

# Why Be Baptized?

Study Book and Questions  
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*(Mark 16:16) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."*

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## Introduction

The word “baptism” is a very interesting word and the purpose of baptism is misunderstood by many in the religious world today. In an effort to clarify the meaning and purpose that God intended for us to understand and believe I will go only to the Bible; I will not refer to man’s definitions as to what the word “baptism” means; if I should make reference to man’s definition it will be only to show the error of their understanding of the word “baptism”.

We need to be aware of fact that there is more than one baptism mentioned in the Bible:

- The apostle Paul wrote that the children of Israel were baptized when they crossed the Red Sea: (*1 Corinthians 10:1-2*) “*Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; <sup>2</sup>And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;*” A large portion of the church at Corinth was made up of Gentiles; perhaps they had read about this event in the past but it is doubtful that it would be foremost in their minds or recollection; so Paul is reminding them of this event so that they would not “be ignorant” of it. The “fathers” that he mentions would be the forefathers of the Jewish members of the church at Corinth. We should not suppose that the act of baptism as we understand it today was administered by Moses or any other person; there is not the least evidence that any such rite was known at that time. They were baptized “in the cloud” and “in the sea,” and this cannot be understood as a religious rite administered by the hand of man. It is evidently that the word “baptized” as used here, is denoting that they were devoted to Moses as a leader, they were brought under his laws, they became bound to obey him, they were placed under his protection and guidance by the miraculous interposition of God. But let us understand that is symbolic of baptism that we know today because there was the water from the cloud above them, water on their left hand and on their right hand, as well as water in front and back of them.
- The first mention of baptism found in the New Testament is the baptism that John administered: (*Matthew 3:1-6*) “*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, <sup>2</sup>And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. <sup>3</sup>For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>4</sup>And the same John*

had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, <sup>6</sup>And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." John's baptism was "unto repentance for the remission of sins": (Luke 3:3) "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;" This was the work of John, as signified by Elias, in (Malachi 4:5) "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:" The Israelites would not repent until Elijah came. The scope and design of John's baptism was to bring all of the people of Israel to repentance and to turn them from their sins. It had long been the desire of God that they repent and turn from their sin: (Ezekiel 18:30) "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Isaiah had foretold that there would be one preaching in the wilderness: (Isaiah 40:3) "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." What result could one who was baptized by John expect? The Bible says they could expect "remission of sins": (Luke 3:3) "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;"

- Next we are informed about the baptism that we might call the Christian baptism; this is the baptism that Jesus instructed his apostles to administer: (Matthew 28:19) "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" Here Jesus clearly commands the apostles to go and teach and baptize those whom they had taught. However, they are not told why they were to baptize; we can turn to another book to tell us why they were commanded to baptize: (Mark 16:16) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Those who believed their teaching and were baptized were saved from their sinful ways. We must recognize that only those who "believed" and were baptized were saved. We cannot overlook the word "believe" as those who baptize infants do. An infant does not understand teaching for some time; therefore they are not proper candidates for baptism. When the first Pentecost came following the ascension of Jesus Peter and the eleven apostles preached the gospel to those in attendance and when asked what they should do Peter told them "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38) So we

see that the apostles carried out the commandment of Jesus to go, teach and baptize. This is how our Christian baptism came into existence.

- We also read about the baptism of the “Holy Ghost” in the New Testament: (*Acts 1:5*) “*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*” The baptism of the “Holy Ghost” that Jesus promised means to overwhelm and we read of this overwhelming in Acts chapter two; (*Acts 2:1-4*) “*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*” I am aware that there are those today in the religious world who claim that they receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost; but I’m afraid that they overlook the first principle in Bible study, they fail to keep things in context. By keeping Acts 1:5 in context we find that Jesus is speaking ONLY to his apostles. This promise of Jesus was intended for his apostles; it was never intended for other Christians. I do believe that the majority of these people are sincere; but they are sincerely wrong.

So we see that there are more than one baptism mentioned in God’s inspired word; but there is only one baptism for this Christian dispensation: (*Ephesians 4:5*) “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*” This one baptism is only for certain people [I.e. those who believe, those who are willing to repent and those who are willing to confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

### **Questions over the introduction**

1. Is there more than one baptism mentioned in the Bible?

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2. When did the apostle Paul write that the children of Israel were baptized? [1 Cor. 10:1, 2].

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3. Why did Paul say he was writing this to the church at Corinth?

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4. Who are the “fathers” he mentions in 1 Cor. 10:1?

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5. Was baptism as we know it today ever practiced in Old Testament days?

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6. What is the first baptism found in the New Testament? [Matt. 3:1-6].

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7. What was John’s baptism unto? [Lu. 3:3].

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8. What could those who were baptized by John’s baptism expect to receive?

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9. Who instructed the apostles to baptize?

[Matt. 28;19]

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10. What were they to do before they baptized anyone?

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11. What is required of those who desire to be baptized? [Mk. 16:16].

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12. Are infants proper candidates for baptism? What disqualifies them?

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13. When was the first Christian baptism performed?

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14. What baptism is written about in Acts 1:5?

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15. Who was Jesus speaking to?

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16. Should we expect to receive this baptism today?

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17. When was this baptism carried out?

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18. Who received the baptism of the Holy Ghost?

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### **The Christian baptism Who ordered it to be done?**

The remainder of this booklet will be devoted to the Christian baptism. We of the Lord's church believe that we must have authority for everything we do or say? In order for us to have the proper authority to baptize we must receive our authority from someone who has to proper authority to give us such a commandment. Do we have authority to baptize and is our authority from a proper source? This is what we will be examining in this section.

There is no question that the apostles had the proper authority to baptize believers: (*Matthew 28:18-19*) "*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. <sup>19</sup>Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*" Before giving his commandment to his apostles to "go teach all nations" and then to baptize those whom they had taught Jesus assures them that he has the authority to give such a command. We should pay special attention as to where and how extensive Jesus' authority was. First, let's set a little background as to where and when Jesus gave this commandment. We know that this event took place after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. This also took place before an apostle was chosen to replace Judas. The eleven traveled to Galilee to see the resurrected Lord: (*Matthew 28:16*) "*Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.*" We might wonder why they would travel so far just to see Jesus once again; the answer may be found in *Matthew 26:32* "*But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*" So they knew before hand that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. Matthew omitted many appearances which Jesus made to his disciples which have been recorded by Luke, John, and Paul. It is probable that Jesus, when he made the appointment, specified the place, which has been omitted by the evangelists. This is generally

thought to be Mount Tabor; but of this there is no proof, nor certainty. To assure them that he has the authority to give them such a great commission he tells them how extensive his authority is “ALL POWER” and he informs them where his authority exists “IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH”! It is utterly impossible to receive any more authority than what Jesus had received.

Some might question whether Jesus was worthy of so great authority. Jesus, the “Son of God” as Creator had the original right to all things; to control or dispose of them. (*John 1:3*) “*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” (*Colossians 1:16-17*) “*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*” If God the Father told Jesus that his throne was forever how could anyone doubt Jesus’ authority? (*Hebrews 1:8*) “*But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*” Because Jesus has been given “all authority” he has the right to be our Mediator, the right to redeem his people, to establish a church, to defend his people, with all authority he can conquer our enemies and make us more than conquerors: (*1 Corinthians 15:25-27*) “*For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup>The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup>For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.*” Jesus did not think it robbery to be equal to God but took upon himself the form of a servant and was obedient unto death as Paul testified in *Philippians 2:6-11* “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup>But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup>And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup>Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*”

Who would even dare to question the authority of Jesus; neither would I question his worthiness?

There is no question that the apostles had the proper authority from the one who had “all authority” to baptize; but now I will address this question “do we of this present day have the authority to baptize as the apostles did in the early

church? There are a very few in the Lord's church today who say that the great commission to go and teach does not apply to us since Jesus commissioned his apostles and we are not apostles. This is true we have no apostles in the true sense that the twelve [actually there were only eleven at the time that Jesus gave the great commission]. At the time of the death of each apostle there was no one appointed to take their place. The Bible only informs us of one apostle who was replaced: (*Acts 1:15-20*) "*And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) <sup>16</sup>Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. <sup>17</sup>For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. <sup>18</sup>Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup>And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. <sup>20</sup>For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take.*" This is of course referring to Judas Iscariot and Peter knew that his office of apostleship must be replaced! To be perfectly honest there is not a man living upon the earth who could possibly meet the qualifications to become an apostle today; Peter gave the qualifications to become an apostle before they chose a replacement for Judas and here they are: *Acts 1:21-22 (KJV)* <sup>21</sup>*Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup>Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.* It is absolutely impossible for anyone today to have been in the company of Jesus; neither can anyone today be a witness to the resurrection of Jesus. I will agree that the great commission was given to Jesus' apostles and since none are the apostles of Jesus today it may not apply directly to us; but what are we to do let the church die? Do you think that God or Jesus would have us not tell people about the gospel of Jesus? Do you think for one moment that God or Jesus would be happy to let all people just die in their sins? If you believe this then don't go and teach all nations.

If we don't have the authority to go and teach all nations because we are not apostles neither do we have the authority to baptize anyone since the commandment to baptize was given at the same time to go teach and it was given to those who were apostles. Now if the apostles were the only ones who baptized I would admit that we don't have the authority to baptize anyone today. But the apostles

were not the only people who baptized in the time that the New Testament was written. For instance there was an evangelist by the name of Philip who baptized: (Acts 8:5-8) “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. <sup>6</sup>And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. <sup>7</sup>For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. <sup>8</sup>And there was great joy in that city.” If Philip was to preach Christ unto them I am certain that he knew that baptism saves people from their sins: (1 Peter 3:21) “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:” What do you think; did Philip baptize those he preached Christ to? I will give you a specific instance where Philip is found baptizing a man he had preached Christ to: (Acts 8:29-35) “Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. <sup>30</sup>And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? <sup>31</sup>And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup>The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. <sup>34</sup>And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” If we read on we will see that Philip did indeed baptize this man: (Acts 8:36-38) “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? <sup>37</sup>And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. <sup>38</sup>And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” But the question is “was Philip an apostle”? Philip was not an apostle; he was one of the seven who was chosen to serve the Grecian widows: (Acts 6:1-5) “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. <sup>2</sup>Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. <sup>3</sup>Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. <sup>4</sup>But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to

*the ministry of the word. <sup>5</sup>And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:”*

So we have seen one case where a man who was not an apostle who both preached the gospel of Jesus and baptized those who believed the gospel. But I will give one more instance of people who were not apostles who when they were scattered went every place preaching the gospel: (*Acts 8:4*) “*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*” Although we cannot prove it with book, chapter and verse in my opinion I feel certain that it is inferred that they baptized as many as believed their preaching.

I suggest to you that we baptize today with the same authority as the apostles baptized. As long as I am able I will teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to anyone who will listen. Furthermore, I feel certain that I do so with the blessing of Jesus Christ and his Father.

### **Questions about who ordered Christian baptism**

1. Who told the apostles to “go teach all nations” and to baptize” those who believed? [Matt. 28:18, 19].

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2. Did Jesus have the proper authority to give the great commission?

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3. Were there any limitations to Jesus authority in respect to place? If not where did he have authority?

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4. Did this event take place before or after Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection?

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5. How many were present when Jesus gave this commission? [Matt. 28:16].

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6. Where was this commission given?

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7. How long will Jesus' authority last? [Heb. 1:8].

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8. What did Paul say about Christ's reign? [1 Cor. 15:25-27].

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9. What does the word "apostle" mean?

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10. We have men who are sent into foreign fields to preach the gospel; are they the same as the apostles of Jesus?

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11. There is only record of one apostle being replaced after his death, name this man. \_\_\_\_\_

12. What were the qualifications that one must fulfill to become an apostle? [Acts 1:21, 22].

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13. Can any man fulfill these qualifications today?

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14. Did anyone besides an apostle ever baptize anyone? [Acts 8:36-38].

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15. Was he an apostle? [Acts 6:1-5].

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16. By whose authority do we baptize today?

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## Jesus himself was baptized

One of the things I love about the Bible is the many examples we are given in its contents. We have the examples of good men and women, wicked men and women, righteous acts and sinful acts; there is no limit to what one may learn simply by reading their Bibles. The Bible has several examples of those who were baptized; these are the examples that we will be examining at this time.

When I think of those who were baptized my thoughts go immediately to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus never asks anyone to do something that he is not willing to submit to himself? Before Jesus began his ministry he went to a man in the wilderness to be baptized: (*Matthew 3:13-15*) "*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. <sup>14</sup>But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? <sup>15</sup>And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*" Verse one gives us a more informative location of where Jesus was baptized and to whom he was baptized by: (*Matthew 3:1*) "*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*" Matthew here gives us record of John preaching and baptizing; which by the way is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter gives the same date as the beginning of the gospel: (*Acts 1:22*) "*Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*" This is a sure way of dating the gospel of Jesus Christ; it began when Jesus was baptized by John and ended when Jesus ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of his Father. It was after Jesus was baptized that he began to appear to the world and began to foretell about the kingdom [I.e. church] he was going to establish!

A few words about this John; verse one of Matthew chapter one tells us that John preached and verse two tells us what he preached: (*Matthew 3:2*) "*And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" I find it interesting that repentance was preached at this very early stage of the gospel. Repentance is essential for if one does not repent they will perish: (*Luke 13:3*) "*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" I like to tell that this repentance was an important point in Jesus' preaching because he repeats this statement in the same conversation: (*Luke 13:5*) "*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" Matthew informs us that this John and his work had been foretold long before this occurrence: (*Matthew 3:3*) "*For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*" This prophecy can be found in

*Isaiah 40:3 “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* In this chapter Isaiah not only foretold that in the future there would be a man crying in the wilderness he also foretold the coming of the Messiah: (*Isaiah 40:9*) *“O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!”* So with very few words Matthew has informed us of two Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled. Unlike many of our preachers today who live in luxury and wear fine clothing and eat the very best food John is certainly pictured as a rugged man: (*Matthew 3:4*) *“And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.”* Not many churches today would even consider hiring such a man to be their pulpit preacher; nonetheless, this is the man that our Savior traveled to be baptized by him. John did draw great crowds to hear his preaching: (*Matthew 3:5*) *“Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,”* Are you wondering if the preaching of such a rough preacher could possibly be successful; read on: (*Matthew 3:6*) *“And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.”* The goal of every gospel preacher should be to get people to confess their sins and to be baptized for the remission of their sins: (*Acts 2:38*) *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**”* [emphasis mine]

On a particular day John no doubt was surprised when he beheld Jesus coming to him to be baptized: (*Matthew 3:13*) *“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.”* Mark tells us exactly where Jesus traveled from: (*Mark 1:9*) *“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.”* Nazareth was in Galilee and it was the place where Jesus had been brought up, and lived, and dwelt in from his infancy, to this time. As Jesus approached him John looked up and recognized Jesus and objected to Jesus’ request to be baptized: (*Matthew 3:14*) *“But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”*

It seems to me that John’s modesty thinks that baptizing Jesus was too great an honor for him to receive. John speaks words to Jesus that are very similar to the words that his mother had spoken to Jesus’ mother: (*Luke 1:43*) *“And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”* From the crowds that John drew and the results of his preaching John had made a great

name for himself; but we should not overlook the humility that he demonstrated at this time. Most preachers would have jumped at the chance to baptize Jesus but John hesitated to do it because he was a very humble man. Do you suppose that John knew that God has greater honors in store for those who are humble? Think about this; John was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb: (*Luke 1:15*) “*For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.*” YET JOHN WAS HUMBLE! John wonders why the most holy Jesus who was separated for sinners had come to him to be baptized. John saw his need to be baptized by Jesus.

But Christ overruled John’s objections: (*Matthew 3:15*) “*And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*” These words of Jesus are rather insistent. In other words he was determined to be baptized. Christ has now humbled himself and he made of himself no reputation: (*Philippians 2:6-7*) “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup>But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*” Jesus who was perfectly pure and one who never sinned: (*1 Peter 2:22*) “*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*” The question of why Jesus was so insistent must come to our minds and in verse fifteen Matthew answers this question; Jesus was anxious to be baptized so that he might “fulfil all righteousness”. What did Jesus mean when he made this statement? We can rule out that Jesus was baptized to obtain salvation, because Jesus was already righteous! I would like to present a couple of quotes that give us understanding of what Jesus meant: “*Jesus was baptized in order to “fulfill all righteousness” (Mt. 3:15). This expression has to do with doing “whatever has been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man” (Vine, 684). Again, it is here used “in the sense of fulfilling the divine statutes” (Arndt, 195).* Friends, if Jesus thought it proper to do what God the Father had appointed who are we that should not do likewise? The point that I want to stress is that Jesus obeyed. If we are commanded to be baptized to wash away our sins [Acts 22:16] should we not follow the example that Jesus set forth and do like wise?

Jesus had a purpose behind everything he did and being baptized is no different. In performing baptism in water Jesus set an example for us and became the captain of our salvation: (*Hebrews 2:10*) “*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*” Being baptized was the first

step that Jesus must take to become the captain of our salvation. By submitting himself to baptism Jesus was proving that he was ready and willing to submit to all of God's righteous precepts. Since Jesus submitted to baptism it behooves us to direct others to follow his example. I would like to point out that there was no particular precept of this in the Old Testament; so when Jesus submitted himself to baptism, baptism became a divine ordinance. Jesus was about to enter into his great work and it was proper that he should be set aside by his forerunner.

Did God the Father approve of Jesus' baptism? Again I say "Read on"! (Matthew 3:16-17) *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: <sup>17</sup>And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* According to Matthew 3:6 others who submitted to John's baptism confessed their sins; but no record is given of Jesus confessing any sin as already stated he had not sin. Was God in heaven pleased with what Jesus had just done? Surely God was pleased because as Jesus was coming up out of water the heavens were opened up and like a dove God lighted on Jesus. It is uncertain whether this was a real living dove or it could have been the representation of a dove that was usual in visions. And God told him [and I suppose there were others present, I know John at least was present] how pleased He was with Jesus. I am sure that John was a witness to the dove descending and lighting on Jesus: (John 1:33-34) *"And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. <sup>34</sup>And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."* Note: as Jesus was coming up out of the water the heavens were opened unto him; it is through Jesus Christ that heaven is opened to the sons of men. Sin has shut up heaven to men; sin has disallowed communication between God and mankind: (Isaiah 59:1-2) *"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: <sup>2</sup>But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."* But Jesus has opened the way so that mankind can once again have access to God. A voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son" thus God speaks of His ownership of Jesus; Jesus is the Son of God. Let me remind you that Jesus was begotten by a super natural conception: (Luke 1:26-31) *"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee:*

blessed art thou among women. <sup>29</sup>And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. <sup>31</sup>And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.” So Jesus is truly the Son of God. God the Father took instant delight in His Son and was “well pleased” with Jesus. God was both well pleased with Jesus as His Son and delighted in him as His servant: (Isaiah 42:1) “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” In this solemn and public manner God expressed His delight and pleasure of Jesus as the Redeemer of the world.

In brief this is God’s record of the baptism of Jesus. I say with confidence that it is God’s record because “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” (2 Timothy 3:16)

### **Questions concerning Jesus’ baptism**

1. Give one point that Jesus never asks anyone to do something that he is unwilling to do.

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2. What was the location of Jesus’ baptism? [Matt. 3:1].

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3. Who baptized Jesus? [Matt. 3:13].

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4. Was this the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ? [Cf. Acts 1:22].

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5. What was John’s message? [Matt. 3:2].

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6. When Jesus began his ministry did he preach much the same message as John? [Lu. 13:3]

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7. What prophet foretold a prophecy of John? [Matt. 3:3].

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8. Where was Jesus when he decided to go to John to be baptized? [Mk. 1:9].

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9. Was John willing and ready to baptize Jesus? [Matt. 3:14].

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10. What did John's mother say when Jesus mother came to her? [Lu. 1:43].

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11. [Thought question] Do you think most preachers today would have the same attitude about baptizing Jesus as John had?

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12. When was John filled with the Holy Ghost? [Lu.1:15].

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13. How was John persuaded to baptize Jesus? [Matt. 3:15].

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14. Was Jesus baptized for the remission of sins? [1 Pet. 2:22].

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15. Why was Jesus baptized? [Matt. 3:15].

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16. What did Jesus mean when he said “fulfil all righteousness? [Matt. 3:15].

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17. What can we learn from the baptism of Jesus?

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18. Who is the captain of our salvation? [Heb. 2:10].

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19. How would you prove that God approved of Jesus’ baptism?

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20. According to Matthew 3:6 those who submitted to John’s baptism also confessed of their sin; do we have testimony that Jesus confessed his sins when he was baptized by John. \_\_\_\_\_ If you answered no why didn’t Jesus do as others had done?

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21. Who was an eye witness to the dove lighting on Jesus after his baptism? [Jn. 1:33, 34].

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22. What was opened to Jesus as he was coming up out of the water? [Matt. 3:16].

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23. What has separated mankind and God? [Isa. 59:1, 2].

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24. Does the heavens being opened up to Jesus have any significance for you and me? [Explain your answer].

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25. Whose Son did God say Jesus was? [Matt. 3:17].

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### **Others who submitted to baptism for The remission of sins**

The book of Acts is considered by many to be the book of conversions; and rightfully so. The book of Acts is a very exciting book; it contains the establishment of the Lord's church and gives us record of many who were baptized for the remission of their sins. We will be looking at some of these baptisms in this section. I will be referring to this baptism as the Christian baptism.

The first mention of this Christian baptism is found in Acts chapter two: (*Acts 2:41*) "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*" What a day of rejoicing that was! The exact number that was baptized is not revealed; but I am sure that it was very close to the number three thousand. In December of 2009 I will have completed forty five years of preaching the gospel; I have not kept track of the number of those I have baptized but I know that it is not even close to the number three thousand, but I have rejoiced every time someone was obedient to the gospel. Not only was there rejoicing in Jerusalem on this day there was also rejoicing in heaven: (*Luke 15:10*) "*Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*" What was it that motivated this large number to be baptized?

Luke who is the writer of this New Testament book tells us that they were "pricked in their heart": (*Acts 2:37*) "*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" The word that has been translated "pricked," is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. It properly denotes "to pierce or penetrate with a

needle, lancet, or sharp instrument”; and then “to pierce with grief, or acute pain of any kind.” It corresponds precisely to our word “compunction.” It implies also the idea of sudden as well as acute grief. In this case it means that they were suddenly and deeply affected with anguish and alarm at what Peter had said. What was it that Peter said to them? This is a rather lengthy sermon that Peter preached on this Day of Pentecost but I believe the preceding verse pin points what it was that “pricked their hearts”: (*Acts 2:36*) “*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*” Peter wanted all Israel to be aware of what he had told them; but in particular he wanted all Israel to know that this Jesus who they had crucified God had made “both Lord and Christ”. We read of those that were *cut to the heart* with indignation at the preacher Stephan: (*Acts 7:54*) “*When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*” But these on the Day of Pentecost were *pricked to the heart* with indignation at themselves for having been accessory to the death of Christ. Peter charged them of crucifying God’s Son; this awakened their consciences, it touched them to the quick; it was as if a sword had pierced them in their bones, it pierced them even as they had pierced Christ. Even today when sinners have their eyes opened they have much the same feelings as these Jews had on the Day of Pentecost. The hearts of these Jews being pierced they asked a very important question: “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” Peter told them exactly what they must do: (*Acts 2:38*) “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” The first thing they had to do was “REPENT”; then they needed to be “BAPTIZED” so that their sin of crucifying Jesus could and would be remitted. As we have already stated about three thousand followed Peter’s advice and were baptized. So here we have a group who were baptized. There were others who were baptized and they were added to the Lord: (*Acts 5:14*) “*And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*”) The phrase “believers were added to the Lord” simply means they were added to the church as those on the Day of Pentecost were added to the church: (*Acts 2:47*) “*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*” We seem to be of the notion that the Lord will only add to the church on a Sunday or a Wednesday; but here is proof that the Lord works daily. Yes, God will add to the church seven days a week, twenty four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a week. If anyone is of the mind to obey the gospel we should never be a hindrance to them; if we will do our part God will do His part.

By turning to the sixth chapter of the book of Acts we learn that the church was still growing; the numbers were being multiplied: (*Acts 6:1*) “*And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.*” Think about this; there were 120 disciples in the upper room: (*Acts 1:15*) “*And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)*” On the day of Pentecost the number of obedient believers grew to “about 3,000: (*Acts 2:41*) “*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*” Were they satisfied with that number? Not in the least they continued in the apostles fellowship and doctrine: (*Acts 2:42*) “*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” This resulted in disciples being added daily: (*Acts 2:47*) “*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*” Now in *Acts 6:1* we find that the number 3,000 has been multiplied! But progress and growth did not stop here; when persecution arose against the church Christians were scattered from Jerusalem: (*Acts 8:1*) “*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*” Not even persecution could stop them from telling the good news about Jesus and their new found salvation: (*Acts 8:4*) “*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*” Not even persecution could stop the numbers and the word of God from growing: (*Acts 12:24*) “*But the word of God grew and multiplied.*” When you consider the growth of the church you also come to realize that growth would be impossible without those who were added to the church and they had first been baptized because God adds the baptized to the church [*Acts 2: 41, 47*].

We have considered large numbers who were baptized but there were also individuals who are recorded being baptized. One such individual was a man by the name Simon who was baptized. Philip went down to Samaria to preach Christ: (*Acts 8:5*) “*Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.*” It was there that he met up with a man named Simon: (*Acts 8:9*) “*But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:*” You and I might consider Simon an unlikely candidate to speak about Christ to; but Philip was aware of the gospel. Philip’s preaching Christ resulted in both men and women being baptized: (*Acts 8:12*) “*But when they believed*

*Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*” But one of those who believed and was baptized name was Simon: (Acts 8:13) *“Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.”* What do you suppose it was that Simon believed? I think there was a good chance that Philip repeated the words of Jesus: (Mark 16:16) *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* This convinced me that I needed to be baptized.

Then the Lord sent Philip on another preaching mission: (Acts 8:26) *“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.”* This was not just a site seeing trip that Philip was sent on; the Lord had a purpose! Maybe Philip was wondering why God would send him to the desert. God knew that a man had been to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home and God wanted Philip to meet up with him: (Acts 8:27-28) *“And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, <sup>28</sup>Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.”* This man was a religious man; he had been to Jerusalem to worship and was reading words from the prophet Esaias; so why did God want Philip to meet up with him? For one very important reason; he had not been baptized for the remission of his sins. And God also knew that he would be receptive to the gospel. I am not suggesting in any way that he was predestined to become saved; I am simply saying that God knows the hearts of mankind. Philip asks the eunuch a question; *“Understandest thou what thou readest? (Acts 8:30)* The eunuch replied: *“How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.( Acts 8:31).* We are even told what he was reading when Philip met up with him: (Acts 8:32-33) *“The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.”* This of course was a prophecy about Jesus Christ and was a perfect spot for Philip to begin to teach him about Christ: (Acts 8:35) *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”* What transpired next is very interesting: (Acts 8:36) *“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”* Have you ever wondered why the

eunuch asked “what doth hinder me to be baptized?” We must realize that we do not have a record of Philip’s entire lesson; therefore we must conclude that Philip did in fact teach the eunuch about baptism. This is the only logical conclusion that can be come to; because there is no way the eunuch could have known about baptism unless Philip had taught him about baptism. So we see that teaching once again worked because the eunuch was baptized: (*Acts 8:38*) “*And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water; both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*” I would like to make another point here: baptism can be performed anyplace. They did not go to a church building to baptize the eunuch; they were out in the desert. The only thing that is required as to where baptism can be performed is the presence of water!

Sometimes whole households were baptized; in Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius: (*Acts 10:1-2*) “*There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, <sup>2</sup>A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*” As this passage suggests Cornelius was a good man; but he had never been baptized for the remission of sins [*Acts 2:38*] and he was not a Christian. Unless he was a proselyte he was not even a Jew. This chapter should be very important to us who are Gentiles because this is the beginning of the gospel being preached to the Gentiles. Up until now the gospel had only been preached to the Jews only. They seemed to have retained the feelings of their countrymen on this subject, that the Jews were to be regarded as the especially favored people, and that salvation was not to be offered beyond the limits of their nation. I feel certain that you have read this chapter in the past and you are aware that it took a vision to get Peter to go to a Gentile so I am not going to make further comments on that subject.

Upon coming face to face with Cornelius Peter reminded him that it was unlawful for a Jew to come in contact with a Gentile; he further stated that God had shown him that he should not call any man common or unclean: (*Acts 10:28*) “*And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*” We who are Gentiles should cherish and delight in the words found in verses 34 and 35: (*Acts 10:34-35*) “*Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: <sup>35</sup>But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*” While Peter was still speaking “*the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. <sup>45</sup>And they of the circumcision which be-*

lieved were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. <sup>46</sup>For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, <sup>47</sup>Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? <sup>48</sup>And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”(Acts 10:44-48). But can we prove that Cornelius and his household were baptized. Acts 10:48 says he “commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord; but who is “them” that was baptized? To answer this we need to know who was present: (Acts 10:33) “Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” Cornelius told Peter “WE ALL” are present and this would include his household and they “ALL WERE” baptized!

Next we go to Philippi: (Acts 16:12) “And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.” It is there that Paul came upon a woman at the river side: (Acts 16:14) “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” Purple was a most valuable color, obtained usually from shellfish. It was chiefly worn by princes and by the rich: (Luke 16:19) “There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:” it is said that the art of dying purple It could be very profitable to those who bought and sold it; therefore it is assumed that Lydia was a wealthy lady. I am not sure whether she was a seller of purple linen or purple dye as the scriptures do not indicate which she sold. One thing that we can be sure of is that she worshipped God. Gill says this about Lydia: “Lydia worshipped the true God, the God of Israel, and not the gods of the Gentiles, among whom she was; which shows, that she was either a Jewish woman, who had knowledge of the one true and living God, or at least a proselytess of the Jewish religion:”

The scripture says that “the Lord opened her heart. What does this mean? Luke the writer of the book of Acts gives us some light what this means in his gospel: (Luke 24:45) “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,” Today we might say that we saw a light bulb lit up when we see that someone understands what is being said. I like to watch the T.V. show “Wheel of Fortune”; every now and then I have seen some who suddenly come to know the puzzle just light up with understanding. Before she heard Paul she did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah. But after hear-

ing Paul her heart was opened up and she became a believer. I believe that since Lydia was a sincere worshipper of God that her heart was prepared to receive the truth of God's word that she heard from this inspired apostle and this is how God opened her heart.

What was it that she heard Paul say? Since the Bible does not say I can give no definite answer; I can only guess that Paul spoke to her about Jesus Christ and him crucified: (*1 Corinthians 2:2*) "*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" Without doubt this had to be a part of Pau's speech.

The point I want to stress is that Lydia and her household were baptized: (*Acts 16:15*) "*And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*" This passage says that Lydia and her household were baptized at the same time. These seem to be her servants who attended to her needs. These seem to all have been men: (*Acts 16:40*) "*And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.*" The reason I bring this up is because there are those who use this to defend their falsely baptizing infants. It cannot be proven that there were infants in the household of Lydia. Lydia is the only woman mentioned and verse 40 verifies that those of her household were "brethren". They will have to go someplace else to establish their authority to baptize infants. Whether Lydia was a maid, a wife, or widow cannot be confirmed by the scriptures.

In this section we have noted that groups were baptized, individuals were baptized and whole households were baptized proving that there is a need for sinners to be baptized for the remission of their sins.

### **Others who submitted to baptism Questions**

1. When is the Christian baptism first mentioned?

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2. What did Peter accuse his listeners of doing? [Acts 2:36].

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3. How did this affect those who heard him? (Acts 2:37).

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4. What did they ask Peter?

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5. Wasn't this a show of guilt?

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6. What was the first thing Peter told them to do? [Acts 2:38]. \_\_\_\_\_  
What was the second thing they were told to do? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many were baptized on this day? [Acts 2:41].

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8. No doubt there was rejoicing in Jerusalem on this day; where else could rejoicing be heard? [Lu. 15:10].

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9. What did the Lord do when they were baptized? [Acts 2:41].

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10. Was this a one time occurrence? [Acts 2:47].

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11. Are Wednesday and Sunday the only days that the Lord will add someone to the church? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Did the church stop growing after the Day of Pentecost? [Acts 6:1].

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13. How many disciples were there before the Day of Pentecost? [Acts 1:15]

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14. What happened when persecution arose in Jerusalem? [Acts 8:4].

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15. Where did Philip go to preach Christ? [Acts 8:5].

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16. Who was converted there? [Acts 8:9] \_\_\_\_\_

17. What were the results of Philip's preaching in Samaria? [Acts 8:12].

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18. Who sent Philip on another preaching mission? [Acts 8:26].

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19. Who was converted as a result of Philip's preaching on this mission? [Acts 8:27, 28].

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20. What was the eunuch reading when Philip caught up with him? [Acts 8:28].

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21. What did Philip ask the eunuch? [Acts 8:30].

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22. What was the eunuch's reply? [Acts 8:30].

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23. What was the theme of Philip's message to the eunuch? [Acts 8:35].

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24. When Philip and the eunuch came to some water what did the eunuch ask Philip? [Acts 8:36].

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25. Who was a good man that he and his household were baptized? [Acts 10:1, 2].

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26. What kind of man was Cornelius? [Acts 10:2].

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27 Was it permissible for Peter to call any man unclean or common? [Acts 10:28].

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28. What must we do to be acceptable to God? [Acts 10:34,35].

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29. Who was present to hear Peter's message to Cornelius? [Acts 10:33].

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30. Is it correct to say that these were the ones who were baptized?

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31. What is the name of the woman that Paul met up with by the river? [Acts 16:14]. \_\_\_\_\_

32. What did she do for a living?

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33. What did Paul usually claim to know? [1 Cor. 2:2].

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34. Was anyone beside Lydia baptized? [Acts 16:15]

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## **Baptism is needed**

In the Lord's church we do not baptize just to have something to do; neither do we baptize because a person is already saved. I could say that we baptize because Jesus commanded baptism to be performed and thereby we have authority to baptize and end my comments there. But I feel it is necessary to give an explanation and to inform my readers why we baptize. Therefore, this section will be devoted to giving the reason we baptize from the Bible. The Bible should always be our source of authority and we should always go to the word of God for everything we do including baptism.

First and perhaps even foremost we baptize because it is approved by God. God approved of Jesus' baptism. As we have already examined God approve of Jesus and what he had just done; it was immediately after Jesus was baptized that God made this announcement: (*Matthew 3:16-17*) "*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: <sup>17</sup>And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" Every son is delighted when their father tells them they are pleased with them for an action they had just taken. Jesus is no different he was delighted when his heavenly Father told him he was well pleased with his being baptized because that was verbal approval of not only what Jesus had done but it was also God's approval of the act of baptism. If God approved Jesus baptism don't you think He will also approve of all baptisms since that time? We can baptize today knowing that it has been and will be approved by God. That is the very reason that we have a good conscience when we are baptized: (*1 Peter 3:21*) "*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:*" As Peter wrote baptism will not take away the filth of the flesh; there is nothing magical about the water. An important fact that Peter makes is that baptism "doth also now save us". But let's think about the conscience; Peter proclaimed that baptism will give "a good conscience toward God. When do you have a good conscience? Is it not when you have done that which is right, that which you are expected to do or that which you know is approved by others? When you are baptized for the remission of your sins you have done that which is approved of by God and you feel good because you now have "good conscience. In other words you have done that which you know God expects of you and is approved by Him.

In the Lord's church we contend that it is through baptism that we receive remission of all past sins; we know that baptism saves because Jesus said so: (*Mark 16:16*) "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" I put my faith in whatever Jesus said; if you can't trust Jesus who can you trust? Peter believed and trusted Jesus as is indicated in *Acts 2:38* "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" Am I incorrect in thinking that Peter said baptism was for the remission of sins; am I incorrect in saying that Jesus said baptism is for the remission of sins. I could only wish that everybody would consider the consequence of not being baptized. "Shall be damned" these are very harsh words; but they are

very true words. True, Jesus did not say that those who are not baptized shall be damned; you are perfectly correct if you say that Jesus said that if you don't believe you will be damned; but let me ask you this; "If someone does not believe is there the slightest chance that they will be baptized"? What Jesus did say is "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved". That little word "and" joins believeth and baptism together; you can have one without the other. You must both believe and be baptized to have salvation. You can believe with all of your heart but if you won't submit to baptism you remain in a lost condition and you will be damned on the Judgment Day. Thinking back to Acts 2:38 Peter said "repent and be baptized FOR the remission of sins". Again we must consider a three lettered word; that word I have put in capital letters in the above quote. Some say that the word "for" means "because". I give you what Strong says about the word "for": "A primary preposition; *to* or *into* (indicating the point reached or entered)". The definition that I have often heard and used is "in order to obtain". I sincerely believe that when Peter said to be baptized FOR the remission of sins" he meant that we should be baptized in order to receive remission of our sins. I find it amazing that those who say we are baptized because their sins have been forgiven that their early preachers said basically the same thing I am saying today.

In the Lord's church we baptize because Paul wrote this about baptism: (*Galatians 3:27*) "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" Paul no doubt was aware that there were those at Galatia who had been baptized in water yet they had not been baptized into Christ. Only those who are baptized in the proper manner are truly baptized "into Christ"! Those who are not repentant are not proper candidates for baptism so even though they may have been baptized in water they were not actually baptized "into Christ". Sometimes people are baptized because their parents, friends, husband or wife want them to be baptized; again these are not baptized "into Christ". Those who are truly baptized "into Christ" baptized into his death, burial and resurrection from the dead: (*Romans 6:3-4*) "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" When we are raised up from that watery grave we are a new person [all our past sins have been forgiven] and we walk and talk in a different way because our old way of life is dead, it is past, it is gone because we are a new person. Those who have been "baptized into Christ" Paul wrote in Galatians 3:27 that they "have put on Christ"; those who have "put on Christ have put on his sentiments, opinions, characteristic traits, etc. This one of the reasons I have always stressed the need to study the life of Christ;

how else are we going to know what Jesus would do or say when faced with similar situations as those we are faced with. To those who bragged about their circumcision Paul points out that baptism “into Christ is of far greater importance if they are seeking salvation. Before one can be baptized they must confess their faith in him; there is not better place to illustrate this than the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch: (*Acts 8:35-38*) “*Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*”<sup>36</sup> *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?*”<sup>37</sup> *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*”<sup>38</sup> *And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”* When you are baptized you profess your faith in him, you are thereby devoted to him, and had, as it were, put on his livery, and declare yourself to be his servants and disciples; and having thus become the members of Christ, they were through him owned and accounted as the children of God. So we can see that baptism is more than just getting wet in water.

Baptism is said to “wash away sins”: (*Acts 22:16*) “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” As has already been stated baptism will not “wash away the filth of the flesh” so what does this passage mean? If I were to paraphrase this statement I would say, “be washed from thy sins”. We must understand that it is not in man to cleanse himself from his sins; what cleanses us from our sins is the blood of Christ and it is in baptism that we come into contact with his blood. The ordinance of baptism is where and when we come into the contact of Jesus’ blood which cleanses us from all sin. It could be said that baptism is emblematic of the washing away of sins. It cannot be intended that the external rite of baptism was sufficient to make the soul pure, but that it was an ordinance divinely appointed as expressive of the washing away of sins, or of purifying the heart. This verse proves that Ananias thought that the penitent sinner [I.e. Saul also known as Paul] was to be baptized for the remission of sins. Paul held the same view: (*Titus 3:5*) “*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*”

Would anyone dare to even think that they could possibly be saved without repenting? If you are of this opinion you are telling Jesus that he is wrong; that he doesn’t know what he is talking about! I will give you the words of Jesus concerning repentance again: (*Luke 13:3*) “*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*” In this chapter Christ begins preaching [or teaching] the ne-

cessity of repentance from the punishment of the Galileans massacred by Pilate: (Luke 13:1-3) *“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? <sup>3</sup>I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* At this time there were some who had been present and heard Jesus’ teaching in the previous chapter and they mentioned what had been done by Pilate to the Galileans. In all likelihood they were Scribes and Pharisees. As the Galileans [those who lived in Galilee] were offering sacrifices Pilate mingled their blood with the blood of the sacrifices they were offering. Jesus asked them; “Do you suppose that those who were slain by Pilate were sinners of the worse degree?” Jesus informs them that they are not correct to draw such a conclusion. Just because men die a violent death does not prove that they were wicked sinful men. Jesus then directed his words to them by telling them if they did not repent of their sins they were going to perish!

Jesus then adds another similar case in an effort to warn them. (Luke 13:4) *“Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?”* Jesus who knows what is in the hearts of men asks them again “do you think that they were the worse sinners known to man?” This had probably happened not too long before and it is most likely they had judged it in the same manner as they had the death of the Galileans. The manner of Jesus’ speech suggests that this had occurred not too long ago in the past and it would have been fresh upon their minds. Jesus again tells them again that if they don’t repent they will perish: (Luke 13:5) *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*

The very words of Jesus himself prove that if we don’t repent we are going to perish; which no man can deny. I have serious doubts that anyone would even attempt to deny these statements of Jesus. Yet there are those who deny that baptism is necessary to obtain salvation. I want to look at the words of Peter once again in an effort to explain why we in the Lord’s church baptize: (Acts 2:38) *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Let us remember that Peter was guided by the Holy Spirit as he spoke these words. He first said “repent” and since it is almost certain that everyone will agree that unless we repent we are going to perish why do some people still insist that baptism is not necessary for the remission of our sins. That little word “and” is a very and it joins the words “repent” and “baptized” together. As is often re-

peated in marriage ceremonies I now repeat; “What God has joined together let no man put asunder”.

This my friends is why we of the Lord’s church insist and teach that baptism is for the remission of sins!

### **Baptism is needed Questions**

1. When Jesus was baptized what did God do? [Matt. 3:16, 17].

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2. Did this show God’s approval or disapproval of Jesus’ baptism?

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3. Will baptism take away the filth of the flesh? [1 Pet. 3:21].

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4. What does baptism provide? [1 Pet. 3:21].

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5. What did Jesus promise that those who are baptized would receive? [Mk. 16:16].

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6. What will happen to those who do not believe? [Mk. 16:16].

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7. Do you think that a non-believer will be baptized?

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8. For what purpose did Peter say baptism was for? [Acts 2:38].

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9. In Acts 2:38 what does the word “for” mean?

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10. What did Paul say that those who have been baptized put on? [Gal. 3:27].

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11. When we are baptized what are we baptized into?  
[Rom. 6:3, 4].

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12. How are we to walk after baptism? [Rom. 6:4].

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13. What must we confess before we can be baptized? [Acts 8:35-38].

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14. Can man cleanse himself of his sins? What is necessary for the cleansing of sins? [Acts 22:16].

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15. What do we come into contact with when we are baptized?

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16. Can we be saved without repenting? [Lu. 13:3, 5].

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17. In Acts 2:38 what word joins “repent” and “baptized” together?

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18. Can repentance and baptism proper be separated?

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### **Essentials and non-essentials of baptism**

I would like to now conclude with some essentials and non-essentials of baptism. I feel that it is important that we be able to distinguish between what is essential and what is not essential.

Of great importance is the status of a person's intellect and spiritual status. Those who are qualified for baptism must be an accountable person who has become a sinner; having committed sin by exercising his or her individual power of choice. Sin is a transgression of divine law: (1 John 3:4) "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*" Anyone who has reached the age of accountability and transgresses God's law is a proper candidate for baptism. This would exclude infants as no one is born sinful.

Immersion is essential in baptizing a sinner. Immersion is what the Greek word baptize signifies. Since baptism is a burial [I.e. we are buried with Christ] it is only through immersion that one can be buried. (Romans 6:3-4) "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" (Colossians 2:12) "*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.*" It was centuries before sprinkling became acceptable in the community of Christianity. Immersion is essential for baptism.

There must be an understanding as to the purpose of baptism if one's baptism be valid. Again I am going to refer to the words of Peter: (Acts 2:38) "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" (1 Peter 3:21) "*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:*" How could Peter have made it any easier to understand that baptism is for the remission of sins? If you are having trouble understanding what Peter said look at Matthew 26:28 "*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" Don't we understand that Jesus shed his blood "for the remission of sins? In Acts 2:38 and Matthew 26:28 the same Greek word is translated "for" and should be understood in the same way in both passages. Jesus gave his life for the remission of sin and we are baptized for the remission of sin. If you don't understand that you are baptized for the remission of sins your baptism is not valid.

On the other hand some things are non-essential since they are only matters of opinion.

Some boast that they were “baptized in the Jordan River just like Jesus was”; such boasting and logic is suggesting that the location provides some special sacredness to the occasion. I do not believe that the location matters; where is there any indication that Philip baptized the eunuch in the Jordan River? Where does it say that Paul took Lydia to the Jordan River to baptize her? Others claim that baptism is only scriptural if it is done in running water. In my opinion running water is non-essential. Still others argue that the person doing the baptizing must get in the water along with the one being baptized. Some of the new baptisteries are narrow and only allow one person into the water; the one doing the baptizing stands outside and emerges the person being baptized. Many years ago I baptized a woman in a horse tank while kneeling on my knees I buried her in baptism. I believe that she had remission of her sins the same as if she had been baptized in a river of running water. I have heard of several who were baptized in lakes that had no running water. Don’t you think their sins were washed away? Some have even objected to the baptizer wearing wading boots; their objection was that the water never touched his legs. I can remember on several occasions I leaned over too far and the bib of the wader dipped up water and I was totally soaked. Would that have been okay with the objector?

As Wayne Jackson wrote; “It thus is imperative that one be able to distinguish the difference between the essential and nonessential. Such would save souls and prevent dissension. An erroneous idea relative to a “nonessential” matter will not nullify the validity of one’s baptism, but when incidental issues become a point of contention, the Lord is not pleased.”

### **Essentials and non-essentials of baptism Questions**

1. What is sin? [1 Jn. 3:4].

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2. It is essential that one be a \_\_\_\_\_ before they are a candidate for baptism.

3. Is baptism a burial? [Rom. 6:4].

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4. Can you be buried by sprinkling or pouring?

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5. Is it necessary that we understand the purpose of baptism?

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6. If it is essential that we understand the purpose of baptism who would not be proper candidates for baptism?

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7. Does the word “for” in Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38 mean the same thing?

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8. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River; should we be baptized in the Jordan River for it to be a scriptural baptism?

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9. Do the scriptures say that Paul took the eunuch to the Jordan River to baptize him?

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10. The Jordan River probably has running water; can we baptize where no running water is present?

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11. Is it okay for the baptizer to wear protective gear so that he does not get wet?

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12. What is essential to baptism? [Jn. 3:23].

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13. Why would John choose such conditions?

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## **Conclusion**

If this material is used as a guide to Bible classes I am aware that most who participate in this study will have already been baptized. If this be the case I hope that this study will have confirmed that your baptism was scriptural. If your bap-

tism was not scriptural I would strongly suggest that you be baptized for the reasons and in the manner that the word of God commands.

In writing this it was in an effort to aid you to teach others about why they should be baptized for the remission of their sins. The Great Commission is still in force today: (*Matthew 28:19*) “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*” As a gospel writer once wrote; “Go ye means go me”.

If this book has not answered all of your questions concerning baptisms I would strongly urge you to contact a preacher or teacher to assist you. It is my earnest prayer that God bless you in all of your efforts.

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