

Bible Mini-course

Lesson 12 — Baptism

If you have ever wondered about paintings depicting John the Baptist and Yahshua standing ankle-deep in the river while John with cupped hands dribbles water on the Messiah's head, you had good reason to question traditions about baptism. The institution of baptism has been misunderstood for centuries, yet, it is essential to one's salvation. Join us as we look not only at how baptism should be done, but also on whom it is to be performed scripturally as well as the reason that Scripture commands that a believer be baptized. (The answers to the questions below are on the reverse.)

1. A baptism was practiced by Israel in the Old Testament.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Proper baptism is allowed only once.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Circumcision is accomplished spiritually today through baptism.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. What is the scriptural age for baptism?
 - a. infancy
 - b. adolescence
 - c. 20 years and older
 - d. 30 years and older
5. At what age was Yahshua baptized?
 - a. eight days old
 - b. twelve years old
 - c. about 20
 - d. about 30
6. Who in the New Testament was given the authority to baptize?
 - a. laypersons
 - b. Deacons
 - c. Elders
 - d. Both b and c
7. In the New Testament the word "baptize" is derived from the Greek word "baptizo," which means to _____.
 - a. overwhelm, cover
 - b. pour
 - c. sprinkle
 - d. wash
8. What is required before baptism?
 - a. a pilgrimage to Jerusalem
 - b. repentance
 - c. fasting
 - d. Both b and c
9. Baptism is to be done in what name(s)?
 - a. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - b. Yahweh and Yahshua
 - c. Yahshua
 - d. all forms are acceptable
10. John's baptism was of what type?
 - a. a washing
 - b. a covering
 - c. repentance
 - d. Both a and c
11. The act of baptism is a symbolic depiction of _____.
 - a. Yahshua's life
 - b. Yahshua's death and resurrection
 - c. Yahshua's Second Coming
 - d. All of the above
12. Baptism is a requirement for _____.
 - a. Yahweh's Kingdom
 - b. Paradise in heaven
 - c. refuge from persecution
 - d. both a and c



Score Yourself

1. a. A form of baptism was practiced by Israel in the Old Testament (2Kings 5:14); however, this baptism was not a baptism of the Holy Spirit (Yahshua's baptism) or of repentance (John's baptism), but a baptism of purification. There is evidence that the Jews practiced a form of baptism long after the birth of the Messiah. For more on historical baptism, see "Baptism," *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (CBTEL).
2. a. Ephesians 4:5 says there is only one Master, one faith, and one baptism. According to the author of Hebrews it is impossible to be renewed spiritually through repentance once one has been "enlightened" through repentance and baptism but later comes to reject the Truth (Heb. 6:4-6).
3. a. In the Old Testament physical circumcision was the confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17:10-11). Upon Yahshua's impalement came a change in the Old Testament covenant (Heb. 9:1-22). One change included circumcision. According to the Apostle Paul physical circumcision is no longer a requirement for salvation (Gal. 5:6; 1Cor. 7:19) as with the Abrahamic covenant. Circumcision today is spiritual, and is now accomplished through Yahshua's baptism (Col. 2:11-12).
4. c. The proper age of baptism is 20 years or older. Before baptism repentance is necessary (Acts 2:38). Repentance requires an understanding of Yahweh's Word. Without this discernment repentance is impossible. Therefore, baptism preceded by repentance requires that person be mature in thinking and understanding. The Bible indicates this age of accountability is 20. It was at 20 that people had to begin giving the atonement offering (Ex. 30:14), and men in Israel were numbered for war (Num. 1:3; 26:2). At 20 the Levite men enrolled in temple service, 1Chron. 23:24, and oversaw temple work, Ezra 3:8. And it was those who were 20 years and older who could not enter the Promised Land but who had to die in the wilderness for their sins (Num. 14:29; 32:11), thus showing that 20 is the age when Yahweh holds a person responsible for his or her actions.
5. d. According to Mark 1:9-11, Yahshua was baptized by John the Baptist at the beginning of His ministry, which Yahshua began at age 30 (Luke 3:23). Following Yahshua's example, Yahweh's Restoration Ministry maintains that a person should be at least 30 years of age to qualify for ordination to the office of elder.
6. d. In the New Testament baptism into Yahshua's Name was carried out only by ordained ministers (John 4:1-2; Acts 16:33). No scriptural examples show a layperson performing immersions. Also, from Acts 8:4-17 it is evident that while deacons have the authority to baptize, they lack the authority to lay on hands; only an elder has this authority (1Tim. 4:14).
7. a. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* defines *baptizo* as, "to make overwhelmed, i.e. cover wholly with a fluid." The *Complete Word Study New Testament* defines *baptize* as "to immerse, submerge for a religious purpose..." The *New International Dictionary of the Bible* offers this insightful statement: "Immersion, however, depicts more clearly the symbolic aspect of baptism since its three steps—immersion (going into the water), submersion (going under the water), and emersion (coming out of the water)—more closely parallel the concept of entering into the death of [Messiah], experiencing the forgiveness of sins, and rising to walk in the newness of [Messiah's] resurrected life (Rom. 6:4)." In addition, according to many biblical scholars immersion was the original form of baptism practiced by the apostles and early Assembly. "...Immersion was the only practice of the apostles and the first Christians, and the church in general for many ages, and that it was only laid aside from the love of novelty and the coldness of climate" (Baptism," *CBTEL*). The words sprinkle (Gr. *Rhantizo* and pour (Gr. *Cheo*) are never used in the context of baptism.
8. b. Repentance from a person's past sins is likely the most important aspect of true baptism. Before 3,000 were baptized in Acts 2, Peter called for repentance from the people (Acts 2:38). Before a person is baptized and receives the gift of Yahweh's Spirit, that person first must repent of past sins and turn toward a righteous way of life. Repentance is more than words. True repentance is nothing short of self-denial and a complete rejection of all that Yahweh considers sinful and wicked.
9. c. Every New Testament account of baptism was performed in Yahshua's Name (Acts 2:38; 8:15-16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). Matthew 28:19, which is the only verse giving a triune formula, is suspect. The Hebrew version of Matthew omits it, while the *Jerusalem Bible* questions its inspiration. One simple reason for this is that a trinity formula was never followed in Scripture! "To some perplexity, and even distress, is caused by the apparent neglect of the disciples to carry out the [Master's] command in Matthew 28:19, 20, with regard to the formula for baptism...Turning to Acts and onwards, they find no single instance of, or reference to, baptism in which the Triune name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is employed. On the contrary, from the very first, only ten days after the injunction had been given, Peter is found (Acts 2:38) commanding all his hearers including those of the dispersion to be baptized in the name of [Yahshua the Messiah]" (*Companion Bible*, Appendix 185). Further, a number of early "church fathers" and historians were apparently without the knowledge of the trinity form in Matthew 28:19, including Eusebius of Caesarea and Justin Martyr (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*). (For more information on the Trinity request our free booklet, *Identifying the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*.)
10. c. John's baptism was one of repentance (Mark 1:4), but not of Yahweh's Spirit (Luke 3:15-17). Yahweh's Restoration Ministry considers most other baptisms, baptisms of repentance. Those who are baptized into the triune formula or other form may have been baptized into repentance, but not with Yahweh's Spirit (Acts 2:38). Those who have not been immersed properly—into Yahshua's Name—need to do so (Acts 19:1-6).
11. b. The act of baptism is a symbolic depiction of Yahshua's death (Rom. 6:3-4). When a person is baptized or immersed into Yahshua's Name he takes part in Yahshua's death, burial, and ultimately His resurrection (Gal. 3:27).
12. a. Yahshua said that baptism was a requirement for the Kingdom. "...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Elohim" (John 3:5, KJV). Being born of water occurs at baptism. At baptism we are washed clean of our past sins and receive the earnest or "down payment" of Yahweh's Spirit with the laying on of hands. The immersed person has an obligation to nurture and cultivate the Spirit, thus allowing it to grow within. The second process, being fully born of the Spirit, occurs when a person is changed to a spirit being at Yahshua's return (1Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).