



# BAPTISM

ROGER E. DICKSON



**BAPTISM**  
**SIGNING A COVENANT**  
**WITH GOD**

**ROGER DICKSON**

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## **A STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER**

Baptism is a controversial subject in the religious world. Most reject what the Bible teaches about it and then they turn around and require that one be baptized simply to become a part of their church. Most believers in Christ have even changed the meaning of baptism from a burial to sprinkling. How sad it is that a simple teaching such as baptism — because of all of the false doctrine that surrounds it — has become the stumbling block that will cause the majority to be lost.

Brother Roger Dickson of Capetown, South Africa has written this treatise on baptism to define it, according to the scripture, to reveal the purpose of it, and to show the beauty of it. One will not be able to read what he has to say, if it is read in honesty, without being able to see the importance of baptism, the role it plays in salvation, and the hope that is derived from being scripturally baptized.

You are invited to compare what is said here with the Scripture itself. We want you to know the truth, to believe it, and to obey it. Only then can any of us be acceptable to the Lord.

J.C. Choate  
Winona, Mississippi  
September, 22, 1997



## INTRODUCTION

In the year A.D. 62, it is believed that the apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians. In this letter he stated that there was at that time only **one baptism** (Ephesians 4:4-6). Taking into consideration the book of Acts and the history of the church after Acts 2, that one baptism was the baptism obeyed by the Ephesians (Acts 19:1-6), the Corinthians (Acts 18:8), the Samaritans (Acts 8:5-13) and a host of others. This one baptism was **water baptism for remission of sins**. This baptism was first mentioned in Acts 2:38 and the one that must be practiced today.

The mode of the one baptism is by immersion. In fact, baptism *is* immersion. This is the true meaning of the Greek word from which we spell the word "baptize". Nevertheless, there has always been great debate in the religious world concerning the mode of baptism.

Many religious groups have made unbiblical changes concerning the manner of baptism. Some have stated that baptism may be performed in any one of three ways: by sprinkling, pouring or immersion. It is claimed that one mode is as valid as another, as long as one has a "conversion experience". There are those who affirm that baptism is accomplished in applying water either by pouring, washing, or sprinkling upon an individual. The manner by which the individual wants to be baptized is his choice.

There are many religious leaders who have

totally rejected the practice of immersion for baptism. Religious people today are sprinkling water on the head of individuals and calling it baptism. This is a common practice. However, men will often practice an unbiblical thing but call the practice by a biblical name in order to justify it.

In this book it will be our goal to investigate the Bible concerning the teaching of baptism. Since the word “baptism” in either a noun or verb form is mentioned over one hundred times in the New Testament, we must assume that this is a very important subject. Therefore, study carefully the following material.

Roger Dickson  
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## Chapter 1

### WORD DEFINITIONS

There are two things to understand concerning the word “baptize”. First of all, the English word is a **transliteration** of the Greek word, *baptizo*. Secondly, this Greek word was used to express immersion, dipping, plunging or overwhelming. All Greek lexicons (dictionaries) and church historians agree on this definition.

#### A. TRANSLITERATION OF BAPTIZO.

A transliteration is the practice of writing in alphabetical characters the sound of the words of one language into the same sound of alphabetical characters of another language. This is what took place when the Greek word *baptizo* was transliterated in 1611 by the translators of the **King James Version** of the Bible.

When the King James translators translated the King James Version of the New Testament in 1611, they chose to **transliterate** the Greek word *baptizo* instead of translating it. They did this because there were many religious groups of that day who were sprinkling people and calling it baptism. Therefore, by transliteration, the Greek word *baptizo* became “baptize” in the English language. This is a transliteration and **not a translation**. We still live with this unfortunate transliteration today. If this one word had been properly translated, think of the great amount of religious confusion that could be avoided.

#### B. LEXICON DEFINITION OF BAPTIZO.

In studying the meaning of the Greek word *baptizo* there is no misunderstanding of the actual mean-

ing of the word as it is defined by Greek lexicons. In the Greek lexicon of Amdt and Gingrich, baptizo is defined as “dip,” or “immerse.” In Thayer’s lexicon the word is defined “to dip repeatedly,” “to immerse,” or “submerge.” The Abbott-Smith lexicon says, “to dip, immerse, sink, or to overwhelm.” In his comprehensive book on New Testament word, W.E. Vine says that baptism is “the process of immersion, submersion and emergence.”

The famous church historian, Philip Schaff, wrote, “Unquestionably, immersion expresses the idea of baptism ...” The world accepted *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states, “It is noteworthy that here (Mark 7:4) *rhantizo* (Greek word for “sprinkle”) is used in contrast with *baptizo* showing that baptize did not mean sprinkle.”

Anyone who defines *baptizo* to mean sprinkle or pouring is arguing against some of the greatest biblical scholarship the world has known. All accepted Greek lexicons and Greek historians affirm that the primary meaning of the word is immersion. This fact cannot be denied. Therefore, no matter what one has been previously taught on the matter, he or she must accept this definition of the word.

### C. TEXTUAL DEFINITION OF BAPTIZO.

There are two key passages in the New Testament that clearly demonstrate that baptism is a burial and not sprinkling or pouring. These two passages of scripture should be carefully studied.

**1. Colossians 2:12:** To the Colossians Paul wrote that they were “**buried** with Him in **baptism** in which you also were raised with Him through faith in

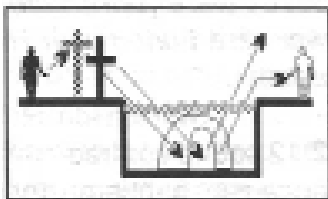
*the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”*

The action of baptism could not be stated more clearly. One is **buried** in baptism, after which he is **raised** from the grave of water just like Jesus was **raised** from the grave by the Father.

**2. Romans 6:3-5:** In Romans 6:3-5 Paul gives a very descriptive account of the relationship between baptism and the Gospel. The Gospel is the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins; His burial and resurrection to give us hope of a future resurrection. Baptism in water is obedience to this Gospel.

In Romans 6:35 Paul explains what happened to Jesus in His redemption for man. He died on the cross. He was buried in a tomb and on the third day He was **resurrected** from the tomb. However, Paul's emphasis in Romans 6:3-5 is on what Christians have done in obedience to this Gospel message.

Paul is saying that as Jesus was buried in the tomb, so we are buried by baptism in a tomb of water. As Christ was resurrected from the tomb, so we are res-



urrected from the waters of baptism. In order to be in the likeness of Jesus' death, we must be buried in water. Jesus was not sprinkled into the tomb. Neither is one sprinkled in water for baptism.

In conjunction with the above two scriptures (Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:3-5), there is an important rule of Bible study to consider. This rule is as follows: **The true meaning or synonym of a**

**word can be put in the place of the word in the text or sentence without changing the meaning of that text or sentence in which the original word is used.** Now this is to say that if baptism means “sprinkling” or “pouring”, then these definitions can be substituted into the text where the word “baptism” is used without any change in the textual meaning. However, if we substitute the meaning “sprinkling” or “pouring” in the text of Romans 6:3-6 and Colossians 2:12 for the word baptism, the meaning of the text changes because the meaning of baptism is not sprinkling or pouring. Notice, though, how this substitution in Romans 6:3-5, *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were (sprinkled) into Christ Jesus were (sprinkled) into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through (sprinkling) into death...”*

The reason Romans 6:3-6 and Colossians 2:12 sound contradictory to the above substitution is because baptism does not mean sprinkling or pouring. The word means “immerse”. This synonym can be substituted in the texts of Romans 6:3-5 and Colossians 2:12 without any change in the meaning of the texts.

#### **D. CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING BAPTISM.**

The events that took place during various cases of baptism in the New Testament show that only immersion could have been the correct manner of the baptism.

**1. Much water is needed for baptism.** In John 3:23 we read that John the Baptist *“was baptizing in Aenon near Salem, because there was much water there ...”* Why would he be baptizing in a location where there was much water if baptism required only

a little water? If baptism was by sprinkling or pouring, then he could have brought the water in a jug to the ones who were to be baptized. But the fact that John had to take the ones who were to be baptized to a place of much water indicates that baptism was by immersion. Much water is needed for immersion.

**2. “Going down into the water” is required for baptism.** In Acts 8:26-40 the Ethiopian eunuch was taught Jesus and baptism by Philip, the evangelist. As they went on their way in a chariot, the eunuch *“commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away ...”* (verses 38,39). We would wonder why both Philip and the eunuch had to go down into the water in order for the eunuch to be baptized. Why get completely wet when one could just stand on the bank of the river, dip out a little water, and then sprinkle it on the subject’s head? The fact that Philip had to dip or immerse the eunuch completely under water made it necessary to take the eunuch down into the water.

This same example for immersion is also seen in the baptism of Jesus. Matthew 36 reads: *“Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water ...”* John and Jesus had gone down into the water in order that Jesus might be immersed by John.

## Chapter 2

### BAPTISM AND CHURCH HISTORY

There has been much discussion concerning what the early church did in the action of baptism. Anyone who has studied church history has discovered an answer that settles this discussion. In fact, it is rare today to find anyone who doubted that the early church practiced immersion. The following material is only a brief example of the evidence for this fact.

**A. ANCIENT RELIGIOUS DOCUMENTS AFFIRM THAT BAPTISM WAS BY IMMERSION.**

Baptism was by immersion in the first century. However, many years after the first century men started the practice of baptism by sprinkling or pouring. The first recorded case of sprinkling for baptism was that of Novatian who was sprinkled in bed no earlier than A.D.251. Eusebius (260-340), an ancient historian, states the following concerning this incident:

*“Novatian, being relieved thereof by the exorcists, fell into a grievous distemper, and it being supposed that he would die immediately, he received baptism, being sprinkled with water, on the bed where he lay, (if that can be termed baptism)”.*

The Didache, an ancient document of the second century, also states a time when sprinkling or pouring was substituted for immersion.

*“Concerning baptism, you baptize thus: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy spirit, in living (running) water. But if you cannot in cold, in warm. But if you do not have either. pour out water three times upon the head into the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.”*

In addition to the above thoughts, James Cardinal



Gibbons, a Catholic authority, stated the following:

*“For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion, but since the twelfth century the practice of baptizing by infusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion” (Faith of Our Fathers).*

In an article entitled “Baptism” in the world renowned *Encyclopedia Britannica* the following statement is made:

*“The usual mode of performing the ceremony was by immersion ... The council of Ravenna in 1311 was the first council of the church to legalize sprinkling by leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister.”*

Religious leaders and ancient church historians all agree that first century baptism was by immersion. However, after the first century, an apostasy led people to believe that sprinkling was the right manner of baptism. Recognition of this historical fact proposes a challenge to those today who have been practicing either sprinkling or pouring and calling it baptism. Either we must restore the New Testament practice of immersion, or continue after the tradition of men who have counterfeited a most sacred commandment of Jesus, “He who believes and is baptized (immersed), will be saved...” (Mark 16:16).

#### **B. RELIGIOUS LEADERS AGREE THAT BAPTISM WAS BY IMMERSION.**

Reference is made to the following religious leaders, not as an authority to establish biblical truth but to show that many religious leaders of the past have contended that the manner of baptism is immersion.

These and many other religious historians unanimously contend that baptism was by immersion in the first century.

**Martin Luther** said, "The name baptism is Greek; in Latin it can be rendered immersion, when we immerse anything in water, that it may be all covered with water. And although that custom has now grown out of use, **yet they ought to be entirely immersed, and immediately drawn out.**"

**John Calvin** stated, "**The very word baptize signified to immerse;** and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church."

**John Wesley** said, "**We are buried with Him, alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.**"

## Chapter 3

### **BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION**

In the world of denominational religion there has probably been more discussion concerning the purpose and importance of baptism than any other New Testament teaching. By a casual reading of the New Testament one can clearly see that the subject of baptism is very important. In this chapter our purpose will be to emphasize the importance of baptism in relation to one's salvation.

Since the New Testament times, however, there have been those who believe that remission of sins, regeneration, and consequently, salvation, precede

one's obedience to the Gospel in baptism. It is believed by some that there is an actual and real remission of sins at the point one believes in Jesus as his personal Savior. It is affirmed that when one truly repents and believes on Jesus that he is born again.

Some have taught that baptism is a "sign of regeneration", or new birth. In other words, salvation is not dependent upon one's obedience to the Gospel. One is saved or born again, and then, he or she is to be baptized.

In the following material we will uphold the major New Testament teaching that baptism **is essential to one's salvation**. In other words, one is not saved unless he or she has obeyed the Gospel by immersion.

A principal passage to remember concerning obedience to the Gospel is 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. Paul wrote, *"... rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction..."*

From the above scripture, one point is clearly understood. Unless one **obeys the Gospel** he cannot escape eternal destruction in hell. Peter says the same thing in 1 Peter 4:17 but in different words. *"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God, and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who **do not obey the Gospel of God?**"* The answer to this question is given in the above passage of 2 Thessalonians. Both Paul and Peter are saying the same thing. One must obey the Gospel.

Therefore, if one must obey the Gospel in order to escape the coming fire of vengeance, two very important questions must be answered by every man:

1. What is the Gospel ?
2. How Does One Obey the Gospel?

A .

#### **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL EVENT?**

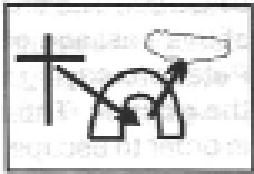
The Greek word which is translated by the English word “Gospel” means “good news”. This would be a literal translation of the word. Therefore, when we ask the question “What is the Gospel?” we are asking, “What is the good news?”

Many people unfortunately believe that the good news is the New Testament, or the Bible, or the teachings of Jesus. The Gospel, however, is an event. The good news is an event that happened in history for the salvation of man. The New Testament is an inspired report of this good news event.

A brief definition of the Gospel event is given in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. In reading this passage be sure to note Paul’s explanation of the Gospel in verses 3 and 4. Many other passages could be used to explain what Paul expresses in only two verses of 1 Corinthians 15. However, these two verses are sufficient to explain the fundamental facts of the good news event.

In this passage, Paul de-fines the Gospel as the

historical fact of the death of Jesus for our sins, His burial and resurrection from the dead in order to give us hope (see verses 20-22). This good news was declared to the Corinthians by Paul.



They received it. And they stood in it. Paul adds that they were saved by the Gospel.

It is interesting to note that this Gospel message is included in the preaching of the New Testament church. This was the good news of salvation which the early Christians declared to all. Paul wrote: *“For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness”* (1 Corinthians 1:22,23). This is what Jesus told the early Christians to preach in Mark 16:15. He said, *“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”*

#### **B. HOW DOES ONE OBEY THE GOSPEL?**

The Gospel is the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins. It is His burial and resurrection to give us hope of eternal life in the future. The Gospel is a historical event. But how can one obey a historical event? How can one obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus which took place almost two thousand years ago? Romans 6:3-6 gives a simple answer to this question.

First consider what John wrote: *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”* (John 1:1). ***“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of***

*grace and truth*" (John 1:14, see Philippians 2:5-8).

Jesus, the incarnate Son of God (the Word), lived among men and then went to the cross in order to die for the sins of man. He was buried in a tomb. On the third day He was resurrected from the dead. In the same manner, the believer dies on the cross when he is "**crucified with Christ**" (see Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:12,20; 3:1,3). "*Our old man was crucified with Christ*" (Romans 6:6). The believer has a cross on which he must die in order to live with Jesus.

Paul wrote in Romans 4 and 5 that the old man of sin is "**buried with him (Christ) through baptism...**" If we are buried with Jesus in the likeness of His death, we are also raised in the likeness of His resurrection when we come out of the water. **Therefore, by immersion in water, one obeys the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.** This is how one obeys the Gospel.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 is saying that those who do not obey the Gospel in baptism cannot be saved. 1 Corinthians 15:1,2 states that the Corinthians were saved by the Gospel. Baptism is necessary in order to obey the Gospel which saves. It is the Gospel that saves. Baptism is only one's faithful obedience to the Gospel. The question should be, "Must one obey the Gospel in order to be saved?" The answer to this question is **yes**. Therefore, one must be immersed in water in order to obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

## Chapter 4

### THE BLOOD OF JESUS

God has always ordained under His law that *“without shedding of blood there is no remission”* (Hebrews 9:22). God required a blood sacrifice of Abel and of all who lived before the giving of the Old Testament law on Mt. Sinai (Genesis 4:4,5). The Old Testament law itself was dedicated with the *“blood of calves and goats”* (Hebrews 9:19). It was a covenant which demanded a continual offering of blood sacrifices because *“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins”* (Hebrews 10:4). The priests, therefore, had to offer animal sacrifices which could never take away sins on a continual basis (see Hebrews 10:1-4). But these sacrifices were *“a shadow of the good things to come...”* (Hebrews 10:1). They had to be offered in obedience to God’s commandments and in preparation for the outpouring of the blood of Jesus which was to come (see Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:15).

The “good thing” during the Old Testament period that was promised to come was Jesus who *“offered one sacrifice for sins forever”* (Hebrews 10:12). Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb of God which *“takes away the sins of the world”* (John 1:29). He did this act of sanctification by bearing *“our sins in His body on the tree...”* (1 Peter 2:24.) Thus, Jesus’ blood was the **“blood of the new covenant”** (Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20). He made a new covenant with the church. Therefore, He sanctified the church and purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

The important question to ask here is: **How does one come into contact with the sanctifying blood of Christ?** It is obvious that Jesus’ cleansing blood does not unconditionally cleanse everyone

in the world of sin. If everyone was unconditionally cleansed of sin, then the entire world would not be lost. Everyone would be saved. Therefore, there must be something which people must do in order to contact the saving blood of Jesus. There also must be a specific point in time at which Jesus' cleansing blood is made applicable in the regeneration of the individual's soul. **We affirm here that at the point of baptism is when regeneration takes place.**

God knew that people needed a specific time at which they could confidently affirm that they had been saved. This point in time could not be an emotional experience. Such "experiences" would occur throughout the life of the Christian. Each would be based on greater knowledge and spirituality than the previous experience. Therefore, with the occurrence of each "experience", the individual would question the "experience" of his or her supposed conversion. For this reason, God knew that an individual needed an exact point in time for his or her salvation to which one could always refer. Concerning one's salvation, that specific time is baptism. Therefore, at what point in time does God say we contact the saving blood of Jesus? The following points will lead us to the time one is immersed. It will be seen that baptism is the time at which one can affirm that he or she is saved.

#### **A. ONE CONTACTS THE BLOOD OF JESUS AT BAPTISM.**

There are two points that must be considered here which introduce us to the conclusion that baptism into Christ brings us into contact with the blood of Jesus.

##### **1. Redemption by Jesus' blood is "in Christ".**



John wrote in Revelation 5:9 that Jesus redeemed us by His blood. But notice in Ephesians 1:7 that it is in Christ that “we have our redemption through His blood”. It is in Christ that “*we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins*” (Colossians 1:14). Keep in mind that redemption is by the blood of Christ. One must be in Christ, therefore, in order to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

2. Sanctification is by Jesus’ blood “***in Christ***”. Hebrews 13:12 reads, “*Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.*” John wrote, “*...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7). Christians have “*washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*” (Revelation 7:14). Notice that sanctification is accomplished by the blood of Jesus. It is also necessary to recognize that sanctified is in Christ. Paul wrote to the “*church of God which is at Corinth, to those that are sanctified in Christ Jesus*” (1 Corinthians 1:2). These same Christians had been washed and sanctified “*in the name of the Lord Jesus*” (1 Corinthians 6:11). **One must be in Christ in order to be sanctified by the blood of Jesus.**

From the above two points it is observed that redemption is accomplished by the blood of Jesus, and that **redemption is in Christ**. Sanctification is accomplished by the blood of Christ and **sanctification is in Christ**. Therefore, how does one come “*into Christ*”? Romans 6:3 states, “*Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into His death?*” (See Galatians 3:27). **One must therefore be baptized into Christ**

**in order to come into contact with the redemption and sanctification which is provided by the blood of Jesus.** We can conclude that sinners come into contact with the blood of Christ when they are baptized.

**B. WASHING BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS TAKES PLACE AT BAPTISM.**

Christians have *“washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* (Revelation 7:14). To the Corinthians Paul wrote, *“...you were washed...you were sanctified...”* (1 Corinthians 6:11). This was the *“washing of regeneration”* he discussed in Titus 3:5. Thus, Jesus has *“washed us from our sins in His own blood”* (Revelation 1:5). **Acts 22:16 connects baptism with this washing.** Ananias said to Paul, *“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* It would be right to conclude that one’s washing by the blood of Jesus is accomplished at the point of baptism. Past sins are washed away by baptism because it is at that point that the blood of Jesus comes into contact with our souls. John indicates that this washing (cleansing) by the blood continues throughout the faithful life of the Christian (1 John 1:7).

**C. BAPTISM PRODUCES A GOOD CONSCIENCE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS.**

The Hebrew writer contended that *“the blood of Christ”* would *“purge your conscience from dead works...”* (Hebrews 9:14). Those works of obedience commanded in Christ’s law are made profitable by the blood of Jesus. In obedience to Jesus we purify our souls and cleanse our conscience (1 Peter 1:22).

Jesus commanded, *“He that believes and is baptized will be saved...”* (Mark 16:16). Baptism is an action of submission which Jesus asks all believers to do. In conjunction with this command, Peter states the following: *“There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but **the answer of a good conscience toward God**) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”* (1 Peter 3:21).

Therefore, in submitting to Jesus' command to be baptized, one clears his conscience toward God. One cannot have a good conscience toward the commandments of God unless he has submitted to the will of God. At the point of baptism, one can intellectually and biblically recognize that he or she has completed everything necessary at this point in his or her life to have sins washed away.

#### **D. WE CONTACT THE BLOOD OF JESUS BY BEING BAPTIZED INTO THE BLOOD-BOUGHT BODY OF CHRIST.**

In Acts 20:28 Paul said that elders should feed *“the church of God which he purchased with His own blood.”* Jesus is the Savior of the body, having given *“Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it...”* (Ephesians 5:23,25,26). He accomplished such by pouring out His blood upon the cross. But notice carefully what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13: *“For by one Spirit we were all **baptized into one body...**”* The church is the blood-bought body of Christ, (Romans 6:3). **In order to come into that body one must be baptized.** One must be baptized into the body of Christ (Galatians 3:27). Therefore, in order to come into contact with the blood-bought body of Christ

one must be baptized.

Because of their obedience, Christians have come into a covenant relationship with Christ. The first covenant, the Old Testament covenant, was dedicated with blood (see Hebrews 9:18). This assumes that the second covenant, the covenant of Jesus, has also been dedicated by blood. But this dedication was by a better sacrifice. It was the sacrifice of Jesus, the Son of God (Hebrews 9:1-27). And only the sacrifice of Deity could take away sins. Therefore, Jesus used the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper to represent the **blood of His covenant** (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20). When one is in a covenant relationship with Christ he or she is sanctified by His blood. This is the teaching of Hebrews 10:28,29. One must purify himself in order to come into this covenant relationship. We must have our sins washed away by coming into contact with the blood of Christ in baptism (Acts 22:16).

## Chapter 5

### **BAPTISM FOR REMISSION OF SINS**

One of the most important scriptures concerning this point is Acts 2:38. This passage was stated by the apostle Peter at the conclusion of the first Gospel sermon that was preached on the first day of the existence of the church. Peter stated the following: *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for **the remission of sins**, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

One cannot be saved with the sins of his past life standing between him and God. Sin separates one from God (Isaiah 59:1,2). Therefore, one must take care of his or her sin problem before he or she can be reconciled to God. Sin must be forgiven in order that the individual be reconciled to God. In Acts 2:38 Peter is stating that one's sins are remitted by God at the point of baptism. This is that specific time where God says the old man of sin is dead and the new man comes alive. The conclusion is that baptism is necessary for the remission of sins.

However, every effort has been made to deny the above fact. For this reason, it is necessary here that we study some of the principal arguments used against the teaching that the point of obedience to the Gospel by baptism God forgives all our past sins.

**A. THE GREEK WORD "EIS" MEANS "FOR", "UNTO", "TOWARD", OR 'INTO'.**

Some have argued that the Greek word "*eis*", which is translated "for" (or, "unto", depending upon your translation) in Acts 2:38 in the **King James Version**, actually means "because of". Hence, Peter would have been saying, "*Repent and be baptized because of the remission of sins.*" But this assumption is not correct. All accepted Greek lexicons define the Greek word "*eis*" as used in Acts 2:38 to mean "for, unto, towards, into, among, in order to". **Thayer's** Greek lexicon states that "*eis*" means "into", "to", "towards", "for", or "among". The **Abbott-Smith** lexicon says it means "into", "unto", "to", "upon", "towards", "for", "among". The **Amdt and Gingrich** Greek lexicon states that *eis* means "in order to", "to". In reference to Acts 2:38, Amdt and Gingrich state that "*eis*", in conjunc-

tion with the forgiveness of sins in Acts 2:38, should be translated “for forgiveness of sin” or “so that sins might be forgiven”. **There are no Greek lexicons or translations that use the meaning “because of” in Acts 2:38 as a translation of the Greek word “eis”.**

**B. ALL ACCEPTED TRANSLATIONS CORRECTLY TRANSLATE ACTS 2:38.**

It would be good here to note some major versions of the English New Testament and how they have translated Acts 2:38. All accepted translations of this passage render the Greek word *eis* according to the above accurate lexical definitions of sub-point A. Note the following examples:

**1. King James Version:** *“Repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins.”*

**2. English Revised Version:** *“Repent ye, and be baptized...unto the remission of sins.”*

**3. American Standard Version:** *“Repent ye, and be baptized...unto the remission of sins.”*

**4. New English Bible:** *“Repent,” said Peter, “repent and be baptized...for the forgiveness of your sins.”*

**5. New International Version:** *“Repent and be baptized...so that your sins may be forgiven.”*

One could also refer to other English versions as the **Twentieth Century New Testament, Knox’s Translation, The Riverside New Testament, The American Bible Union Translation, Moffatt’s Translation, Philip’s New Testament, The Amplified New Testament** and a host of others. Such is a great amount of modern-day scholarship behind the translation of “*eis*”.

The best Greek scholarship in the world stands behind these translations and their correct translations of Acts 2:38. The scholarship states that in Acts 2:38 “eis” means either “to”, “for”, “unto”, or “toward”. Therefore, according to Acts 2:38 one must be immersed in order to have the remission of sins. And without the remission of sins there is no salvation.

**C. MATTHEW 12:41 AND 26:28 DO NOT CONTRADICT A CONSISTENT TRANSLATION OF “EIS”.**

In conjunction with this study of Acts 2:38, there are two important passages which must be considered. They are Matthew 12:41 and Matthew 26:28.

**1. Matthew 12:41:** Matthew 12:41 is often used to prove that “eis” should, or could, be translated “because of” in Acts 2:38. Jesus said, *“The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah...”*

The word translated “at” here is the Greek word eis. A misunderstanding of this passage has led some to believe that Jesus is emphasizing that the people of Nineveh repented **because** of the preaching of Jonah. The Ninevites did truly repent because of Jonah’s preaching. **However, the emphasis of the passage is that the Ninevites turned unto the Way of Life about which Jonah was preaching.**

**2. Matthew 26:28:** Compare the preceding scripture which Jesus said in Matthew 26:28. Jesus said, *“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many **for** (eis) the remission of sins.”* Here is the exact phrase (*“for the remission of sins”*) that is used in Acts 2:38. The Greek word here translated “for” is the same Greek word used in Acts 2:38 and

Matthew 12:41. It is the word “*eis*”. Was Jesus’ blood poured out **because** of “*the remission of sins*”? Or, was it poured out in order that men might have the remission of sins?

If one contends that “*eis*” means “because of”, then we can claim that men had the remission of sins **before the death of Jesus on the cross**. If this is true, then we would naturally ask, why did Jesus even have to die on the cross in the first place?

The correct meaning of Matthew 26:28 is that Jesus died on the cross in order that men might have the remission of sins. Therefore, men are baptized according to Acts 2:38 in order to have remission of sins, for without remission of sins one cannot be saved.

## Chapter 6

### **BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

In the New Testament the phrase “in Christ” refers to a **relationship** one has with Christ. It is a Master-servant relationship, a Head-body union. Jesus is the Master. Christians are the slaves (see Romans 6:17-23). He is the head. We are the body (1 Corinthians 12:27). Jesus commands, we obey. He controls, we follow. In this relationship, Christians have the benefit of many spiritual blessings which come from Deity concerning their salvation. In order for one to receive these spiritual blessings, however, he must come into an “in Christ” relationship with Deity. Therefore, how does the New Testament say one comes into this relationship?



## **A. ACCESS TO ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS “IN CHRIST”.**

Paul wrote, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with **every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places **in Christ**”* (Ephesians 1:3). This passage teaches that all spiritual blessings which God has for every man concerning salvation are *“in Christ”*. “Outside” Christ one does not have these blessings.

All the above blessings are *“in Christ”*, not **outside** Christ. Therefore, in order for one to have access to these blessings **he must be in Christ**. We must clearly understand that one cannot be saved without these blessings of God. In fact, the summation of all

### **SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST**

1. Remission of sins (Ephesians 1:7)
2. Redemption (Colossians 1:14; Romans 3:24)
3. A new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17)
4. All sons of God (Galatians 3:26,27).
5. Eternal life (1 John 5:11)
6. The seal of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13)
7. A state of no condemnation (Romans 8:1)
8. Sanctification from sin (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:9-11)
9. Salvation (2 Timothy 2:10)

these blessings is salvation. This is why Paul wrote, *“Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory”* (2 Timothy 2:10). Now consider the following point:

## **B. ONE IS BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST.**

The question now is, How does one get “in Christ”? How does one come into this spiritual relationship where he or she has all spiritual blessings? The answer to these questions is simple. Romans 6:3 reads, “*Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into His death?*” Galatians 3:27 says the same thing. “*For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.*” Therefore, if one desires to be in Christ where lie all spiritual blessings concerning his or her salvation, he or she must obey the Gospel immersion in water.

According to 2 Timothy 2:10, salvation is in Christ. Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:3 teach that one is baptized into Christ in order to be saved. This same logical thought is true of all the spiritual blessings of the above point A that are mentioned to be in Christ. The final conclusion would be that baptism is absolutely necessary for one’s salvation.

## Chapter 7

### **BAPTIZED INTO A RELATIONSHIP**

To be “of Christ” means to belong to Him, to be of His heritage. All who are not “of Christ” cannot be in a saved relationship with Deity. In order to belong to Jesus one must obey the Gospel. The following points explain this very important Biblical truth.

**1. We are baptized to be “of Christ”.** In First Corinthians 1:12-15 Paul states that before an individual can be “of Paul”, “of Apollo”, “of Cephas”, or “of Christ”, the following two things must be true:

a. *The one to whom allegiance is given must have been **crucified** for the individual who is giving the allegiance (verse 13).*

b. *The individual who is giving allegiance must be **baptized into the name** of the one who was crucified (verse 13).*

In reference to the first point, the New Testament teaches that **Jesus is the One who has been crucified for us**. He was crucified for all who would give allegiance to Him. Neither Paul, Apollo or Cephas have been crucified for believers. Therefore, this first act which is necessary for one to be of Christ has already been accomplished. Jesus has been crucified.

2. The second point must be accomplished by those who believe on Jesus. Believers are not baptized into the name of either Paul, Apollo or Cephas. **They are baptized in the name of Jesus**. Therefore, in order for one to be “*of Christ*” he must be baptized in the name of Christ. One cannot be of the heritage of Christ without being baptized. This conclusion brings us again to an irrefutable point. That point is that baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation. Without immersion in the name of Christ one cannot be “of Christ”, and thus, saved.

#### **B. WE ARE BAPTIZED INTO THE BODY.**

In order to become a part of the body of Christ, one must be immersed into the body. Jesus will save for heaven only His body when He comes again. Therefore, it is important that one be a part of His body at the time of His final coming.

1. **Jesus is the Savior of the body.** The New

Testament teaches that Jesus is the Savior of the body, the church. He *“is the head of the church; and He is the savior of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23). He gave Himself up for it *“that He might sanctify it...that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing”* (Ephesians 5:26,27). Jesus purchased the church *“with His own blood”* (Acts 20:28). He will eternally save only this blood-bought body when He comes again.

**2. We are baptized into the body.** The New Testament teaches that the body is the church. Paul wrote, *“He (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church...”* (Colossians 1:18). Paul even emphasized that Jesus is the *“head over all things to the church”* (Ephesians 1:22). One comes into the body by baptism. Paul wrote this in 1 Corinthians 1:13. *“For by one Spirit we were all **baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit”* (See Acts 2:41,47).

It can be concluded from the above thoughts that only those who have been baptized into the body of Christ will be saved when Jesus comes again. This corresponds to what Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:10 and Galatians 3:27. It was in these two passages that Paul said that salvation is “in Christ”, in the body. And one is baptized into Christ, into the body. It is necessary, therefore, that one be immersed.

## Chapter 8

### **BAPTIZED IN ORDER TO BE SAVED**

In the New Testament, baptism stands between the state of being separated from God and the state of being

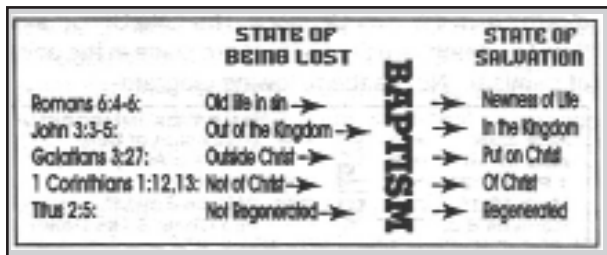
reconciled to God, between being lost and saved. Those spiritual things which come into the individual's life as a result of baptism are necessary for one's salvation.

**A. BAPTISM STANDS BETWEEN BEING SAVED AND BEING LOST.**

Paul wrote that *"our old man is crucified"* with Jesus and that *"we are buried with Him through baptism into death"* (Romans 6:4-6). After baptism one is *"in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4). Jesus said that *"unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3-5). Before one comes into Christ, he or she is outside Christ. However, Paul wrote, *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"* (Galatians 3:27). Before baptism, one is without Christ, but after baptism one is *"of Christ"* (1 Corinthians 1:12,13). Before baptism, one is in a state of unregeneration. After baptism, however, he is in a state of regeneration (Titus 3:5). **Baptism, therefore, stands between being saved and being lost.** The chart below illustrated the above scriptures.

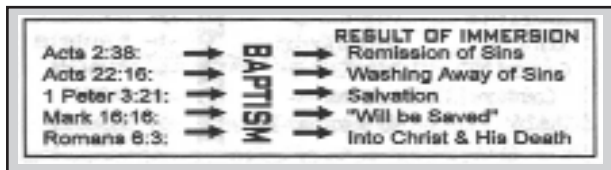
**B. BAPTISM SAVES ONE'S SOUL.**

Those things which come as a result of baptism are those things which pertain to one's salvation. Peter said that one must *"be baptized for the remis-*



*sion of sins*” (Acts 2:38). Remission of sins is here stated as coming after baptism. Ananias commanded Paul to *“be baptized, and wash away your sins...”* (Acts 22:16). The washing of sins comes at the point of baptism. This is true, not because there is any power in the water, but because this is the point at which one contacts the saving blood of Jesus. Jesus stated that one is saved at baptism. In Mark 16:16 He said, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”* The **New American Standard Version** translates Mark 16:16 as follows: *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved.”* Salvation, therefore, comes at baptism, not before. Paul reminded the Christians in Rome that *“so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death”* (Romans 6:3; see Galatians 3:27). The *“into Christ”* and *“into His death”* are things that take place at the point of baptism. Notice the following diagram:

All of the above are not things that occur before obedience to the Gospel. It was because these things took place **at the point of baptism** that the eunuch rejoiced after he was baptized in Acts 8. The scrip-



tures say that Philip *“baptized him...and the eunuch... went on his way rejoicing”* (Acts 8:38,39). The eunuch could rejoice because of what happened as a result of his obedience to the Gospel. There was no reason to

rejoice before, because remission of sins and salvation were blessings in his life only after obedience in baptism. The same is true of us today. Only after we are baptized is there reason for rejoicing.

## Chapter 9

### **BIBLE TEACHINGS ON BAPTISM**

Points A through D below are logical thoughts which show that baptism is a necessary part of one's salvation. Under each major point there are three statements. Statements 1 and 2 are teachings from key scriptures. The third point is true because of the truth of points 1 and 2. Study each point carefully and read all the scriptures that are listed. From this study we conclude that immersion is essential for salvation.

#### **A. BAPTISM IS NECESSARY FOR ETERNAL LIFE.**

1. John states that God has given to us eternal life *"and this life is in His Son"* (1 John 5:11).

2. The New Testament says that we are baptized into Jesus Christ (Romans 6:33; Galatians 3:27).

3. Therefore, we can logically conclude that one must be baptized into Jesus, *"into His Son"*, in order to have eternal life.

#### **B. OBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION.**

1. Hebrews 5:9 says that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation *"to all who obey Him"*.

2. Baptism is a command of Jesus (see Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:16; John 3:3-5).

3. Therefore, we can conclude that one must

obey Jesus' command to be baptized in order to have "eternal salvation".

**C. WASHING IN BAPTISM IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION.**

1. Titus 3:5 says that Christians are saved by the mercy of God *"through the washing of regeneration."*

2. In Acts 22:16 Ananias referred Paul to the washing action in the New Testament. *"And now why are you waiting?"* Ananias stated, *"Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins..."*

3. Therefore, we can conclude that one is saved by the washing away of sins in baptism. Because of this action at the point of baptism, Peter could say of baptism in 1 Peter 3:21 that it does *"now save us..."*

**D. BAPTISM IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BECOME A NEW CREATURE.**

1. One can be a new creation, or creature, only in Christ. Paul wrote this in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..."*

2. The New Testament says that we are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3).

3. Therefore **we must be baptized into Christ in order to become a new creation or new creature.** We must be baptized in order to *"walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4).

The above points are true. One must be immersed into Christ in order to have the blessing of eternal life. One must obey the commands of Christ in order to be saved, and baptism is one of those commands. In baptism, God washes away sin. And thus, one becomes a new creature only after baptism. Baptism



is therefore essential for salvation because of the plain teachings on the subject.

## Chapter 10

### BAPTISM INTO A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

Baptism in the name of Jesus for remission of sins is part of the new covenant and was made necessary for salvation after the establishment of the church in Acts 2. All who would come into a covenant relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit after Acts 2 must be immersed in water for the remission of sins in the name of Jesus. But under the old covenant it was different. The following points discuss this contrast.

#### A. REMISSION OF SINS BEFORE THE ASCENSION.

Before the cross, remission of sins did occur in the life of the obedient. However, such remission took place in view of the coming sacrifice of Jesus. Therefore, under the Old Testament law the conditions for remission of sins were different.

**1. Remission under the old law:** Under the Old Testament law it was *“not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins”* (Hebrews 10:4). Animal sacrifices could not make perfect the Jews who lived under the law (Hebrews 10:1). Therefore, such sacrifices were a shadow of the sacrifice of Jesus which was to come. Of the sacrifice of Jesus, Paul wrote the following: *“Whom (Jesus) God set forth to be a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously*

**committed**” (Romans 3:25; see Hebrews 9:15),

When Jesus died on the cross, therefore, He completed the Father’s plan of forgiveness for those under the old covenant. Romans 3:25 is not teaching that the sins committed before the cross were “rolled forward” in order to be forgiven at the cross. **Before the cross sins were forgiven in view of the cross.**

God looks at all history and all sin through the cross. He sees all the sins of mankind in all history through the cross. Without the cross there would have been no forgiveness of sins before the cross or after the cross. At the time Jesus was crucified, God saw all the sins of humanity **after** the cross. He said, *“The just shall live by faith”* (Romans 1:17). The penitent believer **after the cross will be saved.**

God also saw all the sins of humanity before the cross. Of them He said, *“The just shall live by faith”* (Hebrews 2:4). The cross was His manifestation of grace for sins in the past (Titus 2:11). This is why the Hebrew writer made the following statement in Hebrews 9:15: *“And for this reason He (Jesus) is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of **death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”*

The cross was also God’s manifestation of grace to those who would sin after the cross (Ephesians 2:6-8). All forgiveness of sins therefore centers around and proceeds from Calvary. Forgiveness occurs instantaneously in the life of the believer upon compliance to the conditions for forgiveness God demands at any time in history.

**2. Remission directly from Jesus:** The conditions for the remission of sins were different before the ascension of Jesus and establishment of the new covenant, than **after** the establishment of the new covenant. **Before** the new covenant and while **on this earth**, Jesus could say during His personal ministry, *“your sins are forgiven”* (Luke 7:48,49). Jesus could forgive sin personally while on earth. He said such in Matthew 9:6: *“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins...”* His purpose for doing such was to prove that He was the Son of God, for only a God can forgive sins.

Jesus, therefore, could forgive sins personally while on this earth. And **before** His death, He could say to the thief on the cross, *“Today you will be with Me in Paradise”* (Luke 23:43). While on this earth Jesus could forgive sins personally, and thus, He could directly save the thief on the cross. His power to forgive sins was evidence that He was God on earth, for only God can forgive sins.

One must also keep in mind that the Old Testament law was still in force during Jesus’ life. The New Testament law was brought into force only after the official announcement of the lordship of Jesus in Acts 2 (see Hebrews 9:16,17; Acts 2:36). Under the Old



Testament law the conditions for forgiveness of sins was different from the conditions for forgiveness under the New Testament law of Christ. Jesus, as Deity and originator of the Old Testament law, had authority to forgive sins while that law was in force. But this has changed under the new covenant.

**3. Remission by John's baptism:** During the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus, God ordained by commandment that John baptize people for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, John baptized in the wilderness and preached the *"baptism of repentance for the remission of sins"* (Mark 1:4), This was a baptism for the remission of sins. This same Greek phrase that is used here in Mark 1:4 is also used in Acts 2:38 when Peter told people to be baptized *"for the remission of sins."*

The difference is that the baptism of Acts 2:38 was to be **in the name of Jesus**, that is, in subjection to His lordship for He had already died and ascended by the time of the pronouncement of Acts 2:38. John's baptism was for forgiveness of sins. However, his baptism was replaced by the baptism of Acts 2:38 after the establishment of the new covenant in Acts 2. If any were baptized by John's baptism after Acts 2, they needed to be baptized correctly, for the right purpose. Such a case is recorded in Acts 19:1-7.

#### **B. REMISSION OF SINS AFTER THE CROSS**

**After** His death, Jesus' new covenant was brought into force, *"for a testament is in force after men are dead"* (Hebrews 9:16,17). After His death, therefore, when the new covenant was in force, Jesus' disciples preached baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:12,13,35-39; 10:48; 22:16). Therefore, the conditions

for salvation were different **before** the death of Christ and the establishment of the church. Those conditions differed from what is necessary for salvation under the New Testament law of Christ today.

Jesus could personally forgive sins while on earth, while living under the Old Testament law. Those before the cross also lived under the Old Testament law. But that law was taken away at the cross when the new covenant came into force in Acts 2 (see Colossians 2:14). Christians are not under the Old Testament law today (Romans 7:4). We are under a covenant today that says everyone must be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19,20) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). In order to come into Christ (Romans 6:3) or be of Christ (1 Colossians 1:12-15) today, one must obey the Gospel by immersion. Baptism for remission of sins is a part of the new covenant of Jesus, and if anyone would be submissive to that covenant he must be baptized.

## **Chapter 11**

### **EXAMPLES OF IMMERSION**

If we contend that one can be saved without being baptized, then we are saying that there are some basic New Testament teachings which are not important. But if one says that these basic New Testament teachings are not important, then he is advocating some serious false teachings. Those in the New Testament who were baptized considered baptism in obedience to the Gospel very important.

#### **A. LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS**

If one can be saved without obedience to the Gospel by immersion, then there are some conclusions that must be faced. Notice the following:

**1. If one is saved without immersion,** then he can be saved **without obeying Jesus**, for Jesus commanded that one be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; John 3:5).

**2. If one is saved without immersion,** then one can be saved without obeying the inspired apostles, for they commanded that one be baptized in order to be saved (Acts 2:38; 10:47,48).

**3. If one is saved without immersion,** then one can be saved without obeying the great commission, for it includes immersion (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15,16).

Because of the emphasis which is placed upon baptism in the Gospel message, thousands of people in the first century were immersed into Christ. They were immersed because they knew it was in obedience to the Gospel. All men today must follow their example. If we desire to be as that first century church, we must obey the Gospel as the first century church did. This obedience would include our response to the Gospel. They obeyed the Gospel by immersion into Christ. The following are the examples of those who responded to the Gospel which are mentioned in the book of Acts:

#### **B. EXAMPLES OF RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL**

## **Chapter 12**

## **CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM**

1. The Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2:31-47)
2. The Samaritans (Acts 8:5-13)
3. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)
4. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:10-19)
5. Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:24-48)
6. Lydia and her household (Acts 16:13-15)
7. The Philippian jailer (Acts 16:25-34)
8. The Corinthians (Acts 18:8)
9. The Ephesians (Acts 19:1-5)

In order for one to be immersed into Christ in obedience to the Gospel, he must be a proper candidate. By proper candidate we mean that one must respond to the Gospel by faith and repentance. Those in the New Testament who were baptized heard the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. They believed on Jesus, and in submission to His lordship, they repented of sins. These were the basic prerequisites for immersion into Christ.

In the religious world today there is widespread controversy and confusion concerning the proper candidates for immersion. Infants are often sprinkled or poured with water, and it is called baptism. Some teach that babies have “original sins”, and therefore, need to be baptized for remission of that sin. It is believed by some that baptism is a parallel to the rite of circumcision in the Old Testament. Infants, therefore, should be baptized soon after birth as babies were circumcised soon after birth in the Old Testament.

The actual immersion of an individual in water does not remit sins. There is no power in the water. Immersion is a God-ordained action which is required for one to obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. That which “causes” the remission of sins by God is the blood of Jesus. However, it is at the point of immersion that God says He will forgive. These things take place in the heavenly realm. On earth, the spiritual aspect of the new birth takes place in the heart of the individual who is to be immersed. The heart of man, therefore, must be spiritually acceptable in order for God to forgive.

An unbelieving or unrepentant individual will not be forgiven even though he or she is immersed. In other words, there is no “spiritual power” in the action of immersion to remit sins. One must come to the God-commanded action of immersion with a believing and penitent heart. Upon these prerequisites God says He will “wash away” our sins by our obedience in immersion.

The New Testament teaches that there are certain things one must do before he can be baptized in obedience to the Gospel. The thing to remember here is that **infants can do none of these prerequisites for immersion into Christ**. Notice carefully the following points:

#### **A. TEACHING BEFORE BAPTISM**

Infants cannot be **taught**, but one must be taught the Gospel before he can be baptized (see Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; John 6:45; Acts 8:35-38).

#### **B. BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM**

Infants cannot **believe**, but one must believe on Christ before he can be baptized (see Mark 16:16;



Acts 8:12,13,27-39; 16:30-33).

### C. REPENTANCE BEFORE BAPTISM

Infants cannot **repent of sins**, but one must repent before he can be baptized (see Acts 2:38; 3:19).

### D. OBEDIENCE TO CONSCIENCE

In 1 Peter 3:21 Peter wrote, *“There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but **the answer of a good conscience toward God**)...”* In this passage Peter is stating that one is baptized in answer to a good conscience. This is not the conscience of the one doing the baptizing, but of the one who is being baptized. Therefore, before one is baptized, his conscience must be stirred by the word of God. He is immersed in order to satisfy his conscience concerning what he knows the Bible tells him to do. This is obviously not something infants can do. Therefore, they cannot be immersed for the purpose of cleansing their conscience before God.

One must be able to be taught before he can be baptized. He must be able to believe that which he is taught. He must be able to turn his life in repentance to that which he is taught. In answer to his good conscience to do that which is pleasing to God, he is then baptized. These prerequisites for immersion are not for infants. In fact, babies cannot be taught the word of God. They cannot believe or repent. Therefore, infants are not biblical candidates for obedience to the Gospel.

## Chapter 13

## EXAMINING MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Those who were baptized in the New Testament were men and women. The emphasis in conversion was upon those who recognized their accountability to God. Luke recorded in Acts 5:14 that *“believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.”* In Samaria Philip preached in order to convert mature people. Luke wrote of what took place after the preaching. *“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized”* (Acts 8:12),

When Saul persecuted the church, he imprisoned only those who were “of the Way”. This included only “men and women” (Acts 9:2; 22:4). No infants were baptized, or imprisoned for being “of the Way”. Those baptized in the first century were accountable individuals who had responded to the preaching and teaching of the Gospel.

### A. “HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS” DO NOT JUSTIFY INFANT BAPTISM.

In the New Testament there were several “household baptisms”. These were baptisms of entire families, including servants. Those who support the practice of infant baptism today believe and teach that there were infants in those household baptisms of the book of Acts. But this is a wrong assumption. There is no proof that there were babies in the baptisms of these households. Read and study the scriptures below which are listed with each case.

#### 1. The household of Lydia (read Acts 16:14,15):

This “household baptism” is not justification for

the baptism of infants. We cannot assume that there were infants in the household of Lydia for the following reasons:

**(a) No infants are mentioned in this passage.**

**(b) Those who were baptized in this passage were those who “gave heed” or attended to the things which Paul preached.** Infants cannot give attention to things which are spoken concerning their salvation.

**(c) To say that infants were included in this baptism we would have to assume that Lydia was married.** We would have to assume that she had infant children. And we would have to assume that she had her children with her. (Remember, she was about 400 kilometers away from her home, which was in the city of Thyatira.)

**2. The household of the Philippian jailer** (read Acts 16:31-34):

We cannot assume that there were infants in this household baptism. This is true for the following reasons:

**(a) No infants are mentioned.**

**(b) All who were baptized in this household were able to hear and understand the “word of the Lord.”**

**(c). They were also able to believe** on the Lord Jesus before their baptism

**(d) Those who were baptized, rejoiced greatly after their baptism.** But infants can do none of these things. Therefore, no infants were baptized in this household.

**3. The household of Cornelius** (read Acts

10,11).

We cannot assume that there were infants in this household baptism. This is true for the following reasons:

**(a) No infants are mentioned.**

**(b) All of Cornelius' house feared God.**

**(c) All who were baptized** in Cornelius' house were able to do the following:

**(1) hear the word (vs 44),**

**(2) Speak with languages (10:46), and**

**(3) Magnify God (10:46).**

Infants can do none of these things. Therefore, we must conclude that there were no infants baptized when the household of Cornelius was baptized.

**4. The household of Stephanus** (read 1 Corinthians 1:16; 16:15).

The following two points will not allow infants to be included in the baptism of the household of Stephanus:

(a) No infants are mentioned.

(b) 1 Corinthians 16:15 states that his household "*devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints.*" Infants cannot do this. But if we assume that infants were included in the household baptism of 1 Corinthians 1:16, then we must assume that Corinth had "ministering infants" in 1 Corinthians 16:15. The church in Corinth had no "ministering infants", and thus, we must conclude that no infants were included in the household baptism of Stephanus in 1 Corinthians 1:16.

**B. INFANT BAPTISM IS AN UNAUTHORIZED TEACHING.**

1. Infant baptism is not authorized by the Bible.

The fact that infant baptism is not found in the Bible is a major argument against its practice as a binding command. The New Testament makes several warnings against adding to the religious practices which God desires that man do. Paul exhorted that we should learn “*not to think **beyond what is written...***” (1 Corinthians 4:6). In his letter to the Galatians he warned the Christians there not to be turned aside to another Gospel (read Galatians 1:6-9).

The message which was first preached two thousand years ago contained absolutely nothing concerning infant baptism. Adding it to Christianity as a binding religious law would be going beyond the authority of the Scriptures. In 2 John 9, John adds to the anathema Paul pronounced in Galatians 1:6-9 concerning those who would add to God’s ways. He wrote. “*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*”

The Holy Spirit moved John to record a similar warning in Revelation 22:18,19. He stated that “***if any one adds to these things,***” that is, God’s book of Revelation, “*God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.*” Infant baptism is an addition to the Gospel that was preached in the first century.

To practice infant baptism is to go beyond the teaching of Christ, for Christ said nothing about it. The entire Bible says nothing about it. Those who teach infant baptism as a religious practice have no Bible authority for doing such.

**2. All reliable scholars confirm that the practice of infant baptism originated after the first cen-**

**tury.** Concerning this thought, it is interesting to note what Origen, who lived from 185 to 254 A.D., wrote on this subject. He stated the following:

*“Having occasion given in this place, I will mention a thing that causes frequent inquiries among the brethren. Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or where have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the saved in their case hold good? But according to that sense we mention even now: None is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day upon the earth. And it is for that reason because of the sacrament of baptism that pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized?”* (Works, Vol. 1, p. 65).

The above is one of the first statements that was made in history on the subject of infant baptism. What is important to note in church history is that there is no mention of any kind of infant baptism **that dates back to the first century.** Many religious leaders who practice infant baptism are honest in their admission that their practice **did not originate in New Testament times.** The Catholic religious leader Bertrand Conway wrote that **“there is no express mention of the baptizing of infants in the New Testament...”** (The Question Box, page 155). In the Catholic book, “Teachings of the Catholic Church”, it is stated, **“The baptizing of infants is not positively directed in the Gospels”** (The Question Box, p. 23). Such an admission should urge us to approach this subject with much caution in light of what is said in Galatians 1:6-9 and Revelation 22:18,19.

## Chapter 14

## **INFANTS ARE SAFE FROM CONDEMNATION**

An important Bible teaching is the innocence of newly born babies. They are **pure** of sin and **safe** from condemnation. However, a most hideous doctrine has been developed by some religious groups which centers around the theology that babies are born sinners. Because of this belief, it is believed that infants must be baptized for the remission of sins. However, we must fully understand the following points:

### **A. CHILDREN ARE PURE OF SIN.**

In the sight of God, children are pure of sin, and thus, do not need to be baptized for the remission of sins. Pure of sin means they have no sin. They are not born sinners, neither do they have the ability as infants to sin by voluntarily rejecting the will of God. Jesus used this purity of little children to illustrate the purity of the kingdom. He said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and **become as little children**, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 18:3).

We wonder why Jesus would make this statement if children are in sin, or have “original sin” and are in need of baptism? Why would He illustrate the purity of the kingdom by that which is not pure? The answer to this question is that He would not. Jesus also said of little children, *“...for of such is the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 19:14; see 18:2-5; Mark 10:14,15). But why would He say this if children are in sin? To see this point, you must understand what Jesus was saying in the above statements of Matthew 18:3 and 19:14.

Jesus told Nicodemus, *“unless one is born again,*

*he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (John 3:3). Being "born again" and becoming "as little children" **refer to the same thing**. When one is born of the water (baptism), his sins are washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). One comes out of the grave of water a new creature to "*walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17). At the point of immersion one is washed of every sin and becomes **pure as a little child**, and "*of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" The kingdom of heaven is without sin. Jesus keeps the submitted subject of His Kingdom continually cleansed of sin by His blood (1 John 1:7). When one continues to allow the sovereign will of Jesus to rule in his heart by walking in the light, the blood of Jesus continues to wash him of all sin.

To "become as little children" means to become cleansed of sin, for little children are pure of sin. One is cleansed of sin by immersion. The kingdom is free of sin because of the continual cleansing work of the blood of Jesus. These basic New Testament teachings are based on the fact that children are pure of sin. And if children are pure of sin, **they do not need to be baptized for remission of sins**.

It is often argued that in Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:15, and Luke 18:17, Jesus was urging the little children to come unto Him in order that they be baptized. But this is an unjustified assumption. The word baptism is not mentioned in any of these three chapters. It is not even under consideration.

#### **B. CHILDREN ARE SAFE FROM CONDEMNATION.**

If infants are sinless, then it follows that they are safe from eternal condemnation. Children who die in infancy will not be condemned to hell because they



did not live in rebellion to God's laws while on earth. A baby that does not recognize his or her accountability to the laws of God cannot sin. Infants do not recognize God's laws, and therefore, cannot be held accountable to those laws. If a child dies, that child is safe from any condemnation. This is a most comforting teaching of Christianity.

## Chapter 15

### **CONDITIONS FOR A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP**

All mankind today lives under the sovereign reign of Jesus. Those who would be saved must establish a covenant relationship with Jesus. Before the establishment of the new covenant of Jesus, the Jews were in covenant relationship with the Father through the Old Testament covenant. But the establishment of a covenant relationship with the Father under the Old Testament covenant was different from the New Testament covenant relationship that one must establish with Jesus today.

#### **A. INCLUSION INTO THE NEW COVENANT IS FOR ACCOUNTABLE PEOPLE.**

In order for one to become a part of the New Covenant, he or she must be one who is able to be accountable for his or her own behavior. One must be able to respond to the law of God.

**1. One is baptized into a covenant relationship with Jesus.** One is immersed into the body (1 Corinthians 12:13). He is born anew by baptism in order to enter the church kingdom of Jesus (John

3:3-5) and to come into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). But one is immersed only after he has heard the Gospel message, believed on Jesus, and repented of sins. Only accountable people can do this. Therefore, only those who have grown to the mature age where they can intellectually and emotionally respond to the Gospel can come into a covenant relationship with Jesus.

**2. One was physically born into a covenant relationship with God in the Old Testament.** One was *born* a Jew: he did not *choose* to be a Jew. He was circumcised the eighth day after birth and that circumcision was a sign of his covenant relationship with God.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 explains the difference between the old and new covenants. In verse 31 through 33 God promised, "*Behold, the days are coming says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant...*" Under this new covenant, God said, "*I will put my law in their minds and write it in their hearts...*" This meant that they would know God and His laws **before** they established a covenant relationship with Him

Under the old covenant, the young Jew who had been born into a covenant relationship with God, had to be taught to know God and His laws **after he was physically born a Jew**. Under the new covenant, however, people are already taught of God and His laws **before they are spiritually born through immersion** into covenant relationship with God (John 31:34).

This fact is emphasized in Hebrews 8:11 when the Hebrew writer quotes Jeremiah 31 in order to apply this thought to the Christian age and Jesus' new covenant. **The point here is that only those who can be**



taught to know God and His laws can be brought into a covenant relationship with God in the new covenant.

The new covenant of the Son is in force today. Therefore, only accountable people can be taught of God and brought into the new covenant. Until they reach the age of accountability, infants are **pure and safe from condemnation**. They are not subject to the new covenant law of Christ for they cannot come into a covenant relationship with God according to the promised new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34.

#### **B. CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM ARE NOT PARALLEL.**

Some have taught that baptism replaced circumcision under the new covenant. Therefore, children must be baptized today as children were circumcised under the Old Testament covenant. The Bible, however, does not teach that the "*circumcision of the heart*" in the New Testament is parallel to the act of circumcision in the Old Testament (see Romans 2:29; Colossians 2:11). The Bible does not state or teach that baptism took the place of circumcision. Nowhere does the New Testament make a direct comparison between baptism and circumcision. There is a difference between the **purpose** and **function** of baptism and circumcision. This difference clearly manifests

that baptism did not take the place of circumcision. This difference is pointed out in the next points.

**1. The age of the subjects is different.** Circumcision of the Old Testament took place on the **eighth day** after birth (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3). But under the new covenant law, candidates for baptism must be old enough to understand, believe and obey the Gospel in baptism. There is no set date or age for being baptized. There was a set date for circumcision under the old covenant law.

**2. Baptism is obedience to the Gospel, but circumcision is a token.** Circumcision was a **token**, or sign, of a covenant between Abraham and God (Genesis 17:9-14). It later became a sign of the covenant between God and the nation of Israel. Baptism, however, is an obedience to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3-5).

**3. The candidates for baptism and circumcision are different.** Circumcision as a religious rite under the old Jewish law was administered to **males only** (Genesis 17:10). But baptism, under the new law of Christ is carried out by both males and females (Acts 8:12). Circumcision was never administered to females under the Old Testament law. If baptism is to be administered to the same persons as was circumcision in the Old Testament, then females should not be baptized today because females were not circumcised during Old Testament times. This thought clearly manifests the fact that baptism did not take the place of circumcision.

In Colossians 2:11-14 Paul refers to a circumcision that is not made with hands (vs 14). He defines this circumcision as the **“putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.”** Therefore, reference is to what

the individual does in his own life in turning from the sins of the flesh (see Ephesians 2:1-3). The repentant believer in this “circumcision” cuts off the old man of sin by crucifying himself (Romans 6:6; Colossians 2:20). This takes place **before** one is “*buried with Him in baptism...*” (vs 12). Verse 13 parallels the teachings of Romans 6:6-8. One is dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of the flesh while the old man still lives (see Ephesians 2:1-3). However, one is “made alive together with Christ” when he comes forth from the grave of baptism (Romans 6:8). In Colossians 2, therefore, Paul is simply using the Jewish practice of circumcision (the cutting off of the foreskin) as a figure to represent the cutting off of the old man of sin when one is immersed for the remission of sins.

Religious people must be careful about allowing the traditions of men to direct their religious behavior. Several religious traditions concerning baptism have been handed down from generation to generation. It is the responsibility of this generation to restore New Testament teachings concerning that truth which is most important to do in order to be saved.

That which is most important to do in order to be saved is the area in which Satan will work the hardest to distort and deceive. He has done such with the teaching on baptism. We urge you to thoroughly study God’s word on this matter. We pray that your honestly and open heart will lead you to restore with us this most precious New Testament teaching.





