

## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

## I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Some of the most basic questions in Christianity are:
1. "What must I do to be saved?"
  2. "What am I saved from?"
  3. "Is baptism essential to salvation?"
  4. "How do I become a Christian?"
- B. Our study will answer these questions and equip the student to tell someone what they need to do to become a Christian.

## II. THE STEPS OR PLAN OF SALVATION.

- A. Simply stated one must do the following to become a Christian and be in a saved relationship with Jesus Christ:
1. Hear the gospel. Romans 10:17
  2. Believe the gospel. John 8:24
  3. Repent of sin. Luke 13:3,5
  4. Confess the name of Jesus. Matthew 10:32,33
  5. Be baptized for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38
- B. Each step is important. Baptism is not valid if it is not preceded by the above four steps.
- C. Once we have become a Christian we are to live faithfully to Christ unto death. The plan above does not complete our obedience, it begins our obedience.

## III. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT BECOMING A CHRISTIAN.

- A. First, we must realize that we are sinners.  
Isaiah 59:1,2 Our sin, is our fault, not God's fault  
Romans 3:10,23 Everyone is a sinner and stands in need of salvation
- B. Second, we must realize that we are saved by the grace of God.  
Ephesians 2:8,9 Everyone is saved by grace through faith, and not of works  
Romans 5:1,2 Justified by faith into grace by which we stand
- C. Third, without faith it is impossible to please God.  
Hebrews 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please God  
John 3:16 Everyone who believes should (not shall) have eternal life  
Mark 16:16a Only believers can be immersed--not infants who cannot believe
- D. Fourth, we must repent or turn from our sins.  
Luke 13:3,5 No matter if we think the sin is small or great--we must repent of it  
2Corinthians 7:10 Godly sorrow produces a change of lifestyle without regret  
Matthew 3:8 Repentance involves a change of lifestyle due to the change of mind or heart
- E. Fifth, we must confess our faith in Christ as the Son of God.  
Matthew 10:32,33 Confess to be confessed; deny and be denied!  
1Timothy 6:12,13 The good confession is that Jesus is the Son of God (Mt. 16:16-18)  
Romans 10:9 Confession is made with the mouth (see 2Cor. 4:13)
- F. Sixth, we must be baptized for the remission of sins.  
Acts 2:38 Baptism is for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit  
Acts 22:16 baptism washes away sins by the authority of Jesus  
1Peter 3:21 baptism is a sharing in the resurrection of Jesus

G. Seventh, we must be faithful to Christ unto death.

Revelation 2:10 this means to be faithful even if it includes your death

Matthew 24:13 salvation is for those who endure all the way through to the end

2Timothy 4:7,8 fight, finish, keep--the crown is now available

#### IV. SOME INFORMATION ABOUT BAPTISM.

A. Of the seven things listed in the last objective, the subject of baptism is the most controversial. It bears our study to look deeper and understand as much as we can about it.

B. **Who needs to be baptized?** Answer:

1. Not infants for they are safe (Ezek. 18:20; Mt. 18:10; Heb. 1:14).

2. Adults who can believe in the gospel (Ac. 8:12).

C. **By what manner are we to be baptized?** Answer:

1. Not *sprinkling*. This word in the Greek is *rhantizo* and is never translated as baptism.

2. Not *pouring*. This word in Greek has several roots but is never translated as baptism.

3. By immersion only. This word in the Greek is *baptizo* and means to dip or immerse.

Also means to wash.

Romans 6:3,4 Buried in baptism, not poured or sprinkled in baptism

Colossians 2:12 baptism is a burial done as an act of faith

D. **Why is baptism essential to salvation?** Answer:

1. Christ has commanded it of His disciples.

Matthew 28:18-20 makes disciples by teaching and baptizing

Mark 16:16 Jesus said the belief and baptism are both necessary to be saved

2. The apostles commanded it in their preaching.

Acts 10:47,48 Peter commanded the believing household to be baptized

Acts 19:5 John's baptism is not enough--Jesus' baptism is now commanded

3. Every conversion in the book of Acts contains it.

Acts 2:38,41; 8:5-13; 8:35-39; 9:17,18; 10:34-38; 16:13; 16:32.

4. The act puts one into Christ and the church.

Romans 6:3,4 "were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death"

Galatians 3:27 baptized people are clothed with Christ (see Mt. 22:1-14)

1Corinthians 12:13 by the instructions of the Holy Spirit we were taught baptism

5. It is the act of obedience that saves.

1Peter 3:21 baptism is the act in the plan of salvation that actually does the saving

Acts 22:16 when one realizes they need to be baptized--don't delay!

(the power is not in the water, or in the one baptizing, or even in the obedience, but in Jesus' power to save)

E. **What are some arguments against baptism?**

1. "The thief on the cross was not baptized so why do I have to be?"

**Answer:** Luke 23:39-43

Jesus had not died yet, nor commanded baptism at this time, yet He has done so for us today.

2. "Paul said he was sent to preach and not to baptize"

**Answer:** 1Corinthians 1:10-17

The context shows that the emphasis is not on preaching over baptism, but that the Corinthians were thinking they belonged to the one who baptized them.

Paul's ministry from God was to preach to the Gentiles.

3. "Jesus stands at the door and knocks, all I have to do is come in and be with Him."  
**Answer:** Revelation 3:20  
The context is a command written to Christians (see v. 14).
4. "We are saved by grace, to bind baptism is to say we are saved by works."  
**Answer:** Titus 3:3-7  
This scripture above shows the proper relationship between baptism (a passive act) and being saved by grace.
5. "Baptism is because of the remission of sins, not for the remission of sins. This is a better translation of Acts 2:38."  
**Answer:** Matthew 26:28  
The same Greek word is used in the scripture above. How can we say that Jesus shed His blood because of the remission of sins? The Greek word *eis* means for.

#### V. SEVEN BAPTISMS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. There are seven different kinds of baptism mentioned in the NT. Yet, Paul says that there is only one in Eph. 4:5. What is one to believe?
- B. The teaching of Eph. 4:5 is that there is only one baptism that saves.
- C. The seven baptisms are:
  1. **The baptism of Moses** (1Cor. 10:2). This was a baptism for only those who came out of Egypt and has the meaning of dedicating, consecrating, initiating into, or a bringing under obligation to. This baptism is not commanded for believers.
  2. **The baptism of fire** (Mt. 3:11,12). Jesus did baptize in the Holy Spirit, see below. This baptism is one of judgment, the unfaithful will meet their doom in this baptism. This baptism is not commanded for believers.
  3. **The baptism of suffering** (Mk. 10:38,39). See also Lk. 12:50. Jesus is greatly distressed over the suffering He must endure at the end of His life. He also called this suffering a cup in Mt. 26:37-42. This baptism is not commanded for believers.
  4. **The baptism of repentance** (Mk. 1:4). No Jew had a right to the kingdom of Christ simply because he/she was a Jew. This baptism signified a changed life willing to accept the Christ. This baptism is not commanded for believers today (see Ac. 19:1-5).
  5. **The baptism of the Holy Spirit** (Ac. 1:5; 2:1-4). This was a promise to the apostles (Lk. 24:49), a fulfillment of prophecy (Ac. 2:16,17ff) and was administered by Christ Himself (Mt. 3:11). This baptism is not commanded of believers.
  6. **The baptism for the dead** (1Cor. 15:29). Paul's argument is that if the dead are never to be resurrected, why be baptized at all? Some have used the passage to justify baptism by proxy. This baptism is not commanded of believers.
  7. **The baptism of Christ for the remission of sins** (Mt. 28:19). This is the one baptism of Eph. 4:5. This is the baptism that is commanded of believers. It gives two great blessings; the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 2:38). This is the baptism that now saves us (1Pet. 3:21).

**VI. MATCHING.**

Based on this lesson and the scriptures discussed, match the following phrase or central idea on the left with the appropriate scripture on the right. You may wish to review all the scriptures listed above before taking this test.

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|----------|---|------------------|
| <u>J</u> | 1. Salvation is not of works.                     | A. Isa. 59:1,2.  |
| <u>A</u> | 2. A definition of sin.                           | B. Rom. 3:10,23. |
| <u>I</u> | 3. He who disbelieves will be damned.             | C. 2Cor. 7:10.   |
| <u>B</u> | 4. How many are righteous?                        | D. Lk. 13:3,5.   |
| <u>H</u> | 5. Not a removal of dirt from the body.           | E. Rom. 10:9.    |
| <u>C</u> | 6. Worldly sorrow and godly sorrow.               | F. Acts 8:37.    |
| <u>G</u> | 7. Remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.         | G. Acts 2:38.    |
| <u>D</u> | 8. Everyone must turn from sin.                   | H. 1Pet. 3:21.   |
| <u>F</u> | 9. The queen's treasurer said it!                 | I. Mark 16:16.   |
| <u>E</u> | 10. Believe in the heart, confess with the mouth. | J. Eph. 2:8,9.   |

**VII. NEXT LESSON.**

The next lesson is entitled, "The Three Great Works of the Church." We shall review the works of evangelism, edification (teaching) and benevolence. Self-inventory: What are you doing in each of these areas?

**VII. NOTES.**

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