

Know Your Bible

BY GENE TOPE

LESSON

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

“ . . . BAPTISM DOTH ALSO NOW SAVE US” (1 PET. 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 power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 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 babel of human tradition and seek guidance only from the word of God.

I. 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 requirements to be met before one can be scripturally baptized.

In the commission Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them.” 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 in Christ before baptism. Mark’s account of the commission says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (16:16). “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 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 favor of such would be stopped before they started if the above divine requirements 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 of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 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 God's command that one first be taught, believe, and repent of sins before baptism (see Matt. 15:6, 9).



QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE CIRCLE CORRECT ANSWER

- T F 1. Not everyone is a proper subject for baptism.
T F 2. The Bible gives no requirements before baptism.
T F 3. An infant meets none of the Bible requirements for baptism.
T F 4. A person should be baptized before repentance.
T F 5. 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 word peculiar to New Testament and eccl. Writ., immersion, submersion” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* 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 (Matt. 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, also Lesson 3).

The Bible calls baptism a burial. Colossians 2:12 says: “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Notice the action of baptism as graphically described in Romans 6:3-6. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve 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.”

READ EACH SCRIPTURE, THEN CHECK WHICH ACTION—IMMERSION OR SPRINKLING—IS INDICATED.

SCRIPTURE	IMMERSION	SPRINKLING
John 3:23: “much water”		
Acts 8:38: “into the water”		
Acts 8:39: “out of the water”		
Romans 6:4: “buried by baptism”		
Romans 6:5: “likeness of resurrection”		

TRUE OR FALSE

CIRCLE CORRECT ANSWER

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



III. 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:

- To obey Christ our Savior (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 14:15).
- To be born again (John 3:3, 5).
- To enter the kingdom, the church (John 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13).
- To put on Christ (Gal. 3:27).
- To have sins washed away (Acts 22:16).
- For remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- To be saved (Mark 16:16).

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21).



QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE CIRCLE CORRECT ANSWER

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

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. “Except a man be born of _____ and of the _____, he _____ enter into the _____ of God.”
2. “For as many of you as have been _____ into _____ have put on _____.”
3. “And now why _____ thou? Arise, and be _____, and _____, calling on the name of the Lord.”
4. “_____ and be _____ every one of you in the name of _____ for the _____ of sins.”
5. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also _____.”

IV. WHAT OF YOUR BAPTISM?

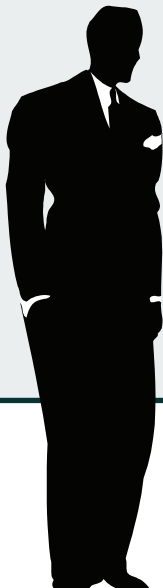
As can be seen from this study of the Bible, three things are necessary to scriptural baptism: the right subject, the right action, and the right purpose. An infant is not a scriptural subject for baptism. Sprinkling with water is not Bible baptism. Those being baptized, thinking they are already saved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

What of your baptism? Were you christened as a baby? Was water sprinkled upon you rather than being immersed into water? Were you misinformed as to baptism’s purpose, being told that “baptism doth not save us”? 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 that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you” (Acts 2:38). “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 11:15). 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 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 Sinner	W A T E R B A P T I S M	Salvation (Mark 16:16). Remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Washing away of sins (Acts 22:16). Death of Christ (Rom. 6:3). Blood of Christ (John 19:34; Rom. 6:3-4). Being a new creature (Rom. 6:5; 2 Cor. 5:17). Putting on Christ (Gal. 3:26, 27). Cleansing (Eph. 5:26). Sanctification (Eph. 5:16). Putting off body of sins (Col. 2:11-13). Forgiveness (Col. 2:13). Kingdom (John 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 name of Christ (1 Cor. 1:12-17).





YES OR NO

- _____ 1. God will accept a person who is unscripturally baptized.
- _____ 2. Were you christened as a baby?
- _____ 3. Is infant christening 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
Baptized,
YOU**

Put on Christ

(Gal. 3:27)

Wash away sins

(Acts 22:16)

Have remission of sins

(Acts 2:38)

Benefit by Jesus' Death

(Rom. 6:3-4)

Enter the Body of Christ

(1 Cor. 12-13)

2. THEN —

What is Your Condition **WITHOUT** Baptism?

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THIS LESSON

- Baptism saves us.
- Baptism is a burial (complete immersion of the penitent believer for the forgiveness of sins).
- My responsibility is to be sure I am scripturally baptized.

If you would like a visit for a further study of the Bible, please check this box.

USE THIS SPACE TO WRITE IN ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

Student's Name _____

Address _____

_____ E-mail _____

Grade _____

Return this lesson to:

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