

## A Study of Baptism II

III. Understanding the “subjects” of baptism or those “qualified” for baptism will reveal much about baptism.

A. Throughout the New Testament story, we see “those who responded with a profession, belief and faith” in the message were baptized!

Acts 2:41 (NIV)

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 8:12 (NIV)

12 But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 16:14-15 (NIV)

14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

B. It seems pretty clear from the “multitude of scriptures” that baptism always followed a believing heart and professing faith!

1. Many traditions have responded to baptism in many and various ways attempting to explain its place in redemption!
2. Some seldom mention baptism as if its insignificant in the life of the Church.
3. Some relegate baptism to simply an outward ritual to show the world around them that they have chosen to become a Christian. Much like the ceremony of joining a fraternity!
4. Some go completely the opposite direction and believe if even a hand or toe isn’t submerged the baptized will miss heaven!

C. When we ask the wrong questions, we are doomed to come to the wrong answers!

1. Let’s not belittle baptism and let’s not distort it either!
2. Baptism is the most beautiful act of obedient submission that anyone could express concerning The Lord they have chosen to serve!
3. This is the beauty of:

Romans 6:1-4 (NIV)

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We 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.

4. Please, let's stop asking completely empty questions!
5. Subjects like, "baptism regeneration" or "believers' baptism"!
6. Let's accept and be thankful for the beautiful and expressive gift of my burial to sin and death and my raising to new life in Christ!
7. Rather than debating, arguing or dividing over importance or mode of baptism, let's celebrate the awesome gift giving to us by God and lovingly and obediently submit to and enjoy it!

IV. Let's remember that we have a Judeo-Christian faith! To truly understand much about our faith we must understand the Prophets!

- A. Much discussion and even argument has been produced from a statement from Jesus Himself!

John 3:5 (NIV)

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

1. Some immediately reply, "See there, it plainly says we have to be born of water."
  2. Others quote the text where Nicodemus said, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he again enter his mother's womb of water?"
  3. Jesus' only response was, "Unless you are born of water and The Spirit, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God!"
- B. Rather than debate which approach is correct, why not consult the Prophets as they foretold of this incredible gift of salvation!

Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NLV)

25 Then I will put clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will make you clean from all your unclean ways and from all your false gods. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My Laws and be careful to do what I tell you.

1. Rather than debating the meaning of Jesus' words, why do we not consult the scriptures the way we "pretend to do?"
2. Why is this understanding of Jesus' words not factored in the mix?

3. Generally, it's because WE DON'T KNOW! That's not okay.
4. Let's commit together...to know!
5. Ezekiel speaks of a "washing" that will come in the New Covenant!
6. This is the "spiritual washing" that occurs when "we receive our new heart" that is renewed with the life of God by The Holy Spirit!

C. When we look deeply at the truth of our redemption, we can then see clearly the awesome work of our salvation!

Titus 3:3-7 (NIV)

3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

1. Let's never forget that "baptism" is God's awesome way of giving us the privilege to obediently submit to the "gift of salvation" and "raise to the newness of life" of Jesus Christ!
2. Through the practice of this "gift" I can both inwardly and outwardly and confidently identify myself with Christ!

1 Peter 3:20-22 (TPT)

20 because of their disobedience of long ago. For during the time of Noah God patiently waited while the ark was being prepared, but only a few were brought safely through the floodwaters: a total of eight souls. 21 This was a prophetic picture of the immersion that now saves you—not a bathing of the physical body but rather the response of a good conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who is now in heaven at the place of supreme authority next to God. The very powers of heaven, including every angel and authority, now yield in submission to him.

3. For all time and in every life circumstance, I tie myself to this!