

Light Study

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this study is to address the most popular false doctrines (teachings) on how someone becomes a Christian. 1 Peter 3:15 calls us to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope we have. This study will better equip you to give those answers.

PREPARATORY QUESTIONS

1. How does a person receive salvation?
2. What role does repentance and baptism play in receiving salvation?
3. Does baptism save you?

PLAN OF SALVATION

- Hear the message - Romans 10:17, Acts 11:14
- Believe (trust) - John 3:16, Acts 16:31
- Repent - Luke 13:3, Acts 3:19
- Confess Jesus as Lord - Roman 10:9, 1 Timothy 6:12
- Be Baptized - Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21

PENTECOST

Acts 2:36-41

36"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

- How did they feel about what Peter was saying?
- Did their faith and being "cut to the heart" alone save them?
- Is belief in Jesus enough for salvation, according to the Scriptures? How do we know?
- What did Peter tell the people who believed to do? For what purpose?
- If they had not repented, would they have been forgiven?
- If they had not been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, would they have been forgiven?

The Greek word used for baptism in the New Testament is "baptidzo," which literally means dip, immerse, plunge, sink or even drown. Classical Greek authors used this word to describe ships sinking in naval warfare. The clear implication is total immersion. – Douglas Jacoby

- Have you ever been baptized in water, after repenting, for the forgiveness of your sins and to receive the Holy Spirit?

DYING WITH CHRIST

Romans 6:1-7

1What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with,^[a] that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. 8Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

- How does the decision to die to yourself play a role in baptism?
- What is the relationship between spiritual death and baptism?
- At what point do you spiritually die with Christ? At what point are you buried with Christ?
- At what point are you raised with Him?
- According to this passage, is it necessary to be baptized in order to become one with Christ?

PAUL'S CONVERSION

Acts 9:1-18

1Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest 2and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

5"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 6"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. 10In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. 11The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." 13"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. 14And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." 15But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. 16I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." 17Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Acts 22:6-16

6"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' 8" 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. " 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 9My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. 10""What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. ""Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' 11My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. 12"A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. 14"Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

- This is the account of Paul's conversion to Christianity:

Miraculously saw Jesus.

Was knocked off his horse by Jesus.

Talked to Jesus personally after He had ascended to Heaven.

Was blinded by Jesus.

Recognized Jesus as Lord and confessed Him as Lord.

Prayed and fasted for three days

- According to Acts 22:16, did any of these powerful experiences save Paul from his sins?
- At what point did God wash away Paul's sins?
- This is consistent with Acts 2:38, Mark 16:15-16, 1 Peter 3:18-21, Acts 8:26-39, Galatians 3:26-27, Colossians 2:11-12 and John 3:3-5.

COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING BAPTISM

Doesn't Romans 10:9-10 say that we only need to believe in Jesus and confess Jesus as Lord in order to be saved?

- Romans 10 is not dealing with people in need of salvation. If you read Romans 10:1-5, you will see that Paul is writing to people who are being falsely taught that unless they obey the Jewish law they will not be right with God. They have already been baptized.
- Paul is convincing people who have already been baptized and saved (Romans 6:1-7) that they are still saved because they continue to believe and confess Jesus as Lord. He is not teaching them how to go from a state of being lost to a state of being saved.
- If the only condition for salvation were heartfelt belief, then Paul would have been saved when he was knocked off his horse and the Jews in Acts 2 would have been saved when they were cut to the heart by Peter's speech. However, when we read those passages we see that in both cases their faith had to be coupled with repentance and baptism in order for them to be forgiven.
- How does God's grace play a role in our salvation? (Ephesians 2:4-5)
- Grace is unmerited favor. When we are saved by repenting and being baptized, we have not earned our salvation; it is a gift of God. All we have done is fulfilled the conditions of God's forgiveness. God's grace is conditional. If grace was unconditional, then everyone who was ever born would automatically be saved and there would be no need for faith, repentance or baptism. God's love for us is unconditional, but His saving grace is conditional on our faith, repentance and baptism.
- According to John 3:3-5, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the

Spirit. A condition of God's grace is to be baptized into Christ.

- We are not earning our salvation by being baptized. We are simply following God's instructions.

LOSING SALVATION

Hebrews 10:26-27

26If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"[d] and again, "The Lord will judge his people." [e] 31It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- According to this passage, can a person lose their salvation once they are baptized?
- What would a person have to do to lose his or her salvation? Answer: Deliberate and continual sin.
- If you were a baptized disciple and you died right after you committed a sin, but before you had a chance to repent of that sin, would you be lost or saved? Answer: Saved.
- God's grace is a wonderful gift. After we are baptized into Christ, we are continually purified of our sins and have the promise of salvation. The only way that we can lose our salvation is if we deliberately continue to sin. Therefore, we must always have a striving spirit to repent as soon as we become aware of our sin.

CHALLENGE:

1. Write down any questions you may have concerning baptism and bring them to the next study
2. Be urgent in becoming a Christian
3. Set up another time to study