

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

A Brief Study on Baptism

Why Be Baptized?

- 1 -- Because it is Commanded by God
- 2 -- To Show My Faith in God
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My Allegiance to Christ
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- 5 -- Because a Refusal Becomes a Rejection
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Baptism

Prepared by
Paul E. Cantrell
84 Northview Dr.
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

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Lesson One

Why Be Baptized?

"Because It Is Commanded By God"

People who have some Bible knowledge know that the Bible teaches a person to be baptized in water. The use of water as a means of cleansing is an obvious fact. And, the use of water religiously as a means of cleansing is not an uncommon thing.

1. The High Priest, under the Law of Moses, was to bathe himself before putting on his special garments to serve in the Temple (Lev. 16:4, 23-24).
2. For some reason the Jews required a Gentile who wanted to become a Jew to go through a ceremonial cleansing (called baptism).
3. John, the baptizer, came calling the Jewish people to repentance, confession of sins, and baptism to get them ready for the coming of the Messiah (and His new Kingdom) (Mark 1:1-5).
4. Jesus, Himself, was baptized by John and afterwards taught the people to be baptized with John's baptism (His disciples did the baptizing) (John 3:26; 4:1-2).

So, it was no surprise to Jesus' disciples that He commanded baptism of those who wanted to become His followers (Matt. 28:18-20). Baptism is an act commanded by God under this New Covenant given through Jesus to all nations. Therefore, as one of the first reasons for a person being baptized, he or she should do so because it is commanded of God.

Examples of People Obeying the Command to be Baptized

John's work was to prepare the way for the Messiah. Shortly afterwards Jesus began His public ministry. After about three and one-half years, Jesus gave Himself over to be crucified, buried, was raised from the dead. During a period of about 40 days He appeared to His disciples so they would have ample proof of His resurrection (Acts 1:3), but would also know what was expected of them after the Holy Spirit came on them. Before ascending, He gave the Apostles their marching orders:

Matt. 28:18-20 _____

Mark 16:15-16 _____

After Jesus ascended back to the Father, where he was crowned "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" and "Head of the church," He sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to give them power and to be a guide for their preaching (Acts 1:8; John 16:13-16). As they went preaching by the revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can easily see that they did command people who believed, repented, and were willing to confess Him as the "*Christ, the Son of God,*" to be baptized (in water, understood). Following are the recorded examples in the book of Acts that show this:

- Acts 2:38, 41 _____
- Acts 8:12, 13 _____
- Acts 8:35-39 _____
- Acts 10:47-48 _____
- _____
- Acts 16:15 _____
- Acts 16:30-33 _____
- Acts 18:8 _____
- Acts 19:1-7 _____
- _____
- Acts 22:16 _____

Baptism and Other Requirements

Owen Olbricht in his study on Baptism made the following observations about Baptism, Faith or Belief, Repent or Repentance, and Confess or Confession. This information is compiled using the New American Standard Version of the Bible.

- Faith or Believe** occurs 483 times in the New Testament.
- Repent or Repentance** occurs 56 times in the New Testament.
- Confess or Confession** occurs 32 times in the New Testament.
- Baptize or Baptism** occurs 77 times in the New Testament.

Please notice some facts about the above items:

1. **Faith or Believe** occurs many more times than the other three all put together. But this does not say that the other three are not important or necessary to be done. "True faith" will cause them to be done. The necessity of **faith or belief** is shown by its connection with the following words:
 - a) To be righteous (10 times)

- b) To be Justified (9 times).
- c) To be saved (2 times).
- d) Forgiveness (2 times).
- e) Salvation (8 times).
- f) Eternal Life (7 times).
- g) New Birth (2 times).

2. Repent or Repentance:

- a) These are never discussed in association with the New Birth, Justification, or Righteousness.
- b) Remission of sins (5 times).
- c) Unto Life (2 times).
- d) Salvation (1)

Even though, the references are scarce that tie Repent or Repentance with being right with God, their necessity in order to be right with God should be unquestioned by a thoughtful and honest mind.

3. Confess or Confession:

- a) Forgiveness (3 times).
- b) Salvation (2 times).

The confession of sins was required by John the baptizer and Jesus to get the people prepared for the coming of the Messiah and to obtain forgiveness. Only one of the above is dealing with people under the New Covenant. But who would question the necessity of people openly confessing their faith in Christ in order to be saved or their willingness to confess sins in order to be forgiven by God.

4. Baptize or Baptism:

- a) In no case does it mention people being baptized who were already saved or right with God.
- b) In all cases where baptism is tied in with being saved, receiving remission of sins, justification, etc., baptism is always in order to obtain such— never because of such.

It is interesting to notice that faith and baptism are tied together unto salvation; repentance and baptism are tied together in order to receive remission of sins; and the necessity of confession for one who wanted to be baptized is also recorded.

It should be obvious that not only is faith required in order to be saved, but that repentance, confession, and baptism are all commanded in order to be right with God.

**What is God Commanding in the use
of the Term "Baptize?"**

It is one thing to establish the fact that God is commanding us to do something, but possibly another thing to know what He is commanding! In this case, the question is made harder because the Greek word used **is not translated!** They have merely carried the Greek letters over into English letters and changed the ending to make it sound like an English word. Let me illustrate:

Greek Word-----**Βαπτίζω**

Now, see if you can transpose the above Greek words into English words _____ . See how easy that was! The word has not been translated!

The Greeks had three different Greek words for sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. Notice below:

Ραντίζω -- To sprinkle

Χεω -- To Pour

Βαπτίζω -- Must be---Immersion!

Look at the following two passages and see if the Scriptures do not so indicate such:

Rom. 6:3-5 _____

Col. 2:12 _____

Concluding Thought

Immersion in water is commanded by God (not mere men) and therefore we ought to obey what God has commanded!

Lesson Two

Why Be Baptized?

"In Order to Show My Faith in God"

The Jewish people had been a special chosen people of God for some 1500 years when Jesus was born and grew up among them. They had all kinds of evidences needed to have a strong faith in the "One True God" of Heaven. And yet, when Jesus began to preach among the people, He called them a *"faithless and perverse generation"* (Mark 9:19). Jesus was continually outspoken about Israel's lack of faith in contrast to the greatness of the faith of some Gentiles among them (Matt. 8:5-10). Jesus stressed the great importance of believing in God and the coming need of people to believe in Him as the *"Christ, the Son of the living God."* (Matt. 16:16). The whole eleventh chapter of Hebrews shows clearly the necessity of faith in order to be acceptable with God. But these were talking about people that lived before Christ came into the world. After Jesus came and died on the cross for man's redemption, it became a necessity to believe in Him as the Christ, the Son of God. (This will be discussed later). The following passages show this also:

Old Testament saints:

Hab. 2:4 _____

Heb. 11:6 _____

New Testament saints:

John 3:16 _____

John 8:21-24 _____

If we ever make it to Heaven, it will be because of our faith in God. But this faith must not be a dead faith, but an active, obedient faith in order to bring about our justification before God! And this faith must also be in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

James 2:17-24 _____

Obedience Shows My Faith in God's Promises!

What has God promised to those who will be baptized? Go through the following Scriptures and write down what God promises to those who will believe Him.

- Mark 16:16** _____
- 1 Peter 3:21** _____
- Acts 2:38** _____
- John 3:5** _____
- Gal. 3:26-27** _____
- 1 Cor. 12:13** _____
- Rom. 6:4** _____
- Rom. 6:17-18** _____
- Rom. 6:17-18** _____
- Acts 5:32** _____

If you will notice that baptism is not commanded of people who are already saved, but commanded of people who wanted to be saved!

- Acts 2:36-38** _____
- Acts 2:41** _____

Thus, baptism is in reality an act of Faith. It makes our faith in God complete. It perfects our faith (KJV).

- James 2:20-23** _____
- _____
- _____

The real issue is—we either believe God or disbelieve Him! If we believe that He will save us upon our obedience in baptism, then we will do what He commands. If we disbelieve Him, we obviously will not be baptized. To believe is to obey; to disbelieve is to disobey. I show that I believe in God's promises by my obedience to His Will!

If you examine closely the examples of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven, you will see clearly that everyone mentioned showed their faith by their obedience to God. James clearly states that faith without works (obedience) is dead (worthless)!

- James 2:20** _____

The Importance of Baptism

Why has God required such a simple act and connected it with the importance of being saved or being justified before God? What is it about this act that would give some kind of importance to it as such? I believe the answer can be found in "the Gospel" that is preached! Turn to 1 Cor. 15:1-8 and read it carefully.

What did the Apostle say he preached to them? _____

What is significant about what he preached?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

What was the basic message of the Gospel?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

We have the choice as to whether we will believe this preaching or not. If we believe it, then we can be saved by it! If we disbelieve it, we will continue in our "lost" condition! However, there is a significant thought here that must be understood—*"Jesus' death is meaningless if there is no resurrection!"* The real challenge of faith is not so much on whether Jesus was put to death and was buried, but on the question of whether He was raised. His resurrection is what makes His sacrificial death on our behalf meaningful!

So, what does this have to do with baptism? In our decision to die to sin (Rom. 6:1-2), the old man of sin is taken and buried in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4), and then is raised up to walk in *"newness of life!"* (Rom. 6:4). In other words, we re-enact what we say that we believe! As Jesus was put to death, was buried, and then raised up from the dead—so, we too, must die, be buried, and be raised up to walk in a new way of living. Thus, baptism is strongly connected with the question of my faith in the resurrection from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 1:4).

Do you believe in Jesus' sacrificial death? Do you believe that He was buried? Do you believe that God raised Him up? If so, then have you re-enacted His death, burial, and resurrection in your obedience to this gospel? Upon whom does God take vengeance? (2 Thess. 1:8) _____

Baptized in Water

John the baptizer came preaching to the people to *"repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt. 3:2). His purpose was to get the people ready for the coming of the Messiah and His Kingdom! Those who believed the message that John preached were baptized in Jordan (Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5). In other words, John baptized these people using water (Matt. 3:11). The belief in John's message was shown by the willingness of the people to confess their sins and to be baptized so that they could receive *"forgiveness of sins."* (Mark 1:4).

After Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension back to the Father; the Apostles were to begin preaching "the Gospel" to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20). We read about a person being preached to in Acts 8:35-40. Philip preached Jesus to him. They came to some water along side the road and the "treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia" stated and asked: *"See, here is water; what does hinder me to be baptized?"* In the preaching of Jesus as Savior, the man was obviously told that he needed to repent and be baptized just like Peter had said on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Why else would he have requested to be baptized? They stopped the chariot and went down into the water and the man was baptized.

Concluding Thoughts

Notice what we have discussed:

1. Men obviously have to believe and obey the Gospel of Christ in order to be saved.
2. In making the decision to die to the way of sin, we then are buried in a watery "tomb," and then raised up to walk a new kind of life in Christ.
3. Baptism becomes a re-enactment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
4. This baptism is a burial in water.
5. Baptism shows that I believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
6. But obedience in baptism also shows that I believe in the promises of God that are connected with this act of faith.
7. Baptism shows that I have an active faith, not a dead faith.

Lesson Three

Why Be Baptized?

"As an Open Act to Show My Allegiance to Christ"

We are all generally acquainted with the concept that if we wanted to be a part of a group, organization, or institution, etc., that there is some kind of activity expected of us. It is often referred to as an initiation into the group or an act that helps to identify us with an organization. Even "secret" organizations usually require some kind of initiations to belong to their groups. Baptism is an act of faith in the promises of God that is required of the "lost" person in order to be "saved" or belong to the group of saved persons (the church—Acts 20:28). When God sent John the baptizer to preach and baptize people, his purpose was to "cull" out honest and sincere people who could make up the group of Jewish people who were prepared for the coming of the Kingdom of God. It not only separated them off from those who were "unbaptized," but it also separated them off as a group of people who believed sincerely that John was sent by God. Thus, it was not a new thing for God to require an act of "initiation" that would identify us as belonging to this new redeemed people of God. Brother Stephen Eckstein, Sr., who converted from the Jewish Religion to Christ, told me that a Jew was not cut off from their religion even if they attended a church—but, if they were immersed, they would then be cut off.

A Sense of Belonging

Baptism is that act required by God before a person is to be forgiven or saved and also before he belongs to the church or kingdom of God. We not only come into a fellowship, but into a relationship with other saved people and with God as well. Notice the following Scriptures that clearly show this.

Matt. 28:18-20 _____

Acts 2:38 _____

Rom. 6:3-4 _____

1 Cor. 12:13 _____

Gal. 3:26-27 _____

Eph. 2:13 _____

Col. 1:13-14 _____

Col. 1:27 _____

Col. 2:11-13 _____

It is "in" this relationship with God that we have the following promised blessings:

2 Cor. 1:10 _____

Eph. 1:3 _____

Philemon 6 _____

Col. 1:13-14 _____

Baptism is a "Spiritual Circumcision"

Colossians 2:11-13 was introduced above and we feel that it would be worthwhile to spend a little more time on the study of this passage. God made a Covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:7-11). Circumcision was to be a sign or seal of this Covenant. Any male children of Jews who were not circumcised would be cut off from the Covenant of promise (Gen. 17:14). The Holy Spirit, in giving us the New Covenant, wanted to show to the "new chosen people" that we have an outward act also that is required of us. For the Jewish male, circumcision was a removal of the foreskin; but, for the new chosen people, it was the removal of sins by the blood of Jesus that made us acceptable with God in the act of Baptism. We must believe that God has the power to remove all of our sins and make us as clean as a sinless person when we repent and go down into the waters of Baptism. Immersion as an act standing on its own has no power to save in and of itself. It is the showing of our faith in God's power to operate on our soul and cleanse it of every sin when we allow ourselves to be Baptized into Christ's death.

Before Baptism, we are uncircumcised. But after Baptism, we have been spiritually circumcised (made clean by the removal of sins) by the blood of the Lamb (Col. 2:13). After Baptism, we are to "*seek those things which are above.*" (Col. 3:1).

Commitment and Baptism

In order to become a Christian, it is necessary that we believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 16:16; Acts 8:37); that we "repent;" and upon a confession of our faith, to be baptized into Christ. The importance of faith is an obvious! The importance of repentance should also be obvious. God is not saving us so that we can continue in the way of rebellion to His Will (Rom. 6:1-2); rather, we are saved in order to "*walk in newness of life.*" (Rom. 6:3-4). In repentance, we make a decision to turn from a disobedient life to an obedient life in Christ. Being baptized is our way to saying that we are turning from sin to walk a righteous life. This death to sin is described in several ways in Romans 6:6-19:

Verse 6 _____

Verse 7 _____

Verse 12 _____

Verse 13 _____

Verse 14 _____

Verse 16 _____

Verse 18 _____

Verse 19 _____

It is important that we live up to the decision or commitment that we have made—to live a righteous life! Those who are born of God do not continue in the way of sin (rebellion) (1 John 3:9); but rather, they practice (continue in the way of) righteousness (1 John 2:29; 3:10). In baptism we are saying to all that we want to live right, we want to be freed from the hold (bondage) of sin, and we want to belong to God. The idea of "bondage" is that a person is under the condemnation of sin and has no way to get a release from this bondage on his own or by his own power. He needs help to be released. Jesus offers to release him when his faith leads him to repent, confess Jesus, and to be baptized (buried with Christ). Upon this act, we are made free!

Into and Out of

Baptism, as an act of faith, brings about a change in our relationship with God, as well as our fellow-man. Notice the following:

1. Before baptism, we are not children of God; but, after baptism, we become the children of God.
2. Before baptism, we are not saved; but, after baptism, we become saved.
3. Before baptism, we are "outside of" Christ; but, after baptism, we are "in" Christ where we have access to all spiritual blessings (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:3).
4. Before baptism, we are "outside of" the church or the body of Christ; After baptism, we are "in" the church—a part of the saved (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47). We become brothers and sisters "in" Christ (Gal. 6:1).
5. Before baptism, we are a part of the "world;" but, after baptism, we are a part of the forgiven and redeemed that make up the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13-14).

For a person to think of baptism as just a ceremonial or symbolic act, it shows that they have not seriously studied what the Bible says about baptism's importance in God's scheme of redemption.

Concluding Thoughts

Faith is shown or proven to be a "saving faith" when it acts in obedience to God's will (Jas. 2:24). Baptism is an act that God has commanded in order to "perfect" our faith (Jas. 2:22). For a person to refuse baptism shows that he has not made the commitment to be obedient to God.

It is again important to remind us that baptism without proper faith and repentance is worthless! Baptism is not the saving power, but rather the blood of Christ. But we only receive the benefit of the blood of Christ when we do what He requires of us.

Lesson Four

Why Be Baptized? *"To Fulfill all Righteousness"*

The Gospel of Mark says that John came preaching *"the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."* (1:4) He evidently taught the people to be willing to confess their sins as well (1:5). Jesus, the perfect Son of God, came to be baptized of John (Matt. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:22). If Jesus was sinless, why would He come to the Jordan River to be baptized of him. He had no sins to confess; nor did he have any sins to be forgiven. John seems to have recognized this fact—or the Holy Spirit through him acknowledged this fact—when he refused to baptize Jesus saying that he (John) needs to be baptized by Jesus. But Jesus insisted upon obeying this command of God given through John. Jesus gave the reason—*"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness."* (Matt. 3:15). Righteousness is "right doing!" Jesus always did that which was right, so why shouldn't He obey this command of God as well. Even though he had no sin to confess or be forgiven of—it was still right to do what God commands! Jesus was thus presenting Himself as an example for all men—we are to be obedient to God in all that He commands of us.

Jesus' Baptism and Ours

Jesus was baptized with John's baptism, which was a temporary act of obedience that God required of the Jewish people to get them ready for the coming of the Messiah and His new Kingdom. We know that it was temporary because of what happened at Ephesus, as recorded in Acts 19:1-7. Twelve disciples had been baptized with John's baptism, but were more fully taught and commanded to be baptized with Jesus' baptism. The act of baptism was the same, but it was to be done again *"in the name of the Lord Jesus."* This shows that there is a distinct difference in the baptisms, even though the act of immersion is the same. It is also important to stress that our baptism is not only to be in the name of the Lord Jesus, but it is for the remission of our sins. Our baptism is not a temporary one, but has been in effect every since the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:38 _____

God's Righteousness

When Jesus said that He wanted to fulfill all righteousness, it was a way of stressing the need for man to be submissive to the Will of God in all things. The expression, "**God's Righteousness**," can be understood in two ways, at least:

1. That God is righteous in all that He does (Ps. 11:7). He is perfect and complete in His righteousness; but, man on the other hand is imperfect and incomplete in his righteousness (Tit. 3:5). He needs for righteousness to be imputed or credited to him from God (Rom. 4:3). But when we become Christians, we are to walk in or practice righteousness (1 John 3:10).
2. God's righteousness can also be understood in the sense of the plan by which God is able to make man righteous through His Son. When we submit to this plan, we become righteous in the sight of God

It is in the second sense that we are discussing God's righteousness. In Paul's discussion about his unbelieving Jewish brethren, he stated that he desired for them to be saved (Rom. 10:1-3), which obviously shows that they were lost! He then stated why they were lost: "**For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**" They rejected God's means of making them righteous—through His Son! They refused to believe in Him or submit to Him in order to be righteous. They believed that they could be righteous by doing what they wanted to do. It is still possible today for people to reject what God requires of us in order to be righteous, and believe that I can be righteous without submitting to God's plan of righteousness.

Jesus submitted to John's baptism because it was something that God commanded to be done, but we submit to Jesus' baptism in order to be made righteous by the blood of Jesus. We are sinners and need God's righteousness. We need the forgiveness of our sins in order to be acceptable to God. It is in the act of baptism, accompanied by faith, repentance, and confession, that we receive this forgiveness and a right standing with God. Those who refuse to be baptized have no promise of forgiveness or being made righteous before God. We can be like the Pharisees and lawyers among the Jews concerning John's baptism: "**But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.**" They rejected the counsel of God against themselves and so can we if we refuse to be baptized by Jesus' baptism.

The Necessity of the New Birth

To treat lightly or with lack of respect for what men tell us to do is one thing; but, to do so with God's commands is inviting disaster to our souls. Jesus' statement to Nicodemus shows this clearly when he said: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.....Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3,5). Please notice the emphasis of being born again:

1 John 2:29 _____

1 John 4:7 _____

1 John 5:1 _____

1 Peter 1:23 _____

1 Peter 1:3 _____

1 Cor. 4:15 _____

James 1:18 _____

Let's notice some obvious facts from the above passages:

1. The new birth is obviously a spiritual birth, not a physical one (John 3:6).
2. The new birth is brought about by the Spirit of God. The "how" He does this is what the above Scriptures show clearly.
3. It is brought about through the preaching, believing, and obeying of the Gospel, or the Word of God.
4. The water part is obviously baptism. When we are buried in water and come forth, we are a *"New Creature in Christ"* (2 Cor. 5:17) and expected to *"Live in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:4).

It is important to notice that Jesus gave an absolute in these verses (John 3:3-5)—unless a person is born again, he cannot see or enter the kingdom of heaven!

A Misunderstanding about Baptism

Error—"Baptism is 'legalism!'"

Some religious people equate "baptism for the remission of sins" as being an effort to save ourselves by law-keeping. But by the same reasoning why wouldn't "faith in order to be saved" be legalism; or, "repentance for the remission of sins" be legalism also. All three are commanded and are stated as being unto or for salvation. To advocate that "baptism" is a "work" and "faith" is not a "work" makes a difference. But "faith" is also called a "work."

John 6:29

The Apostle Paul commanded the Philippians to "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*" (2:12). Were they to work in order to earn or merit their salvation or were they to work (do the commands of God) in order to receive the gift of salvation? The answer should be obvious! We are not baptized to earn or merit salvation, but in order to receive the gift of salvation! Salvation is a gift and not something we earn. But we do not receive the gift until we have complied with the simple requirements that God has commanded!

Concluding Thoughts

Obedience to the Gospel of Christ is what allows God to make us righteous in His sight through the blood of Christ. Those who will obey this Gospel are threatened with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:7-9). It behooves us all to be sure that we submit to God's righteousness and not to try to follow our "own righteousness."

Lesson Five

Why Be Baptized?

"Because a Refusal Becomes a Rejection of Jesus as Lord"

God calls upon his people to show honor and respect to others. The following passages show this clearly:

Rom. 12:10 _____

Rom. 13:1 _____

Rom. 13:7 _____

1 Pet. 3:7 _____

Lev. 19:32 _____

Eph. 6:2 _____

1 Tim. 5:3 _____

1 Pet. 2:17 _____

Children show honor to the parents by being obedient to them (Eph. 6:1-2). We show whether we honor or respect people by our attitude and actions toward them. Would you like to live in a society where there was no honor or respect for anyone or anything? I don't think so! Then, how much more does God deserve our honor and respect! These passages call this concept to our minds:

Mal. 1:6 _____

Rev. 4:9 _____

Rev. 5:12 _____

"God is greatly honored in the assembly of His people."

Respecting the God Who Made Us!

The same way we show respect to our fellow human beings, we can also show it unto God as well. God wants us to listen to what He has to say. He wants us to be saved eternally. He has given His Word to serve as an infallible guide for our lives. He has given His Son as a sacrifice in our stead, etc. Do we listen? Do we believe Him? Do we obey His Word? Undoubtedly, He is worthy of our honor and respect. Jesus gave an illustration in the Gospel of Mark how we can either show or not show honor and respect for God.

Mark 7:1-13

1. What did the Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of doing? _____

2. What does the Bible call this teaching about washing hands? _____

3. Why did Jesus call these people hypocrites? _____

4. Why was their worship vain? _____

5. Did they reject the command of God? _____
6. Why did they reject it? _____

7. How did they make the word of God of none effect? _____

The Lordship of Jesus

In Eph. 4:4-6, there are 7 one's listed. One of them was that there is "one Lord." This one Lord is obviously Jesus! When we hear the preaching of the Gospel, we should hear about the Lordship of Jesus.

Acts 2:36 _____

Jesus became Lord to 3,000 that day because they believed and obeyed what He commanded (Acts 2:36-41).

The New Testament letters are filled with the emphasis upon the Lordship of Jesus (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:3, etc.). And yet, in spite of this strong emphasis, how do most people treat Jesus? Look carefully at the following passages:

Luke 6:46 _____

Matt. 7:21-23 _____

James 1:22 _____

Jas. 2:24 _____

Phil. 2:12 _____

We show that we honor and respect Jesus when we obey Him. When we are baptized in order to receive remission of sins, we show honor unto Him. But when we change the act to sprinkling or pouring water, we show disrespect to Him. And when we change the reason for being immersed, we also show disrespect. When we go through the actions, but we are not sincere—we show disrespect for Jesus.

Preaching Jesus!

The recorded sermons in the book of Acts do not give us everything that was preached to people before they were to be baptized. But we can look at a summary of these lessons and see some things that were definitely necessary before one could be baptized correctly.

1. **There is one true God.** (Acts 17:23).
2. **Jesus is the Christ.** (Acts 17:3).
3. **Jesus is Lord.** (Acts 2:36).
4. **The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus.** (Acts 2:22-32).
5. **The Ascension and Coronation of Jesus.** (Acts 2:33-36).
6. **Salvation only in Jesus' name.** (Acts 4:12).
7. **The Preached Word can save.** (Acts 11:14).
8. **Preached about the Kingdom.** (Acts 8:12).
9. **They were told what they had to do to be saved.** (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:43; Acts 8:37(Rom. 10:9-10)).

Who is Jesus Lord Over?

We have tried to stress that a person can be baptized (immersed in water) and not be acceptable to God. What makes baptism acceptable to Him? It must be done in faith or trust in what God has commanded and promised. Without faith, no man is pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6). Thus, faith not only makes our baptism acceptable but it also shows that I have accepted Jesus as Lord over my life.

The same can be said of repentance, confession, living a godly life, remaining faithful unto death, etc. We can live a godly life and not recognize Jesus as Lord. Some atheist live "good" lives, but do not believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. The stress that is placed on faith in God and faith in Jesus is a way of letting us know that without faith no man can come to or please God.

But, at the same time, a faith that is not obedient to God is worthless. James says that it is dead (2:17, 20, 26). To stress "faith only" as a means of our redemption or forgiveness is going straight into the face of the concept of Jesus being Lord (2:24)! He is only Lord of my life when I believe in Him to the point of being submissive to His Will.

Jesus is not only the Messiah (the Christ, the anointed one that was to come to redeem mankind), but He is also Lord of those who trust in Him and are responsive to His Will in their lives. Thus, *"to be faithful unto death,"* means that I will continue to be obedient unto death!

Concluding Thoughts

Is Jesus actually the Lord of my life? Are we willing to be submissive to Him in all things? Or, do we still want to do the things that we want to do and still insist that I believe in Jesus as Lord? Could He call us hypocrites like He did to the religious people among the Jews? (Matt. 23:13-23). To call Him "Lord" is not sufficient—we must show it by our obedience to His Will (Matt. 7:21-23).

Lesson Six

"Miscellaneous Questions on Baptism"

A part of the confusion about **Baptism** is caused by not translating the word—which we have already discussed in Lesson one. However, there is another reason for confusion because of the wrong teaching being done by religious leaders. And what complicates the matter for the person who is not very knowledgeable of the Bible is.....there are six (6) different usages of the concept of Baptism. The following will illustrate:

1. **Baptism of the Nation of Israel in the Red Sea.** (1 Cor. 10:2)
 - a) It is figurative.
 - b) It is past historical incident.
2. **John's Baptism.** (Matt. 3:6-7, 11, 13-14, 16; Mk. 1:4, 5, 8-10; Lk. 3:3, 7, 12, 16, 21, 7:29-30; 20:4; John 1:25-26, 38, 31, 33; 3:22-23, 26; 4:1-2; 10:40; Acts 1:5, 22; 10:37; 11:16; 13:24; 19:3-4).
 - a) During the public ministry of Jesus.
 - b) No longer valid (Acts 19:1-7).
3. **Baptism of Jesus' suffering.** (Matt. 20:22-23; Mk. 10:38-39; Lk. 12:50).
 - a) Figurative.
 - b) Past historical event.
4. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit.** (Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16).
 - a) Promised by Jesus (Acts 1:5).
 - b) Fulfilled (Acts 2:1-4; 11:14-18).
5. **Baptism in water under the Great Commission.** (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
 - a) A command to believers (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 12:13; 15:29; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12; Heb. 6:2; 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - b) In order to be saved---Remission of sins. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38).
 - c) Superseded John's Baptism. (Acts 19:1-7).
6. **Baptism of fire.** (Matt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16).
 - a) A future punishment. (Rev. 20:14-15).

All but two of the above do not apply for us today--#5 and #6. The command to be baptized in water under the great commission does certainly apply to us now. And the baptism of fire is future for those who do not obey the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

The "One" Baptism

In Eph. 4:4-6, there is a listing of 7 "ones" that we must believe in to be acceptable to God. One of the ones is: **"one baptism!"** It is interesting to notice that on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and at the conversion of the first Gentiles (Acts 10:1-11:18) that there was two baptisms—(1) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit that came on the Apostles and later on the household of Cornelius; and (2) The Baptism in water in order to be saved or forgiven. Obviously, if the inspired Apostle says that there is one baptism, then one of these two had to cease. The dates will help to make this easy to see. The events in Acts 2 happened about AD 30 and the events in Acts 10:1-11:18 occurred about AD 33-38. The Apostle wrote his letter to the church at Ephesus in about AD 63. One of these baptisms had served its purpose and ceased. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised on "all flesh" by Joel (2:28), which could only be understood as on both Jews and Gentiles. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews in Acts 2 and on the Gentiles in Acts 10:1-11:18. The miraculous powers that were given in these two outpourings helped to show the Truth of God to all men.

When the Word of God (the New Covenant) was fully revealed and written down for future generations, the miraculous gifts would cease (1 Cor. 13:8-13). Thus, leaving "one baptism" that was commanded by God for all people to obey in order to receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It is important to notice that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise that only Jesus could fulfill (Acts 2:33). It is senseless or foolish to command someone to be baptized with the Holy Spirit when they have nothing to do with it. If it is done, Jesus has to do it! But all men can be commanded to be baptized in water for the remission of their sins, and we can all be obedient to such if we so choose. It is logical that the "one baptism" has to be water baptism!

Baptismal Regeneration?

The above expression is used in reference to two possibilities: (1) It refers to the "sprinkling of infants" to take away "original sin;" or (2) It refers to a teaching that says that if a person is "sprinkled" with water or "immersed" in water that the act has the power to save or regenerate that person. I know that for centuries the "sprinkling" of infants with water has been practiced by many religious groups.

Some religious groups still practice such today. Quite a few no longer call it a baptism, but a christening or dedicating. It is important to see that an infant cannot "believe," "repent," or "obey in baptism." What is done to the infant has no connection with their "will!" They are not obeying Jesus as Lord! They are not obeying at all! So, it should be obvious that "sprinkling" of an infant could be called "baptismal regeneration." What is also so obvious that such is nowhere taught in the Word of God! Biblically, there is no such thing as "baptismal regeneration." And what is obviously taught from the Scriptures is that when a person believes, makes a decision to turn to Christ as Lord, and openly confesses Him as the Christ, the Son of God—and then is immersed in water—that he is saved by the blood of Christ.

Grace and Baptism

There should be no question in anyone's mind that no one can save himself by his keeping the Law of God perfectly. In fact, such an expression is not even correct! If one kept the Law perfectly, then he is not lost and does not need to be saved—but is just before God! The wrong issue here is not over the question of: "*Are we saved by Grace or by baptism?*" It is not an either/or issue, but **both** are involved in our being saved by the blood of Christ. God's grace extends mercy to sinful, fallen, mankind. And we, by a faith that is obedient to God, reach out to accept that gift—thankfully! It is God that has chosen to require the believer to be baptized, not human beings! He wants us to show that we truly do trust in Him by being baptized into the death of Christ—where He shed His blood (Rom. 6:3-4). Immersion in water is foolishness to the unbeliever; but, to the believer, it is tied in with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus that gives us hope. We gladly show our faith by being baptized into Christ where we expect the blood of Christ to cleanse us of every sin. Without God's grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, we are hopelessly lost for all eternity!

Who Should be Baptized?

It should be obvious from our brief study thus far, that baptism is not for an infant, or even for young children. Baptism is required of those :

- (1) Who are old enough to know they have sinned before God;
- (2) Who know that they are lost without Christ;
- (3) Who know that He is their only hope of heaven;
- (4) Who have made a decision to turn to Jesus as Lord;
- (5) Who are willing to openly confess Him as the Christ, the Son of God.

When this person is baptized:

- (1) He comes into a relationship with the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20);
- (2) He is forgiven or given remission of his past sins (Acts 2:38);
- (3) He is added to the church or the body of Christ (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13);
- (4) He is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13-14);
- (5) Where he has access to "*all spiritual blessings*" (Eph. 1:3);
- (6) Where he has the privilege of addressing God as "my Father in Heaven" (1 John 3:1);
- (7) And have been given the promise of eternal life if we will be faithful to the end (Heb. 3:12-14; Rev. 2:10).

Concluding Thoughts

Every person who is concerned for the lost of this world and wants them to be saved—longs to hear the words that were recorded by a man who heard the preaching of Jesus and said: "*See, here is water; what hinders me to be baptized?*"

God wants all men to be taught the Truth for only the Truth can set us free (John 8:32). But that Truth must be believed and obeyed before we are set free (1 Pet. 1:22).

It is our prayer that all men may have the privilege to hear that Truth, and then to believe and obey it unto eternal life!

