Lesson 7 - Baptism Into Christ



The word “baptism” was first coined by those whose profession was to dye cloth. In Bible days, garments were made mainly of two kinds of materials - cotton and wool, both of which were white in color. The ones who dyed these materials (the common color was purple) used the word “baptize” (baptizo in Greek) to describe the dyeing process. They totally submerged the white material in the purple dye so that the cloth, which went in white, came out purple.

Jesus used this word “baptism” to describe the conversion or new birth experience.

By being immersed in the waters of baptism, the believer is saying good-bye to the old life of sin, which by faith is surrendered to the cross of Christ. When the believer is raised out of the waters of baptism, this act signifies the resurrection of the believer to a new life in Christ. That is why baptism in the New Testament is always by immersion. This will be our study.

1. What human response, besides believing, is essential to salvation? Mark 16:15, 16

Baptism is the believer’s confession of his or her faith-obedience to Christ and Him crucified. True Christianity is participating in the truth as it is in Christ. This means we identify ourselves with the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

2. In what three names should a believer be baptized? Matthew 28:18-20

All three members of the Godhead are involved in the salvation of mankind. God the Father chairs the plan of salvation, Christ is the Savior of the world, and the Holy Spirit is the active agent in the experience of salvation.

3. Who is the one who really baptizes us into Christ? 1 Corinthians 12:13

Believers are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. The expression "made to drink into one Spirit" means we have experienced the new birth and are now born from above. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we receive the life of Christ and have become one with Him (see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27).

4. What does Paul say to us if we have not experienced the new birth? Romans 8:9

Only when we have experienced the new birth and have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us are we truly Christians and stand justified by faith.

5. What does it mean to be baptized into Christ? Galatians 3:27

To "put on Christ" means identifying yourself with Christ, as if He is you and you are Christ. This is what Christ meant when He told His disciples that they are to abide in Him and He in them (see John 15:4).

6. What should every baptized Christian confess? Galatians 2:20

True baptism says, "Not I, but Christ." Every Christian must confess with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." This is what it means to walk in the Spirit (see Galatians 2:20, 5:16).

7. As Christians, who should be controlling our lives? Romans 8:10

Before conversion, we had only one life, the life of the sinful nature. But now that we have surrendered that life to the cross of Christ, we should allow the new life of the Spirit to control us. This process we must repeat daily.

8. In what sense are believers baptized into Christ? Romans 6:3

When the phrase "baptized into Jesus Christ" is used in the Bible, it is not referring to the act of baptism but to its experience. When we are baptized into Christ, we were also baptized into His death. His death becomes our death.

9. How should believers who are baptized into Christ walk? Romans 6:4

In this world we begin with life and end with death. Through the gospel we experience the very opposite. We begin with death to our old life of sin and in exchange receive the eternal life of Christ.

10. What will be our experience if we identify with Christ's death? Romans 6:5

Our union with Christ by baptism is as two branches being grafted together so that they become one. His death and resurrection become the heritage of all believers.

11. What is destroyed or done away with when one is baptized into Christ? Romans 6:6

The original text actually says: "... that the body of sin might be 'deprived of its power' or 'rendered inoperative'." Through the new birth experience, we receive a life that is able to subdue the old life of sin. This is what makes holy living possible.

12. What are we freed from when we die with Christ in baptism? Romans 6:7

The actual word Paul used is "justified" which also means freed or acquitted. The law of God condemns sinners to death (see Romans 6:23). The moment we identify ourselves with the death of Christ by faith and baptism, the law no longer condemns us. Now we are free from the condemnation of the law (see Romans 8:1). This is what gives us peace with God (see Romans 5:1).

13. What is the ultimate hope of those who have been baptized into Christ? Romans 6:8

If we choose to die with Christ by faith and baptism, we have the hope of the resurrection. Christ has conquered the grave and His resurrection now becomes the blessed hope of the believer (see Philippians 3:20, 21).

14. Who is the source of our resurrection to the new life in Christ? Colossians 2:12

Our part in salvation is faith, from beginning to end (see Romans 1:17). God does the operation. The moment we believe in Christ, God sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and we live in His power.

15. What is one of the blessings we receive when we die with Christ? Colossians 2:13

God is just in forgiving all our sins because we died in Christ. That death paid the wages of our sin (see Romans 3:24-26). To be forgiven of all our sins is one of the great privileges we receive when we are baptized into Christ.

16. What experience of the Jews does Paul use as a model of salvation? 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

Paul is using the exodus of the Jews from Egypt to Canaan as a type of salvation. The crossing of the Red Sea is a type of baptism. Moses symbolized Christ; therefore, Egypt symbolized the world. Pharaoh symbolized Satan, and Canaan symbolized the kingdom of heaven.

17. Why did many of the Jews of the Exodus die in the wilderness? 1 Corinthians 10:5

Although the Jews had physically crossed the Red Sea, having been delivered from their slavery in Egypt, and were now heading for the Promised Land, the hearts of many of them were still in Egypt. Their act of baptism in crossing the Red Sea was therefore not genuine. In the same way, Paul is saying that the act of baptism does not save unless it is a heart response to the gospel.

Another example of Scripture's use of the Exodus as a type of baptism is found in the story of Joshua (Joshua 4:1-9). "And…the sons of Israel…took up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, just as the LORD spoke to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel; and they carried them over with them to the lodging place, and put them down there. Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant were standing, and they are there to this day" (Joshua 4:8-9). Those twelve stones represented the church. The sinful life of Egypt, which the Jews had brought with them, could not be taken into Canaan; it had to be buried in the Jordan. Only the new resurrected life, which God offers us in Christ, can enter heaven. Crossing the Jordan River represents true baptism.

18. What event does Peter use to describe our salvation by baptism? 1 Peter 3:18-21

The ark Noah built represented Christ. Only the eight people who entered it (Noah and his family) were saved when the flood came. In the same way, only those who enter into Christ by faith and

baptism will be saved when this wicked world is destroyed by fire (see 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). Baptism does not change our sinful natures but changes our (individual) status from condemnation unto death to justification unto life.

19. Why does Paul glory in the cross of Christ? Galatians 6:14

The three basic drives that control worldly people are "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Through the cross of Christ, a believer has said good-bye to all three (see Galatians 5:24). It is not the act of baptism, but our union with Christ crucified, buried, and resurrected, symbolized by baptism, that saves us. In this, we glory!

20. On hearing the gospel, what request did the Ethiopian eunuch make? Acts 8:36-38

This Ethiopian, a Jew by religion, had come to celebrate the Passover feast in Jerusalem. On his way back, he was reading the book of Isaiah when Philip approached him. The Ethiopian requested Philip to join him and explain whom the prophet Isaiah was talking about. Philip took this opportunity to preach Christ and Him crucified. The Ethiopian's heart was convicted and as a result, the first Gentile was baptized into the Christian church.

21. Would you like to make a similar request and have a pastor or church member visit you?

My Response to Lesson 7

• To obey the gospel from the heart means you are changing your spiritual citizenship from the world under Satan to God's kingdom under Christ. Is it your desire to publicly confess this by being baptized?

Response: _____

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