

Baptized into Christ

Paul, in talking to Timothy gives an outline, however brief, of what the Christian's life should look like...

2 Tim 2:11-13

1

11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; **12** If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; **13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

We die with Christ, we live with Him, and if we endure with Him through this worldly life, then we will reign eternally with Him. That is the promise that the Lord has made and it's a promise that He will keep because He is faithful.

This is the outline that Paul gives to Timothy, Christianity in a nutshell, if you will. Now note the very next verse...

2 Tim 2:14

2

14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

Paul tells Timothy to remind those faithful Christians of what the life of a Christian is supposed to be. That is what we will be endeavoring to do in this lesson, to remind ourselves of what God has done for mankind, and maybe more importantly what He expects from us. Christ came to save man from his sin, but the caveat to that statement is that it is a conditional offer. Now there will be some who want to argue that statement and say that god offers salvation unconditionally to anyone. That is absolutely true...

Rom 5:15

3

15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

What I mean by salvation being conditional is that it is offered through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to anyone, but only if they adhere to and obey the ordinances of God. Very briefly we want to breakdown the ideas and meanings, biblical meanings, of the concepts or steps of the conditions that God, Himself, has put into place.

4 HEAR

Rom 10:17

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

The first step in coming to God is to hear His word. This means to really hear, to process the words, the thoughts, the evidence being brought forth. Biblical hearing entails taking in not only the evidence of the Scriptures but also the evidence of the world God created, and when that evidence is accepted, then comes....

5 FAITH

Heb 11:6

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

If we hear, truly hear God's word, taking it into our hearts and minds, then the natural and logical result, has to be Faith. That is the point of **Romans 10:17**, Biblical hearing must produce

biblical faith, the kind of faith that is produced by hearing God's word. This is the kind of faith that is based, not on hearsay, or tradition, but on the evidence contained within the scriptures and in the world and universe that surrounds us, the kind of faith that emanates from the heart and mind of a true believer. The kind of faith that without, it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would come to God, must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. The kind of faith that moves the true believer to begin to search his soul to see where he is at in his relationship with God and God's word, and to begin to take the steps of doing something about it. The true believer, based on what the scriptures teach, begins to mold his life to the kind of life that God would have him to live, he begins to change how he lives his life, the decisions that he makes, he changes his will to God's will. By definition, that is repentance, ...

6 REPENT

Luke 13:3

3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Faith leads the true believer to repentance, and biblical repentance demands that the believer looks back at the life he has lead, it requires that he be aware of the world he lives in with all its allurements, and that he recognizes the promise that is found in truly accepting God and Christ through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Biblical repentance, the complete and total giving of ourselves over to God's will and doing it and living it, has only one destination, and that is...

7 CONFESSION

Rom 10:10

10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Confession means to proclaim our faith that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. Paul illustrates this in...

Rom 10:10

8

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

All of these ideas are part of the process that brings man to the point of contacting the blood of Christ, which results in remission of sins.

This brings us to the next step man has to take in this process of salvation...

10

Baptism

The word baptize, or baptism, is a Greek word that has been Anglicized, transliterated, from the original Greek into an English word. The Greek word is...

11

Baptisma (bap'-tis-mah); from NT:907; immersion, baptism (technically or figuratively): It means to dip, to immerse.

It is an unfortunate circumstance of translation that the translators decided to Anglicize the word instead of including the actual definition in their translation. Had they just used the actual definition, immerse or immersion, I believe it would have helped many people to understand what baptism is. It does not mean pouring, sprinkling, or dipping a finger and touching. In the Bible, in the New Testament, baptism means immersion, complete immersion. So every time you read of someone being baptized it is speaking about a complete immersion and nothing else.

When the believer wholly accepts what he has heard and believes the evidence that has been presented, and changes his will to God's will, the result is that he begins to speak as Christ spoke, the oracles of God. He begins to live his confession that Christ is the Son of God and that He came

and offered Himself as the propitiation for our sins. He boldly and freely, with no reservation, proclaims his faith and love for Christ and God in his faithful obedience, being baptized, completely immersed, knowing that as he takes Christ into his heart and proclaims him before men, that Christ is taking the believer into His heart and proclaiming him before God and the angels. What a beautiful thought to think that Christ will proclaim us as His, **Matt. 10**, when we proclaim Him as ours, what a wonderful manifestation of His love for us, which moves the true believer to responding to that love by loving Him in return. Jesus says...

John 14:15

12

15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

The true believer that has heard, believed, repented, and is trying to live his confession of Christ, will seek to manifest his love for Christ by keeping his commandments. Annanias told Saul after he had arrived in Damascus...

Acts 22:16

13

16 And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name

About the only thing that rivals the controversy surrounding the necessity of baptism is the misunderstanding of what baptism does. There are few topics that are mentioned as often as baptism is in the New Testament. It is the believer's ultimate response to what God has done for him.

Consider...

1 Peter 3:21

14

21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Faithful obedience must be man's response to the commandments of God if he wants to be found righteous...

Heb 10:36-39

15

36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. **37** *FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.* **38** *BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.* **39** But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

The writer here points out that God states clearly that the one who lives by faith, read faithful obedience, is the one that has a righteous relationship with Him.

When you look at the definitions for the Greek words that are translated as repentance, or repent, from the Greek *metanoia*, has a half a page in vines, and has three different usages. Confession is almost as long in its diversity, but baptism means simply, immersion. There just are not a lot of variations that are dependent upon the context of how it is being used, no tenses that might mean something slightly different when used in a certain way. No, baptism means immersion, plain and simple. As we pointed out earlier, baptism, baptize, is not a translated word, it is a transliteration, a word that has moved from its original language to the language it is being used in and not translated, but rather it becomes a part of its new language in its original form and retains its original definition. Do you see the importance of that statement? Baptism, Baptizo or Baptisma, in the original Greek, means exactly the same thing now as it did when John was first called "The

Baptizer”, it means “To Immerse”. There are no variations in its meaning, it is just exactly the same as what it was in the Greek, immersion. To completely bury, in water, just as we saw in...

1 Peter 3:21 16

21 And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience,

You can see the difficulty the consistency of this word presents to those who would pervert its meaning and purpose. Since it has always meant immerse, when did it come to mean pore, or sprinkle? Baptism is not an act performed on someone, like removing a tooth or setting a bone. Baptism is the response that the believer engages in because of how God's Word has affected his heart and mind and compels him to have this response. It is the appeal to God for a good conscience. That is why it is predicated upon our belief in Him, in Christ as His Son, and the Word that was sent through the Spirit to guide us.

Acts 8:36-37 17

36 And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" **37** And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Without Biblical belief, baptism is nothing more than just getting wet, regardless of the form that man chooses to use. How can a baby, who has no ability to examine the evidence, internal and external, accept that evidence and have it generate faith within its heart, so that it can respond, come to God for a good conscience? It is the cause and effect scenario, the Word causes faith and the necessary and natural effect is to lead man to obedience and baptism.

It is the true manifestation of the believer's acceptance of the free gift that God offers, and his bold statement of confession that Christ is the Son of God and has given man the opportunity to have remission of his sins through His death, burial, and resurrection, as seen when we continue reading from....

1 Peter 3: 21-22 18

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22** who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Peter makes it pretty clear that baptism is the final step, or first step, depending on the viewpoint, in man's journey back to God, more on that in a minute. It is at the point of baptism that man is saved. Baptism is the culmination of our hearing, our accepting the evidence, turning our will to God, and the decision to proclaim Christ in our lives and words. Which raises the question, can someone hear falsehood, be taught error concerning God's word, and respond in a correct manner? Remember that baptism is our response to God based upon our understanding and faith in Him through His Word. If our understanding is based upon inaccuracy or falsehood, can our baptism result in salvation?

Acts 18:24-26 19

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. **25** This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; **26** and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Apollos, an eloquent man fervent in his zeal to spread the Word of God, well read in the Scriptures was speaking and teaching the things of Jesus, but his education was lacking. Apollos was as sincere a man as you could imagine, diligently interested in teaching and studying, but he knew only the baptism of John, the baptism of repentance, turning away from the sinful life being led and returning to God under the old Law. The baptism of John did not save man from his sin. Like the sacrifices of the Old Testament, John's Baptism pointed toward Christ and the kingdom that was coming and there could be no forgiveness of sin until the debt had been paid by Christ.

Acts 19:1-5

20

1 And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, **2** and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." **3** And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." **4** And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." **5** And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 2:46-47

21

46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, **47** praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

One of the fallacies that some teach concerning baptism, is that it is the agent by which man is added to the Church. That is not what is said or taught in Acts 2. That's not to say that there isn't a connection between being saved and the Lord adding one to the Church, there most assuredly is, but **1 Pet 3** is plain, baptism saves as a result of hearing, believing, repenting, and confessing. **Acts 2** is just as plain, the Lord adds to the Church. The connection is that the Lord adds those that are saved, and baptism is what saves, but the scriptures are very clear, baptism is not the vehicle that puts us into the Church, the Lord puts us into the Church. Baptism puts us into a position to come into contact with the blood of Christ because of the steps we have taken prior to it.

As I said earlier, depending on one's viewpoint, baptism is either the last step or the first. It is the last step in the process of...

22

Hearing; Believing; Repenting; Confessing; Being baptized

These five steps bring someone into contact with the saving and cleansing blood of Christ, but they don't keep us there. This is where the viewpoint that baptism is the first step comes in. God states clearly in ...

Acts 2:42

23

42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The process of salvation doesn't end with baptism, it begins. The one who has been saved is to continue in the Apostles teaching, read following the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the New Testament. That is the continuation of the process that brings man into contact with the blood of Christ. Continuing in faithful obedience keeps man there, through the grace, mercy, and Love of God.

There really is only one question left at this point...

Have you.....