

Access to God



If there were a cure for cancer....

Do you want to be pleasing to God? Does it really matter? Let's be honest, many loud voices in our world today tell us that God and His will just doesn't matter and in fact it may seem more fairy tale than anything. Maybe you believe that.

But if somewhere in your mind you harbor the smallest doubt, then friend, you owe it to yourself and your family to find the truth.

Truth. Many people are discarding that today, too saying that everything is relative, that there are no absolutes. But we, at the Church of Christ, want you to know this absolute truth: God is real and He loves you.

Maybe you do believe along with us that there absolutely is a Great and Eternal God in heaven who created us and loves us. Either way, this study is designed to give an overview of God's plan for each to become His children.

Will you take a few minutes to hear His message to you? Life doesn't end when you breath your last breath here. You see, you are a soul, not a body. Your soul is only "housed" in your body for this life time. Your lasting home is where your soul will spend eternity. Maybe you don't like to think about it, maybe you purposefully ignore it, but each time we stand at a grave side we can't help but believe, there must be more to life than this. Yes, you better believe it! That is right, you really need to understand all that is beyond this first home your body. You will leave this planet. Find out what it takes to put you securely in the hands of the One who holds this life and the next life in His palms.

As you study these pages you will notice it is simply a study of the Word of God the Bible. Our goal is never create a teaching, but to uphold God's teaching. You see, simply put, we can't save you. We want to give our life to the One who does save and teach others His way.

*... you would expect it to be made
available to all who need it.*

Access to God

Do you want to be pleasing to God? Let's see what God says we must have to be please Him.

1. What does God say we must have to please Him?

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

What must we have to please God? _____

What two things must we believe to please God? _____

2. Where do we get the faith that is pleasing to God?

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

From where should our faith come? _____

To what does God want us to listen? _____

Think about it: With so many different faiths in the world, how do we know who or what to believe.

3. Is Jesus pleased with all faiths?

Mark 7:7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrine the commandments of men.

What does vain mean? _____

What makes a teaching vain? _____

Think about it: Simply because someone speaks of God or religion doesn't make their faith pleasing to God, does it? When these men taught their ways while saying it was God's way, their followers were misled causing their worship to be vain or worthless. This did not please God!

4. What did Jesus tell us He will say to these people in the last judgment?

Mathew 7:21-23 Not everyone that says to me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Had they been good people? _____

Had they been religious people? _____

Had they spoken in the name of Jesus? _____

What had they not done that would have been pleasing to God? _____

Also Study:

Mathew 7:13-14 Many will not inherit Heaven as their eternal home.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 Paul prophesied of people leaving the truth.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 Paul warned Timothy about those who would not follow sound doctrine.
Think about it: How do we know that what we study is of God and not of men?

5. Is the Bible from man or God?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scriptures is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

How much scripture is inspired?

<i>Equation:</i>	The scripture of God	(2 Timothy 3:16)
	+ <u>A person who Obeys</u>	(Hebrews 11:6)
	Complete person pleasing to God	(2 Timothy 3:17)

2 Peter 1:3 As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

Was it man's power or divine (of God) power that gives us the written word? _____

How is the word "all" used? In other words, is the Bible sufficient? _____

Illustration: Can you have more than **all**? Imagine a child is told to pick up all the shoes in the floor. How many would be left if he picked up **all**? How much truth can be given if God has revealed **all** of it in the Bible?

Also Study:

2 Peter 1:20-21 We can be assured that the scriptures are from God.

Review: God's word tells us the Bible is from Him and all of it is inspired. By obeying it we can have a faith that pleases God.

6. How is the Bible to be Rightly Divided?

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

There are some basic principles we must understand about God's Word – The Bible:

There are two major divisions – Old Testament and New Testament

Moses was the law giver of the Old Testament – Christ is the law giver of the New Testament

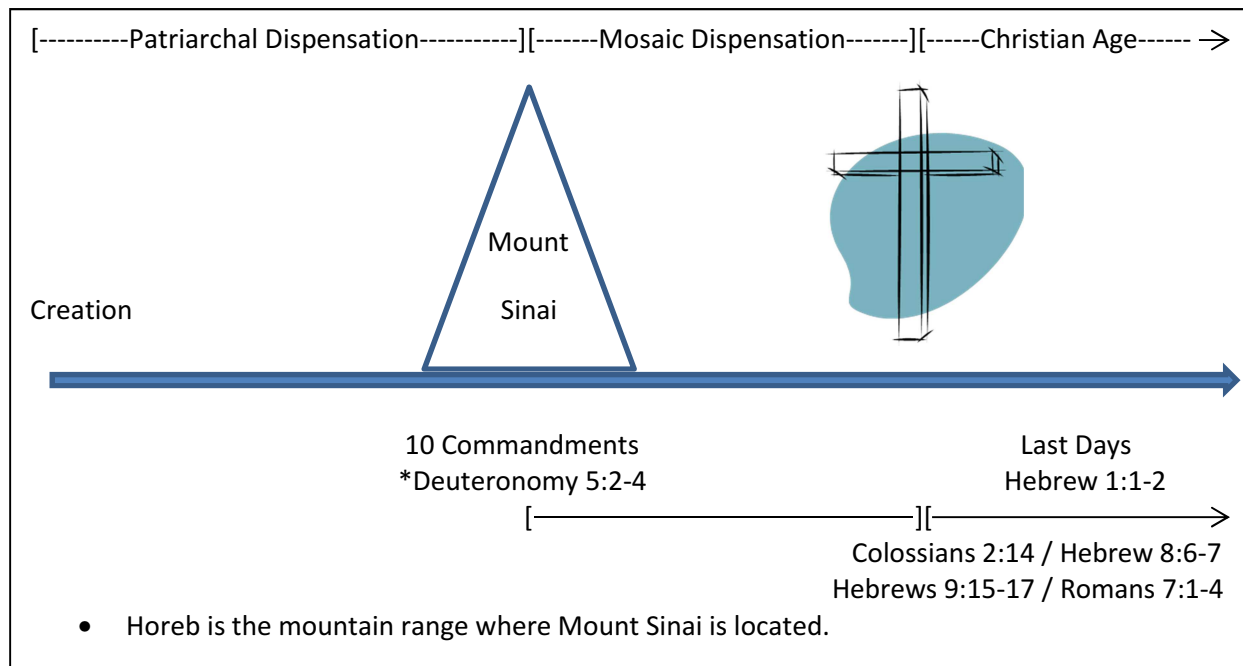
Judaism was the religion under Moses – Christianity is the religion under Christ

Thinking about it: Since the Bible is divided into two testaments, contains teaching from two law givers, and reveals two different religions, it is important that we study so that we know we are "rightly dividing the word of truth". The Bible clearly show us which testament we live under today, which lawgiver we are under and which religion we are to follow.

In the following section study the scriptures and illustrations to see which testament we live under today.

God Speaks

God has always loved mankind enough to speak to them. Through the ages He has spoken through the patriarchs (fathers), Moses, and Christ. Study the passages below to see which age you live in.



7. Consider This Timeline

This timeline demonstrates how God has communicated with mankind since the beginning of time.

Patriarchal Time Period

Creation is the beginning point on the left side. Adam and Eve lived at this time. During this time God communicated with people through the patriarchs. "Patriarch" means father, We do not know of a written law during this time period.

Mosaic Time Period

On Mt Sinai God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. This is represented on the timeline by the mountain. God spoke to the children of Israel giving the law through Moses.

Christian Time Period

The old law given through Moses was done away or fulfilled at the cross. From the cross until Jesus comes again people should live under Christ. God has spoken through His Son in this "last" dispensation of time (Hebrews 1:1-2). Therefore this period of time is called the Christian age.

Let's see How the Scripture Teaches These Points in Time:

Old Testament

When did the Law given to through Moses begin?

Deuteronomy 5:1-3 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive."

As you think about the order of events:

Was the law given to their fathers? _____

Was this a new law given to them? _____

So this is a beginning point of the law of Moses on the timeline since they were the first generation to have the Old Law

New Testament

Hebrews 9:16-17 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

Note: "Will" and "Testament" are synonymous.

When does an individual's will come into effect? _____

Therefore, when did the New Testament become effective? _____

Galatians 3:24-25 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Note: In the first century a tutor was the one who was responsible for bringing children to their teacher.

What was the purpose of the Old Law (Old Testament)?

Since we are under Christ today, are we still under the Old Law?

Colossians 2:14, 16-17 Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross ... So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

What three things happened to the Old Law or Testament?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Old Law contained dietary restrictions, annual festivals, and Sabbath day worship.

Are we under these Old Testament teachings today? _____

Romans 7:1-3 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

Paul uses these three verses to illustrate the importance of faithfulness and commitment.

Can a woman marry another if her husband dies? _____

What is she called if she marries another while her husband lives? _____

Now read the next verse to see how Paul applies this to the two covenants.

Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another - - to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Look in verse four and answer the following questions:

If we have become dead to the Old Law, what are we to marry? _____

If we are now to be married to Christ's Law, wouldn't it be "spiritual adultery" to also follow the Old Testament or any other teaching? _____

While looking at the timeline:
When did the New Testament come into force?

Make a point on the timeline of 33 years before the cross to identify the time of Jesus birth.
What covenant did Jesus live under? _____
What religion was Jesus? _____
Did He practice Judaism or Christianity? _____
So which testament do we live under today? _____

Also Study:

Luke 4:16 Jesus worshipped in a synagogue on the Sabbath Day.

Review: We live under Christ's Covenant, the New Testament.

The New Testament shows God's love for each of us; what sin does to our relationship with Him, and what Christ has done to reunite us with God.

8. What is our condition?

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

How many have sinned? _____

9. What is Sin?

1 John 3:4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

What is lawlessness? _____

Think About It: If a person transgresses or goes beyond God's will, they are guilty of living a lawless life. Sin can cause painful events in our life, but even more so toward our relationship with God and eternity.

10. How Does Sin Affect Us?

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

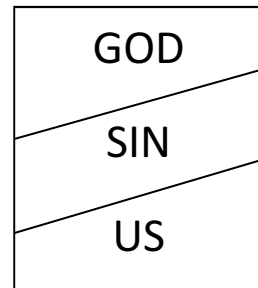
What do iniquities (also sin) do to our relationship with God?

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also

Death is a separation;

What two things separate in a physical death?

According to Isaiah 29:2, what separates in spiritual death?



Thinking about it: The good news is we serve a loving God who since the very beginning has wanted a relationship with us. He doesn't want us to be separated from Him. In Genesis 3:8 God walked through the garden "in the cool of day" to talk with Adam and Eve. We know it is our sin that separates us from God. God in His love – Great Love – has made a way for us to have that relationship with Him again.

11. What did God do to show His love for us?

Romans 5:8-10 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us.** **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from wrath through Him.** **10** For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

How did God demonstrate His love for us? _____

What was our condition before Jesus died for our sins? _____

What makes us enemies of God? _____

What reconciles us to God? _____

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through Me.**

How Do We Come to the Father? _____

Is there any other way to the Father? _____

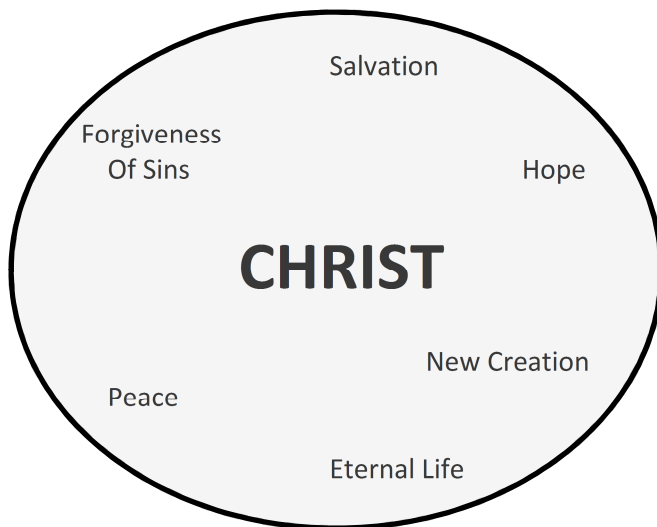
Think About It: Christ is the only way to the Father, but also in Christ are all the Spiritual blessings that God has for us.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had blessed us with **every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**

Where do we find every spiritual blessing? _____

Think About It: What are some of the spiritual blessings that we find in Christ?

Below are spiritual blessings found in Christ. You may want to list more.



Blessings found "in Christ"

Hope: Ephesians 2:12 " that at that time you were **without Christ**, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having **no hope** and without God in the world."

Forgiveness of Sins: Colossians 1:13-14 " He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of **the Son** of His love, **in whom** we have redemption through His blood, the **forgiveness of sins.**"

Eternal Life: 1 John 5:11 " And this is the testimony: that the God has given us **eternal life**, and this life **is in His Son.**"

Peace: Philippians 4:7 "and the **peace of God**. Which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds **through Christ Jesus.**"

Salvation: 2 Timothy 2:10 "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain **salvation** with is **in Christ** Jesus with eternal glory."

New Creation: 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new

Think About It: This leaves us asking, "How do we get into Christ?" The good news is that God has shown us in His Word, step by step how to get into Christ.

STOP! Are you saved? _____

If no, please study carefully the following pages and obey God's plan.

If yes, please write down what you did to be saved so you can later evaluate it.

Have you been baptized? _____

Was this after you were "saved?" Yes _____ No _____

12. How do we get in Christ?

Believe:

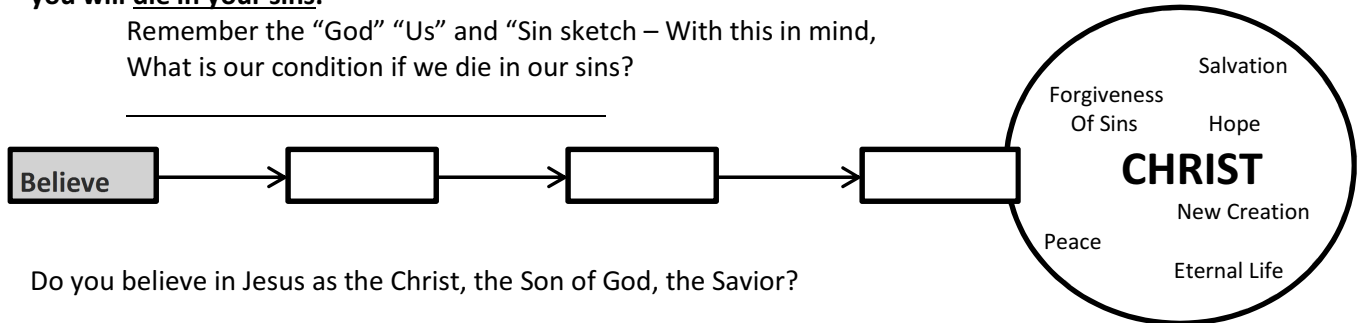
John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

What is the first step required to have the “everlasting life” which is found in Christ?

John 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.

Remember the “God” “Us” and “Sin sketch – With this in mind,

What is our condition if we die in our sins?



Repent:

Think About It: Is simply being sorry for sin enough?

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

How many kinds of sorrow are discussed here? _____

What does worldly sorrow produce? _____

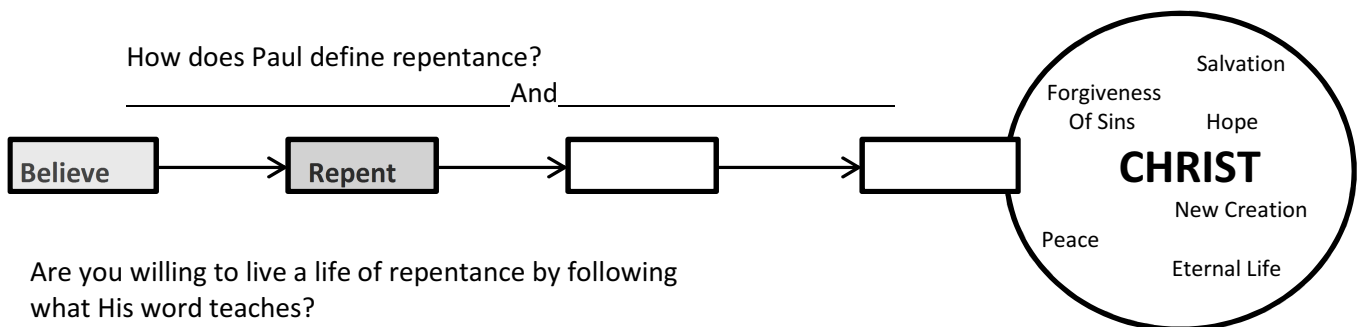
What does godly sorrow produce? _____

Think About It: What is repentance?

Acts 26:20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

How does Paul define repentance?

_____ And _____



Confess:

Romans 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

What is the next step Jesus asks of us? _____

What are we to confess? _____

If we won't confess Jesus as Lord, can we be saved? _____

Matthew 10:32-33 Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

If we confess Christ on earth what will He do for us before the Father?

If we don't confess Christ on earth what will He do before the Father?

Thinking about it: Whether or not the Lord speaks my name favorably before the Father is dependent upon my confessions. That is important! What would keep people from confessing or talking about Christ?

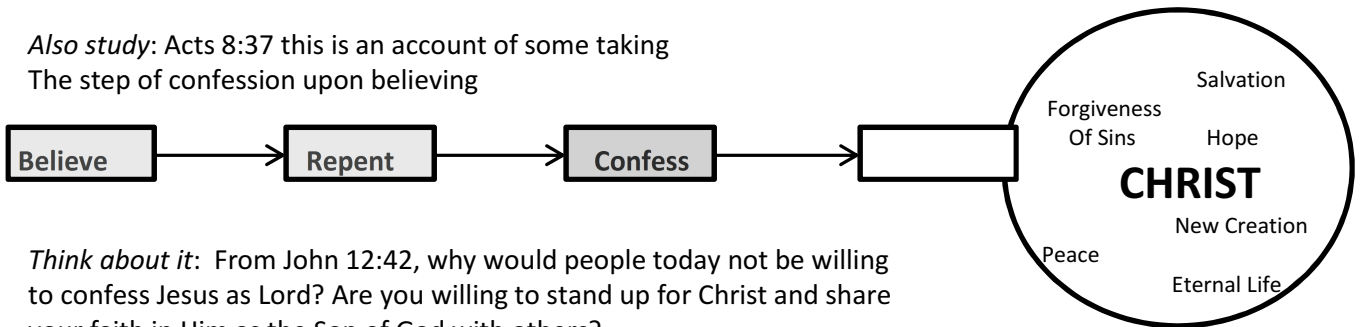
John 12:42-43 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Did many of the rulers in the synagogue believe? _____

Were they willing to confess? _____

Why not? _____

Also study: Acts 8:37 this is an account of some taking
The step of confession upon believing



Think about it: From John 12:42, why would people today not be willing to confess Jesus as Lord? Are you willing to stand up for Christ and share your faith in Him as the Son of God with others?

Baptism:

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

What is the next step Jesus Christ ask of us? _____

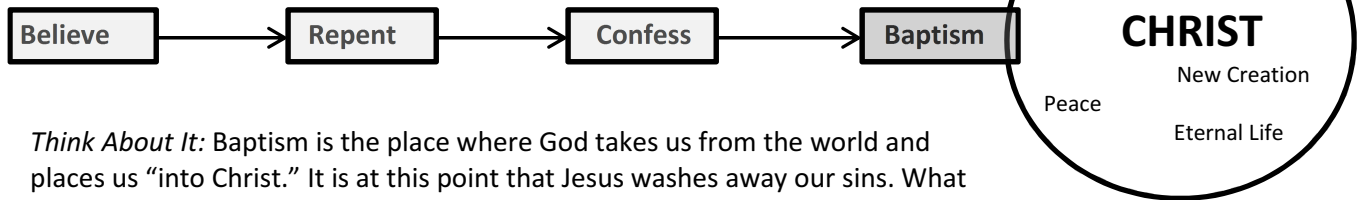
According to this verse where does baptism place us? _____

Baptism is the final step when God saves us from our sins. He does this by taking us from the world and placing us into Christ. We don't find in scripture individuals "Believing in Christ," "Repenting in Christ," or "Confessing in Christ," or praying a sinners prayer to get "into Christ." We only read of being "baptized into Christ."

Thinking about it: If you were leaving a room and entering another, each step would be necessary. The first step would begin our journey. The second and third would be just as important to continue. But there will be the final step when we leave the room and enter the other. Baptism is the final step of God's plan in bringing us from the world and into Christ.

Acts 22:16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

What does baptism do with our sins that are separating us from God?



Think About It: Baptism is the place where God takes us from the world and places us "into Christ." It is at this point that Jesus washes away our sins. What does

13. What are the characteristics of baptism taught in the Bible?

Ephesians 4:5 on Lord, one faith, one baptism

According to Holy scripture how many baptisms are there? _____

There are many baptisms taught today in the religious world.

If the world teaches there are many baptisms, but God teaches there is but one, who should we follow? _____

Think about it: What are the characteristics of that one baptism?

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, "**All authority** has been given Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen

Who commanded baptism? _____

By whose authority do we baptize today? _____

Think about it: No one should be baptized because a family member, friend or other person compels them. This is an act someone does to obey Jesus, making Him Lord of their life.

Mark 16:16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Who should be baptized? _____

Think about it: This verse reveals to us how infants are not candidates for the baptism found in the Bible. One must first be a believer. Infants are safe with God (Ezekiel 18:20)

Romans 6:3-4 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Is one baptism taught in the scriptures:

Pouring? Yes _____ No _____

Sprinkling? Yes _____ No _____

Burial? Yes _____ No _____

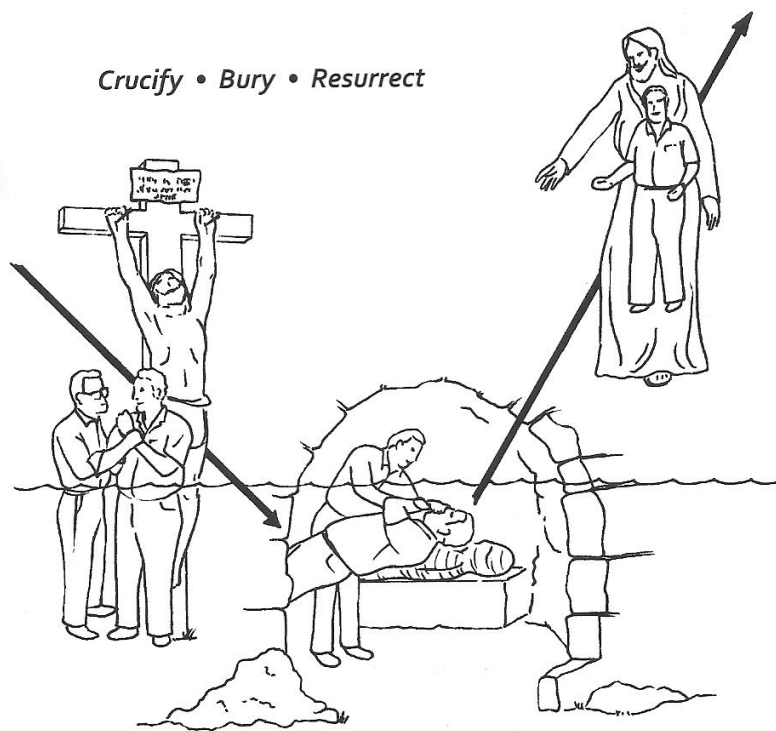
Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Why is a person baptized? _____

Think about it: Sin separates us from God and baptism is the place where God says He removes those sins giving us life. Baptism is a wonderful event essential to our salvation! This event is pictured in a deep meaningful way in Romans 6:3-6. Here God shows us baptism as a reenactment of what Christ has done for us on the cross? Let's look at the picture God draws of baptism. Notice where life was given.

14. What are the characteristics of baptism taught in the Bible?

Romans 6:3-6 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His resurrection*, ⁶knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.



CRUCIFY: In verse 6 our old man is crucified with Christ. This is repentance. We must put to death (“crucify”) our old ways of sin.

BURY: In verse 4 we bury in a watery grave the man who has been dead in sin. Remember that sin leaves us spiritually dead – separated from God.

RESURRECT: In verse 4 and 5 The old man (dead in sin) is buried in baptism and the new man is risen – or made alive as he is resurrected with Christ. Notice the place the new life is given. No one living under the Christian dispensation has ever been saved by prayer. Contrary to one of the most popular man-made teachings today, the sinners prayer isn’t from God. The sinners prayer isn’t found anywhere in the Bible. No one in the New Testament church ever said it. We can’t find one example in the scriptures of a person being saved and then later being baptized. If someone were alive spiritually why would they be placed in a grave? Who puts the living in a grave? God tells us to put the spiritually dead who wants to live again in the grave of baptism. Just as Christ died, was buried and given life as He was resurrected from the grave, we too, are given life as we are resurrected with Him when we are raised from baptism. At that point we rise out of the waters of baptism, made alive again by the Lord because of the

forgiveness that took place in baptism. As a preacher of the past century would say, "The power is not in the water, the power is in the One who said, 'Get in the water.'"

Think about it: Think about Jesus dying on the cross. To think He did that for you and me is touching. Imagine the only perfect man who has ever lived dying for you. This is the greatest demonstration of grace we have ever known. No one deserves such a powerful demonstration of love and grace, but it is offered! Have you received it?

Also Study:

Acts 8:12 Believing the preaching of Jesus resulted in Baptism

Acts 8:35-39 The eunuch was taught Jesus, believed, baptized and rejoiced (notice the order)

Acts 16:30-33 The jailer and his family were taught, believed, baptized and rejoiced (notice the order)

1 Peter 3:21 Baptism is when God saves and man's conscience can be at peace.

Colossians 2:11-12 Baptism is like a spiritual circumcision. During our baptism, God is at work cutting away our guilt of fleshly past and resurrecting us to a new life.

15. This grace is offered to us, but how do we access it?

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

How do we access His grace?

Think about it: Try to log on or "access" a computer without the password; or gain "access" into a vault without the combination; or "access" entrance through a locked door without a key. The greatest "entrance" we will ever know is having "access" into God's saving grace. God has done His part and Romans 5 teaches our response through Faith is our part. Do you have a faith that pleases God? Remember that first passage in this study, Hebrews 11:6?

Act Through Faith: Through His word we have seen that God loves us so much He has laid a plan whereby our sins can be forgiven. He will wash them away. Seeing what God's will is for you what should you do at this time in your life to have a faith that obeys and pleases God? If you have never come to Christ, why not be baptized right now. Give us a call and we will assist you. In Acts we see that people were baptized immediately as they learned what they needed to do to be saved (Acts 2:41; 8:35-38; 16:33). If you have been baptized before, but have learned from God's word that what you did previously isn't in the scriptures (example: a saved person being baptized, infant baptism, sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion, baptized to join a denomination) **do what dedicated believers did in Acts 19:1-5 as they were baptized again.** They were baptized into the one baptism of Christ once they learned that what they had previously been taught was not the one baptism. Earlier in this study did you describe your baptism as taking place after you were saved? It may have been what you were taught, but that baptism isn't the one baptism taught in scripture, is it? It takes great humility and courage to say, "Give me Jesus Christ and His teachings – Nothing more or less." Jesus taught us that we can't follow a teaching from men and end up right with God. Remember Jesus' own words in Matthew 7:21-23? The real test of our faith is what we will do when we learn we need to make changes in our life (Romans 10:17).

These words aren't written to try to win arguments or debates, but simply to point us to the Savior so He can win our soul. We love to study God's word with individuals. If you are interested in a further study or ready to come to Christ, please call the number at the bottom on this booklet.

In the words of the great apostle Paul as he closed the letter of Ephesians, "grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

Study Compiled by
David Shannon and Mitch Poskevich

Mt. Juliet Church of Christ
Mt. Juliet, Tennessee
www.mtjuliet.org