



# Bethel

## Discipleship Series

# WATER BAPTISM

### SCRIPTURE TEXTS:

**Mark 16:15-16** – “And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

**Acts 2:37-38** – “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

## I. TAKING THE NEXT STEPS:

- A. We have discovered that faith and repentance are the first steps we must follow in God’s plan of salvation. However, scripture teaches us that there are additional steps that follow these first two.
- **Hebrews 6:1-2** – “Therefore leaving (going forth from) the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”
- B. The above scripture reveals to us that after repentance and faith, the next step in the foundational doctrine of salvation is the doctrine of baptisms. In this lesson, we will begin to examine that next step, being baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## II. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

- A. First, we should be baptized because it is a direct command of Jesus Christ. In our scripture text, Jesus specifically commands baptism. He directly links baptism to salvation by stating that those who respond to the gospel by believing and being baptized will be saved.
- B. Second, we should be baptized because it is part of the “new birth” experience – it is part of our spiritual birth of “water and Spirit.”
1. In the following verses, notice how water baptism is connected with Spirit baptism (the infilling of the Holy Ghost) in the scriptural plan of salvation.

<b>WATER</b>	<b>SPIRIT</b>
<b>John 3:5</b> – “Except a man be born of <u>water</u> ...	...and of the <u>Spirit</u> , he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
<b>Titus 3:5</b> – “...He saved us by the <u>washing</u> of regeneration...	...and renewing of the <u>Holy Ghost</u> ...”
<b>Acts 2:38</b> – “...be <u>baptized</u> every one of you...	...and ye shall receive the gift of the <u>Holy Ghost</u> .”
<b>Acts 19:5-6</b> – “...they were <u>baptized</u> in the name of the Lord Jesus...	...and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the <u>Holy Ghost</u> came on them...”

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2. The scriptural record clearly reveals that water baptism is an integral, indispensable part of the new birth experience of “water and Spirit.”

C. Third, we should be baptized because it is the scriptural example set for us by the apostles. The following scriptures reveal how the apostles actually obeyed the command of Jesus.

<b>WHAT WAS PREACHED...</b>	<b>...WHAT HAPPENED</b>
<i>Acts 2:38-41</i> – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...	...Then they that gladly received his word were <u>baptized</u> ...”
<i>Acts 8:12</i> – “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ...	...they were <u>baptized</u> , both men and women.”
<i>Acts 8:35-36</i> – “Then Philip opened his mouth... and preached unto him Jesus...	...they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be <u>baptized</u> ?”
<i>Acts 9:17-18</i> – “And Ananias...entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost...	...And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was <u>baptized</u> .”
<i>Acts 10:44-48</i> – “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word...	...Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be <u>baptized</u> , which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be <u>baptized</u> in the name of the Lord...”
<i>Acts 16:29-33</i> – “Then he [the keeper of the prison] ...came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, ...and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house...	...And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was <u>baptized</u> , he and all his, straightway.”

D. Fourth, we should be baptized because baptism is part of our cleansing from sin. Baptism plays a role in bringing us remission of our sins.

- *Acts 22:16* – “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
- *Hebrews 10:22* – “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”
- *Acts 2:38* – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

1. The word “remission” is the Greek word “*aphesis*” meaning freedom, pardon, deliverance, forgiveness, and liberty.

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2. Remission of sins is fully accomplished when we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
3. In Luke chapter 24, Jesus instructed His disciples, "...that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." The apostles understood that Jesus was referring to water baptism when He spoke of *remission of sins*. (Compare Luke 24:47 with Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15-16.)
4. Note the amazing parallel between the command of Jesus Christ just before His ascension and the Apostle Peter's message on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem.

<b>LUKE 24:47 – Jesus (giving the command)</b>	<b>ACTS 2:38 – Peter (obeying the command)</b>
<i>"And that <u>repentance and remission of sins</u> should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."</i>	<i>"Then Peter said unto them, <u>Repent</u>, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the <u>remission of sins</u>, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."</i>

E. Fifth, we should be baptized because baptism identifies us as being buried with Jesus Christ.

1. In the sixth chapter of the book of Romans, the apostle Paul describes baptism as a burial (a complete and total covering).
  - **Romans 6:3-4** – *"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death..."*
2. Just as repentance represents the "death" of the "old man", so baptism represents the "burial". After we have repented and the "carnal man" has "died", we must "bury" the "carnal man" so that a new man can be born into eternal life!
  - **Romans 6:4** – *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*
  - **Colossians 2:12** – *"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."*

F. Sixth, we should be baptized because it marks us as recipients of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

1. God established a covenant (pact, contract, agreement) with Abraham and the descendants of Abraham's son, Isaac. This covenant, which produced the nation of Israel, dictated that Abraham and his male descendants be circumcised as a mark or seal of the covenant that existed between them and God. (Genesis 17:9-14)
2. Jesus announced the coming of a "new covenant" or testament (Luke 22:20). In Colossians 2:11, the Apostle Paul tells us that this new covenant does not dictate the outward cutting away of physical flesh, but the inward cutting away of the sin of the heart.
  - **Colossians 2:11-13** – *"In whom (Christ Jesus) also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."*

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- **Romans 2:29** – “... circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter...”
3. Paul states that just as circumcision was the mark of the old covenant, so water baptism is the mark of the new covenant. Water baptism signifies that we are partakers of the new covenant with Jesus Christ.
  4. Paul reminds us that faith is also required in this new covenant of spiritual circumcision. Abraham was justified by faith and not by works (Romans 4:1-8, 13-25) yet God still required that Abraham take the mark of circumcision. We also are justified by grace through faith and not of works, yet God still requires that we take the mark of baptism. (Mark 16:16)
  5. Baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ distinguishes us as legal beneficiaries of the new covenant.

## III. HOW SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

### A. Baptism should be by immersion in water.

1. In the Bible, the words “baptize” and “baptism” are translated from the Greek words “*bapto*” and “*baptizo*” meaning to immerse, to dip, or to submerge in fluid.
2. In New Testament scripture, water baptism was always by immersion, never by “sprinkling with water”. The Greek word for “sprinkle” is “*rhantizo*.” The New Testament instructions concerning water baptism use the Greek words, “*bapto*” and “*baptizo*” (to dip, to immerse). The word “*rhantizo*” is only used in the New Testament in reference to the figurative “sprinkling” of the blood of Jesus Christ upon our heart.
3. The following verses reveal that scriptural baptism requires a person to go down into the water:
  - **Acts 8:38** – “...and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”
  - **Matthew 3:16** – “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water...”
4. In scripture, when groups were baptized, much water was needed.
  - **John 3:22-23** – “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized.”

### B. Baptism must be in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. There is unlimited power available when we invoke (call upon) the name of Jesus Christ. This power is demonstrated in the following scriptures:
  - **Acts 3:2-9** – “And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.”
  - **Acts 16:16-18** – “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same

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followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.”

- **Mark 16:17-18** – (Jesus said) “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”
  - **James 5:14-15** – “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”
2. The same name that heals and delivers also remits our sins. The name of Jesus Christ is necessary for the remission of sins – and we have already seen that remission of sins comes through baptism.
    - **Luke 24:47** – (Jesus told His disciples) “... that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
    - **Acts 2:38** – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
    - **Acts 22:16** – (Ananias told the newly converted Saul of Tarsus) “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
  3. Clearly, water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ results in remission of sins. In fact, there is no other name that we may call on to be saved.
    - **Acts 4:12** – “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
  4. In the following scriptures, we see that the apostles called on the name of Jesus when baptizing new converts:
    - **Acts 8:12-16** – “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)”
    - **Acts 10:48** – “And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord....”
    - **Acts 19:5** – “When they (the Ephesians) heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
  5. The apostles instruct us that everything we do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus – this would most certainly include water baptism.
    - **Colossians 3:17** – “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
- C. What is the meaning of Matthew 28:19?
- **Matthew 28:19** – “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”
1. At first glance, this one scripture appears to contradict all other scriptures as to which name we should use in baptism. This misunderstanding leads some people to believe that God has three names (Father,

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Son, and Holy Ghost) and that we should call on these three names in baptism. However, let's examine this scripture more closely.

- a. First, if Jesus wanted the disciples to call on three different names, then the statement was grammatically incorrect and should have read, in the names (plural) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. However, since the word "name" is used in the singular, it becomes apparent that Jesus was referring to the use of one name.
- b. Second, the words "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost" are not names, but titles. (For example: a man can be a father, because he has children; a son, because he has parents; and also a husband, if he has a wife. However, he would not be allowed to sign a legal document with these titles; he must sign his name.) Likewise, Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize in the singular name that is represented by the three titles – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Let's see what the scriptural record says concerning this "singular" name.

<i><b>The Name of the Father JESUS</b></i>	<i><b>The Name of The Son JESUS</b></i>	<i><b>The Name of the Holy Ghost JESUS</b></i>
<i>Jesus said, "I am come in my <u>Father's name</u>, and ye receive me not..." <b>John 5:43</b></i>	<i>"Whosoever shall confess that <u>Jesus is the Son of God</u>, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." <b>1 John 4:15</b></i>	<i>(Jesus said) "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send <u>in my name</u>, he shall teach you all things..." <b>John 14:26</b></i>
<i>"Being made so much better than the angels, as he (Jesus) hath <u>by inheritance</u> obtained a more excellent <u>name</u> than they." <b>Hebrews 1:4</b></i>	<i>"But these are written, that ye might believe that <u>Jesus</u> is the Christ, the <u>Son of God</u>..." <b>John 20:31</b></i>	<i>"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is <u>Christ in you</u>, the hope of glory." <b>Colossians 1:27</b></i>
<i>"Philip saith unto him, Lord, (Jesus) shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? <u>he that hath seen me hath seen the Father</u>; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" <b>John 14:8-9</b></i>	<i>"For the <u>Son of God</u>, <u>Jesus Christ</u>, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea." <b>2 Corinthians 1:19</b></i>	<i>"Now the <u>Lord</u> [Jesus Christ] is that <u>Spirit</u>..." <b>2 Corinthians 3:17</b></i>

2. Jesus Christ came in "His Father's name," Jesus received His name "by inheritance" – therefore the name of the Father is Jesus. Since the Holy Ghost within us is actually "Christ in us," then that Spirit which dwells within us is also Jesus Christ.
3. Jesus Christ is the one, singular name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Therefore, according to the command of the Lord, in baptism we are to use that one, singular name that denotes Father, Son and Holy Ghost – Jesus Christ.
4. There is no baptism event recorded in scripture where the words "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" were ever called or spoken over a baptismal candidate.
5. The Apostle Peter, after hearing in person the baptismal command of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19,

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obeyed that command by decreeing that baptism should be in the name of Jesus Christ.

- **Acts 2:38** – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

D. So why is there confusion over the baptismal formula today?

1. The book of Acts records the history of the original church and it reveals that the disciples fulfilled the great commission (Matthew 28:19, Luke 24:47) by baptizing exclusively in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. During the second century, long after the time of the apostles, men changed the formula for water baptism to the titles, “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Note these historical records:

**BRITANNICA ENCYCLOPEDIA**, (11th Edition, Volume 3, page 365) – Baptism was changed from the name of Jesus to the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the 2nd century.

**CANNEY ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION**, (page 53) – The early church baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus until the second century.

**HASTINGS ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION**, (Volume 2 – page 377) – Christian baptism was administered using the words, “in the name of Jesus”. (Volume 2 – page 389) Baptism was always in the name of Jesus until the time of Justin Martyr.

**CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA**, (Volume 2, page 263) – The authors of this encyclopedia state that the baptismal formula was changed by the Catholic Church.

**SCHAFF-HERZOG RELIGIOUS ENCYCLOPEDIA**, (Volume 1, page 435) – The New Testament knows only the baptism in the name of Jesus.

**HASTINGS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE**, (page 88) – It must be acknowledged that the three-fold name of Matthew 28:19 does not appear to have been used by the primitive church, but rather in the name of Jesus, Jesus Christ or Lord Jesus.

E. The triune baptismal formula of “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” was a later invention of men and does not have support of either the Word of God or the historical record of the early church.

## IV. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

A. According to the Bible, there are specific things a person should do before being baptized.

- **Hebrews 6:1-2** – “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms...”
1. First, we must believe (or have faith) in the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is closely linked in scripture to faith and believing.
    - **Mark 16:16** – “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
    - **Acts 8:12** – “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

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- *Colossians 2:12* – “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”
2. Second, we must repent from our sins and turn toward God with a sincere heart.
    - *Acts 2:38* – “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
    - *Luke 24:47* – “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name ...”
  3. Third, we must confess with our mouth that we believe the gospel and that we are turning away from sin and turning toward Jesus Christ.
    - *Matthew 10:32* – “(Jesus said) Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”
    - *Romans 10:9-10* – “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
    - *1 John 4:15* – “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”
    - *Acts 8:36-38* – “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”
  4. Fourth, we should have some understanding of the doctrine of baptism. We need to have a basic knowledge of the scriptural teachings concerning water baptism, including an understanding of why and how we are to be baptized and what baptism does for us.
    - a. Although the scripture does not reveal everything that the Ethiopian eunuch was taught before he was baptized, we know that Philip must have given him some teaching on the subject. The Bible says that after Philip preached “Jesus” to him, the eunuch responded by saying, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:35-36)
    - b. This same eagerness to be buried with Christ in water baptism should be present within the hearts of all who repent, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek after God.
  5. Fifth, we should be baptized even if we have already received the Holy Ghost.
    - a. The Apostle Peter was sent by God to preach to the Italian Centurion, Cornelius. While Peter preached the gospel, the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his gentile household. Even though they had just been filled with the Spirit, they were still commanded by Peter to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ.
      - *Acts 10:44-48* – “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision (Jewish Christians) which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed (pled) they him to tarry certain days.”

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## V. ADDITIONAL TRUTHS ABOUT WATER BAPTISM

### A. What about infant baptism?

1. There is no scriptural evidence of infants being baptized. There is no scriptural command for infants to be baptized. An infant cannot exercise faith in God, repent of his sins, confess faith in God, or understand the doctrine of baptism.

### B. Why was Jesus baptized?

1. Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was without sin (1 Peter 2:21-21; 1 John 3:5). If He was without sin, why would He need baptism?
2. Even John the Baptist was perplexed as to why Jesus would come to be baptized.
  - **Matthew 3:13-15** – *“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer (allow) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered (allowed) him.”*
3. Jesus’ answer to John’s question is revealing – Jesus, as our Redeemer and Mediator, was obligated to fulfill and complete the righteous plan of God. This plan included His water baptism and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him in the symbolic manifestation of a dove.
4. Second, as our great High Priest, Jesus was also required under the Law of Moses to wash his flesh in water as part of his ordination into the priesthood ministry. Again, this was part of His obligation to fulfill or complete the righteous law of God.
5. Third, the baptism of Jesus was an example to us. If Jesus Christ, the only man without sin, was baptized in water, then certainly, we sinful men and women, need to be baptized also.

### C. What was the baptism of John?

1. John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance and confession of sins.
  - **Mark 1:3-5** – *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”*
2. John the Baptist’s ministry and baptism represented a bridge between the old and new covenants. John’s ministry prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah – the Savior, Jesus Christ. His message included repentance and baptism but it could not yet include the infilling of the Holy Ghost because Jesus had not yet been crucified, resurrected and glorified (John 7:39). The Holy Ghost could only come after Jesus ascended back into glory.

3. The baptism of John was made ineffectual on the day of Pentecost, when *everyone* was commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). In fact, John knew this change would occur when he said in John 3:30, “*He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease.*” Notice how the apostle Paul insisted upon re-baptizing a group of people because they had only been baptized with John’s baptism.

- **Acts 18:24-25, 19:1-5** – “*And a certain Jew named Apollos...came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord...knowing only the baptism of John...And it came to pass that...Paul...came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them...Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”*

D. When do our sins get remitted – at repentance or at baptism?

1. Just as our physical birth involved many elements but was one “process”, so our new birth experience involves many elements but is one “process.”
2. At physical birth, a child must be delivered from the mother’s body; an umbilical cord must be cut; breath must be drawn into the child’s lungs. All of these elements must take place to complete the birth. If any element is omitted, the child will die. The same is true with our spiritual birth – all of the essential elements must take place to complete our spiritual birth.
3. The scriptures reveal that repentance and baptism are *both* part of the same process, the forgiveness and remitting of our sins. It is unwise and unscriptural to assume that either element is sufficient by itself. It takes both repentance *and* baptism in order for the remission of our sins to be complete.
  - **Acts 2:38** – “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*”
4. The scriptural command is simple and clear – we should not receive baptism until we have believed, repented, and confessed that Jesus is our Lord. But once we have been obedient in these things, we should immediately seek to be baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an essential part of the plan of salvation.
  - **1 Peter 3:20-21** – “*...in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...*”
  - **Mark 16:15-16** – “*And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

*Baptism is a privilege, a blessing, and a responsibility. It is the decree of Jesus Christ, the command of the apostles and the example established for us by the first church. Baptism is an essential part of the “new birth” of “water and Spirit”. It is the spiritual washing that brings us remission of sins and marks us as recipients of the “new covenant” of Jesus Christ. In baptism, we identify with the burial of the Lord and take upon ourselves the saving name of Jesus Christ. In light of these manifold blessings, it is expedient that we respond to the words of Ananias who commanded, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16)*

# WATER BAPTISM

Additional reading material (available through the Pentecostal Publishing House):

*In The Name of Jesus*, David K. Bernard

*The Real Truth About Baptism in Jesus Name*, John Patterson

*History of Baptism*, Thomas Weisser

*One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, John W. Hanson

