

# Baptism

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*Por David Lasseter*

Baptism. Everyone has their own way of doing it. Some "baptize" infants. Others "baptize" for the dead. Some say you are saved before "baptism." Some sprinkle. Others pour. Some wait and "baptize" a large group at once. I'm sure some don't baptize at all. Did God intend for us to be so confused about baptism? The early church was confused about spiritual gifts. The apostle Paul spends much time addressing the issue of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians. In chapter 14, verse 33 of this inspired writing Paul answers the question we asked above. God is *not* the author of confusion! Since God is not the author of confusion, why are we so confused? We are confused because of our misunderstanding and misapplication of God's Word. Since God has written a book we can all understand, we will have no excuse in the day of judgment for our disobedience. As Jesus tells us in John 12:48, we will be judged by the words written in the Bible. Our lives are classic open book tests! We have the book. If we don't open it we will have no one but ourselves to blame when we fail the test.

In this study I will address ten different questions regarding baptism. As I become aware of new questions or issues regarding this vital topic, I'll add them to these pages. I will begin our study with a discussion of the definitions of the words we will use while considering baptism, then proceed to a list of the scriptures found in the Bible regarding baptism. Finally, we'll consider the 10 questions dealing with different issues regarding baptism. Links

are provided to each scripture we'll study. In addition, I've provided links to Vine's Dictionary of Old and New Testament words and to a Greek concordance. Please make use of these links freely.

My goal in undertaking such a study is to present the Biblical teachings regarding baptism. The word *baptizo* is used 76 times in the New Testament and is recorded in 8 of the 27 books of the New Covenant. The writers of the New Testament had much to say regarding baptism. In this study I hope all will gain a greater understanding of God's Will for us and the role baptism plays in His Will.

As in all my studies within my site I encourage you, no I *plead* with you to open your Bibles and see what God has to say. I opened this introduction with a statement regarding the confusion present in the religious world concerning baptism, as well as many other scriptural concepts. This confusion is man's fault, not God's. In answering one of the questions regarding baptism I include a study of the word "opinion." Please remove all opinion from your mind as you consider baptism. The scriptures answer for themselves. We don't have to embellish God's Word with our opinions. I thank you for your interest in the Word of God. Now, let's begin our study!

## Definitions

1. Baptism: the Greek verb *baptizo* is translated "baptize, baptized, baptizest,

- baptizeth, and baptizing" in the New Testament. The noun form of the word is *baptisma* and is translated "baptism." Two similar words are used in the NT: *baptismos* refers to the ceremonial washing of pots (see Hebrews 6:2), and *baptistees* is used to refer to John the Baptist. Vine's defines each of these words.
2. Buried: two Greek verbs are translated "buried" in the NT. *Thapto* refers to the act of burying a corpse, while *sunthapto* refers to one being "buried together with".
  3. Immersion: "an act of immersing: baptism by the complete submersion of a person in water."
  4. Submersion: "to put under water."
  5. Complete: "total, absolute."
  6. Emerge: "to rise from or as if from an enveloping fluid: come out into view."
  7. Bury: "to dispose of by depositing in or as if in the earth."
  8. Pour: Please reference Vine's dictionary to address the usage of this word in the NT.
  9. Sprinkle: this word is not used in the NT. The words "sprinkled" and "sprinkling" are found in the NT.
  10. Death: several Greek words are translated "death" in the NT. Please reference Vine's and take a few moments to consider these words.
  2. Acts 2:38: Peter tells the hearers on Pentecost what they must do for remission of sins.
  3. Acts 2:41: Response of those who believed on Pentecost.
  4. Acts 8:12,13: Response of the Samaritan people and of Simon to Philip's preaching.
  5. Acts 8:16: Whose name those of Samaria were baptized into.
  6. Acts 8:36-38: The eunuch's question, Philip's answer, the eunuch's confession and baptism.
  7. Acts 9:18: Saul's baptism.
  8. Acts 10:47,48: Baptism of Cornelius and his household in water.
  9. Acts 16:14,15: Baptism of Lydia and her household.
  10. Acts 16:33: Baptism of the Philippian jailer and his household.
  11. Acts 18:8: Conversion of Crispus, his household, and many Corinthians.
  12. Acts 19:1-5: The ineffective baptism of some disciples, and their response.
  13. Acts 22:16: Ananias tells Saul why he must be baptized.
  14. Romans 6:3,4: What those who were baptized were baptized into.
  15. 1 Corinthians 1:12-16: We are not to be baptized in the name of another man.
  16. 1 Corinthians 12:13: We are all baptized into one body.
  17. 1 Corinthians 15:29: Some were being baptized for the dead (see summary

### **Scriptures**

1. Mark 16:16: Jesus makes baptism a requirement for salvation.

below).

18. Galatians 3:27: Those baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
19. Ephesians 4:5: How many baptisms there are.
20. Colossians 2:11,12: Baptism as a burial, the change in one after baptism.
21. 1 Peter 3:21: Baptism doth also now save us.
22. Hebrews 12:1: Being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses...

### Questions

1. **Is baptism a New Testament principle?** Yes. Several inspired writers of the New Testament have written about baptism. Please review the scriptures listed above.
2. **What does "baptism" mean?** The noun form of the word (*baptisma*) refers to the process of "immersion, submersion, and emergence." (see Vine's for a review of this definition) My inclusion of the definitions above may seem simplistic, but I want to make sure we all understand the words we are using in this study. As one can see from the definitions for immersion, submersion, and emergence (emerge) above, one who is baptized has been placed completely under water (immersion, submersion), after which they arise from the body of water (emerge, or emergence). The word for "to pour upon" (*epicheo*) is used once in the NT. When the good Samaritan poured oil and wine into the wounds of the injured man Luke uses the word *epicheo* (Luke 10:34). At no time is this word used in reference to the act of baptism. "Sprinkled" and "sprinkling" as well are not used to refer to the act of baptism. As one can see, baptism refers to a complete immersion, not simply a pouring on or sprinkling of water.
3. **Who is a candidate for baptism?** This question is answered for us in the scriptures. Before one is baptized one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36,37). The believer must repent of their sins before being baptized (Acts 2:38). As we've discovered in our study of salvation one must hear the Word of God. Hearing the Word leads to faith (Romans 10:17). With faith one has taken the first step toward being pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6). Just as Abraham's faith in God was demonstrated by his willingness to offer Isaac as a burnt sacrifice (Hebrews 11:17-19; James 2:20-23) we show our faith in God by the works we perform (James 2:24). In order to be saved we must repent of our sins and perform works meet for repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 26:19,20). So, we see that a candidate for baptism has heard the Word, has developed a belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, is willing to confess Jesus' name before men (Romans 10:10; Acts 8:37,38), and has repented of their sins (please review our lesson on repentance and consider the works we will perform once we've repented).
4. **How is one baptized?** We saw in our study of the word *baptism* that immersion within a body of water is required. Let's turn again to the example of the Ethiopian eunuch as we answer question #5. In Acts 8:37-39 we read of the eunuch's baptism. Again, he asked Philip "What doth hinder me from being baptized" in verse 36. After making the confession in verse 37, we see Philip

commanding the chariot they were in to stand still (verse 38). Once it was still, they left the chariot and *both* went down *into* a body of water. Once in the body of water, Philip baptized the eunuch. In these verses we see the answer to our question. First, a body of water large enough for two people to enter must be available. Second, a Christian is present to assist the believer in their immersion (will continue this thought later). Third, the believer is completely submerged beneath the surface of the water. Finally, the newly baptized Christian leaves the body of water having had their sins washed away (Acts 22:16) to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

5. **Can one's baptism be invalid?** To answer this question let's turn to Acts 19:1-5. Paul found some disciples in Ephesus who had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." When Paul asked them into what were they baptized they responded, "Unto John's baptism." Paul explains to them the purpose of John's baptism in verse 4. Notice the response of these disciples as recorded in verse 5: they were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" upon hearing Paul's words. In these verses we see that one may be baptized, and have their baptism be invalid. These disciples saw the need to be baptized again once they had learned the truth. John's baptism ceased to be in effect once Christ died on the cross and the church was instituted. Just as these people needed baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus once they heard the truth, people today who are baptized in response to false teaching need to submit to baptism in the name of Jesus to have their sins washed away. If one hears and believes error, they will not be baptized for the right reasons. Once

they hear and believe the truth, they must repent of sins, confess the name of Jesus before men, and be baptized for the remission of sins in order to enter a saved state (see our discussion above).

6. **For what purpose is one baptized?** Let's consider the account of Saul's baptism in Acts 22:1-16. Paul tells the account of his conversion to the people of Jerusalem. Saul (also known as Paul, Acts 13:9) was on his way to Damascus to bind Christians and bring them to Jerusalem when a great light from heaven shone round about him. The Lord spoke to Saul, asking him "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul asked the question "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord reveals His identity to Saul: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Saul immediately realized the grievous wrongs he had committed (e.g. consenting to the murder of Stephen: Acts 22:19,20). Saul was unwilling to continue down his current path of life and asked the Lord "What shall I do?" The Lord answered, "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." What did Saul demonstrate when he asked the Lord what he must do? He voiced his repentance: he was unwilling to continue persecuting the Lord's church, but he didn't know what to do. How did he show his repentance? By obedience to the command he was given of the Lord. He went to Damascus, but for a different purpose. This time he went seeking a Christian for guidance, not to imprison. The Lord told him of a man named Ananias, who would tell him all he needed to do (Acts 9:6-12). In a vision Ananias was told to go to Saul, which he did (Acts 9:10-16; 22:12,13). Now please carefully con-

sider the words spoken to Saul by Ananias in verses 13-16 of Acts 22. Ananias laid his hands on Saul, and Saul received his sight the same hour. Ananias revealed to Saul that he was chosen to know God's will and be His witness unto all men of what he had seen and heard. What did Ananias tell Saul to do next? In Acts 22:16 he tells Saul to "arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord." What do the scriptures reveal to us in this statement? Clearly, Saul was still in a sinful state when he first met Ananias. Otherwise, why would Ananias have told him to "be baptized, and wash away thy sins?" If Saul's sins had been forgiven on the Damascus road Ananias would not have needed to tell Saul to wash his sins away. In Paul's account of his conversion we see the purpose of baptism clearly revealed: **baptism is necessary in order to receive the forgiveness of sins!** Many people are teaching today that one is saved when one believes in Jesus, and that baptism is an "outward sign of an inner work." Many teach that baptism allows one to gain entry into the church, but that one is saved at the moment of belief. They then have a certain day set aside where a large number of people who are already "saved" are baptized for entry into the church. As we can see in the account of Saul's conversion these are false teachings. Did Saul believe in Jesus? Yes! Did Saul repent? Yes! Had Saul's sins been forgiven (washed away) at the moment of his belief and repentance? No! Was Saul saved before his baptism? No! Are people today saved before baptism? No!

Let's consider the believers on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter had

finished preaching a sermon where he clearly outlined from the Old Testament scriptures the coming of the kingdom of God. He reminded them how Jesus had shown His coming from God through the miracles He performed. Despite this they crucified Him, but God raised him from the dead. Peter again showed from the scriptures how David had prophesied Jesus' resurrection. He reminded them how they were all witnesses to the things which had occurred shortly beforehand. In verse 37 we see the effect of Peter's sermon: they were pricked in their heart and asked "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This is the same question Saul would ask the Lord, as recorded later in the book of Acts and which we studied in the preceding paragraph. What did Peter tell them? Again carefully consider his instructions as recorded in verse 38: he told them that **every one** of them must **repent and be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the remission of sins. Please review definitions 1a and 1b in Merriam-Webster given for the preposition *for*. This word is used to indicate *purpose* or an *intended goal*. Remember our study of confession? We reviewed the use of the prepositions *unto* and *into* as recorded in John 6:16,17. As you recall, the word *unto* indicated *progression toward something*, and *into* indicated *actually entering something* (the disciples came *unto* the sea and entered *into* a boat). The Greek word translated *for* in Acts 2:38 is *eis*. This is the same word translated *into* in John 6:17 (the disciples entered *into* a ship). So, confession is made to bring one *toward* salvation, and baptism brings one *into* salvation through the remission of sins. **The purpose of baptism is to attain the remission of sins.** One's sins are not remitted *before* baptism; only *after* baptism is one forgiven of sin.

Now let's turn to 1 Peter 3:20-21. You are all familiar with the account of Noah as recorded in Genesis 6-8. Peter reminds us of Noah in his first epistle, chapter 3. He reminds us how eight souls were saved from death by drowning as the entire earth was covered with water. Were people drowned by the flood? Of course so! The purpose of the flood was to rid the earth of the wickedness of mankind (Genesis 6:5-7). However, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he was righteous and walked with God (Genesis 6:8,9). But what saved Noah and his family? Did his goodness alone save him, his wife, sons, and daughters-in-law? No! He had to build the ark, enter the ark, and remain within the ark in order to receive salvation from death by drowning. If Noah had failed to do any one of these three, what would have been his fate? He would have died with the rest! His goodness alone would not have saved him! Peter tells us that baptism is a like figure to Noah's obedience in building the ark and depending upon it to save his life. Just as Noah had to build the ark and depend upon it during the flood, we must be baptized in order to receive forgiveness of sin and enter into salvation from eternal destruction. Baptism "*doth also now save us*" (1 Peter 3:21)!

Let's summarize what we've learned about the purpose of baptism. We are all sinners (Romans 3:23). We all deserve to receive the wages of our sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). God has offered salvation to mankind, but this salvation can be neglected (Hebrews 2:3). If we neglect the salvation offered by God, we will receive the just reward for our sin (Hebrews 2:2). Since salvation can be neglected, it is up to the sinner to make sure they have not

neglected the salvation offered by God. God has outlined for us how we enter into salvation through the forgiveness of sin. Baptism is necessary to receive the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16). If one has not been baptized one is still in sin and has neglected the salvation offered by God. As we saw in Hebrews 2:2, such a one will not escape the reward for unforgiven sin (eternal death). Have you neglected the great salvation offered by our merciful heavenly Father?

The word "when" may be taken a couple of ways. "When", asking what must be done before something is accomplished, and "when" referring to the timing after the prerequisites have been completed. We have studied the steps leading up to baptism: one must hear the word, believe in Jesus as the Son of God, confess His name before men, and repent of sin. Once these have been completed one is ready for baptism. Now I'd like to look at the timing of baptism for the one who has completed the four preliminary steps. That is, how long should one wait before being baptized?

Let's again turn to the scriptures and look at some examples of baptism. Remember what Ananias told Saul in Acts 22:16? Once he had finished telling Saul of God's plan for him Ananias told Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." What does *tarry* mean? Please notice the Merriam-Webster link. What was Ananias asking Saul? He was asking him "Now why are you waiting any longer? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Saul had completed the preliminary steps to baptism. It was foolish for him to wait any longer for baptism, because *he was still in sin*. Had he died in that state he would have been lost. Jesus

tells us in Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Until one is baptized, they are still in sin. Should they die in that state, they would be lost.

In Acts 16:25-34 we read of the conversion of the Philippian jailer. What was he told in response to his question in verse 30 ("Sirs, what must I do to be saved")? He was told to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (verse 31) We see in verse 32 Paul and Silas preaching to him and all in his house the word of the Lord. After hearing the word, what did they do? He and his house were baptized *straightway*. Please notice the definition for *straightway*. They were immediately baptized. They didn't wait until some later date. They knew what they had to do, and did it.

What can we learn from these examples? We see that baptism is an urgent issue for one who has heard, believed, repented, and confessed. The one who believes the truth knows he is not saved until his sins have been washed away in baptism, and he doesn't wish to wait another minute until this has been taken care of. In the scriptures we see the urgency to be baptized expressed in the believer. Do we see the same urgency expressed by "believers" in many religious organizations today? If so, why are they satisfied with waiting several days, weeks, or months to be "baptized" on some day assigned by the "pastor" for many to be "baptized"? Is this doctrine in keeping with the scriptures? If it is not, it is false doctrine! What are the consequences of teaching for doctrine the commandments of men? Jesus tells us to do so is to worship God in *vain*! (Matthew 15:9) In NT Greek the word for *vain* in Matthew 15:9 is *maten*. Vines tells us this word means "a fault, a folly", signifies "in

vain, to no purpose." Jesus warns us that we are worshipping God "to no purpose" when we teach for doctrine the commandments of men. Can we be saved when our worship is to no purpose? If so, how?!

Let's take a few moments and review the meaning of "belief" or "believe" as used in the NT. Many people take Acts 16:31 alone as evidence for salvation by faith only. Is this the message Luke is recording for our learning? As we learned in our study of belief as a step toward salvation the Greek word translated *believe* is *pisteuo*. The word carries the idea of trust and reliance, not mere credence. When we rely upon Christ we rely upon the words He spoke as being absolute truth and follow them to the very best of our ability. When Jesus tells us "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved", we don't under-emphasize the importance of the word *and*. Please review the Merriam-Webster definition for *and*. This word serves as a *coordinating conjunction*, joining together words or word groups of equal grammatical rank. When Jesus used *and* in Mark 16:16 He was emphasizing the equal importance of belief *and* baptism for salvation. Please do not use the modern definition of believe when studying the scriptures. Merriam-Webster includes "to hold an opinion; think" as the 3rd definition for the word *believe*. We see in the dictionary that an opinion is "a belief stronger than impression and less strong than positive knowledge; a generally held view." (Merriam-Webster 2a,b) Do you wish to base your eternal destiny on anything less than positive knowledge? Do you wish to stand before God at the day of judgment with your salvation based on nothing more than a generally held view? When we *pisteuo* the words written

in the scriptures we don't hold an opinion that cannot be solidly affirmed in the Word of God. We don't discount what is taught in one part of the scriptures simply because it seems to conflict with something else in the scriptures. We put our reasoning ability to work and learn how both work together to give us a complete picture of God's will for our lives. The Philippian jailer and those of his household were required to complete every step we must complete in order to be saved. In Acts 16:31, the jailer hadn't yet heard the word of the Lord--this wasn't taught them until verse 32!! Even faith only (if it was a valid doctrine) couldn't have saved him in verse 31, since he didn't know what to believe in!! How did the account of the Philippian jailer end? Luke records in verse 34 that the jailer and all his house "rejoiced, believing in God." Please notice the two times the word *believe* is used in this account. The first is in verse 31. The second is in verse 34. The jailer and his house rejoiced, having believed in God when? Before, or after they were baptized? After! Please review the NASB rendering of Acts 16:34. In verse 31 they were told they would be saved if they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 34 we learn they recognized themselves as believers after completing the act of baptism (which took place in verse 33). So, one cannot believe (*pisteuo*) in the Lord Jesus Christ without being baptized!

How is one different after baptism? We've already learned that one is different in that his/her sins are forgiven. The new Christian has entered into a saved state which did not exist prior to baptism (please review our study up to this point should you have questions regarding baptism leading to forgiveness and salvation). In what other ways is the new Christian different after baptism?

Let's study Galatians 3:26-29. The Galatians had trouble with "Judaizing" teachers. These were people who taught that one must continue to observe the tenets contained within the old law in order to please God. Paul clearly shows in this powerful letter the temporary nature of the old law. This covenant was never meant to be in force permanently--once Jesus died on the cross the old law ceased to be in effect. Once I finish our study of the steps necessary for salvation I am going to start a series of topical studies. One of those will deal with the old and new covenants, and how they apply to us today. For now, let's focus on the final 4 verses of Galatians chapter 3. Paul tells the Galatian Christians that they are "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (verse 26). In verse 27 we see that the one who has been baptized into Christ has put on Christ. How is this important? Paul tells us in verse 29. Those who are Christ's are also Abraham's seed. What is the benefit of being Abraham's seed? In verse 29 Paul tells us that the seed of Abraham are heirs according to the promise. What promise did Abraham receive? We read of this promise in Genesis 12:3. The Lord tells Abraham that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Paul reveals to us who the seed of Abraham was, through whom all nations of the earth would be blessed--he was Christ (Galatians 3:16). Paul also tells us in Ephesians 1:3 that God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." So, the blessings promised to all nations are the spiritual blessings found where? In Christ! How does one put on Christ? Through baptism! What spiritual blessings are available to the one who has not put on Christ in baptism? None! So, the one who has put on Christ is Abraham's seed. Abraham's seed are heirs of the



promise given to Abraham. The promise given Abraham was that through him all nations of the earth would be blessed. The seed through which those blessings would come was Christ. Those who have put on Christ have been blessed with all spiritual blessings. But one cannot put on Christ without being baptized. Therefore those who are not baptized have not put on Christ, they are not Abraham's seed, they have no access to the promise made to Abraham, and have received no spiritual blessings. Have you put on Christ?

Those who have been baptized into Christ are dead to sin, and walk in newness of life. Let's look at Romans chapters 5 and 6. In verse 20 of chapter 5, Paul tells us of the magnitude of God's grace: where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. He doesn't end his teaching there, however. In verse 21 he tells us where grace reigns: **through righteousness** unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. So, the grace of God abounds to those who have submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. Paul uses the Jews as an example of a people who failed to submit themselves to the righteousness of God. In Romans 10:1-4 Paul tells of his desire that Israel might be saved. But what was keeping them from salvation? Their ignorance of God's righteousness (verse 3)! They had a zeal for God, but their zeal was not based on knowledge (verse 2). Their lack of knowledge and going about to establish their own righteousness kept them from submitting to the righteousness of God (verse 3). Just as the Jews in the first century, people today often fail to submit to the righteousness of God as they go about establishing their own "righteousness". Their lack of knowledge of God's Word doesn't lessen their zeal, but zeal without knowledge will not make one

righteous before God. As I was preparing this study on baptism I encountered many writings by people who state that baptism is not necessary for salvation, because baptism is a work and to make baptism necessary for salvation takes away from the grace of God. They fail to understand where one gains access to the grace of God--through righteousness by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:21). Those who go about to establish their own righteousness have no access to the grace of God unto eternal life. Only when one submits to the righteousness of God will one have access to the blood of Jesus which washes away our sins. One must be certain their zeal for God is based on knowledge. Let's see what Paul teaches in Romans 6:1-12. Paul continues with his thoughts on grace and sin. Verse 1 asks the question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" If God's grace abounds more than the sin committed, wouldn't His grace be even more evident if one continues in sin? Paul answers the question in verse 2: "God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" In the next 4 verses he gives a beautiful description of what baptism means to the believer. We all know that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life on earth, was crucified by sinful man, died on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and raised from the dead. Those who are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into His death (verse 3). Just as Jesus was buried in the earth after His death, the believer is buried in water in baptism (verse 4). Just as Christ was raised from the dead and left the tomb, the believer leaves the watery grave of baptism. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, the baptized believer leaves the grave of baptism to walk in newness of life (verse 4). Please notice verse 5: Paul tells us that "if we have been planted

together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:" What hope do we have to be resurrected unto life as was Jesus if we haven't been planted together in the likeness of his death? None! The American Standard Version translates "planted together" in a way which may make more sense to us today. It reads "become united with Him" rather than "planted together." When we are obedient to the will of God in baptism, we become *united* with Christ. As you can see from the definition of united, we become a single unit with Christ after rising from the watery grave of baptism. Now that we are a single unit with Christ, who lives in us? Do both Christ and I live together? Paul tells us that we are crucified, and Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20). Self dies on the cross, and Christ reigns in its stead. However, not only are we united in the likeness of His death, but we are also united in the likeness of His resurrection. Again, what hope do we have for resurrection to life if we are not united with Christ? None! How are we united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection? By being united with Him in the likeness of His death. How are we united with Him in the likeness of His death? Through baptism. We read in verses 6 and 7 that "our old man us crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." To walk in newness of life is to live our lives as servants of God, rather than servants of sin (Romans 6:20-22). However, in order to made free from sin one must obey that form of doctrine delivered in the scriptures (Romans 6:17-18). To obey any other form of doctrine will not lead to the forgiveness of sin. Just as the Jews were zealous for a form of religion which appeared Godly but was ignorant of God's righteousness, many

people today are zealous for a form of religion that appears righteous but which is based on ignorance of God's Word. We must heed the examples of error given in the scriptures and examine ourselves closely to be certain we are not making the same mistakes.

The baptized believer is added to the church. In Acts 2 we read of the saved being added to the church. We've studied in detail the requirements for salvation Peter preached to those present at Pentecost (Acts 2:38). In verse 41 we read that those who gladly received his word were baptized, and that day about 3,000 souls were added unto them. But unto what were they added? The scriptures tell us in verse 47: the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (those who were being saved, *NASB*). Prior to their obedience in baptism those who heard Peter's sermon were not members of the Lord's church. However, once they fulfilled the requirements for salvation they were added by the Lord to His church. They didn't have the option of joining the church themselves. Only after they did what the Lord commanded did He add them. How do people enter the ranks of many religious organizations today? Don't they "join" the church of their choice? Is this how one enters the Lord's church? No! We see that one enters the church only after the Lord has added them.

The baptized believer becomes a member of the Lord's body. This is a continuation of the prior paragraph (the believer is added to the church). I separated the two (the church and the body), since many people misunderstand the relationship between the two. We see in Colossians 1:18 that the body of Christ IS the church. Therefore, when one obeys the

Word of God one is added to the church by Jesus and becomes a member of His body. Many believe the members of the body mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 refer to different religious organizations all serving under one head (Jesus Christ). Is this doctrine consistent with the teachings of Paul in Colossians 1:18? No! Since the body IS the church, the different members of that body cannot be different churches! The different members of the body are individual members of ONE church: the church built by Jesus and to which He adds members as they are being saved. One does not become a member of the body of Christ until one is baptized into Jesus Christ.

Let's summarize what we've learned about a baptized believer, and how they're different after baptism:

1. Their sins are forgiven.
2. They have entered a saved state.
3. They have put on Christ.
4. They are dead to sin.
5. They walk in newness of life.
6. They are added to the Lord's church.
7. They become a member of the Lord's body.

### **Should an infant be baptized?**

I'll approach the answer to this question by asking two fundamental questions. By finding the answers to these two questions we'll understand the teaching of the Bible regarding infant baptism. The two fundamental questions are:

1. Is an infant in sin?

2. Can an infant fulfill the requirements for baptism as outlined in the New Testament?

If the answer to *both* is yes, then an infant must be baptized. If the answer to *either* is no, then an infant cannot be baptized according to the pattern outlined in the NT.

Let's turn to the book of Ezekiel as we consider the answer to our first question. Please consider carefully Ezekiel 18:1-25. We see in verse 1 that what Ezekiel is about to write is the word of the Lord. In verse 4, Ezekiel introduces the idea of souls, sin, and death. He states that the soul of the father and of the son belong to the Lord. However, the soul that sinneth shall die. In verses 5-9 Ezekiel deals with the soul of the father that follows the statutes of the Lord. If the father is obedient, he shall surely live (verse 9). But, this father may have a wicked son. We read of this wicked son in verses 10-13. Such a son shall surely die (verse 13), but his father shall live (verse 9). But what happens if the father is wicked? Will the son pay for the sins of the father? We read the answer to this vital question in verses 14-17. We see the son has a wicked father (verse 14). But the son sees the sins of his father and does not follow his wicked example (verse 14). Is such a son doomed to die because he has a sinful father? No! Ezekiel tells us the son shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live (verse 17)! The father, on the other hand, shall die for his iniquity (verse 18). Ezekiel asks a question that I believe many people ask today. Notice what he says in verse 19. "Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?" Many people today teach that man is born with an *Adamic nature*, that is, born in sin due to the

sins of the father. I copied the seventh article of the Methodist discipline, and have pasted it here for your consideration: (<http://www.umc.org/genconf/pets/bd92/text/d0067.html>)

#### Article VII--Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Not knowing what a *Pelagian* was, I searched for the meaning of this word and found the following:

#### Pelagianism

Beyond the classic heresies of Arianism and Gnosticism, there are several other heresies that are of particular influence even in modern day Churches. One of them is Pelagianism. Pelagianism is the belief that Adam and Eve's Fall from Grace didn't bequeath to humans anything other than a bad example. According to Pelagians, humans don't HAVE to sin, and can -- if we attain the proper knowledge of God's Will -- by our own free will, DO what God wants us to do, not sin, and achieve salvation. According to Pelagians, Jesus doesn't give us anything except (1) forgiveness of sins, and (2) a good example of how to live in God's Will. For Pelagians, NO Grace is needed to BE a Christian. For Pelagians, salvation depends entirely upon the human's will to respond to Jesus'

teachings. Most Pelagians today are legalists who view Christianity as more a set of rules and regulations than a living relationship with a Risen Lord. They don't deny the resurrection, but they do deny the normative Christian understanding of the purpose of the death and resurrection of Jesus. While Jesus' death does pay for our sins, we do not need anything other than right teaching and a good example for us to be able to be "good Christians." These three ideas -- Arianism, Gnosticism, and Pelagianism -- are theological ideas that we, as a denomination, oppose. Jesus is Fully Human, Fully Divine, and died so that we might live ... and live with the power and life of Christ within us.

The above definition was taken from a Methodist minister's web site (<http://hwmin.gbgm-umc.org/churches/bdumc/TheoTerm.htm>). So, a Pelagian believes that the sin of Adam and Eve did nothing other than bring sin into the world ("bequeath to humans anything other than a bad example"). Unfortunately for this Methodist minister, Ezekiel 18:20 says something along those lines. We know from Romans 5:12 that sin entered the world through Adam, we know from Ezekiel 18:20 that the son will not die for the sins of the father. So, the son has the opportunity to look at his sinful father and decide not to follow his sinful ways (Ezekiel 18:14). Does this mean the son will never sin? No! Romans 5:12 (along with other verses) tells us that all have sinned. However, one is not born with sin, one commits sin of his own free will and suffers the consequences of his own sin should they go unforgiven. One does not

suffer the consequences for his father's sin. What does article VII of the Methodist discipline say about Methodist doctrine? Man is born with sin ("Original sin... is the corruption of the nature of every man"). What does Ezekiel 18:20 say? "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." Who should we believe? (A rhetorical question). Other tenets of Pelagianism are false (assuming a Pelagian would agree with the definition a Methodist minister used for them). For example, if a Pelagian believes he/she can live a sinless life, they are wrong (Romans 5:12, 1 John 1:8-10). But those who state an infant is born suffering the sin of his/her father are equally wrong.

The Catholic View (<http://www.catholic-pages.com/dir/link.asp?ref=20433>)

The main argument for the perennial practice of the Church regarding infant Baptism is the absolute necessity {necessity of means} of the Sacrament for entrance to heaven. If Baptism is necessary for salvation, it must be administered to infants as well as to adults. If not, we would be guilty of thinking that God had deprived infants of every means of salvation.

We can find many examples of infant Baptism in the New Testament. For example, when Paul baptized Lydia and her household (ACTS 16:15), there were obviously children in that group. A jailer and his whole family (ACTS 16:33) and the household of Stephanas (1 COR 1:16) are other examples. The probability is that in these households there were at least some young children.

The Fathers of the Church also testify to infant Baptism: St. Cyprian, St.

Augustine, and Pope Siricius, to mention only a few. Even in those countries where for a time it became a custom to defer Baptism so that the recipient, having the use of reason, might benefit more from its effects, still the Sacrament was administered to infants in danger of death.

In the SCDF's Instruction on Infant Baptism of 20 October 1980, we are given two clear pastoral principles with regard to infant Baptism:

1."Baptism, which is necessary for salvation, is the sign and the means of God's prevenient (guiding) love, which frees us from original sin and communicates to us a share in the divine life. Considered in itself, the gift of these blessings to infants must not be d e l a y e d .

2."Assurances must be given that the gift can grow by authentic education in the faith and Christian life, in order to fulfill the true meaning of the Sacrament. As a rule, these assurances are to be given by the parents or close relatives, although various substitutions are possible within the Christian community. But if these assurances are not really serious there can be ground for delaying the Sacrament; and if they are certainly nonexistent the Sacrament should even be refused."

Interesting. Let's evaluate the Catholic view in light of the scriptures. First, they state that baptism is an "absolute necessity" for entrance into heaven. Under section 1 they clarify the stance they take on baptism and what it does for the recipient: it "frees us from original sin and communicates to us a share in the divine life." As we've seen in our study thus far, original sin is not a scriptural concept. Again, the son shall not bear the iniquities of the father. Section 2 of

the same paragraph makes some interesting points as well. The acknowledgment is made that an infant cannot fulfill the requirements necessary for baptism as outlined in the NT. Note the statement that's made: "Assurances must be given that the gift can grow by authentic education in the faith and Christian life..." If such an education is necessary, then does the one being baptized truly understand the reason for their baptism? Can they believe as they must? (Mark 16:16) Can they repent of sin they don't know they have? (Acts 2:38) Can they confess Jesus as the son of God before men if they are unable to speak the language? (Romans 10:10) If one cannot be sure that serious attempts will be made to teach the newly baptized infant one has a "ground for delaying the sacrament; and if they are certainly nonexistent the sacrament should even be refused." Evidently the granting of baptism to a Catholic infant is based more on the parents than on the needs of the infant. If the Catholic church is in doubt as to whether the infant will receive the teaching he/she needs from "parents, relatives, or various substitutions within the Christian community" the baptism "should even be refused." Doesn't this seem odd? Baptism is required for salvation, but another person may prevent one from being baptized! So the Catholic view on baptism requires understanding, but is backwards on when the understanding should occur. As we've seen in many scriptures, understanding is required *before* one is baptized. We will cover this in more detail when we address question #10.

The Catholic doctrine lists "examples" of infant baptism. But are they really examples? They mention the conversion of Lydia and her household, the

Philippian jailer and his house, and the house of Stephanas. Notice the language used in this paragraph of the Catholic doctrine. After Lydia the word "obviously" is used when referring to the likelihood that infants or young children were part of her household and received baptism. However, after all three examples are mentioned the language used is that the "probability is that in these households there were at least some children." "Probability" is much less certain than "obviously." It's quite a leap to base a doctrinal position on something as important as baptism on something so open to doubt. Since no children were specifically mentioned in the scriptures do we know children were present? How old was Lydia, the jailer, or Stephanas for example. Do we know their children weren't grown and of an age to submit to baptism, if they even had children? Are these insignificant points? Certainly not! Remember our study of opinion earlier? What was an opinion: a "belief stronger than impression and less strong than positive knowledge; a generally held view." Is the language used expressing positive knowledge, or something less? I believe we can all see that something less than positive knowledge is expressed in this statement. Therefore, what is it? An opinion. Do you wish to base the fate of your eternal soul on an opinion? In the doctrinal statement above the sources of the opinion are mentioned: St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and Pope Siricius, to mention a few. What did Jesus say in Matthew 28:18? "All authority is given unto me (Jesus) in heaven and in earth." In order to believe the opinions of other human beings we must show where the authority for them to express opinion as doctrine has been given them by Jesus. He is the only one who is in a position to grant such authority to a man. The Apostle Paul (who was

certainly given the authority to speak for Jesus, cf Acts 9:15, 1 Corinthians 14:37) warns in Galatians 1:6-9 against any who would speak a gospel other than that the Galatian Christians had received from Paul and other men with the authority to speak for Jesus. Jesus Himself in Matthew 15:9 tells us that those who teach for doctrine the commandments of men worship Him in vain! Are the doctrines we've examined above of men or of God? If not of God, of what value are they?

It appears that a disagreement has existed in the past even within the Catholic church regarding the validity of infant baptism. Notice the doctrine statement above (the paragraph beginning with the "Church fathers"). The statement is made that "Even in those countries where for a time it became a custom to defer Baptism so that the recipient, having the use of reason, might benefit more from its effects, still the Sacrament was administered to infants in danger of death." What? So some countries baptized all infants, and others didn't. Those who didn't felt that the one baptized, having use of reason, might benefit more from its effects. But the justification for infant baptism by the modern Catholic church is made on the grounds that these countries baptized infants in danger of death. What infants weren't in danger of death? The infant mortality rate centuries ago was astronomic compared to today's standards. It seems illogical to acknowledge that one who is baptized later benefits more, but those who are about to die, even though they won't benefit as much, still should be baptized. Why not baptize all infants and allow them to grow into their knowledge (evidently the current teaching of the Catholic church). But why would the current church fall back on the illogical acts of those within its ranks from

the past to justify its use of infant baptism today? I still wonder about the large group of apparently healthy infants who weren't afflicted with a mortal illness. Actually, a place has been designated for them should they die. A place called "limbo." However, Catholics don't agree on this doctrine. The information below is taken from the Catholic Pages (<http://www.catholic-pages.com/dir/link.asp?ref=20433>)

Infants who die without Baptism cannot go to heaven. This does not mean, however, that they go to hell.

Infants cannot have Baptism of Desire. The reason for this is because it requires the use of reason. And in our times, infants have a very small chance of being slaughtered out of hatred for Christ, and so rarely can they have Baptism of Blood. Therefore they must have the Baptism of Water, and if this is not given them, they die unbaptized through no fault of theirs and can never go to heaven.

This doctrine that an unbaptized infant can never enter heaven and live with God may at first sight seem extremely harsh and cruel. This divine design becomes still more difficult to understand and more mysterious if we consider also that the child's failure to be baptized would be due to no fault of his own. But Christ's words regarding the necessity of Baptism is absolute: "Unless a man (that is, a member of the human race or species) be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (JOHN 3: 5)

9. What Is Limbo?

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Limbo is the place where unbaptized infants go. It is a place of natural happiness surpassing the most exquisite joy of the present life. When we stated in the previous question that unbaptized infants (that is, below the age of reason) cannot go to heaven, we are not implying that they either go to hell or purgatory.

Hell and Purgatory are places of expiation for those who have committed actual or personal sins. Infants only have original sin. Not having the use of reason, they cannot be guilty of personal sins. And so, they cannot be sent either to Hell or Purgatory.

They are in a place where they do not see God, but where they do not suffer any pain. They are in Limbo.

Notice the sin infants possess. They do not have "actual or personal sins.", only "original sin." As we've seen, original sin is not a scriptural doctrine.

This information is also taken from the Catholic Pages:  
(<http://www.catholic-pages.com/dir/link.asp?ref=18838>)

The condition of the Saints of the Old Testament (Adam, Abraham, John the Baptist, etc.) before Christ's redemption opened heaven to them is called the Limbo of the Fathers. As the Creed announces, Christ went there to announce to them the glad news that redemption was at last accomplished.

This is the only doctrine of Limbo

that the Church has ever held and still holds today.

The notion of a Limbo for unbaptized babies never was a doctrine of the Church and the Church never taught it. At most it was a speculation on the part of certain theologians, and one never hears of it nowadays. There is no "official doctrine on the subject." God has not revealed the destiny of babies who die before baptism.

One source will speak of unbaptized infants who die going to this place of bliss, but outside the presence of God. Other Catholics will state that "limbo" has never been a doctrine of the Catholic church and we must leave the fate of these infants in God's hands, since nobody knows what happens to them. But both doctrines are listed within the same web site. The second states that "one never hears of it nowadays", but it is still being promoted within the web site to which he contributes. Who are we to believe? Who do Catholics believe? It seems like they have a choice of belief, whichever doctrine they prefer.

Fundamental question #2: Can an infant fulfill the requirements for baptism as outlined in the NT? A brief review of our earlier study shows the answer must be *no*. What is necessary for belief? The ability to understand. If one cannot understand what one hears, one is incapable of the belief necessary prior to baptism. Does an infant need to repent? Again, from our study one sees an infant has nothing of which to repent. When they reach an age of accountability (that is, an age where they understand the difference between right and wrong, and choose to commit wrong), they then are sinners and must repent. At this point they are capable of understanding,



believing, and are in need of repentance. They are then able to obey.

What is the answer to question #7? No! An infant should *not* be baptized. They *cannot* be baptized in the manner outlined by the Lord in the New Testament. The answer to both fundamental questions is *no*! An infant is not in sin, and is incapable of following the requirements prior to baptism as outlined in the NT.

A single reference to baptism for the dead exists in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 15:29. A modern religious organization has taken this verse and created a doctrinal system which includes baptism by proxy. Is this a valid doctrine? If so, the majority of religious organizations must change their practices and begin baptism by proxy. If not, this doctrine is of men and must be discarded by those who practice it before their worship is anything other than vain (Matthew 15:9).

Let's consider what must be true before baptism by proxy for the dead can be valid. First, the dead must have unforgiven sin. Else why would one who is living be baptized for them by proxy? Second, the unforgiven sin of the dead must be capable of being forgiven. Again, if their sin cannot be forgiven, baptism by proxy is a waste of time. Third, the dead must be capable of fulfilling the requirements for baptism as outlined in the NT. As we studied earlier, the NT has specific requirements one must fulfill before baptism can be valid. The dead must also be capable of fulfilling these requirements if baptism by proxy is a valid doctrine.

Let's look at each of these

necessities as we evaluate baptism by proxy. Are there those who die in an unforgiven state? Most certainly so. Jesus tells us in John 8:24 that "ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Clearly there are those who have died and will die in a sinful state.

Next, are the unforgiven sins of the dead capable of being forgiven? Let's move back a few verses in John 8 as we consider this question. Notice what Jesus says in verse 21: "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." What did Jesus say?!! "Whither I go, ye cannot come." Where was Jesus going? Jesus tells us in John 14:12: He was going to His Father! Where is His Father? He tells us in Matthew 7:21: in heaven! So, Jesus tells us in John 8:21 that those who die in their sins cannot go to heaven with Him! We use the word "cannot" frequently in the English language. What does it mean? Merriam-Webster defines cannot as "to be unable to do otherwise than." What does "unable" mean? Within the definition for this word we find the word "incapable." Merriam-Webster tells us that one who is incapable lacks the capacity, ability, or qualification for the purpose or end in view. So, Jesus tells us that the one who dies in their sins is unable to enter into heaven. Let's look at the Greek words used in John 8:21. The verse is transliterated as "Where I go away you are not able to come." The Greek word translated "able" is *dunamai* and means "to be able", or "to be capable." However, this word is preceded by the absolute negative *ou*, which means "no" or "not". *Ou* represents an absolute denial, while another Greek word, *mee*, expresses qualified negation. Consider Jesus' words in John 3:18. "He that believeth not is condemned

already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Here the word translated "not" is *mee*. So if one believes (*pisteuo*) in the name of the only begotten Son of God, one may escape condemnation. The negative is qualified. However, Jesus does not use the qualified negative in John 8:21. He uses the word expressing absolute denial. So Jesus tells us that those who die in their sins will be absolutely unable to go where He is. This verse tells us that those who die in their sins have their eternal destiny already determined--they will be absolutely unable to go to heaven (where He is)! Since the sinner who dies unforgiven cannot enter heaven, the answer to question number 9 has already been discovered. We should not be baptized for the dead, since the sinner who dies unforgiven cannot enter heaven. But let's continue with our analysis of this doctrine (which we now know to be false).

Can the dead fulfill the requirements for baptism as outlined in the NT? When Paul tells us that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17), how is it that one hears? A few verses earlier Paul tells us that one hears the word spoken by a preacher (Romans 10:14). Do preachers preach to living or dead individuals? To living individuals. Is an unforgiven sinner who dies capable of developing the faith necessary prior to baptism? No! We know that eventually everyone will believe as they stand before God at the day of judgment. Is this the belief one must have prior to baptism? No! Consider again the definition of the word translated "believe" in the gospels. Vine's tells us *pisteuo* signifies reliance in, not mere credence. Jesus clarifies the need for belief prior to death in Mark 16:16 when He tells us "he that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Baptism by proxy is not authorized in this verse, and is actually shown to be a false doctrine. Consider carefully the words of Jesus: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. So the one who is to be saved must fulfill two requirements: believe and be baptized. How can one who is dead fulfill the second requirement? Jesus doesn't say "he that believeth and is baptized *for* shall be saved." He states clearly that the one who is to receive salvation is the one who must be immersed! We've spent a fair amount of time discussing baptism by proxy, but what exactly does the word "proxy" mean? As you might deduce, the word is not found in the New Testament. How does Merriam-Webster define the word? "The agency, function, or office of a deputy who acts as a substitute for another." So a proxy is one who acts in the place of another. But Jesus does not authorize this practice when He states that the one who is to be saved is the one who must be immersed! Where does a proxy fit into this equation? He/she doesn't! Baptism by proxy is a man-made doctrine.

Jesus illustrates to us the fates of the dead sent to torment and to the place of comfort in the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). As you recall, the rich man fared sumptuously during his life, and Lazarus was a beggar. After their deaths we see the rich man in torment and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. We learn much about the relationship between the place of torment and the place of comfort in this account. We see clearly that one in the place of comfort *cannot* pass to the place of torment, as the one in torment *cannot* pass to the place of comfort. Jesus tells us that even should one *wish* to pass from comfort

to torment they *cannot* (verse 26)!! So, ***one desiring to pass from torment to the place of comfort is absolutely unable to do so!!*** (See our discussion of "cannot" above) Below you will see the doctrine of the Mormon church as it relates to the fate of the dead. Based on the verses we've studied, who are you going to believe, Jesus or Joseph Smith? Again consider what Jesus tells us regarding all authority. He has it! What did Paul tell the Galatian Christians (Galatians 1:6-9)? Since the doctrine preached by Joseph Smith is contrary to that preached by Jesus, what can we say about Joseph Smith (and about any man who preaches anything different than that we have revealed in the scriptures)? The answer lies in Galatians 1:8,9.

What can we say about 1 Corinthians 15:29? In verse 15 of the same chapter Paul reveals a problem the Corinthians Christians were having. Some among them were saying there was no resurrection of the dead. Paul uses his logical manner of thinking over the next several verses to refute this teaching. Notice his progression of thought from verses 13-30. Paul begins with the resurrection of Christ (verse 13). What is a major problem with the doctrine of no resurrection? Christ was not resurrected! If Christ was not resurrected, then Paul's preaching was in vain, their faith was vain, ministers of Jesus were false witnesses since they testified that God raised Jesus from the dead, they were still in sin, those who died in Christ have perished, and they are the most miserable of men since they have no hope in Christ after this life. If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, there was no need for the church since there was no hope for forgiveness of sins. As we can see, the teaching that the dead will not be resurrected is not compatible with the teaching of Paul and the other ministers of Jesus. Belief in this teaching reveals a basic contradiction in

those who are members of the church--Jesus' resurrection was the source of the hope one has in the church. If He wasn't raised, it is pointless to continue with the worthless exercises of worship since one has no hope anyway. One might as well enjoy the pleasures of the flesh rather than suffer for a worthless cause. Paul states that his fighting beasts in Ephesus was of no advantage if the dead are not raised. "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die." (1 Corinthians 15:32)

As one can see, some among the Corinthians were teaching one thing (no resurrection) that was not compatible with other beliefs they practiced. As part of his refutation Paul shows them the contradiction present within another practice of theirs. They were teaching one thing, but practicing another. If the dead are not raised, why are some baptized for the dead? (verse 29) If the dead are not raised, it is pointless to be baptized for the dead. Notice the language Paul uses in verse 29. Throughout the verse he uses the 3rd person plural pronoun (*they*) when referring to those who baptize for the dead. ***At no time did he include himself as part of this group!*** Paul was not making a doctrinal statement to which we must adhere in order to be pleasing to God. He was simply showing them the contradiction between their teaching and their practice!

Pasted below is a page from a Mormon web site. ([http://www.mormons.org/basic/temples/Baptism\\_EOM.htm](http://www.mormons.org/basic/temples/Baptism_EOM.htm)) As you can see, they use the verse we've been studying as justification for their elaborate practices of genealogy and baptism by proxy.

by H. David Burton

Baptism for the dead is the proxy performance of the ordinance of

baptism for one deceased. Joseph Smith taught, "If we can baptize a man in the name of the Father [and] of the Son and of the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred who have not heard the gospel or fulness of it" (Kenney, p. 165).

The first public affirmation of the ordinance of baptism for the dead in the Church was Joseph Smith's funeral sermon for Seymour Brunson in Nauvoo in August 1840. Addressing a widow who had lost a son who had not been baptized, he called the principle "glad tidings of great joy," in contrast to the prevailing tradition that all unbaptized are damned. The first baptisms for the dead in modern times were done in the Mississippi River near Nauvoo.

Revelations clarifying the doctrine and practice have been given from time to time:

1. This was a New Testament practice (1 Cor. 15:29; cf. D&C 128; see *Baptism for the Dead: Ancient Sources*).
2. The ministry of Christ in the spirit world was for the benefit of those who had died without hearing the gospel or the fulness of it (1 Pet. 4:6; see *Salvation for the Dead*).
3. Such baptisms are to be performed in temple fonts dedicated to the purpose (TPJS, p. 308; cf. D&C 124:29-35). In November 1841 the font in the unfinished Nauvoo Temple

was so dedicated.

4. The language of the baptismal prayer is the same as for the living, with the addition of "for and in behalf of" the deceased.
5. Witnesses are to be present for proxy baptisms and a record is to be kept in Church archives (D&C 128:3, 8).
6. Women are to be baptized for women and men for men.
7. Not only baptism but confirmation and the higher temple ordinances may also be performed by proxy (TPJS, pp. 362-63).
8. The law of agency is inviolate in this world and the world to come. Thus, those served by proxy have the right to accept or reject the ordinances.

In the early years of the Church, proxy baptisms were performed only for direct blood ancestors, usually no more than four generations back. Today, Latter-day Saints are baptized not only for their own forebears but also for other persons, unrelated to them, identified through the name extraction program. The practice reflects the yearning of children for their parents and of parents for their children, and charitable feelings for others as well, that they receive the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In LDS perspective, whatever else one may do to mourn, give honorable burial to, cherish, or memorialize the dead, this divinely authorized ordinance of baptism is a demonstration of love and has eternal implications.

(See Basic Beliefs; Teachings About Temples; Early Christian Temple Rites home page)

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Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Vol. 1, Baptism for the Dead Copyright © 1992 by Macmillan Publishing Company

The Mormons admit who taught this doctrine: Joseph Smith. Nothing about Jesus teaching this doctrine is mentioned. Only two verses from the New Testament are referenced in the above discourse. We've dealt in detail with 1 Corinthians 15:29. Does 1 Peter 4:6 say what they claim it does? Please link to the verse and consider what it says. Next, look at Ephesians 2:1-8. Paul was preaching to living individuals (the Ephesian Christians). But, he tells them that at one time they were dead *in trespasses and sins* (verse 1). He stresses this point again in verse 5 where he says they were dead in sins, but quickened with Christ. Now reconsider 1 Peter 4:6. Peter states that the gospel was preached (again consider how the preacher preaches to living individuals, not dead ones) to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. Consider Paul's words in Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live

in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." What was the purpose of the cross? Was it a burden people carried around with them during their lives, which they endured because of their faith in God (a common misrepresentation when people say they just "have to bear this cross" they've been given)? No! It was a form of torture and capital punishment. When a man was placed on a cross he was expected to die! But Paul tells us he is crucified with Christ, but yet he lives? What part of Paul died with Christ? His inner self (his own will). Now Christ lives in place of Paul's inner self and desires. So Paul can accurately say that he has died, but yet he lives. However, it is Christ living within him (Paul is no longer following the desires of his inner self as he once did). Peter is saying the same thing in his first epistle. The gospel was preached to living individuals who were dead in sin, that they might die to self and live thereafter according to God. They will be judged according to the works they performed, as will all men (Revelation 20:13). So, the only two verses mentioned in the Mormon treatise pasted above do not support the doctrine they preach. Notice how many references to human works are mentioned (I counted seven that I could look up if I had the documents referenced). In the bibliography two references to human works are listed. The Bible is not included within the bibliography! Again consider the source of this doctrine, is it of man or of God? I believe we all know the answer.

This concludes our study on baptism for now. As I encounter different questions regarding baptism I'll address them and add them to this page. Please visit often and look for an "updated" flag after the link to "baptism." If one is present you will know