

Lesson 8

How Does One Become a Christian? Part II

Acts 2:36-47 *This is the first example of New Covenant salvation.*

1. From last time, describe how repentance changed their lives.
2. When they asked what to do to be saved, what did Peter tell them (verse 38)? *He told them to repent and to be baptized to have their sins forgiven. In doing so, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to live in them. (If desired, review Jesus' own baptism in **Matthew 3:13-17**).*
3. To whom is this promise given (v 39)? *To everyone God calls.*
4. Is this all they were told (v 38-39)? *No, in verse 40, we read they were told many other things about "saving themselves" from the wicked world.*
5. Why were they to be baptized? *To be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit.*
6. How does this compare with the popular contemporary notion of simply saying the sinner's prayer (accepting Christ through a prayer) to be forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit? *It's completely different. There is no "sinner's prayer" in scripture. It's a beautiful prayer. It's a necessary principle. But, it's not the Biblical way to actually become a saved Christian. Prayer is something we do. Baptism is something done to us. On the outside, another human does it. On the inside, it is about what God does to us.*
7. What did those who "accepted the message" do? *They were baptized that day. This is in contrast to modern "Christians" who "get saved" through prayer and are baptized days, weeks, or years later or even not at all.*
8. What word described these converts' lives after their repentance and baptism? *Devoted to God's things and ways.*

Baptism

John 3:1-5 *Jesus described the rebirth.*

1. What did Jesus say had to happen to "see" the kingdom? *A man must be reborn in order to even perceive the spiritual kingdom of God (see **Luke 17:20-21**- the kingdom of God is not visible).*
2. Why was Nicodemus confused? *He was thinking through human perception. (This is the particular instrument of Satan, the arch-deceiver. See **Matthew 16:23**)*
3. What are the essentials of Jesus' rebirth? *A man must be born of water and the Spirit.*
4. See the next scripture for an explanation.

Romans 6:3-11 *Paul gives a New Testament explanation of Jesus statement.*

1. What does Paul say happens at baptism?
 - a. v. 3 – We're baptized into Christ.
 - b. v. 3 – We're baptized into death.
 - c. v. 4 – We're buried in baptism.
 - d. v. 4 – We're raised by the glory (power) of God just like Jesus was.

- e. v. 5 – We’re united with Jesus in his death.
 - f. v. 5 – We’re united with Jesus in his resurrection.
 - g. v. 6 – Our old self is crucified.
 - h. v. 6 – Our body of sin is rendered powerless (Romans 8:1-4)
 - i. v. 6 – We’re no longer enslaved to sin.
 - j. v. 7 – Since we’ve died with Christ, we’re freed from sin.
 - k. v. 8 – We believe we will live (eternal life) with Christ.
 - l. v. 11 – We count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.
2. Looking at Jesus’ baptism (**Matthew 3:13-17**) and the first Christian conversion (**Acts 2:38-41**), explain what the rebirth of water and the Spirit looks like. *Upon coming to faith, we repent of our sinful past, turning to God. Then we are immersed in water as God ordained to have our sins washed away through the death of Christ and receive the promised Holy Spirit. This makes us a Christian “as God sees it.”*

Colossians 2:11-13

Baptism is a pure, simple, God-designed act of faith. It’s about what He’s doing.

1. What does Paul say happens in baptism? *We are buried with Christ, we’re raised with Christ, our hearts are circumcised by God, we’re made alive, and He forgives all our sins.*
2. What’s our part in baptism? *We put our faith in the same power of God that was able to raise Jesus from the dead (verse 12). If God said to beat your head against the wall to be saved then faith would dictate you simply do it. God required one man to dip in a dirty river seven times to be healed of leprosy (II Kings 5:8-14). Jesus required a blind man, in whose eyes Jesus had rubbed his own saliva mixed with soil, to go wash in a certain pool (John 9:6-7), and God saved eight people through water on a God-designed ship (I Peter 3:20). All of these are acts of faith in God. None of these believed in their own ingenuity. However, in each instance, God used certain elements of His own creation coupled with men’s willingness to trust and obey to bring healing and salvation. Such is the case with baptism.*

Ephesians 4:4-5

There’s only one baptism for everyone.

1. What does it mean that there is only one baptism? *The Greek word used here means “one.” God wanted a point made. Today there are many “baptisms” practiced. But we must not define God’s intent from a dictionary, an encyclopedia, or a church manual; we must define God’s baptism from God’s one Book – the Bible. There is only one baptism for everyone. There were other “baptisms” that applied to other times (John the Baptist’s baptism, Acts 19:1-5), to specific individuals (the baptism with the Holy Spirit: the apostles, Acts 2:1-4; Cornelius’ household, Acts 10:44-46, 11:15-16). Also mentioned are a “baptism of suffering” – Mark 10:38-39 and a “baptism of fire” – Matthew 3:11-12. Yet, the one baptism Paul mentions involves the one for “everyone God calls” (Acts 2:38-39).*
2. What is this one baptism? *As with everything of God there is a mode and a meaning, a way to do it and a reason to do it (John 4:24). God’s only mode of baptism is immersion in water and the meaning is to receive forgiveness and the Holy Spirit.*

3. **Why only immersion?** *The Greek word “baptize,” only means to dip or immerse. There are other words for sprinkling and pouring. God commanded immersion and nothing else! Jesus came up out of water (Matthew 3:16), John needed plenty of water to baptize (John 3:23), and the Ethiopian went down into and came up out of the water. Baptism is only by immersion. Men later introduced other methods.*
4. **What’s the one meaning?** *People get “baptized” for all kinds of reasons: as babies (sprinkling and pouring) to either have “original sin” removed or as a commitment of parents, as children or adolescents to join a church or confirm their faith, and as believers to show they’ve already been saved. All these meanings are inexact in their conformity to God’s purposes. God’s meaning is clear and concise – a faithful response to a simple command to be forgiven by God through the sacrifice of Christ and to receive the Holy Spirit.*

Mark 16:16 *Jesus promised that whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*

1. **What did Jesus require for salvation?** *Belief and baptism.*

Galatians 3:26-27 *Baptism is how we “put on Christ.”*

1. **How does Paul say we are God’s children?** *By faith.*
2. **When does Paul say we become God’s children?** *When we clothe ourselves with Christ (put him on) in baptism.*

1 Peter 3:21 *Baptism is when we are saved.*

1. **We can commit ourselves to God in many ways and rituals. But God commits Himself and His salvation to us when we’re baptized through faith in Him.**
2. **Does the water save or cleanse us?** *No, not any more than the water of the flood saved Noah. God saves, but He can save however He will please. Baptism is “the pledge of a good conscience toward God.”*

Lesson 8

Homework

Reading the Word

Look at these conversions stories in Acts and mark if the story included some mention of faith, repentance, baptism, or prayer.

Acts Conversion Stories

Conversion	Faith	Repentance	Baptism	Prayer
2:36-42				
8:12-13				
8:26-39				
9:1-9				
10:44-48				
16:13-15				
16:25-34				
18:7-8				
19:1-7				
22:3-16				

What is specifically mentioned in every one of them?

Does Luke mention saying a prayer to be saved?

Challenging Yourself

There are many views on who is actually saved. In your own words, what is God's view?

Have you ever done anything to be saved? What? How does it compare to what you've studied?