

Baptism
An Exposition
By
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1. Introduction

a. Definition

- i. The word, "baptize", in the Greek is "baptizo", which means:
 1. "to immerse, dip, or submerge" (Holman Bible Dictionary)
 2. "to make overwhelmed (i.e. fully wet)" (Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words)

2. History of Baptism

a. Ceremonial washings

- i. Baptism first appears in the Bible as ceremonial washings for the priests before they could perform their ritual sacrifices.
 1. Leviticus 16:3-4 = "This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. *These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on.*"

b. Proselyte (new convert) Baptism

- i. Non-Jews by birth were circumcised and then baptized to be accepted into the faith (Holman Bible Dictionary).

c. John's Baptism

- i. John the Baptist immersed repentant sinners for the forgiveness of sins, forming a purified community waiting for God's salvation.
 1. Mark 1:4 = "And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and *preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*"

d. Jesus' Baptism

- i. When Jesus comes on the scene, his followers are baptized as well.
 1. John 3:22-26 = "After this, *Jesus and his disciples* went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and *baptized.*"

e. Summary

- i. Historically speaking:
 1. Baptism was always *a physical bath that cleansed, washed clean and purified spiritually.*

2. Baptism (and circumcision) was used by the Jews to *usher new converts into the faith.*
 3. John the Baptist further defined these ceremonial washings as being *“for the forgiveness of sins”*.
 4. *Jesus and his disciples continued this practice in his ministry.*
3. Baptism in the Early Church
- a. Purpose of Baptism
 - i. For the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
 1. Acts 2:38 = *“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
 2. Acts 22:16 (Ananias to Paul) = *“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”*
 - ii. For entrance into the church, the body of Christ
 1. Acts 2:41 = *“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number [the first Christian church] that day.”*
 2. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 = *“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”*
 - b. Importance of Baptism
 - i. Baptism is essential for salvation
 1. John 3:3-5 = *“In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”*
 4“*How can a man be born when he is old?*”
 Nicodemus asked. *“Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!”*
 5Jesus answered, *“I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”*
 2. Mark 16:15-16 = *“He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*
 - ii. Salvation is only found *“in Christ”*
 1. Ephesians 1:7 = *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...”*
 2. Romans 8:1 = *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”*

3. There are only 3 passages in the whole Bible that tell us specifically how to get *into Christ*:
 - a. Romans 6:3-4 = "Or don't you know that all of us who were *baptized into Christ Jesus* were baptized into his death? ⁴We 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."
 - b. Galatians 3:27 = "...for all of you who were *baptized into Christ* have clothed yourselves with Christ."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 = "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. *So it is with Christ.* ¹³For we were all *baptized* by one Spirit *into one body* – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

c. The Plan of Salvation

- i. Acts 2:36-41 = "Therefore let all Israel *be assured of this*: God has made this *Jesus*, whom you crucified, both *Lord and Christ*."

³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "*Brothers, what shall we do?*"

³⁸Peter replied, "*Repent and be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ *for the forgiveness of your sins*. And you will *receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. ³⁹*The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.*"

⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "*Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.*" ⁴¹*Those who accepted his message were baptized*, and about three thousand were *added to their number that day.*"

1. Summary:

- a. Q: What was required of them?
 - i. Faith (vs. 36-37)
 - ii. Repentance (vs. 38)
 - iii. Baptism (vs. 38, 41)
- b. Q: What did they receive?
 - i. Forgiveness (vs. 38)
 - ii. Holy Spirit (vs. 38)
 - iii. Added to the church (vs. 41)
- ii. A simple chart of the conversion accounts in the book of Acts (by Dr. John Oakes) shows graphically how all of these elements of the conversion process work together:

Scripture	Faith	Repentance	Baptism	Forgiveness	Holy Spirit	Church
Acts 2:14-47	Implied vv. 36-37,41	Stated v. 38	Stated v. 38	Stated v. 38	Stated v. 38	Implied vv. 1-47
Acts 8:9-13	Stated vv. 12-13		Stated vv. 12-13			Implied vv. 8-13
Acts 8:26-39			Stated v. 38	Implied vv. 35,39	Implied vv. 35,39	
Acts 9:1-19	Implied vv. 5,17	Implied v. 9	Stated v. 18		Stated v. 17	Implied vv. 17-18
Acts 10:1-11:18	Implied 10:1-8	Stated 11:18	Stated 10:48			Implied 11:17-18
Acts 22:5-16	Implied vv. 8,14-15		Stated v. 16	Stated v. 16		
Acts 16:13-15	Stated vv. 14-15		Stated v. 15			Implied v.15
Acts 16:25-34	Stated vv. 31,34		Stated v. 33	Stated v. 31		Implied vv. 31-33
Additional References Acts 18:7-8 Acts 19:1-5 Acts 26:1-23	John 3:16 Heb. 11:6	Acts 3:19 Luke 13:3,5 Acts 17:30	Mark 16:15-16 John 3:3,5 Gal. 3:26 Col. 2:12 1 Peter 3:21	Isaiah 59:1-2 Romans 6:23 Ephesians 1:7	Rom. 8:9-11 Eph. 1:13-14 Gal. 5:22-23	1 Cor. 12:12-13 Matt. 28:18-20 Mark 16:15-16 John 3:1-7

iii. Some people erroneously pit one element of the salvation process against another, but they are meant to be taken together.

1. Example:

a. I tell Jose I live in *America*; I tell Bob I live in *Florida*; I tell Jane I live in *Tampa*; I tell Mike I live at *7234 Hammet Road*.

i. Question: which is correct?

1. They get together and talk and all insist that either:

a. One of them is correct.

b. Or I am contradicting myself.

ii. But the truth is that *they are all correct*.

1. I live in *America, Florida, Tampa and 7234 Hammet Road* all at once.

b. Same with the scriptures on salvation.

i. Question: What is required to be saved?

1. John 3:16 = faith

- a. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that *whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*”
 - i. This verse says nothing about *repentance* or *baptism*.
 - 2. Acts 3:19 = Repentance
 - a. “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord”
 - i. This verse says nothing about *faith* or *baptism*.
 - 3. 1 Peter 3:21 = baptism
 - a. “and this water symbolizes *baptism that now saves you also...*”
 - i. This verse says nothing about *faith* or *repentance*.
 - ii. Question: which is correct?
 - 1. Many people today insist that either:
 - a. One of them is correct.
 - b. Or the Bible contradicts itself.
 - 2. But the truth is that *they are all correct*.
 - a. We are saved by *faith*, *expressing itself through repentance and baptism*.
4. What did the Early Church Father’s Teach about Baptism?
 - a. Historians record that the Patristic Fathers taught and practiced baptism (full immersion in water) for the forgiveness of sins exclusively until the late 2nd and early 3rd Century, when theology weakens and false teachings begin to appear. (Refer to A Dictionary of Early Church Beliefs, by David Bercot)
 - b. Hermas, c. 70-130 A.D.
 - i. “Before a man bears the name of the Son of God, he is dead. But when he receives the seal, he lays aside his deadness and obtains life. The seal, then, is the water. They descend into the water dead, and they arise alive.” (Hermas c. 150, W, 2.49)
 - c. Justin Martyr c. 100-165 A. D.

- i. "Accordingly, we have believed and testify that the very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented." (Justin Martyr c. 160 E, 1.201)
 - d. Irenaeus of Lyons, c. 130-200 A. D.
 - i. "When we come to refute them [the Gnostics], we will show in its proper place that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God. Thus, they have renounced the whole faith.... For the baptism institute by the visible Jesus was for the remission of sins." (Irenaeus c. 180, E/W, 1.346)
 - e. Clement of Alexandria, c. 150-215 A. D.
 - i. "Being baptized, we are illuminated. Illuminated, we become sons.... This work is variously called grace, illumination, perfection, and washing. Washing, by which we cleanse away our sins. Grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted. Illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly." (Clement of Alexandria. c. 195, E, 2.215)
 - ii. "In the same way, therefore, we also repent of our sins, renounce our iniquities, and are purified by baptism. Thereby, we speed back to the eternal light as children of the Father." (Clement of Alexandria." c. 195, E, 2.217)
- 5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Baptism
 - a. FAQ: What about the thief on the cross?
 - i. Two reasons the thief on the cross did not need to be baptized to be saved:
 - 1. The thief on the cross was saved under the old covenant.
 - a. Baptism into Christ represents being unified with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4), which had not yet occurred at that point.
 - b. Baptism into Christ was not instituted until the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven.
 - c. So, the thief on the cross was saved under the old covenant, not under the new covenant which took effect only after the death of Jesus (Hebrews 9:15-18, see NIV Bible Commentary, pgs. 980-981).
 - 2. The thief on the cross was forgiven directly by Jesus.
 - a. Mark 2:10-11 = "But that you may know that *the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . .*" He said to the paralytic, 11"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

- i. Jesus had authority on earth to forgive sins.
 - b. FAQ: We're saved by grace, not by works; Isn't baptism "a work"? Aren't we saved by "faith alone"?
 - i. The Bible teaches that we are not saved by our works, meaning that we are not saved by obeying the Law of Moses (Jews) or any good deeds on our parts (Gentiles).
 - ii. But to categorize baptism as "a work" would be to necessarily categorize any other biblical response to the gospel as "a work" as well, such as faith and repentance.
 - 1. Is not repentance more "work" than being baptized?
 - 2. And yet, no one teaches that repentance is "a work". All agree that repentance is essential for salvation:
 - a. Acts 3:19 = "*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...*"
 - b. Acts 26:20 = "...I preached that they should *repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*"
 - iii. The biblical truth is that while belief, repentance and baptism are all things that we must *do*, they are *deeds of faith, not works*. In other words, they are *manifestations of our faith* - what the Bible calls "*deeds*" in passages such as Acts 26:20 above and James 2:14-26.
 - 1. James 2:20, 26 = "...faith without deeds is useless; ...faith without deeds is dead."
 - iv. Besides, baptism is a work of God, not man.
 - 1. Colossians 2:12 = "having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him *through your faith in the power of God*, who raised him from the dead.
 - v. There is only one place in the Bible that the phrase "faith alone" occurs - James 2:24. And it states very plainly that we are not saved by faith alone:
 - 1. James 2:24 = "You see that a person is justified by what he *does* and ***not by faith alone.***"
- c. FAQ: Aren't I saved by "praying Jesus into my heart" (Rev. 3:20)?
 - i. Revelation 3:20 = "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and *opens the door*, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."
 - 1. This verse is taken out of context.
 - 2. The letter is written to the church in Laodicea (vs. 14) - people who have already been baptized and born again to be saved.
 - 3. It has nothing to do with our initial salvation.

- ii. Nowhere in scripture do we see anyone “praying Jesus into their hearts”.
 - 1. It is quite simply an unbiblical practice invented by men relatively recently.
- iii. Excerpt from “The Sinner’s Prayer” by Steven Staten:
 - 1. “Today, hundreds of millions hold to a belief system and salvation practice that no one had ever held until relatively recently. The notions that one can pray Jesus into his or her heart and that baptism is merely an outward sign are actually late developments. The prayer itself dates to the Billy Sunday era [early 1900s]; however the basis for talking in prayer for salvation goes back a few hundred years.”
- d. FAQ: Isn’t baptism just “an outward sign of an inward grace”?
 - i. Baptism is more than just a sign or ritual; it is a participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is our vehicle into Christ; how we get into Christ and receive the benefits of salvation.
 - 1. Romans 6:3-4 = “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.*”
 - 2. 1 Peter 3:18-22 = “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, *19*through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison *20*who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. *In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21*and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, *22*who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.”
 - a. Illustration: wedding ceremony
 - i. Like a baptism, a wedding ceremony effects what it symbolizes.
 - ii. Just as a wedding ceremony both marks and changes the status of two people from single to married, so baptism both marks

and changes the status of someone from lost to saved.

3. Watch the order of Paul's (Saul's) conversion. At what point is he saved (sins forgiven) - when he believes in Jesus or when he is baptized?
 - a. First he believes:
 - i. Acts 22:6-8 = "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' 8 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting," he replied."
 - b. Then Jesus tells him that Ananias will tell him what he must do:
 - i. Acts 22:10 = "What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do."
 - c. Then Ananias tells him to be baptized and wash his sins away:
 - i. Acts 22:16 = "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."
 1. Note: we are saved when our sins are washed away (forgiven).
 - d. So, at what point in this story is Paul saved - when he believes in Jesus or when he is baptized? The Bible clearly states that it's when he is baptized (see Acts 22:16).
 - e. Point: baptism is more than just a sign. It is the point in time when our sins are forgiven and we are saved.
 - i. Note: We are not fully saved until Judgment Day, but the Bible uses "saved" in the past, present and future tenses in the scriptures, so it is biblical to say that we are already saved (past tense) even though we know that ultimate salvation is yet to come.
4. Another example: Acts 2:36-41 reveals the same truth.
 - a. Verses 36-37 show that the people already believed the message and were "assured" that

Jesus is Lord and Christ (so they were believers at that point) – but they are still not saved.

- b. Verses 38-41 reveal that they must still repent and be baptized for their sins to be forgiven.
 - c. So, their sins were not forgiven at the point of their faith, but at the point of their baptism.
- e. FAQ: What about infant baptism?
- i. Infant baptism was not practiced by the first century church.
 1. There are *no commands to baptize infants or examples of infants being baptized* in scripture.
 2. Some point to Acts 16 to say that “whole families” were baptized in the book of Acts, and so surely some that were baptized were infants.
 3. But upon closer observation, this passage makes the opposite point:
 - a. Acts 16:31-34 = “They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – *you and your household.*” 32Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately *he and all his family were baptized.* 34The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; *he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family.*”
 - i. Notice verse 34 indicates that he and his whole family *had come to believe in God.*
 1. An infant cannot believe in God, therefore there must not have been any infants who were baptized.
 - ii. The logical reason that infants were not baptized in the first century is that the Bible teaches that infants are born without sin and therefore do not need to be saved.
 1. Matthew 19:14 = “Jesus said, “Let *the little children* come to me, and do not hinder them, *for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.*”
 2. Romans 7:9 = “Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, *sin sprang to life and I died.*”
 3. Deuteronomy 1:39-40 = “And *the little ones* that you said would be taken captive, *your children who do not yet know good from bad – they will enter the land.* I will give it to them and they will take possession of it. 40 But as for you, turn

around and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea.”

- iii. Additional reasons infants are not candidates for baptism:
1. An infant cannot have his or her own personal faith, which is essential for their salvation:
 - a. Colossians 2:12 = “having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him *through your faith* in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.
 2. An infant cannot personally repent, which is also essential for salvation:
 - a. Acts 26:20 = “First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should *repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*”
 3. Infant baptism is done by “sprinkling”, yet baptism into Christ must be *full immersion in water*.
 - a. The Greek word “baptizo” itself means “to immerse, dip, or submerge” (Holman Bible Dictionary), and “to make overwhelmed (i.e. fully wet)” (Strong’s Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words).
 - b. Baptism is meant to evoke the image of a *burial*:
 - i. Colossians 2:12 = “having been *buried with him in baptism* and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.
 - ii. Romans 6:4 = “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.”
 - c. Examples in scripture suggest more than sprinkling:
 - i. Acts 8:35-39 = “Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch *went down into the water* and Philip

baptized him. 39 When they *came up out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing."

- f. FAQ: What about the Greek word "eis" in Acts 2:38? (Is it "for" or "because of"?)
- i. The Greek word, "eis", can mean a number of different things depending on its context.
 - ii. So, some claim that the original Greek word "eis" in Acts 2:38 means "because of", rendering the translation: "be baptized *because you already have* the forgiveness of sins".
 - iii. But there are several problems with this hypothesis:
 1. One: Not a single version of the Bible translates it that way.
 - a. Quote from Rex Geissler's book, "Born of Water": "The Protestant translators agree that "eis" means "for" or "so that". It is true that the translation of "eis" can mean different things in different contexts in the Greek, but there is no debate among Greek scholars about its translation in Acts 2:38." (page 27)
 2. Two: That translation wouldn't make sense anyway.
 - a. If their sins were already forgiven (and they were already saved), why would Peter urge them in verse 40: "*Save yourselves...*"?
 - b. The whole verse says: "Peter replied, "*Repent and be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)."
 - i. Yet no one would argue that we are to *repent* as a response to having our sins *already forgiven*.
 - ii. In fact, Peter specifically says *repentance is a condition of forgiveness* in his next recorded speech:
 1. Acts 3:19 = "*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord*".
 - iii. So the only proper translation of "eis" here would be "for" or "so that" (which makes baptism a condition of salvation as well).

- c. The exact same word, "eis", is used in the same way in Matthew 26:28. Yet to translate it "because of" would be absurd:
- i. Matthew 26:28 = "This is *my blood of the covenant*, which is poured out for many *for* ["eis"] *the forgiveness of sins.*"
 1. Clearly Jesus shed his blood *so that* our sins could be forgiven, *not* because our sins have already been forgiven.
- g. FAQ: Aren't we saved when we "confess Jesus as Lord" (Rom. 10:9)?
- i. Romans 10:9 = "That if you *confess with your mouth*, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
 - ii. A faithful view of scripture never pits one verse against another, but seeks to harmonize them.
 1. Example: Acts 22:16 combines *confessing Jesus as Lord* with *baptism*:
 - a. Acts 22:16 = "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, *be baptized* and wash your sins away, *calling on his name.*" [i.e. confessing the name of Jesus as Lord]
 2. To confess Jesus as Lord is to make Jesus the Lord (master) of our lives. So, that involves repentance and discipleship.
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:19 reminds us that repentance must accompany confessing Jesus as Lord: "Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "*Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.*"
 3. So, *confessing Jesus as Lord must be accompanied by repentance and baptism for it to save us*, and sure enough that is exactly what Acts 2:36-38 shows us:
 - a. Acts 2:36-38 = "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this *Jesus*, whom you crucified, both *Lord* and Christ."

37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "*Brothers, what shall we do?*"

38Peter replied, "*Repent and be baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

- iii. So, "confessing Jesus as Lord" is *one part of the salvation process – not instead of faith, repentance and baptism.*
 - 1. It is actually a *faith* statement, expressing *repentance at our baptism.*
- h. FAQ: Didn't Paul downplay the importance of baptism (1 Cor. 1:17)?
 - i. Not at all. Look at the context of this passage (vs. 13-18). Paul was just downplaying *the baptizer* since the Corinthians were taking pride in *who* had baptized them, and Paul wanted nothing to do with that kind of immaturity.
 - ii. Paul thought so much of baptism, that he saw fit to include it in the following list of important doctrines:
 - 1. Ephesians 4:4-6 = "There is one *body* and one *Spirit* – just as you were called to one *hope* when you were called – 5one *Lord*, one *faith*, one *baptism*; 6one *God and Father of all*, who is over all and through all and in all.
- i. FAQ: When does someone need to be re-baptized (Acts19:5)?
 - i. Paul re-baptized these disciples because they had been baptized with the baptism of John, and not into Christ.
 - 1. Acts 19:1-5 = "While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."
³So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.
⁴Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus."
 - ii. The efficacy (effectiveness) of baptism depends on your *faith*.
 - 1. Colossians 2:12 = "...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through *your faith* in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."
 - iii. The efficacy (effectiveness) of baptism depends on a *clear conscience*.
 - 1. 1 Peter 3:21 = "and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but *the pledge of a good conscience toward God...*"
 - iv. So, rebaptism may be necessary if a problem with either *faith* or *conscience*.

1. One: a problem with faith
 - a. Either baptized for the wrong reasons (not for forgiveness of sins, but only as an outward sign)
 - b. Or baptized without a personal faith in Jesus:
 - i. Infant baptism
 - ii. Immature baptism (person too young)
 - iii. Baptized because of peer pressure, family pressure, etc. (therefore, not a personal faith)
2. Two: a problem with conscience
 - a. Either did not combine baptism with repentance and confessing Jesus as Lord (becoming a disciple of Jesus).
 - b. Or baptized while consciously refusing to repent of a particular hidden sin.
6. Spirit of this lesson
 - a. I sincerely hope and pray that God is merciful to sincere seekers who misunderstand his will about baptism.
 - b. But I have no authority to teach that God expects anything less than his word reveals. God is the judge; we are simply his servants.
 - c. So, I have attempted to faithfully present the Bible's teaching on baptism, and leave judgment to God.
7. References:
 - a. Holman Bible Dictionary
 - b. Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words
 - c. "One Baptism", bebaptized.org
 - d. "The History of Baptism", by Dr. John Oakes, evidenceforchristianity.com
 - e. "The Sinner's Prayer", by Steven Staten
 - f. "Born of Water", by Rex Geissler
 - g. "Shining Like Stars", by Dr. Douglas Jacoby