

Know Your Bible

Correspondence Course

Lesson 6 (final lesson)

By Gene Tope

As Edited By Ashley Goosen for use with the NASB.

"Baptism Now Saves You..." (1 Peter 3:21)

It seems strange that anyone would ever question the necessity of baptism in becoming a Christian. So much is said concerning this subject in the New Testament. Jesus *said*: "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*" (Matthew 28: 18, 19). Why should anyone deny this universal commandment? Yet, countless thousands of religious people do just that.

It is true that a number of questions regarding baptism may perplex the student. Such questions as "Who should be baptized?" "How is baptism accomplished?" "Why should one be baptized?" will all present themselves to the thoughtful person and, the answers are not difficult to find **if** we go to the right source - the Bible.

Confusion concerning baptism has come about because of the conflicting erroneous answers given by denominationalism over the years. Let us turn our backs on the babble of human tradition and seek guidance only from the Word of God.

1. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Certainly it is important to know who is a proper subject for baptism. The student should understand that the Bible gives several prerequisites to be met **before one** can be scripturally baptized.

In the commission (Matt. 28:20,21) Jesus said: "*Go therefore. and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*" (21) *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" Teaching must precede baptism. Therefore, the untaught, or those incapable of being taught, should not be baptized. The insane, or mentally unbalanced, are not subjects for the Gospel.

Again, man must believe Christ before baptism. Mark's account of the commission *says*: "*He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*" (Mar 16:16). *Without faith it is impossible to please God*" (Hebrews 11:6). Thus, to baptize one without faith, or before faith, is in clear violation of the commandment and renders the act null and void.

Repentance must precede baptism. Peter's words are: "*Repent and be baptized*" (Acts 2:38). The individual who hears the Gospel and believes it wants to turn away from his sins, it is only when such a change of mind takes place that one is truly subject to baptism. He who wants to be baptized and then continue in his sinful practices understands neither the meaning of Christianity nor the purpose of baptism!

What about infant "baptism"? Most arguments in favour of such would be stopped before they started if the the Divine prerequisites were considered. Babies cannot be taught to understand the Gospel. They are too young to believe in Jesus and are incapable of repentance. Hence, little children are not subjects of Bible baptism. They have no need of it. Baptism is for sinners, but babies are in a state of innocence. This Jesus affirms when he says of little children, "*for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these*" (Matthew 19:14).

Surely He would not have said this if children were polluted with sin; inherited or otherwise There is not a single case of infant baptism found in Scripture! This means that infant baptism is without divine approval - a tradition of men that seeks to make of none effect Gods command that one first be taught, believe, and repent of sins before baptism. (See Matthew 15:6, 9.)

QUESTIONS ON SECTION I.

TRUE OR FALSE (circle correct answer)

1. T F Not everyone is a proper subject for baptism.
2. T F The Bible gives no prerequisites before baptism.
3. T F An infant meets none of the Bible prerequisites for baptism.
4. T F A person should be baptized before repentance.
5. T F Babies are in a state of innocence.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. It is _____ to know who is a _____ subject for baptism.
2. "He that _____ and is baptized shall be ...".
3. Babies cannot be _____ to understand the Gospel.
4. Little children are not _____ of Bible.
5. There is _____ a single case of _____ _____ found in scripture.

YES OR NO

1. _____ Teaching must precede baptism.
2. _____ A person can be scripturally baptized before he believes.
3. _____ There are examples of infant baptism in the New Testament.
4. _____ Infant baptism is a human tradition.
5. _____ Jesus taught in Matthew 19:14 that little children are innocent.

II. HOW TO BE BAPTIZED?

Some say that baptism is a sprinkling of water. Others, that it is an immersion. Some feel that it makes no difference. But it is clear that baptism cannot mean both: "sprinkling and immersion".

Which of these meanings is the correct one? The Greek dictionaries teach that baptism means immersion. Thayer says concerning baptism: a work peculiar to N.T. and eccl. writ., **immersion, submersion**" (Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T. Pg. 94). The Greek word for sprinkle is "rantizo" - a different word entirely.

The New Testament clearly teaches that baptism is an immersion. John's baptism required much water (read John 3:23). Jesus went into the water to be baptized (Matthew 3:16). The eunuch's baptism is most helpful. We read that the chariot was stopped and that both he and Philip went down into the water in order to be baptized. (See Acts 8:38).

The Bible calls baptism a burial. Colossians 2:12 *"having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."* Notice the action of baptism as graphically described in Romans 6: 3-6, *"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin".*

Baptism, then, is a true likeness of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Our old man of sin is to be crucified; we are to be buried in a watery grave of baptism: we are to be raised to walk in newness of life. Only immersion will fit this beautiful description of the new birth

Notice what others have said about these passages

JOHN CALVIN - Presbyterian. "The word baptize signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church.'

JOHN WESLEY - Methodist. Buried with him in baptism alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."

BRENNER - Catholic. For thirteen hundred years was baptism an immersion of the person under water."

CONYBEARE & HOWSON - Anglican. "this passage cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion."

QUESTIONS ON SECTION II.

Requirements For Scriptural Baptism

Fill in each block with "Yes" or "No" from what the Scriptures say.

	Immerse	Sprinkle
Water (Acts 8: 36)		
Much Water (John 3:23)		
Come to Some Water (Acts 8:36)		
Down into the water (Acts 8:38)		
Both baptizer and baptized going down into the water (Acts 8:39)		
Up out of water		
Burial (Romans 6:4)		
Resurrection (Colossians 2:12)		
Birth (John 3:5)		
Body washed (Hebrews 10:22)		

TRUE OR FALSE (circle correct answer)

1. T F The Greek dictionaries teach that baptism means "sprinkling".
2. T F The Bible calls Baptism a "burial".
3. T F John's baptism required "much water".
4. T F Baptism should be in the likeness of Christ's death, burial and resurrection.
5. T F Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water.

WHY BE BAPTIZED?

Certainly this is our most important question. If baptism is not essential to salvation, it matters little who is baptized, how it is done, or if one is baptized at all. On the other hand, if baptism is essential to salvation, all need to know about its requirements.

The New Testament teaches that one must be baptized to become a Christian. It ranks with faith and repentance in the commandments of Christ. If one can become a Christian without these, then he may become a Christian without baptism.



Notice why God commands baptism:

(Please study each scripture reference.)

1. To obey Christ our Saviour (Matthew 28: 18, 19; John 14:15).
2. To be born again (John 3:3, 5).
3. To enter the kingdom, the church (John 3:5; Corinthians 12:13).
4. To put on Christ (Galatians 3:27).
5. To have sins washed away (Acts 22:16).
6. For remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
7. To be saved (Mark 16:16).

"Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you (not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," (1 Peter 3:21).

QUESTIONS ON SECTION III.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. T F Baptism is not essential to salvation.
2. T F Baptism is a Bible commandment.
3. T F Faith and repentance are more important than baptism.
4. T F Faith, repentance, and baptism are all commandments of Christ.
5. T F People became Christians in New Testament times without being baptized.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. "Unless one is born of _____ and the _____ he cannot enter into the _____ of God."

2. "For all of you who were _____ into _____ have clothed yourselves with _____".
3. "Now why do you _____? Get up and be _____, and _____ _____, calling on His name."
4. " _____, and each of you be _____ in the name of _____ _____ for the _____ of your sins".
5. "Corresponding to that, baptism now _____".

WHAT OF YOUR BAPTISM?

As can be seen from this study of the Bible, three things are necessary for scriptural baptism. The right subject, the right action, and the right purpose. An infant is not a scriptural subject for baptism. Sprinkling with water is not Bible baptism. Those being baptized thinking they are already saved before baptism, are not scripturally baptized.

What of your baptism? Were you christened as a baby? Were you sprinkled upon, rather than being immersed into water? Were you misinformed as to baptism's purpose, being told that "baptism does not save you"? If so, your baptism is not the one commanded by the Son of God and you have yet to submit yourself to it.

The Bible teaches an individual responsibility in this matter. Jesus said: *"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16); Peter said: *"Repent, and each of you be baptized"*. (Acts 2:38). Jesus said: *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."* So it is up to you whether you obey the command to be baptized or not. You are no longer a babe. As an adult you have the ability to study God's Word and to distinguish between false doctrine and Bible doctrine, between human tradition and divine commandment. It is not overstating the case to say that your eternal salvation depends on your attitude toward this divine command. Re-examine your baptism again. Compare it with all the scriptures given in this lesson. Then, if your baptism is not exactly like the one commanded by Christ in the New Testament, do not hesitate one moment to submit yourself to the Lord's command. We will be happy to assist you in your obedience to the Gospel. We will be delighted to discuss with you in person Bible baptism, the Christian life and the church of Christ. Why not contact us today?

**Baptism Stands Between The Alien Sinner And All Of The Blessings Listed
In The Right Hand Column**

Alien	Water	Salvation, Mk. 16:16
		Remission of Sins, Acts 2:38
Sinner	Baptism	Washing Away of Sins, Acts 22:16
		Death of Christ, Rom. 6:3
		Blood of Christ, Jn 19:34; Rom. 6:3-4
		Being a New Creature, Rom. 6:5; 2 Cor. 5:17
		Putting of Christ, Gal. 3:26, 27
		Cleansing, Eph. 5:26
		Putting off Body of Sins, Col. 2:11-13
		Forgiveness, Col. 2:13
		Kingdom, Jn. 3:5
		Good Conscience, 1 Pet. 3:21
Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38; 5:32		
Body (church) of Christ, 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph 1:22-23		
Being a Child of God, Gal. 3:26-27		
Wearing the Names of Christ, 1 Cor.		

QUESTIONS ON SECTION IV.

YES OR NO

1. _____ God will accept a person who is unscripturally baptized.
2. _____ Were you christened as a baby?
3. _____ Infant christening is scriptural baptism?
4. _____ Have you been taught that you were saved before you were baptized?
5. _____ Is a person saved before baptism?
6. _____ Do you have a personal responsibility in seeing that you are scripturally baptized?
7. _____ Is your baptism scriptural?
8. _____ Would you like us to assist you in being scripturally baptized?

1. If -

When
Baptised

You

Put on Christ (Gal 3:27)

Wash Away Sins (Acts 22:16)

Have Remission of Sins (Acts 2:38)

Are Made Free From Sin (Rom. 6:17-18)

Benefit from Jesus' Death (Rom 6:3-4)

Enter the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13)

2. Then -

What is your condition WITHOUT

Baptism?

Use this space to write down any questions you may have:

Completed Lesson to:

www.churchofchrist.ie