

## Guided Bible Study: Week 9

May 16-22, 2020

During the time we cannot have Sunday School and Wednesday Bible Study due to the Corona Virus emergency, Rick is posting a guided Bible study on here to help fill the void left by not having those classes. We encourage you to read the passages in the Bible together with your family. We will post the study for each week.

### BAPTISM STUDY

#### Part 2

In our last study we considered how baptism fits into the overall plan of salvation as revealed in God's Word. In this study we turn our attention to the topic of the intended recipients of baptism as taught and practiced in Scripture. In today's Christian world there are some who baptize even infants while others contend that baptism is only for those old enough to believe, confess faith, and repent from sin. What is right? In [II Timothy 3.16-17](#) we learn to go to the Bible as our source for "doctrine". Let's see what the Bible has to say about who should be baptized.

First, candidates for baptism in the Bible were those who had been taught. In His "Great Commission" in [Matthew 28.18-20](#), Jesus told His followers to teach all the nations. The word for "teach" in the original language carries the idea of leading them to become disciples (i.e. learners and followers). Having taught, He said to baptize and to follow baptism with instruction in Christian living. This is very much in harmony with [Mark 16.16](#) where we learn that those who believe and are baptized shall be saved.

This leads right into the conclusion that those who, according to the Bible, were baptized, were believers. [Acts 8.12](#) identifies those who were baptized as being people who believed. Once again, this is in harmony with Jesus' words in Mark 16.16 which we just cited in the previous paragraph.

The Bible also reveals to us that baptism and repentance are tied together. [Acts 2.38](#) tells us that one who repents and is baptized receives the forgiveness of sin

and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. The conjunction “and” in that verse ties matters of equal importance. We cannot just do one or the other. Thus, we conclude that the baptism of one who has not repented is without effect. While that is true of the insincere (supposed) convert who gets baptized without repenting, it is also true of those who have no need for repentance, such as tiny innocent children.

So, in the New Testament, who was baptized? Do we ever see infants and tiny children baptized or was it always those who believed and repented? Let’s consider several baptism accounts to see.

In Acts 2 when Peter preached the first gospel sermon and 3,000 responded we saw in verse 38 that he had told them to repent and be baptized. Then in **Acts 2.41** we see that those who received his word were baptized. The three thousand who were baptized all “received” Peter’s preaching, that is they heard, comprehended, processed, and responded to the message that he preached.

We have already cited the instance of the men and women in Samaria who responded to Philip’s preaching in Acts 8. Verse 12 specifies that when they believed they were being baptized. Thus, once again, we see believers were the ones baptized in the New Testament.

Read **Acts 10.23-48**. Here is the account of the conversion of the household of Cornelius, the first Gentiles to come to Christ. Peter preached to them and, to re-emphasize what God had revealed to Peter earlier in chapter 10, the people gathered in Cornelius’ household began to speak in tongues, signifying their acceptance for salvation. (Note that this was a special instance for a special purpose and is not the case with all who come to Christ.) In verse 46, just before Peter led them to baptism in verse 47, it says that not only did they speak in tongues but along with that they exalted God. To be able to exalt God, these people had to be of sufficient age to have at least a degree of understanding. While we don’t know the ages of those present we can, by this, rule out those who were so young they could not have at least some understanding about God.

The next instance to consider is in Acts 16, the conversion of Lydia and her household. Read **Acts 16.11-15**. The Bible says that Paul’s audience on this

occasion consisted of women. Lydia was a professional woman and no mention is made of a husband nor of children. Lacking clear evidence to the contrary, it would be quite a stretch to take this passage as differing from the usual Bible pattern of believers being baptized.

Also in Philippi, where they had first encountered Lydia, Paul and Silas encountered the Philippian jailer and his household and ended up baptizing them. Read [Acts 16.19-34](#). It is clearly stated in verse 34 that all those in the jailer's household believed.

Our final New Testament example is in [Acts 18.8](#). It cites a number of conversions in Corinth. The point is clearly made that these Corinthian converts heard the gospel and believed prior to being baptized.

[DISCUSS: Based on the commands and examples in the Bible, who got baptized into Christ in the Bible?]

It seems clear that baptism as taught and practiced in the New Testament was for repentant believers. If it was for such in the beginning days of the church, we understand that this is what we should teach and practice, today, as well. Read [Ephesians 4.4-6](#). If we believe there is yet one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one Lord, one God and Father of all, then doesn't it stand to reason that there is yet one baptism we should follow and it is the one being followed when Paul wrote these words to the Christians in Ephesus? In [Galatians 1.8-9](#) the Apostle Paul issued a stern warning to those who would change the gospel.

Obviously, today, a number of denominations practice some type of infant baptism. Why do they do that in light of what we have seen? It would take a separate lesson on church history to fully explain that situation. Suffice to say that practice arose after the First Century A.D. and, thus, after the Apostles were alive. It's roots are in an idea that some came to embrace, claiming babies are born guilty of the spiritual guilt of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden and are thus lost. It is not the purpose of this study to answer those claims in detail. Based on Scripture verses such as these, we do not accept that idea of "Original Sin", i.e. that we are born guilty and in need of salvation as infants: [Matthew 18.1-4](#) [Matthew 19.13-14](#) [Ezekiel 18.20](#) [James 1.14-15](#) [James 4.17](#). We understand

the need to become saved comes to us when we, of our own understanding and decision, disobey God. That is when we are called to believe in Jesus, repent from sin, confess our faith, and be baptized into Jesus.

What we have discussed here will be so familiar to some of you that you probably take it for granted. Perhaps, though, you might find this material valuable as you reach out to others and explain to people why we believe and practice what we do.

To others of you, this is new and challenging material. As we present this, we do not mean to in any way be demeaning or judgmental. We do, however, feel the need to present the simple teachings of the Scriptures. We understand that the Bible, not religious tradition, is the ultimate source of truth, coming from Christ and God. (**John 17.17** || **Timothy 3.14-16**) We encourage you to carefully consider these matters and search the Scriptures for guidance.

In our next installment we will look at the form of baptism in the New Testament. If you have questions, we encourage you to contact me, Rick Mosher, and I will be glad to study with you in more depth.