

Jesus said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26)

Any subject that relates to the salvation of our most important possession – the soul – needs our careful study. Since Jesus also said, “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved,” baptism in water is such a subject.

In this lesson our aim is to determine the place that baptism filled in New Testament times rather than to examine its modern usage. We will try to answer these questions: (1) what method (immersion, sprinkling, or pouring) was employed? (2) What was the purpose of baptism? (3) Who were baptised? (4) In whose name were they baptised? First, however, note that water baptism should not be confused



with Holy Spirit baptism to be examined in another lesson. Except for the six times that Holy Spirit baptism is mentioned, almost every scripture using the words “baptise” and “baptism” applies to baptism in water.

The Method

A vital question is whether immersion, sprinkling, pouring, or all three are authorised in the Scriptures. Almost all Greek scholars agree that the word baptise as used in the New Testament means to dip, submerge or immerse. Whether they are correct can be determined by uses of the word in the New Testament.

The first person to baptise in New Testament times was John the Baptist. Of him it is said, “And John also was baptising in Aenon near to Salim,

because there was **much** water there. (John 3:23) We are certain that John immersed since neither pouring nor sprinkling requires **much** water.

However, immersion does. When Jesus was baptised by John it is said, “And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway **out** of the water.” (Matt. 3:16) “And straightway coming up **out** of the water, he saw the heavens opened.”

(Mark 1:10) Had Jesus not gone into the water He could not have come up out of it. Furthermore, He would have been foolish to have walked into the river Jordan up to His waist only to have John sprinkle some water on Him when such could have been done on the shore. Every indication is that Jesus was immersed.

We are told of the conversion of the Ethiopian, "And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." (Acts 8:38, 39) This clearly shows that the eunuch was immersed.

Paul calls water baptism a burial.

"Therefore we are **buried** with him **by baptism into death**" (Rom. 6:4) "**Buried** with him **in baptism** ..." (Col. 2:12) Only immersion can truly be called a burial.

But were sprinkling and pouring ever used in apostolic days? A careful study of the New Testament reveals not a single passage mentioning either sprinkling or pouring of water. We must conclude that neither was employed or authorised by the apostles.

The Purpose

Those baptised in apostolic times were immersed for the remission or forgiveness of sin. "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name

of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38) "Arise, and be baptised, and **wash away** thy sins." (Acts 22:16) Since we cannot be saved without forgiveness it follows that baptism is necessary for salvation. Thus we read, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be **saved**." (Mark 16:16) "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now **save** us." (I Peter 3:21) But **why** does baptism save? It saves because it puts us **into Christ** where we may obtain forgiveness through His blood. Paul speaks of "the redemption that is **in Christ Jesus**." (Rom. 3:24) He also teaches, "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27) "Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptised into Jesus Christ** were baptised into his death?" (Rom. 6:3) Therefore we cannot be saved unless we are **in Christ** where we reach His redeeming blood, and we cannot get **into Christ** without being baptised.

We must also conclude that forgiveness never precedes baptism, but is a direct result of it. Never is baptism called "an outward sign of an inward grace." It never expresses the idea that one is already a child of God, but it is the act by which one becomes a Christian.

The Subjects

It is sometimes asked whether the Bible teaches infant or adult baptism.

Actually, neither is taught. What is taught is believers' baptism. Jesus says "He that **believeth** and is baptised shall be saved." (Mark 16:16) In Acts 18:8 we read, "And many of the Corinthians hearing **believed**, and were baptised."

We have no command to baptise those incapable of believing. Furthermore, those to be baptised must be teachable. In the Great Commission Jesus says, "Go ye therefore and **teach** all nations, baptising them ... " (Matt. 28:19) Again, repentance is a prerequisite of baptism. "**Repent**, and be baptised ... " (Acts 2:38) The one who has not sinned has nothing of which to repent and is not told to be baptised.

An infant which cannot believe, be taught, nor repent is not a subject of baptism. Furthermore, it has no need to be baptised "for the remission of sins" because it has no sins to be remitted. There is not a command or example in the Scriptures that even hints at infant baptism. Advocates of infant baptism cite Matthew 19:14 as authority. This says, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." But Jesus was not here discussing baptism.

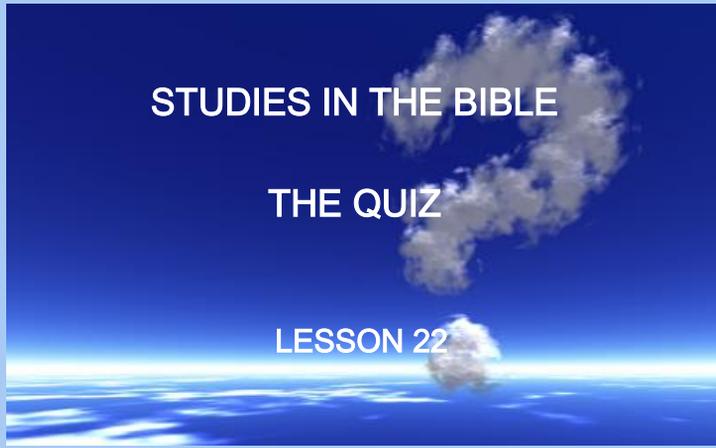
Furthermore, those mentioned were able

to "come" to Him. He certainly does not say, "Bring little children to me to be baptised." The little child who has not sinned is as sure of heaven as any adult until he becomes old enough to sin.

In Whose Name

In the Great Commission Jesus says, "Baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19) Since these are the words of the Saviour, we cannot go wrong when we baptise into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:38 Peter commanded baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ." The expression "in the name of ... " often means "by the authority of ... " A policeman who shouts to a fleeing criminal, "Stop, in the name of the law!" means, "Stop by the authority of the law!" When one is baptised into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he is baptised in the name of Jesus or by His authority since Jesus gave the command Himself.

When changes are made on such subjects as baptism it is extremely dangerous. If we wish to reach the heavenly home we will find it is much safer to comply with the Lord's command on baptism than to risk our eternal salvation by altering it in some way.



Seek and ye shall find

In the blanks write the scripture location of each statement:

1. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. "

2. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water".

3. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."

4. "Buried with him in baptism."

5. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us."

6. "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip."

7. "And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."

8. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

9. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them.

Fill in the blanks:

1. The method of baptism employed in New Testament times was. _____
2. This is proved by Romans 6:4 which teaches that "we are _____ with him by baptism into death."

3. In apostolic times sinners were baptized in order to receive the _____ of sins.
4. Forgiveness and redemption are to be found in _____
5. We get into Him by being _____
6. Infants are not proper subjects of baptism, but those who are capable of _____ must be baptized if they wish to be saved.

Match each scripture reference with the statement which most nearly expresses the thought in that scripture by writing the correct letter to the corresponding blank:

- | | | |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| There is no condemnation IN CHRIST. | _____ | a. Rom. 12:5 |
| All will be made alive IN CHRIST. | _____ | b. Phil. 2:1 |
| There is one body IN CHRIST. | _____ | c. Rom. 6:3 |
| Any man IN CHRIST is a new creature. | _____ | d. II Cor. 5:17 |
| Redemption is IN CHRIST. | _____ | e. Rom. 8:1 |
| Those far off are made nigh IN CHRIST. | _____ | f. Gal. 3:27 |
| Gentiles are partakers of His promises IN CHRIST. | _____ | g. I Cor. 15:22 |
| There is consolation IN CHRIST. | _____ | h. Eph. 3:6 |
| To get INTO CHRIST we must be baptized. (1) | _____ | i. Rom. 3:24 |
| To get INTO CHRIST we must be baptized. (2) | _____ | j. Eph. 2:13 |

Have you been scripturally baptized? If you have not and wish our assistance, we will be happy to help you.

LESSON 22 – ANSWERS

Seek and ye shall find

In the blanks write the scripture location of each statement:

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2. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water”. Matt 3:16
3. “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.” Mark 16:16
4. “Buried with him in baptism.” Col. 2:12 or Rom. 6:4
5. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.” 1 Pet. 3:21
6. “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.” Acts 8:39
7. “And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.” Acts 18:8
8. “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” Acts 22:16
9. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them. Matt 28:19

Fill in the blanks:

1. The method of baptism employed in New Testament times was immersion.
2. This is proved by Romans 6:4 which teaches that “we are buried with him by baptism into death.”
3. In apostolic times sinners were baptized in order to receive the remission of sins.
4. Forgiveness and redemption are to be found in Christ.
5. We get into Him by being baptised.
6. Infants are not proper subjects of baptism, but those who are capable of believing must be baptized if they wish to be saved.

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