

Title Page

Important Questions
on
BAPTISM

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Lesson One

"Is Baptism Sprinkling, Pouring, or Immersion?"

Many people are seeking answers to their spiritual questions and they face a major problem! Unfortunately, they receive conflicting and contradictory answers! Now, what do they do? They should do what should have been done to begin with—turn to God's Word. Read it, study it, meditate on it, and search it for answers. It may be necessary to turn to people for help; but, always ask them to give you a Bible reference for the answers they give you. Then, turn and read and check it out for yourself.

What has created so much of our problem is not the Bible itself, but what man does with the Bible—and what they even do to it! Most people only pay lip-service to the Bible and do not really respect it as their authority in religion. They use it (really, misuse it) to uphold preconceived ideas or to justify what they want to believe.

Now, for our first question in this series of lessons: *"Is Baptism sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?"* Just what does the Bible say?

A Recognition of what has caused the problem!

The translators of the Bible are at fault! They have not translated the Greek word, **βαπτίζω**. Instead, they have "transliterated" the word! That is, they have put English letters for Greek letters and changed the last letter from an O to an E. Notice below:

Β α π τ ι ζ ω
B a p t i z o (or)
B a p t i z e

By failing to translate, Baptiso, it has hid the meaning of the word to those who do not know Greek. Does the Greek word have a meaning? It sure does! Then, how can an honest, sincere person find out what it is? There is three basic ways to find an answer to our question:

1. Go to a Greek-English Lexicon that will define the meaning of the word.
2. Go to a "Word Study" Book that will define its meaning.
3. Or, find out if the Scriptures tell us the meaning.

Since the reader of this study book probably does not have access to the first two sources, we will concentrate on the third possibility. We will find all references in the New Testament that would give us a clue as to how Baptism was performed in the early Church.

The following Scriptures are all that are given to indicate how Baptism was performed. Please write in the blank what you discovered.

- Acts 10:47 _____
- John 3:23 _____
- Acts 8:36 _____
- Acts 8:38 _____
- Acts 8:39 _____
- Rom. 6:4 _____
- Rom. 6:5 _____
- Col. 2:12 _____

What is your conclusion from these Scriptures? _____

Three Greek Words

There are three different Greek words for Sprinkling, Pouring, and Immersion. See if you can discover which one is indicated by the Scripture passage below.

Heb. 9:13 (Rantizo) _____

Acts 2:17 (Cheo) _____

Rom. 6:4 (Baptizo) _____

God chose the word that He wanted and commanded of men in order to be right with Him—Baptizo! He did not command Rantizo nor Cheo, but Baptizo. If He is to be Lord of our lives, we must do what He commands!

Greek Scholars on the Subject

Thayer defines it—"To dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge"
---"Immersion in water"

Liddel & Scott (A more recent work) define it—"To dip in or under water."

There is a **Handbook on Baptism** by Shepherd and Harding that contains 33 quotations from Lexicons put out by recognized Greek scholars. Without exception, they all give the meaning as—"To dip, immerse, or to put under." This book also contains quotations from many other sources: Encyclopedias, Church Historians, the Early Church writers, and quotations from more recent scholars. All are in agreement on what the Bible says about Baptism. Also, all are in agreement on what the practice was in the early Church.

A **Special study** was made by three Greek scholars (Carson, Stuart, & Conant). They studied every known use of the Greek word, *Baptiso*, in Greek literature dating from 522 BC to 450 AD. They found 236 occurrences. The literal meaning of the word was always: "**To dip, or to Immerse.**" The following three quotes can help to illustrate:

Earliest (522 BC) – *"For, as when the rest of the tackle is toiling deep in the sea, I, as a cork above the net, am undipped (unbaptized) in the brine."*

Time of Christ (AD 37—Josephus) -- *"Continually pressing down and immersing (baptizing) him while swimming, as if in sport, they did not desist till they had entirely suffocated him."*

Latest (450 AD) -- *"We all, therefore, shifted our position to the more elevated parts of the ship, in order that we might lighten that part of the ship that was immersed (baptized)."*

One other area of confirmation can be found in the writings of some of the leading men or scholars in the early Reformation Movement.

Luther. *"The term baptism is a Greek word; it may be rendered into Latin by **mersio**: when we immerse anything in water, that it may be entirely covered with water."*

Calvin. *"The term Baptize means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive Church."*

Concluding Thoughts

We believe that the evidence is overwhelming for immersion. However, a question could be asked: *"If the evidence is so overwhelming for immersion, then why do so many churches practice sprinkling?"* We believe the answer should be obvious—**The authority of men has replaced the authority of God and His Word!**

Which authority do you recognize, respect, and go by? Have you been immersed into Christ upon a confession of your faith in Him as being the Son of God....for the remission of sins? (Acts 2:38). God's word says that it is necessary—have you obeyed God?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Baptize is not a translation of the Greek word "Baptizo."
- _____ 2. There is no way for a person to know the meaning of the Greek word "Baptizo" unless he knows Greek.
- _____ 3. The Greek word "Baptizo" can be translated as "Sprinkling," "Pouring," or "Immersion."
- _____ 4. The New Testament does not clearly state how "Baptizo" is performed.
- _____ 5. A person does not have to be "baptizo" in water, but he can be "baptizo" with water.
- _____ 6. There is a Greek word for "Sprinkling" and also one for "Pouring."
- _____ 7. Bible scholars do not agree on how "baptizo" should be performed.
- _____ 8. Scholarly Greek Lexicons all agree on the meaning of the Greek word "baptizo."
- _____ 9. Three scholars traced the use of the Greek word "baptizo" in Greek literature for almost 1000 years and found a consistent meaning for the word.
- _____ 10. The evidence is overwhelming for the meaning of the word "baptizo" to be translated "Immersion."

Lesson Two

"Who needs to be Baptized?"

This question is more complicated than might first appear! Because of so much wrong teaching on so many subjects, many people find themselves confused and not knowing really what is Biblically correct and what they should believe and practice. Obviously, Baptism is one of those subjects that needs to be clarified from Scripture. However, there can be no clarification or the end of confusion unless a common "Standard of Authority" is accepted by all—**The Word of God and it alone!**

Most people who think of themselves as being Christians have undergone some form of what is called "Baptism!" However, because of the many differences in teaching on this subject, they have sincere questions as to the validity of such actions in God's sight. Some are concerned enough that they sincerely want to know just what the Bible teaches and are willing to submit to such—no matter the cost! In this lesson, we want to look at four answers as to *"Who needs to be Baptized?"*

1--Those Who are Lost Need to be Baptized!

Some religious groups do not believe that baptism has anything to do with their salvation. They have been taught and believe that they were saved by faith alone the moment they accepted Jesus into their heart as Savior. Some advocate that you have to "pray through" before you can be saved by faith alone. Others advocate that a person must have a religious experience that lets you know you are saved. This is often regarded as the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." But the emphasis is upon salvation by faith alone by most of these people.

But the New Testament shows the very opposite to be true! If you will turn to Acts 2:1-38 and read this carefully, you will see the following things:

1. The Apostles received the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" that allowed them to speak in "tongues" or "different languages (vs. 4, 6, 8-12).
2. The Apostle Peter said this outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a fulfillment of what the Prophet Joel had stated some 800 years before (vs. 14-21). (Joel 2:28-32).
3. He preached "Jesus" to these "devout Jews." That He lived among them, performed miracles among them—but you people crucified Him by "lawless hands." (vs. 22-23)
4. He then offered proof that God raised Jesus up to sit on David's Throne

- as was foretold and that they were eye-witnesses to this fact! (vs. 23-32).
- 5. He concluded his teaching with stating that Jesus was now at the right hand of God, made Lord and Christ, and received and sent forth the Holy Spirit to the Apostles as He had promised them. (vs. 33-36) (John 16:13; Acts 1:4-8).
- 6. Many of the people were convinced and wanted to know what to do (vs. 37).
- 7. They were plainly told to "repent and be Baptized"....for the remission of sins!(vs. 38).
- 8. Three thousand gladly received his message and were baptized. (vs. 39-41).

Without the remission or removal of their sins, these people were lost! They wanted to be saved! They were told to saved themselves from that "perverse generation." How? By repenting and being baptized! Other passages that indicate the same thing (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). The Lord tells us that Baptism is for lost people who want to be saved!

**2—Those who have been Sprinkled with water
need to be Baptized!**

Many religious groups sprinkle water over children in infancy and then have them accepted into their churches at age 12, 13, or 14. Most groups called such "baptism." Some called it "christening" or "dedication." But the original concepts were:

- 1. Children inherit the sin of Adam and are "lost!"
- 2. They need that sin removed!
- 3. "Baptism" removes "original sin."

Is this what the Bible teaches? If so, where can it be found? We have already seen in our first lesson that true "baptism" is not sprinkling or pouring water, but an immersion. Have people obeyed God in being sprinkled with water? Is this what God commands? If not, then do such need to be "baptized" or "immersed" in order to be right with God?

Also, can infants actually obey God? Is Baptism by itself alone able to save a person? Are there other things involved along with Baptism that a person must do to be right with God? And I believe that it should be obvious that there is!

Mark 16:16 _____

Acts 2:38 _____

Rom. 10:9-10 _____

Does a person have to believe in Jesus as the Son of God to be saved? Does a person have to repent (turn from sin to obedience to God) to be saved? If so, it is quite obvious that an infant or a small child cannot do any of these. A person must be old enough to realize and do these things that God commands.

**3—Those who were Baptized under Pressure
Should be Baptized!**

A couple wants to get married, but one is a Christian and the other is not. The Christian may put pressure on the potential mate to be baptized. The potential mate may do it without proper convictions. Sometimes parents or grandparents put pressure on their children to be baptized and they do it to relieve the pressure, but were not really convicted! There are pre-requisites before a person should be Baptized! These should be the primary concern of the person wanting a potential mate or a child to be Baptized!

1. The decision must be made by the person.
2. It must be from their heart (Rom. 6:16-18).
3. They must be convicted that Jesus is the Son of God and their only hope of salvation.
4. There must be true and sincere repentance (2 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 6:1-2).
5. Upon a confession of Jesus, then they are ready to be Baptized into Christ for the remission of sins.

**4—Those Baptized for the wrong reason
need to be Baptized!**

If a person is taught that he is saved before baptism, but is later baptized (immersed) into some denomination; his baptism is not for the right purpose or reason. The New Testament actually has an example of people who were Baptized (Immersed), but were not properly taught. They were told to be Baptized (Immersed) again after being properly taught (Acts 19:1-7). Even though one may have been immersed:

1. Immersion needs to be preceded by correct teaching;
2. Preceded by true repentance;
3. Preceded by a realization that he is lost;
4. Preceded by a realization that upon belief, repentance, and open confession of Christ, he is ready to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins.
5. We believe we have shown that this is clearly taught in the Scriptures.

Concluding Thoughts

Eternal punishment is too horrible to have to suffer because we wouldn't listen to what God says for us to do. Heaven is too wonderful to miss simply because of my pride or stubbornness and unwillingness to do what God commands of me to be saved. Baptism has become a real test of one's faith in God!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Under no circumstances should a person who has been immersed be immersed again.
- _____ 2. Only lost people should be baptized.
- _____ 3. It is not important to convince men to believe in the resurrection of Christ.
- _____ 4. People who claim they were saved by faith alone do not really believe in the doctrine of salvation by faith alone.
- _____ 5. Some people believe in having a "religious experience" to indicate they are saved.
- _____ 6. The Apostle Peter told people to repent and be baptized to be saved or have remission of sins.
- _____ 7. If God commands immersion, then sprinkling is in reality disobedience.
- _____ 8. Pre-requisites to baptism should be stressed before one is baptized.
- _____ 9. People who were baptized under pressure do so for the wrong reason.
- _____ 10. The book of Acts actually records people being baptized again who had been baptized.
- _____ 11. Baptism could be God's test of our faith in Him.
- _____ 12. I have not been correctly baptized.

Lesson Three

*"What does a Rejection of Baptism
Do or Say?"*

There are two ways to approach a subject: POSITIVELY and NEGATIVELY!
Jesus illustrated this in Matthew 7:21-27:

1. Just to say Lord, Lord is not enough!
2. We must do the Will of the Father!
3. Our claims of doing many works are worthless if we do not do the Father's Will—for Jesus will not recognize us in Judgment.
4. Those who do the Will of the Father are wise!
5. Those who do not the Will of the Father are foolish!

This is a very effective method of teaching people:

1. What it is...What it is not!
2. What we should do....What we should not do!
3. The results of Obedience....The results of Disobedience!

When we speak about rejecting baptism, we mean the following:

1. We mean to refuse to be immersed in water.
2. It is to refuse to make a decision to die to sin (Repent).
3. It is to refuse to make a confession of faith in Christ.
4. It is to do something insincerely and not from the heart.
5. It is not done in order to receive the Remission of our Sins.

This lesson will look at four things in particular that deals with a rejection of being baptized correctly.

**1—To Reject the Baptism Jesus commands is to Reject
His Authority.**

Baptism is an obvious test of one's obedience to God. If I can refuse to be baptized and be right with God; then, I can refuse to repent and be right with God! And, others could refuse to believe and be right with God! if not, why not? There is no stopping point, once one starts down the road of disobedience, where does it end? Who is going to say that one command of Christ is less important than another? Christ is the authority we must hear!

Matt. 28:18 _____

Matt. 28:20 _____

Christ is the Head, the Lord, and the King! We must obey Him! We have no right to delete any command!

John 12:48 _____

To refuse to obey His command is to reject His Headship or Lordship over us!
Such can bring His judgment of condemnation upon us.

**2—To Reject Baptism is to refuse to Re-enact
the death, burial and resurrection of Christ!**

The threat of punishment is pronounced upon those who do not obey the Gospel.

2 Thess. 1:7-9 _____

The Gospel message is the hope that we can have through the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:1-4). This Gospel is to be Preached, Believed, and Obeyed! In reality, we obey a "form" of this Gospel.

Rom. 6:1-4 _____

Rom. 6:16-18 _____

We obey commands that re-enact the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus. We "die" to sin, we are buried with Him by immersion, and we are raised up to walk in newness of life.

When we refuse to be immersed in water, we are refusing to re-enact Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection. It is a form of denying the Gospel itself. We find ourselves denying in deed what we profess with our mouth. This is called hypocrisy!

**3—By Refusal, we Bring an Indictment
Against God!**

We say that God is unjust in requiring such an act for our salvation. We are trying to tell God that His requirements are not only unfair, but unnecessary! *"I just don't believe a person has to be immersed in water in order to be saved."* That is right.....you are an unbeliever! Such statements as this are an indictment against God, Himself. Why? Because He is the one that has commanded it, not men! Such an attitude and refusal is presuming on the Grace of God. It is telling God that He will have to save us without doing what He commands. We set

ourselves up as God's judge! To do such is completely out of place. If God has required Baptism in order to be saved; then, who am I to speak against or contrary to God's command? Where do I have the right or the authority to contradict God's word?

Rom. 9:20 _____

Rom. 3:4 _____

2 John 9 _____

**4—Our Refusal Brings Upon Us a Just
Condemnation**

God has sufficiently spoken and warned! He has told us the wisdom of obeying His Word. He has told us of the foolishness of disobedience. We are without excuse!

Luke 7:29-30 _____

Jas. 4:17 _____

Matt. 7:21-23 _____

Let's not be deceived; God means what He says; He doesn't lie! Baptism is such a simple, easy act to conform to—anyone can do it. But without faith or belief in God and His promises, such an act would be worthless!

Acts 2:38 _____

Mk. 16:16 _____

Acts 22:16 _____

1 Pet. 3:21 _____

Concluding Thoughts

In being immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins, we show:

1. Our submission to God's Will;
2. Show our faith in Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection;
3. Show our faith in the Promises of God;
4. Show our willing acceptance of God's grace, through Christ.

"We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. It is wrong and not in good taste to approach a subject negatively.
- _____ 2. Jesus shows a contrast between the wise and the foolish in Matt. 7:21-27.
- _____ 3. If one or more of God's commands appear foolish to us, we can reject it without impunity.
- _____ 4. Since we are not perfect, it is okay to reject some of God's commands.
- _____ 5. The Bible condemns the person who does not obey the Gospel of Christ.
- _____ 6. The Gospel is the Message of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ.
- _____ 7. To reject immersion is to reject the Gospel.
- _____ 8. To reject immersion is an indictment against God.
- _____ 9. To reject immersion is to presume on the Grace of God.
- _____ 10. To reject immersion is to set ourselves up as God's judge!
- _____ 11. A person can reject immersion and still be in fellowship with God.
- _____ 12. To know what God commands and refuse to do it will be just condemnation upon our soul.
- _____ 13. A person is saved when he believes and does not need to repent, confess Christ, or be immersed.

Lesson Four

"God's Use of Water!"

Water is a most unusual compound on our earth! It is not only unusual, but it is vitally important! Man would have a very short stay on earth with it! Look at the following four outstanding facts about water:

1. It is common, abundant, plentiful, and freely given to mankind! It is the most plentiful of all chemicals. It covers 75% of the earth and is 6 miles deep in some areas. It is in the form of vapor in the air above us. It is in the form of ice and snow that blankets the Polar Regions and high mountain tops. Man, himself, is 3/4ths to 2/3rds water. 97% is salt water, 2% is frozen, and 1% is fresh water.
2. It is absolutely necessary to live. Without it, the earth would be lifeless like the moon. It's vapors shield the earth from the burning rays of the Sun. It prevents heat loss at night. Man cannot exist long without it. It becomes torture and torment without it.
3. Water is a very effective cleanser for man's body and filth.
4. Water refreshes and renovates the weary and the faint.

We would be FOOLISH to be PREJUDICE against water! Let's see how God has used & required water that has affected man!

Genesis 6:14-18

Man's wickedness became great on the earth and brought on God's punishment. Noah's righteousness made it possible to start all over again. Water enveloped the whole earth and destroyed every living creature that was not in the Ark. God used water to destroy the wicked, but in a special sense He used water to save Noah and his family from that wicked generation and destruction.

1 Pet. 3:18-20 _____

The next destruction of this present heavens and earth will be by fire!

2 Pet. 3:7 _____

Exodus 14:15-18

God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage and when they came to the Red Sea, it appeared that they would be overtaken by Pharaoh's army and be slain. God parted the waters of the Red Sea and the Israelites passed through on dry

ground. Afterwards, the Egyptians were destroyed when God caused the water to come back down on them in the midst of the Sea.

Exodus 14:26-28

In a special sense water saved Israel (Exo. 14:30).

1 Cor. 10:1-4

2 Kings 5:10-14

Naaman was a Captain in the Syrian Army. He was a man of valor and courage, but he had leprosy. He heard of a Prophet in Israel that could cure him, so he journeyed to see this Prophet. The Prophet of God told him to go dip seven times in the Jordan and he would be made clean. His first reaction illustrates man's reactions against the simple! However, upon reconsidering, he obeyed; dipped seven times; and was cleansed! Look and see what was involved: God's power to heal, obedience on the part of Naaman, and dipping in the River Jordan. God used water!

John 9:6-11

Jesus healed a man that was blind from birth so that God could be glorified through this man (Jn. 9:3). Notice that Jesus anointed his eyes with the clay that he made from his saliva and dirt and told the man to go wash in the pool. He obeyed Jesus and his sight was restored. The water had no power of its own to heal the blind man! Then, why did Jesus use water? Why not just heal him with a word? I do not know the answer, but it is interesting that Jesus used water in the process. But it also required the man's obedience in order to be healed.

Mark 1:1-5

God required the use of water in various ways in the Old Testament for the people's ceremonial cleansings. But John's commanding immersion of their bodies in order to be cleansed of their sins was new to the people. Yet, the people were all baptized by John in the Jordan River, confessing their sins (Lk. 7:29-30). Those who were baptized by John "justified God," but those who were not baptized rejected the Will of God. Why did God use Water in this way? I am not sure that I can give you an answer. But the fact is....He did use water in this way! He connected their being immersed in water with the cleansing of their sins (Mk. 1:4).

Mark 16:15-16

When we see how God has used water in the past in a special way that is connected with cleansing, it is no surprise that Jesus' great commission to His Apostles would require them to baptize people also. It was used before to test man's faith; so, why not again, as well? To require water was not new, nor strange, nor unreasonable. And the point is that God did require it.....not man!

Rom. 6:3-4 _____

Rom. 6:17-18 _____

Is there any power in the water? Obviously not! It is the power of God at work, but He chose to require something on man's part connected with water before His power would be put into action. People are saved by God when they meet the water test!

Concluding Thoughts

God has promised to wash away man's sins upon his willingness to confess his faith in Jesus as the Son of God, upon true repentance, and upon being immersed in water. It is just that simple! God is testing us to see if we believe Him!

When we do what God commands of us.....we "justify God!"

When we refuse or reject His commands.....we judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. God has made drinking water so plentiful because man's life depends upon it.
- _____ 2. Water is not only connected with giving life for man, but it is also a cleanser.
- _____ 3. God has used water to destroy the good and the bad.
- _____ 4. God said that He would destroy the present heavens and earth by water and fire.
- _____ 5. Israel's deliverance from Egypt and its army was by water.
- _____ 6. Naaman's first reaction to God's command through the Prophet was typical of man—he obeyed immediately.
- _____ 7. Jesus healed the blind man of his blindness without the use of water.
- _____ 8. John's commanding immersion of their bodies something new for the Jewish people.
- _____ 9. Water is a part of the Great Commission of Jesus.
- _____ 10. Faith and Baptism are inseparably tied together.

Lesson Five

"Faith and Baptism"

Man has a tendency to take commands of God and put them at odds with one another. God combines "faith" and "baptism," but man tends to put them asunder!

Faith without baptism is a dead faith!

Jas. 2:17 _____

Baptism without faith is worthless!

Heb. 11:6 _____

So, what God has joined together, let not man put asunder!

Mark 16:16 _____

What has brought about this tendency on the part of men to say that faith is necessary but not baptism? I am convinced that a lot of the problem is a misunderstanding and a misteaching of how man is justified before God.

Justification by Grace through Faith!

There is no question about it.....man is saved or justified by God's grace.

Eph. 2:8-9 _____

Justification is by Grace and not Works. *"Baptism is a work; therefore baptism is not necessary for our justification."* This may sound good but it is so false that anyone can see it if their eyes are open! Notice the following:

1. Faith is a work (Jn. 6:29).
2. Repentance is a work (Matt. 3:8).
3. Living the Christian life is filled with good works (Tit. 2:11-12).

Therefore, if our works have nothing to do with our being saved; then, none of the three things above are necessary. Now, I would doubt that any sincere person would accept that conclusion; so, there must be another answer to this

problem. It is obvious that no amount of faith, works, repentance, good works, living the Christian life can earn or **merit** our Salvation. But they are all **necessary** to our being saved by the Grace of God! For man to earn or merit justification, he has to live perfect! One sin makes him a sinner and he comes under the curse of law-breaking—death!

Gal. 3:10-11 _____

Since we break God's Law, God's grace is necessary in order for us to be saved or just before God. But God's grace is conditional upon our doing what God requires. We are saved by grace, but only when we do our part. Baptism is one of the requirements that God has commanded in order for His grace to save us. So is faith, repentance, confession, living a godly life, and filling our lives with good works. To refuse to do any of these things is to refuse God's grace!

Justification by Faith

Man accepts God's grace through faith. We become justified through our faith.

Eph. 2:8-9 _____

Jn. 3:16 _____

Rom. 4:5 _____

But this justification is not by a "dead faith" or "faith only." James makes this very clear!

Jas. 2:24 _____

The contrast is between an "obedient faith" as opposed to a "disobedient faith." It is not a question of whether we are saved by faith. The issue is, by what kind of faith are we saved? If we are saved by "faith alone" or a "dead faith;" then, repentance, confession, baptism, living a godly life, or having our lives filled with good works are necessary. If we are saved by an "obedient faith;" then, all of these things become necessary.

The stress on faith in the Scriptures is helping man to see something very needful:

1. He cannot save himself without God's grace.
2. Salvation by meritorious works is a misnomer! There is no such thing.
3. That man must turn to God and to God's way to be saved.

4. This requires the kind of faith that will do God's Will.
5. Our faith is telling us—we cannot merit salvation or justification.
6. That baptism by itself is worthless to save anyone; but, baptism as an act of faith in God's promises will bring salvation. God has laid down the conditions and we meet them believing in His promise of salvation.
7. God does not save all men—only those who believe (Heb. 11:6); BUT, those whose faith is diligently seeking Him and that He rewards those who will do so.

But Why Baptism?

Someone observes: *"I don't see why God has required baptism in order to be saved."* Well, do we understand why God gave Adam and Eve the command not to eat of a certain tree in the garden? And, do we understand why God told them they would die if they ate? Do we understand why God asked Abraham to offer his only son upon an altar? Do we understand why God had to send His Son to die in our place? We may never (in this life) know why God has commanded certain things, but does that say we shouldn't obey Him? What God commands of us in reality becomes a test of our faith in Him! Do we really believe Him? If so, won't we obey Him?

Concluding Thoughts

Man can never be saved on his own "righteousness" or "goodness!" At the best we can do, we are still sinners and lost (under condemnation for being a law-breaker). Thus, man's salvation or justification has to be by God's grace or mercy!

But, God does not save everyone! He saves those who really believe in Him. But a "dead faith" is worthless. Baptism by itself is worthless. But when our faith in God leads us to be obedient to His commands (repentance, confession of faith, and baptism), God's grace takes away our sins and makes us acceptable to God.

It is critical that we make a distinction between "faith" and "opinion." Our faith depends upon evidence of God's existence and that He has spoken to us through His written Word! Opinion is when man walks in his own way and not the way of God. To say, "I believe," obligates me to find where God says so! What if Noah had said to God: *"I believe you can save me, but I don't need to build an ark."* Would God have saved him? What if we say: *"I believe God can save me, but I don't need to be baptized?"* Will God save us? **What kind of faith do we have?** Or, is it just my opinion that I am going by?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Faith without baptism is a dead faith.
- _____ 2. Baptism without faith is worthless.
- _____ 3. Man's justification has to be by God's grace.
- _____ 4. Baptism is considered by some as man's efforts to save himself.
- _____ 5. If salvation is by "faith only;" then, repentance, confession, baptism, living a godly life, and having a life filled with good works are all unnecessary.
- _____ 6. The reason why man cannot save himself is because he is a sinner and cannot remove the penalty of law-breaking.
- _____ 7. The right contrasts would be: "Grace" versus "Works," and "faith only" versus an "obedient faith."
- _____ 8. The real issue of salvation by faith is....what kind of faith saves.
- _____ 9. The Bible's stress on "faith" is God's way of helping man see his need of His mercy.
- _____ 10. Baptism serves as a test of man's faith in his promises.
- _____ 11. Making a distinction between "faith" and "opinion" is vital to a proper understanding of man's responsibility to God.

Lesson Six

"Repentance and Baptism"

In the previous lesson we looked at "faith" and "baptism." We tried to show how they are tied together by God. In this lesson we want to do the same thing—to show that "repentance" and "baptism" are also tied together by God!

Jesus gave the message of repentance to the Jewish people in a few words: **"Repent or perish!"** (Lk. 13:3). John, the immerser, preceded Jesus with a similar message: **"...preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"** (Mk. 1:4). Sinful man needs his heart and life changed towards God or he will be lost eternally! For any man to question the necessity of repentance to be saved shows that he is biased and does not understand what "salvation" is all about. All of us sin and we all need to repent!

Rom. 3:23

Acts 17:30

Man's obvious Stumblingblock!

We can all easily say that we are not perfect—no one is! We can easily say that all men are sinners. But when it comes down to specifics, it is harder to get men to admit their sinfulness. But we can go one step further, it is also hard to get man to sincerely repent—turn from his sinfulness! Look at these Bible examples carefully:

1. **In Noah's day.** (Gen. 6:5). The world had become so wicked that God saw no point in man's further existence. But He mercifully gave it 120 years to come to repentance through the preaching of Noah. Only 8 souls were saved from that wicked world (1 Pet. 3:20).
2. **Israel's deliverance from Egypt.** (Exo. 9:27-28). God's command to Pharaoh was to let His people go. Pharaoh refused and brought about the plagues from God. Pharaoh openly stated that he was wrong and wanted God's forgiveness. But he was not sincere. As soon as the plague ended, he hardened his heart (Exo. 9:30, 35). He really had no intentions of doing right because there was no true fear of the Lord in his heart. Pharaoh said all the right words, but they were not sincere.

In Jesus' day. John, as a forerunner to Christ, preached for the people to repent and get ready for the Messiah. But, he also told them to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance (Matt. 3:8). In other words, if you are sincere, you will show it by a changed life! Jesus came with the same message of repentance, but the majority would not really listen. He warned them:

Luke 11:31 _____

Luke 11:32 _____

He concluded with the sad picture of: "*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!*" (Matt. 23:39). Why? Because they would not sincerely repent and turn back to God!

It is very difficult to get mankind to truly repent.....but repent we must or perish!

1. **There must be true godly sorrow over our sinfulness (2 Cor. 7:10).** It requires that we hate sin and what it does to us and to others, but most of all to God.
2. **There must be a mourning or grieving over our sins (Matt. 5:4).** It is to have a recognition of our true condition before God and that we are in desperate need of His great mercy.
3. **We must have a broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17).** There is no room left for arrogance, haughtiness, or pride in our sinful condition before Him.
4. **There must also be a change in one's life (Matt. 3:7-10).** True repentance will bring about changes in:
 - a) Our attitudes. We will turn from selfishness, self-righteousness, and an arrogant spirit. Instead, our attitude will be one of humility, contriteness, and understanding that we are sinners in need of mercy.
 - b) Our Lives. We will put off the old man of sin (Eph. 4:22) and put on the new man that is after Christ (Eph. 4:23). We will seek God's kingdom and righteousness as the first priority in our lives (Matt. 6:33). There will be a transformation to take place within and without (Rom. 12:1-2). There will be a dying to the way of sin (Rom. 6:1-2, 6, 19-22).

All men must recognize the essentiality of true, sincere repentance! The messengers of God have warned men of such! Jesus sent out His disciples to preach the same message of repentance.

Luke 24:47 _____

Repentance and Baptism

Repentance was connected to baptism in John's preaching (Mk. 1:4). The people were called upon to recognize their sinfulness by openly admitting to such; and then, he would take them and baptize them unto a removal of their sins. Jesus came preaching the same message. But after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, He gave the "great Commission" to his disciples:

Matt. 28:18-19 _____

Mk. 16:15-16 _____

Luke 24:46-47 _____

When Jesus ascended back to the Father, He sent forth the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to guide them into all truth. When Peter had preached to the Jewish people about the man that they had had crucified, he made it clear that God had made Him both Lord and Christ. Being convinced of the fact of Jesus' Messiah, they wanted to know what they needed to do. The answer came simple and clear:

Acts 2:38-41 _____

What God has joined together, let not man put asunder. Not only is faith and repentance tied together, but also faith, repentance, confession, and baptism.

Concluding Thoughts

The outcome of true, sincere, repentance will be:

1. It will lead one to obey the Gospel of Christ;
2. It will cause one to become right with God;
3. It will give assurance that all our sins have been removed;
4. It will give us a contented and peaceful relationship with God and our fellowman;
5. It will encourage us to continue faithful in our service to God;
6. It will make us more effective and fruitful in reaching others with the Gospel of Christ.

Repentance is for all—both sinner and saint!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Possibly, man's greatest stumblingblock is his unwillingness to sincerely repent.
- _____ 2. The results of Noah's preaching shows how hard it is to get man to repent.
- _____ 3. The results of the Prophet Jonah shows that it is possible to get large groups of people to repent.
- _____ 4. Even Jesus' preaching on repentance did not meet with great success.
- _____ 5. Repentance begins in the heart, but doesn't end there.
- _____ 6. Jesus used the example of the "Queen of the South" to encourage the Jews to repent.
- _____ 7. Without godly sorrow for sin, a person has not truly repented.
- _____ 8. A broken and contrite heart is true repentance.
- _____ 9. God commands all men everywhere to repent.
- _____ 10. Baptism and repentance are tied together by God just like faith and baptism.

