

BAPTISM

Purpose: For this study we will focus on how baptism is essential to Christian doctrine (Ephesians 4:4-6). Definition: Gk "baptisma" primarily means dipping or immersion, from the verb "baptizo". This study helps establish the link between Christ's sacrifice and our forgiveness of sins by means of baptism.

Note: We recommend this study for those who have done the repentance study and show willingness to repent.

Ephesians 1:7-14

Q: What is redemption based on v7? (It's the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Jesus.)

Q: What does a person receive that guarantees their redemption based on v. 13-14? (The Holy Spirit.)

Acts 2:36-47

Within this first "Christian sermon" at Pentecost, Peter preaches about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. When the people heard his message, "...they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles...what shall we do"?

Q: What was Peter's direction to them? ("*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*")

Q: How does a person receive the forgiveness of sins? (Repentance + baptism = forgiveness of sins and gift of the Spirit.)

Baptism is the way prescribed by God to receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit, because it is our connection to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Those who accepted this message were baptized, thus they were saved. (Note the parallel in v. 47).

Romans 6:1-4

Writing to Christians in Rome, Paul recalled how all of them including himself were baptized.

Q: What does he say happens at baptism? (Baptism is a participation in death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.)

Q: Just as Christ was raised from the dead to life, what does getting baptized mean? (We, too, will be raised to a new life through baptism. Thus, we are born again.)

[Refer to illustration of death, burial, resurrection]

Colossians 2:9-12

Paul explains that faith in the power of God is required when it comes to baptism.

Q: Why is faith required when it comes to getting baptized? (Just as we need to have faith that God raised Jesus from the dead, we need to have faith that God will raise us from the dead through baptism).

Acts 22:1-16

Before a hostile crowd, Paul defended himself in regards to what caused him to become a Christian.

Q: Even though Paul had had a personal encounter with Jesus, had prayed, had fasted (see Acts 9:9-11), had been healed of blindness, and had been told that he had been chosen by God to be a witness of what he had seen and heard, what did Ananias tell Paul he still needed to do based on v. 16? ("*...what are waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.*")

Even though Paul had had some significant spiritual experiences happen in his life, his sins were not forgiven yet. He was directed to get baptized.

Titus 3:3-5

Q: In light of our sinfulness, what saves us and enables us to have the hope of eternal life? ("*...the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit...through Jesus Christ our Savior.*")

Self-assessment questions:

Q: Is getting baptized something that you need to do? Why?

Q: When do you want to get baptized?

Additional verses:

Mark 16:16 – To show how belief and baptism go hand in hand

Luke 3:7-14 – To show the importance of repentance before baptism

Ac 16:31-33 – To show that aside from belief, hearing the word and baptism are essential.

John 3:1-5 – To show how being born again involves water and spirit.

New Testament Conversion

1. The Major Conversions in Acts
 - A. Conversions
 1. Acts 2:36-47 First Christian in Jerusalem
 2. Acts 8:26-39 Ethiopian Eunuch
 3. Acts 16:22-34 Philippian jailer and his family
 4. Acts 9:1-22 Paul
 5. Acts 22:3-16 Paul
 6. Acts 18:24-26 Apollos
 7. Acts 19:1-5 Ephesians
 - B. Questions concerning Conversions
 1. What was preached?
 2. What was their response to the message?
 3. How long did they take to make the decision?
 4. What was their response after baptism?
2. Refuting False Doctrines
 - A. **"Pray Jesus into your heart"**: This phrase is never mentioned in the Bible. People may use Revelation 3:20 about Jesus knocking at the door, however, you must examine the Scripture in context. This Scripture does not teach how to become a Christian and be saved, but how to come back to God after becoming lukewarm. It is addressed to disciples who already responded to Christ in faith, repentance, confession and baptism.
 - B. **"Accept Jesus into your heart"**: (Same teaching as praying Jesus into your heart just different terminology.) Based on Romans 10:9. You must look at Scripture in context. Paul is addressing the problem of the Israelites which is unbelief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Read further on to Romans 10:13. When do you call on the name of the Lord? At baptism. (Acts 22:16)
 - C. **"Infant baptism"**: A baby cannot have faith, and since we are baptized through faith in the power of God (Colossians 2:12), babies cannot be baptized. Original sin: Ezekiel 18:20 teaches there is no original sin; each person is responsible for his own actions and will be judged accordingly. Therefore babies are born sinless and will be saved if they die.
 - D. **"Baptism does not save you"**: 1 Peter 3:21 says that baptism does save you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:38 teaches that sin is forgiven at baptism. One is saved at the point sin is forgiven.
 - E. **"Baptism is a work-yet we are saved by faith"**: (Ephesians 2:8.) Colossians 2:12 teaches we are saved by faith in the working of God at baptism.
 - F. **"Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace"**: Romans 6:2-4 states that baptism is an actual participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is not merely a sign, seal or symbol.
 - G. **"Baptism isn't important, after all, look at what Paul said about it in 1 Corinthians 1:17"**: Paul does not diminish the importance of baptism here. (Paul himself was baptized to have his sins forgiven in Acts 22:16.) In context (read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17), he makes the point that he does not want people following men (denominationalism). He mentions baptism several times in the passage.
 - H. **"The thief on the cross was not baptized and Jesus told him that they would see each other in paradise"**: Jesus had not even died yet, and baptism is participating in his death (Romans 6:2-4); also on earth, he had the power to forgive sins. (Matthew 9:2-6)
 - I. **"Believers baptism"**: This is baptism as an adult, but is not done in conjunction with the understanding that one is being saved at this point in time. (John 3:5, Acts 2:38) "Retroactive understanding" is not sufficient for salvation.