

SHOULD I BE BAPTISED?



Many years ago in the land of Syria there lived a man by the name of Naaman. We are not told very much about him, but we do know that he was the commander of the Syrian army who discovered that he had leprosy. Today there is some hope for the leper, but in those days the discovery that a person had this disease meant only one thing, a slow, lingering death.

Evidently Naaman was a very good man and was a valuable soldier, because the king of Syria was deeply interested in his recovery. A little Hebrew maid, who was a servant in the home of Naaman, learned of her master's plight and declared that God's prophet, Elisha, could heal him if he went up to Samaria. Like most people who have some deadly disease, Naaman was willing to try anything. When he arrived with a request for his healing from the king of Syria, the king of Israel was concerned about this unusual request. Elisha, however, sent word that God would take care of the problem. When Naaman came to the house of Elisha, the prophet did not even meet him at the door. Elisha just sent his servant out with a message that if Naaman wanted to be healed, he merely had to go and wash seven times in the River Jordan.

At first Naaman was furious and refused to do this, but after a talk with his wise servants, he obeyed and washed seven times in the Jordan. The Bible tells us the result of his trusting God and doing what he had been told: "His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." 2 Kings 5: 14. He was cleansed because he had faith and obeyed the instructions of God given through His prophet, Elisha.

There were no healing substances in the water of that river. By dipping seven times Naaman was merely demonstrating his faith in the God of Israel. It was God who cleansed and healed him. Many of us are afflicted with a spiritual leprosy, sin. We need to be cleansed from all sin. Let us discover in God's Word how we can be cleansed.

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT BAPTISM

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 28:19

As you study, be thinking about the Life Quest questions.

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

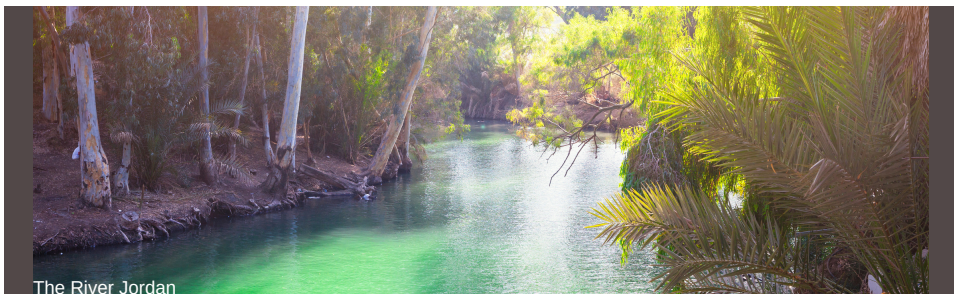
HIS WORD SAYS

1. What great commission did Christ give His church? Matthew 28:19, 20.

2. How many different forms of baptism are recognised in the Bible? Ephesians 4:5.

Although there are a number of different ways in which people are baptised today, the Bible tells us that there is only one form of baptism that God acknowledges.

3. Who is first mentioned in the New Testament as performing baptisms?
Matthew 3:11-16.

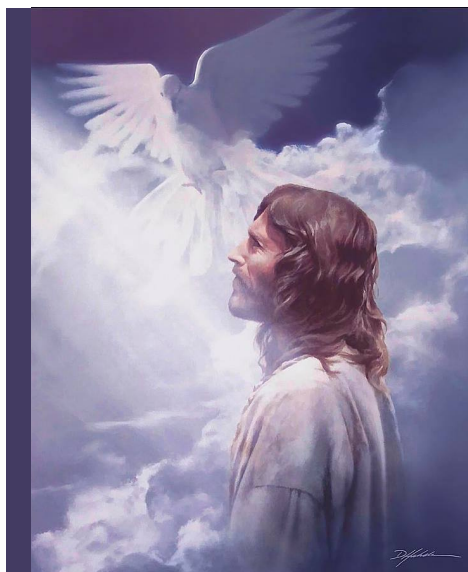


The River Jordan

4. Why did Jesus say that it was necessary for Him to be baptised by John?

Matthew 3:13,15.

Jesus had not sinned. He had no need of baptism for Himself. In this statement He showed that He wanted to leave us a perfect example of righteous living. He was to do everything that would be expected of Christians so that they might safely follow in His steps. He was, after all, fully human.



5. How was Christ baptised by John?

Mark 1:9, 10.

This text definitely shows that Christ was baptised by full immersion, for He came “up out of the water”.

6. What did Peter tell the people to do for the remission of their sins? Acts 2:38.

The Greek word used by the New Testament writer in this text is “baptise,” which means to fully immerse, to dip under a fluid. It is a word taken from the Greek language and does not mean sprinkle or pour. When Peter said to those people, “Repent and be baptised,” they understood him to say, “Repent and be immersed.” Thus they were fully covered and clean.

7. In the story of the Ethiopian treasurer, how did Philip baptize him? Acts 8:36-39.

Here again the details indicate that the eunuch was baptised by immersion. They went “into” the water and came up “out of” the water. It was necessary that both Philip and the Ethiopian entered the water together for him to be baptised. If his baptism could have been done with sprinkling of water, this would not have been necessary.

8. How essential is it that a person should be baptized by water and the Spirit? John 3:5.

Note also that salvation is not by our works. If there is a good reason that a person is not baptised before they die, but they have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, this will not exclude them from Heaven. This may be true in the case of someone converting in the moments before death. There is no evidence that the thief on the cross was baptised, yet Jesus gave him full assurance of salvation. It is ultimately our faith in Christ's redeeming blood which grants us eternal life. However, if we can be baptised, then it is a must if we should expect God to receive us.

9. Who did Jesus say would be saved in the kingdom? Mark 16:16.



10. What was Paul told to do when he understood the true plan of salvation? Acts 22:16.

11. By being baptized, the individual shows his faith in three of Jesus' experiences. What are they? Romans 6:1-6.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Baptism is the outward way of publicly showing our faith in, and acceptance of, our Saviour's death, burial, and resurrection, and His ability to save us from our sins. "Burial" means being covered over. Similarly in baptism one should be covered in water symbolising death to the old way. As we come up out of the water we take the first breath of our new life and are born again into the new life in Christ. The old is crucified and passes away, behold, all things become new. One can only be baptised when they understand what it means to accept Christ as their Saviour and enter into His death, burial and resurrection. For this reason, infant baptism is not Biblical.

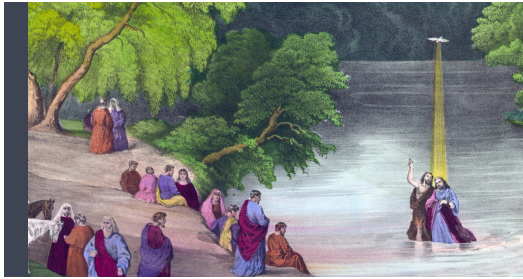
12. What did Jesus say we need in order to see the kingdom of God? John 3:3

The new birth is the start of our new life in Christ. A born again Christian does not continue in the old ways, seeking after the lusts of the flesh. They seek instead the things of God. They desire to know and do His will. His pleasure becomes their delight. In turn, they become beacons of light to the world as they reflect the light and love of God that they have received by His grace, through His Spirit, who now abides in them.

13. What, wonderful experience do we enter into when we are baptised? Galatians 3:27.

What does it mean to 'put on Christ'? This is certainly a theme worthy of contemplation. See also Phil 2:5-8.





“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17

LIFE QUEST:

Have you thoughtfully reviewed these Questions?

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

YOUR TURN

Check the statements that most closely reflect your response to this study.

____ I have never been baptised by immersion and desire to be baptized in this way.

____ I have been baptised, but because of circumstances in my life, I desire to be re-baptized.

____ I have learned so much more of the Word of God that I want to be baptized again because I so want Jesus and His Father to be well pleased with me.

____ I want to be baptised but there are obstacles that stand in my way.

____ Other _____