

# ***Basic Discipleship***

## ***A Course On New Testament Discipleship***

***Topic #3***

## *New Testament Baptism*

**Objectives:** As a result of the study of this topic, we want to be able to:

1. Understand the \_\_\_\_\_ of baptism and its relationship to the Great Commission.
2. Examine the various \_\_\_\_\_ of the term baptism in the New Testament.
3. Analyze those Scriptures that have been used erroneously to \_\_\_\_\_ that baptism contributes to one's salvation.
4. Distinguish between paedobaptism and credobaptism.
5. Discern from the Bible the timing and the \_\_\_\_\_ of baptism to be practiced.
6. Ask and answer commonly asked questions about the practice of baptism.
7. Memorize a verse of Scripture on baptism.

### **Introduction**

*This handout responds to six primary questions that people commonly ask about baptism and then six less commonly asked questions about baptism including the baptism of the dead, the baptism of children, baptism as a mark of maturity, when rebaptism is important, the baptism of the handicapped & alien baptism. The goal is to help the believer understand that biblical baptism is one which involves the right person, at the right time & for the right reason. This study will be most helpful if read in its entirety, but it can also be used as a ready-reference guide to address specific issues or questions one might have.*

### **I. What Is the Meaning of Baptism and Is It Part of The Great Commission?**

*Very often baptism is described simply in terms of what some church or denomination teaches. You will hear people speak of the "Baptist doctrine" or the "Catholic or Methodist doctrine" or "the doctrine of our church." However, the only thing that matters is what the Bible teaches about baptism. God's people should be baptized because God commands it, not because some church requires it. We should be baptized a certain way, because that is the way the Bible teaches—and it should have a certain meaning—the meaning which God gave to baptism. People need to remember what the Lord says about baptism, and then do what He says, because He said so.*

#### **A. Definition of the Greek verb for baptism (βαπτίζω).**

1. A lexical study of "baptizo" indicates it means, "to dip or to immerse."

2. When used in relation to water, in first century Greek literature the word is used of a sinking ship, of someone sinking in mud, and of a fuller dying a piece of cloth by immersing it \_\_\_\_ die.
3. This study will demonstrate that when the Christian is being immersed in water—one is proclaiming that Christ died and was buried for \_\_\_\_.
4. Even so, the action of coming \_\_\_\_ of the water—pictures Christ’s resurrection.
5. By symbolism, the one being baptized is saying that he or she believes in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the \_\_\_\_\_ way of salvation.

**B. Baptism is important because it is part of the Great Commission.**

**18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).**

1. After people were initially converted or became disciples, as new believers they were to be baptized in the name of the Triune God.
2. The order is always the same in the Bible—first believe, and then after conversion, after a person is made a disciple, they \_\_\_\_ to be baptized.
3. A failure *not* to offer and encourage new believers to be baptized, is a failure to obey a critical dimension of the Great Commission.

## ***II. Does Baptism Have Any Part in Salvation?***

***People have often been deceived into believing that they can rely on their good works for salvation. Some trust in their morality, some depend upon confessions to priests, some on their church membership, and still others trust in their baptism to save them. However, the unanimous voice of all Scripture is that people are saved by simple faith in Christ as Lord and not by any works.***

**A. Baptism does not save or help save a person.**

1. Baptism is defined as a \_\_\_\_\_ and works do not save a person.
2. Jesus describes baptism as an act of ‘**righteousness**’ (Matthew 3:15), and Christ through His Apostles, specifically said that such acts of ‘**righteousness**’ do \_\_\_\_\_ save and cannot save (Titus 3:5).

3. Salvation is a gift of God, which is not deserved, is not bought, and absolutely cannot be \_\_\_\_\_ for by our works (Eph. 2:8&9).
4. We are plainly told in Scripture — that the one who trusts in Christ, immediately has received the gift of eternal life (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).
5. Anyone who teaches that baptism saves, or helps to save, is guilty of teaching “**a works righteousness**” and thus — a different \_\_\_\_\_ (Galatians 1:8&9).

**B. Illustrations of people who are saved apart from baptism.**

1. The immoral woman—of whom we are told, “**her sins**” were “**many**” was immediately forgiven by her “**faith**” in Christ’s power & promise to forgive and save \_\_\_\_\_ from her being baptized (Luke 7:37-50).

**50 And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”**

2. In Christ’s parable of two men going up to the Temple to pray, the tax collector who relied on God’s mercy alone was said to be saved by his faith apart from being baptized (Luke 18:10-14).

**14 “I tell you, this man went to his house justified . . .”**

3. The thief on the cross simply turned to Christ in faith and without ever having been baptized — he was promised that he would, that very \_\_\_\_\_, be with Christ in Paradise (Luke 23:39-43).

**43 And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”**

4. The Philippian jailer was told to simply “**believe in the Lord Jesus**” and he would be saved & then after He received Jesus, his baptism followed his salvation—but it did \_\_\_\_\_ save him (Acts 16:22-34).

**31 They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”**

**C. Baptism is separated from the plan of salvation.**

1. We are told in the Bible that the gospel is the power of God to \_\_\_\_\_ an individual (Romans 1:16).
2. The Bible defines the gospel—as the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-3).
3. When writing the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul distinctly separated the gospel from water baptism when he said that Jesus did \_\_\_ send him, “**to baptize, but to preach the gospel**” (1 Corinthians 1:17).

4. If baptism were necessary to salvation, then the Apostle Paul would not have \_\_\_\_\_ such a statement separating the two.

### III. What Verses Do People Use to Teach That Baptism Saves?

*To add ANYTHING to the Gospel is to say that Jesus' death on the cross was not sufficient to purchase our salvation. To teach that we must be baptized in order to be saved, is to invalidate the sufficiency of the saving power of Christ's death and resurrection (Galatians 2:21). Any verses that are used to try to prove that baptism saves, must be understood in the broader context of the Bible. Since the Bible never contradicts itself, the diligent student of Scripture will discover there is always a clear explanation for verses someone applies to falsely teach that baptism saves.*

#### A. Acts 2:38 does not contradict Ephesians 2:8&9.

**38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

1. The term, “**for the forgiveness of sins**” sometimes has been used erroneously to justify water baptism as a \_\_\_\_\_ to salvation.
2. However—when one uses the word “**for**” in this passage, much like it is used every day in conversational English, \_\_\_\_\_ can easily understand and apply what Peter meant.
3. When we state, “**A man is arrested for stealing**” or that one is “**grateful for a favor**” or that one is “**blamed for carelessness**” or “**commended for bravery**” — how are we \_\_\_\_\_ the word — “**for**” in English?
4. Certainly we do not mean, “**one is commended in order to be brave,**” but rather that — “**one is commended—because he is brave.**”
5. Even so, the word “**for**” does not mean *in order to secure* the forgiveness of sins and it is not rendered that way—in \_\_\_\_\_ translation of the Bible.
6. The Greek word **eis** (εἰς), here translated “**for**” is sometimes translated in the Bible “**against, among, at, upon, unto,**” etc.
7. For instance, in Luke 11:32 we are told that the people of Nineveh repented “**at**” (εἰς), or “**because of**” — the preaching of \_\_\_\_\_.

**32 “The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at (εἰς) the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.**

8. Likewise, we are to be baptized “for the forgiveness of sins” meaning, \_\_\_\_\_ “in order to be forgiven” but rather “because we are forgiven.”
9. We are baptized as a public expression of our faith to say that we are unashamed of the death, burial & resurrection of our Lord & Savior.
10. The misuse of the word “for” is an issue \_\_\_\_\_ in the English Bible, for when other languages—across the world translate Acts 2:28 it is crystal clear that baptism in no way contributes to our salvation.
11. Interestingly, when the plural and singular aspects of the verbs and nouns are isolated from the Greek translation—it becomes impossible to say that baptism—is a means to receiving—“the forgiveness of sins.”

**38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

12. In Greek, “repent” is a second person plural verb whose plural meaning—in this context could \_\_\_\_\_ paraphrased:

*“All of you Jews who are listening need to repent or change your mind what you have said about Jesus—for you said Jesus was only a man when the Scripture that I just preached to you reveals that in reality Jesus is the God-Man.”*

13. All of you \_\_\_\_\_ to “repent for (*meaning for the purpose of*) “the forgiveness of your sins, and you (*plural*) will receive the Spirit.”
14. Then — based on the Greek grammar — Peter \_\_\_\_\_ parenthetically, “And each of you (*singular*) be baptized” (*in testimony to your faith*).
15. Clearly, in this context & in the context of Acts and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible, “forgiveness of sins” is linked to repentance & not to the act of baptism.
16. In mentioning baptism “in the name of Jesus” — Peter is not denying the baptismal formula issued by Christ (Matthew 28:19)—but emphasizing to these people their \_\_\_\_\_ to acknowledge Jesus whom they denied.

**B. Mark 16:16 does not make baptism a requirement to be saved.**

**16 “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”**

1. Jesus was not teaching that baptism saves you—for then the verse would have read, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved *and not been baptized* shall be condemned.”

2. Clearly, this was a combined promise of salvation and a warning, for Jesus did not say that condemnation belonged to the one who was not baptized but only to the one who does \_\_\_\_\_ believe.
3. The Lord never mentions baptism as a basis of condemnation for the simple reason that salvation is based on our faith in Jesus who by His grace—already has \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins.
4. A shallow reading of Mark 16:16 will conclude that \_\_\_\_\_ people must be baptized to be saved—because Christ’s emphasis is on believing, which causes this *misinterpretation & misapplication* of this verse to disappear.
5. If a person does not believe in the Lord Jesus, then & only then is he condemned—even \_\_\_\_\_ he has—been baptized.
6. The Lord assumed a \_\_\_\_\_ of God would publicly confess his faith:

**32 “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men,  
I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.**

7. This was done \_\_\_\_\_ baptism & so this is the context of Mark 16:16:

**16 “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”**

8. Certainly, there are people today who have been saved, but who have never confessed their faith by believer’s baptism—not because they are rebellious but because they do \_\_\_\_\_ understand its importance.
9. It is unfortunate that \_\_\_\_\_ order to believe & then to be baptized has been totally reversed by some believers — who baptize infants, and then later when they hear the gospel—they ask them to believe.
10. With all this said, it would be *terribly wrong* to minimize the importance of baptism as “**non-essential**” because while baptism is “**non-essential**” to one’s salvation—it \_\_\_\_\_ absolutely essential—to one’s obedience.
11. Since the Lord Jesus told the \_\_\_\_\_ believer to be baptized after he believes, we must obey because He commands it.

C. 1 Peter 3:21 does not teach that baptism removes sin.

**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,**

1. The key to understanding this is the phrase “**corresponding to that**” because the word “**corresponding**” is the Greek word “**antitupos**” (**ἀντίτυπος**) which gives us our English word “**antitype**,” a word used in \_\_\_\_\_ translations like the KJV, NKJV and the YLT.

**21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (New King James).**

2. Baptism, immersion, is an “**antitype**” or a mirror image of an earlier type—namely Noah’s ark in the Flood—a \_\_\_\_\_ or a picture or a typological prophecy of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
3. Peter does \_\_\_\_\_ say that baptism ‘**saves us**’—but that baptism “**corresponds**” (ESV/HCSB) or “**prefigures**” (NET) in that it pictures or symbolizes an antitype of that which does save us.
4. This is further clarified by the \_\_\_\_\_ that follow:

**“not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”**

5. Peter is very careful to note that it is not the actual water of baptism that saves us \_\_\_\_\_ rather the spiritual reality behind the immersion.
  6. Water on the body, or the body placed in water, cannot remove the stain of sin—only the blood of Christ can do that (1 John 1:7–2:2).
  7. It’s \_\_\_\_\_ your baptism that saves you, but appealing to God in faith for new life provided through the death and resurrection of Christ.
  8. When a person is baptized or immersed, they picture this great truth.
- D. Acts 22:16 does not teach baptism washes away sin.

**16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

1. Knowing that Paul did not receive the gospel from Ananias but directly from Christ—Galatians 1:11-12 tells me that the Apostle Paul had already heard the \_\_\_\_\_ of salvation on the road to Damascus.

**11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.**



2. The phrase, “wash away your sins” is not grammatically connected to, “arise and be baptized” \_\_\_\_\_ to “calling on the name of the Lord.”
3. The actual washing away of Saul’s “sins” — came the moment he called in faith “on the name of the Lord” Jesus Christ—such that his baptism is a symbolic act—which \_\_\_\_\_ that cleansing.
4. The “calling on the name of the Lord” is synonymous—with faith in Christ as taught in Romans 10:13&14—such that it was Saul’s faith that effected the washing away of his sin & not his baptism.
5. In this case—Paul’s “calling on the name of the Lord” for salvation, preceded his baptism & so clearly in Acts 9:17 he was \_\_\_\_\_ with the Spirit before baptism indicating that he was already saved.
6. The means of his “spiritual washing” was his faith in Jesus & so Paul referred to it here as, “calling on His name” (cf. Joel 2:32).
7. Paul clearly experienced regeneration on the Damascus Road when he believed that \_\_\_\_\_ of Nazareth was the promised Messiah predicted in the Old Testament (Acts 22:10; cf. Galatians 1:11-12; Acts 9:17-18).
8. He experienced believer’s baptism in water \_\_\_\_\_ he called on the Lord.
9. In summary, we know that he was \_\_\_\_\_ on the Damascus Road, and not at the encounter he had with Ananias for three reasons.
10. First, as noted above, Galatians 1:11-12 tells \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel was given to Paul directly by Jesus & not later by Ananias.
11. Second, in verse \_\_\_ of Acts 22 when he asks, “What shall I do Lord?” it is clear that he had already beforehand submitted in faith to Jesus.
12. Third, linguists \_\_\_\_\_ the Greek aorist participle (*epikalesamenos*) translated, “calling on His name” refers—either to action which is simultaneous with or before that of the main verb & so it means:
 

**“Having arisen, be baptized and wash away your sins,  
having previously called upon His Name.”**
13. Through believer’s baptism, Saul of Tarsus gave evidence of his \_\_\_\_\_ in the death, burial & resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
14. It is the calling/believing and \_\_\_\_\_ the baptizing that effects the cleansing.

#### *IV. Who Were the Subjects of Baptism in the Bible?*

*In the New Testament, the only people we ever find that are water baptized are those who have exercised faith in Christ. The Bible is clear that people are to be converted first, and then be baptized. Many refer to this as credobaptism/post conversion or believer's baptism because the order is always first believe and then be baptized.*

##### **A. Christ taught believer's baptism in the Great Commission.**

1. **"Disciples"** or **'converts'** were first to be made or won to Christ & then these disciples were to be baptized and instructed (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ is clearly conversion first, and then baptism.
3. Jesus also taught that His command and promise applied to **"the end of the age"** — informing us that His commission is not time bound — but applies \_\_\_\_\_ His Second Coming.
4. Significantly, when Jesus told them to **"go"** to **"all the nations,"** He did \_\_\_\_\_ tell them to circumcise those who became disciples.
5. Instead—they were to baptize them—suggesting a clear break with traditional Judaism & any Old Testament parallels to circumcision.
6. Notice too, that they were baptized **"into the name"** implying both the Trinity of God & an allegiance to the Father, Son \_\_\_\_\_ Spirit.

##### **B. The early church always and only baptized new believers.**

1. New believers were baptized at Pentecost (Acts 2:38).
2. Philip baptized new converts in Samaria (Acts 8:12,13).
3. The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized at conversion (Acts 8:37-39).
4. The Apostle Paul was baptized after conversion (Acts 9:18).
5. Peter baptized Cornelius at conversion (Acts 10:44-48).
6. Lydia and her household had believer's baptism (Acts 16:13-15).
7. The Philippian jailer and his household all believed and were baptized, and Crispus and his household along with other Corinthians were baptized \_\_\_\_\_ they believed (Acts 16:31-34; 18:8).
8. All the examples in the Bible indicate that Christ's followers were baptized right \_\_\_\_\_ they believed (e.g., Acts 16:33).

## V. Were Infants Ever Baptized in the Bible?

*There is not a single verse in the entire New Testament even suggesting that local churches should baptize infants. The first possible record of infant baptism dates to around AD 197, and we know that this practice did not become a widespread practice until the late fifth century.*

*A major motivation in the early centuries for infant baptism was the high infant mortality rate. The average Christian could not search the Scriptures as we can today because it was in the language of the scholar, and there were limited copies to study. The Bible is clear as we will address later in this course, that little children who die before being able to believe, go to Heaven.*

### A. Some argue for infant baptism (*paedobaptism*) based on circumcision.

1. Protestants who practice infant baptism reason that just like infants in the nation Israel were circumcised and brought into the believing community, so infant baptism is the counterpart of circumcision, bringing infants \_\_\_\_\_ the Christian community.
2. They reason that as the first generation of men circumcised were adults and after these infants (Genesis 17:22)—to establish from this Jewish rite a pattern for infant baptism is fraught with \_\_\_\_\_ problems.
3. First, \_\_\_\_\_ is the “**initiatory symbol**”—into a believing community, whereas circumcision brought men and infants into a theocracy, namely, the nation of Israel—which had both believers and unbelievers in it.
4. Second, circumcision was obviously for male infants and for adult men, whereas baptism is for \_\_\_\_\_ sexes alike.
5. Third, circumcision was a sign for the nation of Israel only, whereas baptism is for “**all nations**” or peoples — who \_\_\_\_\_ trusted — in Jesus Christ.
6. Fourth, equating the circumcision of male infants under the old covenant & the baptism of Christians under the new covenant (*much less of infants*) is \_\_\_\_\_ made in the Bible.
7. Clearly, after God had the first generation of Jewish men circumcised, He specifically commanded Israel to circumcise their infant boys in Genesis 17:9-12—but God gave \_\_\_\_\_ such command for baptism.

### B. Some argue for infant baptism based on the household baptisms.

1. From the four household baptisms in the Book of Acts (Acts 10:48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8) and the one passage in 1 Corinthians (1:16), it is presumed by some that infants must have been present in each of these homes—thus legitimizing \_\_\_\_\_ baptism.

2. The problem with this position is that inferences should not be taken as dogmas when there are other clear passages that instruct us that faith must \_\_\_\_\_ precede baptism (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:37-38; 8:36-37).
3. If faith is a prerequisite to baptism, since an unaccountable infant is unable to understand the gospel and thus \_\_\_\_\_ to exercise true faith in Christ—they should therefore—not be baptized.
4. While the age of children is never mentioned — in any of the so called, “**household baptisms**”—we do learn that with Cornelius’ house, the jailer’s & Crispus’ house—that all in the households heard \_\_\_\_\_ believed the gospel (Acts 10:44-45; 16:32-34; 18:8).
5. If there were any children present—then they were of an age that they could \_\_\_\_\_ with comprehension & truly believe.
6. To assume from Stephanas’ & Lydia’s households (1 Corinthians 1:17; Acts 16:14-15)—that because faith is not mentioned that infants were baptized too, is to read \_\_\_\_\_ the passage & to contradict Scripture.

C. Biblically, infant baptism is no substitute for believer’s baptism.

1. In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus where He held them, prayed for them and then commanded us to welcome them—yet He never baptized them—nor did He command anyone else to baptize \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16; Lk. 18:15-17).
2. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for salvation & so Cornelius’ household did \_\_\_\_\_ have to become Jewish proselytes or be baptized before being saved (Acts 10:44-48).
3. As noted earlier — if baptism is necessary for salvation — for either an infant or for an adult—then why would Paul have said, “**I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius**” (1 Cor. 1:14)?
4. If baptism is necessary for salvation—for either an infant or an adult, then why would the Apostle Paul have said, “**For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void**” (1 Cor. 1:17)?
5. Additionally, if baptism is necessary for a person’s salvation, be they infants or adults—then how could Paul possibly say, “**I am thankful that I baptized none of you**” (1 Cor. 1:14)?
6. While some, take infant baptism as a “**covenant**” between God & the parents to raise a child for Him—they are still infusing into baptism meaning that cannot clearly be found from the Bible.

7. If you were baptized as a child and it was the \_\_\_\_\_ of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Jesus—then you might view your “**post-conversion**” baptism as the fulfillment of their wishes.
8. So, if you were baptized before you found the Lord — you may have been “**dedicated to God**” but you were \_\_\_ truly biblically baptized.
9. In either case, you still need to be baptized, not to please or displease your parents, but to obey & please Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:37-39):

37 “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 “He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

## *VI. What Was the Form or Mode of Baptism in the Bible?*

### A. Biblical baptism is never by sprinkling or pouring, but by immersion.

1. The “**primary meaning**” of the word “**baptize**” in every Greek lexicon, is simply defined as, “**to immerse/to plunge/to put into/to submerge.**”
2. Even the figurative or metaphorical uses of the word carry the idea of immersion as someone ‘**immersed in cares**’ or ‘**plunged in grief.**’
3. Baptism by sprinkling or by pouring is an oxymoron—that is something that is self-contradictory—because baptism by its inherent definition must be an \_\_\_\_\_ of “**immersion**” in water.
4. There is a Greek word for “**sprinkling**” — “**rhantizo**” (Hebrews 9:13; 9:19; 9:21; 10:22) & “**pouring**”—“**ballo**” (Matthew 26:12 & Jn. 13:5), but these words — are \_\_\_\_\_ once used — for the rite of baptism.
5. Immersion \_\_\_\_\_ pictures the significance of the Holy Spirit’s baptism, which is death to the old life and resurrection to the new (Romans 6:1-4).

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

6. The action of being immersed in the water illustrates being buried with Jesus and the action of coming out of the water pictures His resurrection.

7. The symbol of death, burial, and resurrection—can only be clearly taught and explained by “**immersion**”—a symbol that breaks down **if you pour or sprinkle someone** (Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27).
8. While we are never told to immerse a person backward into the water — for centuries Christians have done it this way because when you are buried, you are laid on your \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Then when you are brought back \_\_\_\_\_ to the upright position, you are representing the resurrection, all to give glory to Christ for His work.

**B. All the examples in the New Testament argue for immersion.**

1. When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, we are told in Mark 1:10 that the Lord came, “**up out of the water.**”
2. Jesus illustrates for us the proper \_\_\_\_\_ of being baptized & so He demolishes the human traditions that change the mode of baptism.

**13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” 15 But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. 16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him (Matthew 3:13–16).**

3. Jesus’ baptism, in all \_\_\_\_\_ Gospels, clearly shows that one would need to twist the text to conclude that He “**came up**” from being sprinkled (Mt. 3:13-17; Mk. 1:9-11; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn. 1:29-34).
4. Obviously, if John the Baptist was baptizing, by either sprinkling or by pouring then there would be \_\_\_\_\_ need to go down into the Jordan River.
5. When “**Philip the evangelist**” baptized the believing eunuch, we are told that, “**He ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him.**”
6. If sprinkling or pouring was in view in Christ’s or the eunuch’s baptisms, then there would be no need for either John or Jesus or Philip and the eunuch to \_\_\_\_\_ enter into the water together.
7. They would not have had to have — gone “**down into the water**” but simply to the water’s edge & then used a cup to pour \_\_\_\_\_ to sprinkle.

8. In fact, we learn that when John the Baptist performed his baptism of repentance—we are told in John 3:23 of \_\_\_\_\_ he chose this area:
 

**23 “John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized.”**
9. Again, had he sprinkled or poured there would be no need for plenty of water for “**much water**” is \_\_\_\_\_ necessary when immersion is practiced.
10. Immersion could have been used—in every recorded \_\_\_\_\_ of baptism found in the New Testament—for even apart from the oasis found on the desert road to Gaza—in Jerusalem there were sufficient “**mikveh baths**” to immerse the 3,000 new converts—on the Day of Pentecost.
11. Even non-immersionists such as **Calvin** in his Institutes (4:15:19), **Luther** in his commentary on Galatians 3:27 — or **Wesley** in his commentary on Romans 6:4 — all acknowledge that immersion was the universal practice for early \_\_\_\_\_ baptisms.

## *VII. Some Commonly Asked Questions About Baptism*

### A. What is baptism for the dead?

1. The question about “**baptism for the dead**” arises from 1 Corinthians 15:29 when the Apostle asked:
 

**29 “Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?”**
2. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, historians record that there were some heretical groups—that practiced—“**vicarious baptisms**,” but the church at large \_\_\_\_\_ accepted their practice.
3. This verse has more recently been misapplied by Mormons \_\_\_\_\_ claim this supports their view of **proxy baptism** for dead people.
4. In this practice, individuals go to their local Mormon temple, dress appropriately for a baptism—representatively adopt the name of a person who has died & then are baptized \_\_\_\_\_ that deceased person.
5. By this **proxy baptism** the living Mormon has fulfilled for the dead person “**salvation**” if they died without knowing Jesus’ teachings \_\_\_\_\_ supposedly were entrusted to Joseph Smith its founder.
6. Letting *Scripture interpret Scripture* the Bible is clear that our destiny is settled the moment we die—and that no one can make a decision, for someone \_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:19-31; John 3:36).

7. His argument in addressing \_\_\_\_ resurrection in chapter 15, is that if there is no future resurrection, *then why bother* to reach sinners who are then baptized **to take the place**—of those who have died?
8. Paul is speaking of the certainty of the good news we preach as seen in the resurrection & so **“those do who are baptized for (ὐπέρ) the dead”** \_\_\_\_\_ to those baptized **“to take the place of those who have died.”**
9. Simply put, the Apostle Paul is reasoning that if the Christian life is only a **“dead-end street,”** then you would be wise to get off of it.

**B. At what age should children be baptized?**

1. Since the New Testament contains no clear example of a child receiving baptism or of a child being refused baptism, each local church must \_\_\_\_\_ God’s wisdom on this ordinance.
2. Baptism requires a level of both cognitive and developmental readiness, so, if a child — cannot answer basic questions — about the meaning of salvation & baptism—it is better to \_\_\_\_\_ than to prematurely baptize.
3. While we must be careful never to communicate to children, that they are too young *to understand* the gospel or *respond* to Jesus for He said:  
  
**“Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14).**
4. At the same time, we need to be sure *that since understanding* precedes genuine salvation (Romans 4:1-5) — as best as we can humanly assess, we want to make sure—that their conversion is real.
5. Even if it is \_\_\_\_\_ a pastor’s practice—to baptize children—he should always be thrilled—when a child expresses a desire—to be baptized because it is a wonderful opportunity—to speak to that child about their soul — and to encourage him — to continue to seek the Lord.
6. In an effort to prevent young children — from making a premature commitment that they may not fully understand, as a pastor I like to give a period of \_\_\_\_\_ between the child’s decision & their baptism.
7. I baptize very few seven or eight-year-old children & typically only if they have been believers for several years and demonstrate exceptional cognitive \_\_\_\_\_ spiritual development.

**C. Why in some churches is baptism withheld until the candidate reaches a certain level of spiritual growth and maturity?**



1. Some churches—wait until the new believer grows to a certain level of maturity—in order to prove his salvation and so one’s baptism is withheld \_\_\_\_\_ one’s confession—sometimes for several years.
2. However, \_\_\_\_\_ the examples in the New Testament indicate those believers were baptized—right after they believed.
3. For example, three thousand believers were baptized at Pentecost probably within an \_\_\_\_\_ or so after their conversion (Acts 2:41).
4. The eunuch was baptized—the same day he believed (Acts 8:26–38), and Saul of Tarsus—three days \_\_\_\_\_ he came to faith (Acts 9:18).
5. In addition, Lydia and her house were baptized—the same day they came to faith (Acts 16:14-15) and Acts 16:33 notes the Philippian jailer and his family were baptized the very \_\_\_\_\_ they believed.
6. Clearly, from such passages the argument can be made that baptism was not withheld—until someone reached a certain level of maturity, because baptism is the believer’s initial confession of faith in \_\_\_\_\_.
7. While there is not a command for “**immediate baptism**” and while caution needs to be exercised—in days of apostasy & persecution, there seems to \_\_\_\_\_ a clear emphasis on one’s confession & baptism.
8. In light of the examples in Acts — the fear of potentially baptizing an “**unbelieving believer**”—a church would do well to keep the space of \_\_\_\_\_ between a person’s confession and baptism as short as possible.
9. In addition, since some churches do not allow a person to partake in the Lord’s Table until after baptism—this and other factors further \_\_\_\_\_ to the importance—of baptizing a child—in a timely manner.

D. What if I was baptized by immersion before I became a Christian?

1. This question is commonly asked \_\_\_\_\_ with those who when they look back on their baptism, they are uncertain that they truly knew Jesus & so they ask if they should be rebaptized.
2. There is one clear example of people being “**rebaptized**” or baptized twice (Acts 19:1-5) — “**about twelve men**” from Ephesus who were baptized by John the Baptist when they were in Israel—but were rebaptized by Paul \_\_\_\_\_ they believed—the Christian message.
3. John’s baptism was a call to repentance and preparation for the Messiah but \_\_\_\_\_ a personal profession of faith in Jesus as Lord.

4. Those baptized by John the Baptist in Acts 19, were \_\_\_ making a profession of faith for they hadn't even heard about Jesus (19:3-5).
  5. Granted, while this is a unique case *related to John's baptism*—it still gives us a helpful example for counseling those who were baptized as unbelieving infants, adolescents, or adults before they came to \_\_\_\_.
  6. The principle drawn here is that if one's baptism is \_\_\_ after they have been truly converted then he should be rebaptized.
  7. This principle would also apply to those who had been baptized as part of a \_\_\_ or some other so-called Christian lacking biblical integrity & orthodoxy.
  8. Even if one was born again but was baptized by a non-orthodox group, it would still \_\_\_ qualify as a “**biblical baptism**” since baptism in the local assembly is to portray truth & not error.
  9. Clearly, if you found Christ as your personal Savior and you made a public profession of your faith in the assembly of the saints by being baptized—then you will never \_\_\_\_\_ need to be baptized.
  10. The biblical principle, is to put your baptism on “**the right side**” of your salvation as an emblem of what Christ has done for you.
  11. If you are uncertain whether your baptism followed your conversion, then err—on the side of obedience to Christ—and do it \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. Should I be baptized if I am physically handicapped or if I am afraid of being immersed under the water?
1. Two extremes are taken in answering this question \_\_\_ baptism.
  2. Some will say baptism is of little *importance* concluding one should not worry about it, while others who falsely require baptism for salvation, end up motivating the above cases out of fear rather than out of \_\_\_\_.
  3. Biblically, I believe that every Christian should seek to be baptized even with a physical limitation—if it is \_\_\_\_\_ for them to do so.
  4. If they are able to obey by being baptized even with a handicap, their motivation should only be—out of their \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ.

15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15).

5. If one is \_\_\_ physically able to be baptized—one might understand this like one who is financially broke & unable to give (2 Corinthians 8:12).

6. However, in most cases even those who are physically handicapped can be baptized—by taking some extraordinary measures using a mechanical device—or being carried \_\_\_\_ a couple of people.
  7. On more than one occasion we have had individuals in our baptistry in place and ready to be baptized with the window down, and then, \_\_\_\_\_ their baptism—the window is immediately lowered.
  8. In regard to those who are afraid of the water, I have discovered that this is often the case because they do not know how to swim and the thought of being placed under the \_\_\_\_\_ is sometimes terrifying.
  9. I have baptized dozens of people with this fear—and I have learned as a pastor — that walking a person through the process ahead of time & reminding them of God’s care — will \_\_\_\_\_ them through.
  10. I always remind them—that God will never \_\_\_\_\_ them to do something that He does not give them the strength to accomplish (Hebrews 11:6; Philippians 4:13) & that I have never lost a single person in baptism!
- F. What if I was baptized in another church by immersion after I was saved & my new church does not accept it?
1. Some churches will \_\_\_\_\_ accept your baptism, even if it was done after conversion by immersion, if it was done in a different church.
  2. This is referred to as “**alien baptism**” practiced by some Independent Baptists & very \_\_\_\_\_ in a handful of Southern Baptist Churches.
  3. “**Alien**” means foreign, strange, or not native to its original design & so when this is applied to baptism, this position views such a baptism as “**defective.**”
  4. Such thinking is very rigid & not founded in Scripture, and I would counsel someone to \_\_\_\_\_ long and hard — before joining such a fellowship.
  5. Some churches like this — are driven by a very narrow view of the Body of Christ (e.g., Landmark Baptists), while still others with a motivation to drive \_\_\_\_\_ the number of baptisms.
  6. Our church will receive anyone biblically baptized and a biblical baptism is one which involves **the right person**—a consenting believer in Jesus, at **the right time**—after one has trusted Christ & for **the right reason** that is to symbolize the death, burial, & resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*MEMORY VERSE*

19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).