

## 16 – Making a New Start (Baptism)

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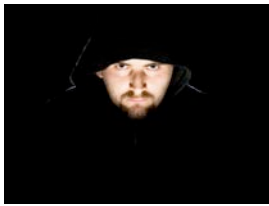
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### You Can Begin Again



2

A number of years ago, a Christian evangelist held a series of evangelistic meetings in Moscow's Kremlin auditorium. After one of the meetings, he was seated in his little office, when the door suddenly flung open.



3

A tough-looking young man with a scruffy beard and rough appearance came bursting into the room. Believing he was going to attack him, the evangelist stood up and stepped back. His Russian translator stepped between them. Immediately the man began waving his arms and talking animatedly in Russian. After the initial tension drained from the room, the translator explained that this man was one of Moscow's notorious criminals. He had been in and out of jail twenty-eight times. Filled with guilt and hopeless about his future, he longed to find peace. The evangelist calmly read 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." He told the troubled man the story of the thief on the cross who found forgiveness. He assured him, "Jesus is the same Savior today. He offers forgiveness. He offers deliverance. He offers salvation. Take it! Rejoice in it! Praise God for it!" With tears running down his face, this guilty young Russian knelt and received God's forgiveness.



4

About a year later, the evangelist visited Moscow. As he praised God with a group of believers in a newly formed church, he noticed the converted criminal singing in the choir.

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5

The man's face revealed a new inner peace. He radiated with happiness. He had accepted Christ. The teachings of the Bible had transformed his life, and he had followed Jesus' example and was baptized. His sins were washed away.

Bible baptism is a symbol of a life transformed by God's grace. Baptism testifies to the beginning of a new life in Jesus Christ. Baptism speaks of a transformed life.

One of the most powerful examples of the dramatic change Christ can make in a life is the story of Saul, who later became the apostle Paul.



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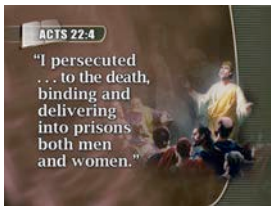
Saul was a Roman citizen by birth, and was educated by the very best teachers in Jerusalem.

He was zealous for the Jewish religion, and was recognized as a staunch defender of the faith.



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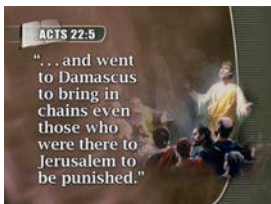
Saul – better known as Paul, his Christian name – describes what he did to put an end to the Christians.



8

(Text: Acts 22:4, 5)

"I persecuted ... to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. . . .



9

and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished."

Acts 22:4, 5.



10

As he was on his way to Damascus, a bright light shone out of heaven and struck him to the ground.

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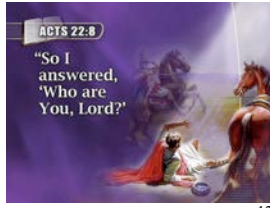
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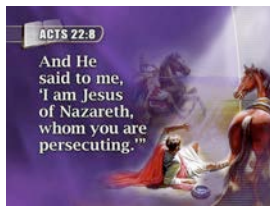
(Text: Acts 22:7, 8)

He heard a voice, saying, "...Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"



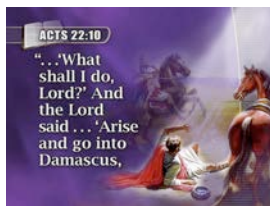
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and he answered, "Who are you, Lord?" And the voice answered,



13

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting."  
Acts 22:7, 8.



14

(Text: Acts 22:10)

The proud Pharisee humbly asked the Lord, "'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said..., 'Arise and go into Damascus,



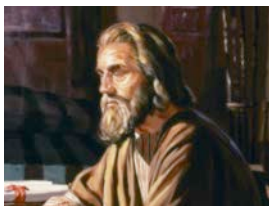
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and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.'"  
Acts 22:10.



16

Saul was blinded by the bright light and had to be led to a house in Damascus.



17

For three days, Saul had time to think of the suffering and pain he had caused the people of God.  
He recalled his hatred of Jesus' followers and their claim that He was the Messiah.

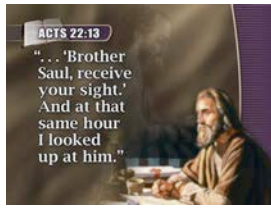
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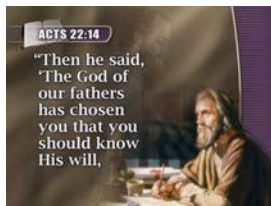
What anguish of heart these memories must have brought to Saul! He sat in total darkness for three days, and then God sent a prophet to him by the name of Ananias. Then Ananias said to Saul,



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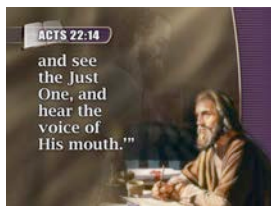
(Text: Acts 22:13-15)

“‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that same hour I looked up at him.



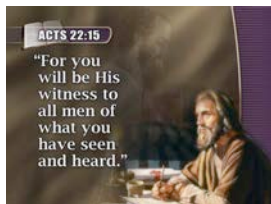
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Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will,



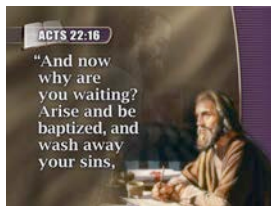
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and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.”



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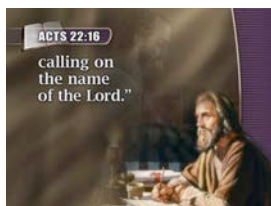
For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.” Acts 22:13-15. Then, in order for Saul to go forward in his life and shut the door on his past,



23

(Text: Acts 22:16)

Ananias said to Saul, “And now, why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins,



24

calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts: 22:16.



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25

Saul needed to make a new start.  
He needed to be washed clean from the terrible things he had done.  
He needed God's amazing grace and forgiveness.  
Baptism was the doorway to a new life for Saul.

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26

When he was baptized he knew that God had forgiven him.  
And Saul the persecutor became Paul, an evangelist for Jesus all the rest of his life!

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27

Have you ever wished you could start all over again and that all of the mistakes you had made in the past could be washed away?  
God knew that we all need just such an experience!  
He gave us baptism as a symbol of a new start – a new life in Jesus.

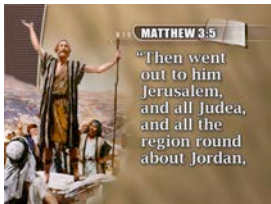
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Christian baptism had its origin with John the Baptist, a vigorous prophet who appeared in the wilderness of Judea boldly preaching repentance.  
The roads leading to the Jordan River were crowded with people going to listen to him.

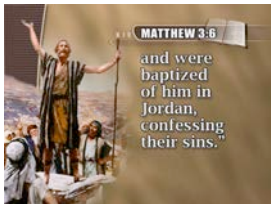
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29

(Text: Matthew 3:5, 6)  
The Bible says, "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

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30

and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Matthew 3:5, 6.

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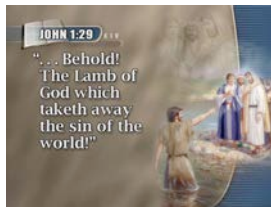
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Meanwhile in Nazareth, Jesus closed the door to His carpenter shop and told His mother farewell. He joined the crowds making their way to the Jordan.  
When John caught sight of Jesus, he recognized Him and stopped preaching.

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32

(Text: John 1:29)

Pointing to Jesus, John said, "...Behold! The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1:29.



33

John the Baptist recognized the true sacrificial Lamb who was to die for the sins of all who would accept His sacrifice.

When Jesus asked to be baptized, John hesitated.



34

(Text: Matthew 3:14)

He said, "I need to be baptized by you." Matthew 3:14.

John recognized that Jesus had no sinful past to put behind Him.



35

(Text: Matthew 3:15)

But Jesus insisted, "...Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Verse 15.

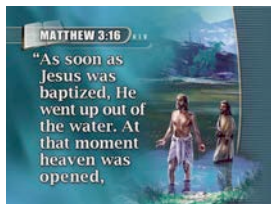


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Jesus asked to be baptized because as the Savior He was to identify with man.

He was to leave a perfect example for us to follow.

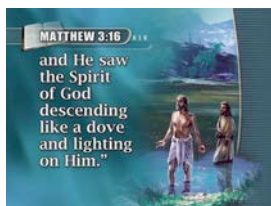
So John immersed Jesus in the Jordan River, burying Him under the water and bringing Him back up again.



37

(Text: Matthew 3:16, 17)

The Bible says, "As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened,

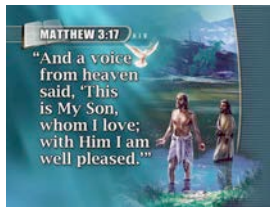


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and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

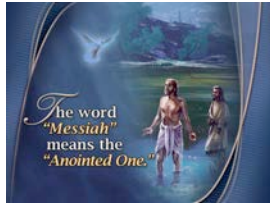
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39

And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'." Matthew 3:16, 17



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As Jesus walked up out of the water and stood with dripping clothes on the muddy banks of Jordan, God publicly recognized Him as the Messiah—the Anointed One.

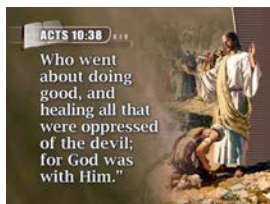
This marked the beginning of Christ's public ministry, for Peter said that at His baptism...



41

(Text: Acts 10:38)

"...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power:



42

Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

Acts 10:38.

Baptism became a practice of the followers of Jesus. Though Jesus Himself did not baptize, the Bible records that His disciples did:



43

(Text: John 4:1, 2)

"The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John,



44

although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but His disciples." John 4:1, 2.

And evidently heaven approved of the practice! Notice how Matthew records the last instructions given by Christ just before He went up to heaven:



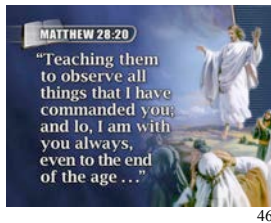
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(Text: Matthew 28:19, 20)

"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

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46

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."

Matthew 28:19, 20.

The New Testament church obediently followed their Savior's instructions. Sometimes thousands were even baptized in a day!

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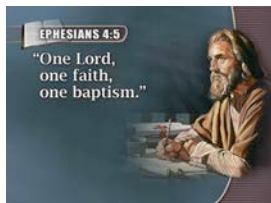


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But what mode of baptism did Jesus' followers practice after He returned to heaven?

No doubt they followed Jesus' example, since they were His disciples.

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48

(Text: Ephesians 4:5)

Paul, one of Jesus' most ardent followers, says that there is only "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Ephesians 4:5.

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49

The only detailed account of baptism after the cross is recorded in the Book of Acts.

Philip, the evangelist, conducted it.

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50

As Philip was walking along the dusty road to Gaza, he saw the Ethiopian treasurer of Queen Candace, who had charge of all her treasury.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship.

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51

Now he was on his way home, riding in a chariot and reading from a scroll.

Philip ran and over to the man and asked him,

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52

(Text: Acts 8:30, 31)

"Do you understand what you are reading?" The treasurer quickly replied,

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53

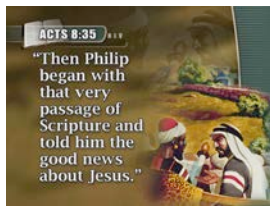
“How can I, unless someone guides me?”



54

He invited Philip to join him in his chariot.  
Philip saw that the man was reading Isaiah, chapter 53, a prophecy of the Messiah.

The Ethiopian invited Philip to explain it to him.



55

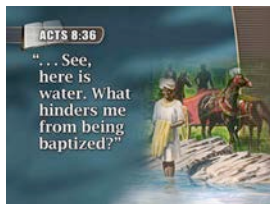
(Text: Acts 8:35)

The Bible says, “Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.” Acts 8:35.  
What a Bible study that must have been, bouncing along in that chariot!



56

Not only did Philip tell about Jesus, but he evidently explained the significance of baptism, for the Bible says that when they came to a pool of water, the Ethiopian said to Philip,



57

(Text: Acts 8:36, 37)

“...See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Acts 8:36.



58

Philip replied, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

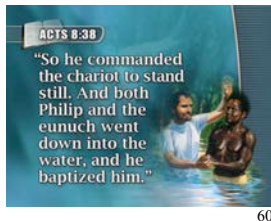


59

The Ethiopian said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Verse 37.

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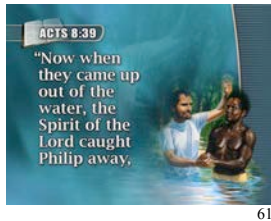


(Text: Acts 8:38)

“So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.” Acts 8:38.

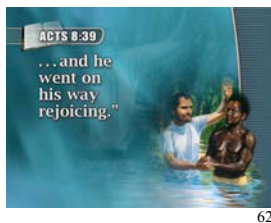
Notice that they went “down into the water.” Philip immersed the Ethiopian treasurer in the water, just as John immersed Christ when He was baptized.

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(Text: Acts 8:39)

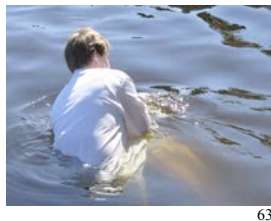
“Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away,



... and he went on his way rejoicing.”

Acts 8:39

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That is what happens when we bury the old life of sin and start a new life in Christ.

Clearly, immersion was the mode of baptism practiced by the early Christian church. In fact, there is no evidence in the New Testament for any other method of baptism.

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Here is a picture of a baptistry in a first century church in Philippi. Early church historians and findings by archaeologists

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both show that immersion was the mode of baptism until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

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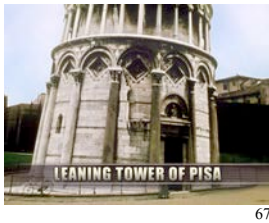
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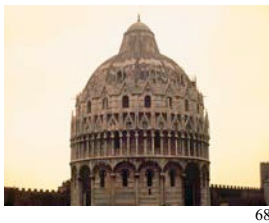
Many tourists today visit St. John's Church, located in the ruins of the biblical city of Ephesus in Turkey.

This church was built as a memorial to the disciple John.

Of special interest is the baptistry, circular in shape, about twelve feet in diameter and four feet deep, with stairs leading down into the font on two sides.



Most people have heard of the old bell tower in front of the Cathedral of Pisa, in Italy, more commonly known as the Leaning Tower of Pisa.



Along with the cathedral and the leaning bell tower is a baptistry, a round building that encloses



a pool about twenty feet across and four feet deep that was constructed in the fourteenth century.

Thirteen hundred years after Christ's ascension, the mode of baptism was still by immersion!



There are dozens of such cathedrals with large baptismal pools in Europe.

Sixty-six are found in Italy alone, with construction dates between the fourth and fourteenth centuries.



Cardinal James Gibbons wrote: "For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity baptism was usually conferred by immersion;

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72

but since the twelfth century the practice of baptizing by infusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church,



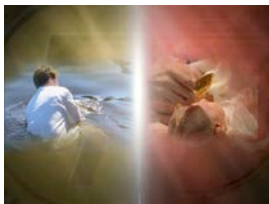
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as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion. . . .

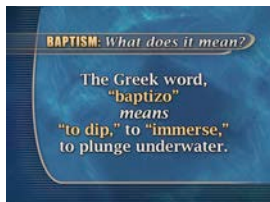


74

The Church exercises her discretion in adopting the most convenient mode, according to the circumstances of time and place." –The Faith of Our Fathers, 94<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 277. Note that convenience and tradition are behind the alternate forms of baptism! The Word of God never speaks of such practices.

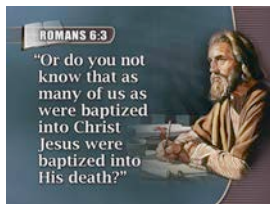


There may be nothing wrong with sprinkling water on a baby. But it just simply isn't baptism according to the Scripture!



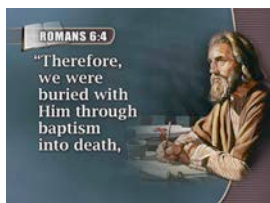
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In fact, the Greek word "baptizo" means to dip under the water or cover over with water. This is the only method of baptism that represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.



77

(Text: Romans 6:3, 4)  
Paul said, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"  
Romans 6:3



78

"Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death." Verse 4.  
But Jesus didn't stay in the grave – He came forth victorious! When we are baptized our old man is buried, and we rise to live a new life!



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79

(Text: Romans 6:4)

“That just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,



80

even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Verse 4.

Coming out of the water symbolizes the resurrection of the new man, the new life through the Spirit! Only baptism by immersion can properly symbolize this burial and new birth experience!



81

But how important is the rite of baptism?  
Is it really necessary to be baptized?



82

One night a Jewish leader by the name of Nicodemus came secretly to talk to Jesus.



83

(Text: John 3:2)

He flattered Jesus by telling Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God;



84

for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” John 3:2.

Jesus could read this man’s heart, so He cut right to the point and showed Nicodemus what he needed.



85

(Text: John 3:3)

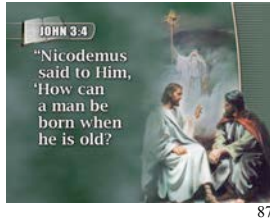
“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly,

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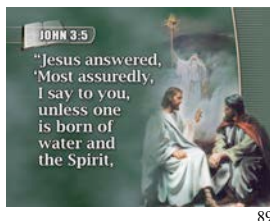
I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”  
John 3:3.



(Text: John 3:4)  
Nicodemus was puzzled, and he asked Jesus, “How can a man be born when he is old?



Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”  
John 3:4



(Text: John 3:5)  
Then Jesus pointed out that He was talking about a spiritual rebirth, when He said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit,



he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”  
John 3:5.  
Here Jesus is talking about a spiritual rebirth that is witnessed to by baptism.



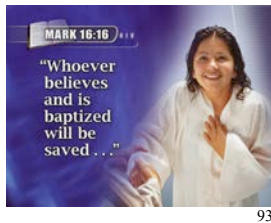
No doubt Nicodemus, the proud Pharisee, anticipated entrance into God’s kingdom by virtue of his being a natural-born, devout Jew.



However, Jesus made it clear that anything less than a complete transformation of life by the power of the Holy Spirit – as signified by baptism – was inadequate.  
Christ didn’t make this solemn statement only once.  
Notice that He says essentially the same thing in Mark 16:16:

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93

(Text: Mark 16:16)

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”

Mark 16:16.

So the first step in preparing for Bible baptism is believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and is your Savior and Lord.

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94

Philip emphasizes this need for belief in Christ to the Ethiopian. When the Ethiopian asked Philip if he could be baptized, Philip said,

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95

(Text: Acts 8:37)

“If you believe with all your heart, you may.” Acts 8:37.

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96

(Text: Matthew 28:19)

Jesus gave His disciples a second step,

“Go ...and teach all nations, baptizing them.”

Matthew 28:19.

Teaching precedes baptism.

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97

(Text: Matthew 28:20)

Jesus said the baptismal candidate is to be taught “...to obey everything I have commanded you...”

Matthew 28:20.

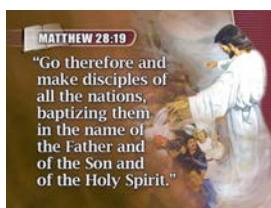
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98

In other words, an individual preparing for the sacred rite of baptism needs to understand Jesus’ teachings and accept them. But, more than a mere knowledge of doctrines is needed.

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99

(Text: Matthew 28:19)

“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.”

Matthew 28:19

There must be a commitment of one’s life to Christ.

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When a person unites with Jesus, he naturally begins to live Christ's way. On one hand, he/she doesn't want to do anything that Jesus would not want him/her to do. On the other hand, he/she wants to do what Jesus wants him/her to do.

This change of heart we sometimes call repentance. Peter said,

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100

(Text: Acts 3:19)

“Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Acts 3:19.

Repentance means to be deeply sorry for one's sins and to turn from them.

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101

This can only come from a heart touched and softened by the sacrifice made on Calvary's cross to save us from our sins.

Let's just summarize these steps in preparing for baptism;

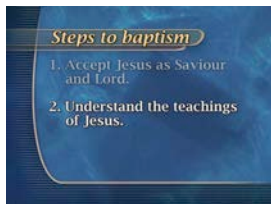
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102

1. Before baptism the person should accept Jesus as Savior and Lord.

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103

2. Before baptism the person should understand the teachings of Jesus and be willing to follow Him.

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104

3. Before baptism the person should confess his/her sins and repent.

By following these three steps in preparation for baptism, you may truly become a new person—from the inside out.

Through God's power you can be changed, reborn, and start anew!

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105

Sometimes people ask, “When I am baptized, do I become part of a church? Or am I only baptized into Jesus?”

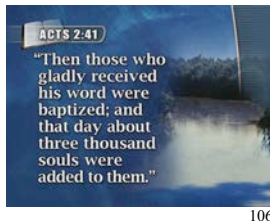
The Bible teaches that baptism into Christ is baptism into Christ's body, the church. When multitudes were baptized on the day of Pentecost, the Bible declares,

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## 16 – Making a New Start (Baptism)

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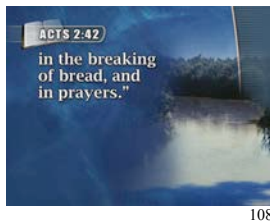


(Text: Acts 2:41, 42)

“Then those who gladly received His word were baptized and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”



And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship



in the breaking of bread and prayers.” (Acts 2:41,42)

The text is plain. When we are baptized, we do not become spiritual orphans. We are not left alone.

Those baptized in Acts “continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship.” They became part of God's Bible-believing church.



(Text: 1 Corinthians 12:13)

1 Corinthians 12:13 states: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized in one body....” Verse twenty-eight of the same chapter points out clearly that the body is the church.

When men and women accept Jesus and commit their lives to follow Him, they wish to worship with like believers. Their hearts burn within them to be part of Christ's faithful people.



It is like the wedding ceremony for the engaged couple.

It's not a hard decision to get married if they're really in love!

Baptism is the public expression of love and commitment for our Savior!



One time Paul and his coworker Silas went to the city of Philippi on the invitation of a Macedonian man Paul had seen in a dream. As a result of their preaching, the city became quite agitated.

## 16 – Making a New Start (Baptism)

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112

So much so that a mob attacked them, and their lives were in danger. The mob tore off the two men's clothing, and the authorities had them beaten. They were taken to prison, where the jailer was told to put them in heavy confinement and to make sure they did not escape.

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113

At midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing, when suddenly an earthquake shook the prison walls—and immediately, the doors of the prison were opened and everyone's chains fell off. The keeper of the prison came running and, seeing the doors opened, assumed that all the prisoners had fled.

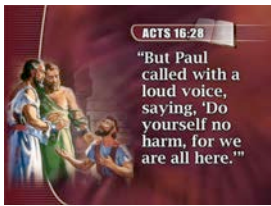
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114

Certain that he would be put to death for letting the prisoners escape, the jailer drew his sword to kill himself.

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115

(Text: Acts 16:28)

"But Paul called out to him in a loud voice, 'Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.'" (Acts 16:28)

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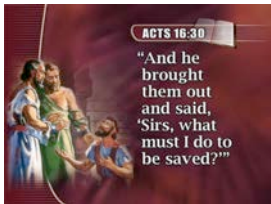


116

The jailer was astonished!

These men—Paul and Silas—had suffered agony at the hands of the jailer, yet they held no resentment and wanted no revenge. He ran and got a light, and returned to their cell.

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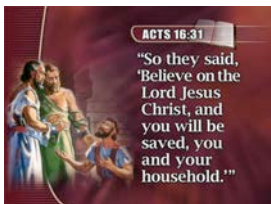


117

(Text: Acts 16:30, 31)

"And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'"

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118

So the two men of God answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

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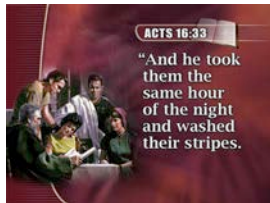
## 16 – Making a New Start (Baptism)

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119

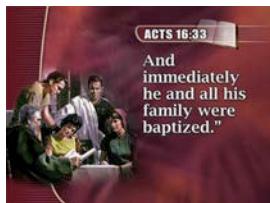
The jailer took Paul and Silas to his house and bathed their bleeding backs.



120

(Text: Acts 16:33)

“And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes.



121

And immediately he and all his family were baptized.”  
Acts 16:33

This jailer didn’t delay; he didn’t procrastinate. When he recognized the truth, he followed it!



122

Tonight, Jesus is appealing to you to commit your life to Him. He is appealing to you to become part of His Bible-believing, commandment-keeping people. He gives you the same invitation he gave the apostle Paul:



123

(Text: Acts 22:16)

“Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins...”

Acts 22:16.



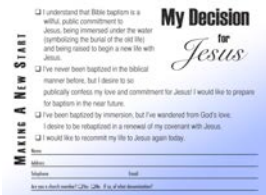
124

Once again this evening the ushers are placing a decision card in your hands. This topic is a wonderful topic – I don’t know what could be better than an opportunity to start anew! And it’s an important topic on which to make a decision. I want you to prayerfully and carefully consider your decision for Jesus tonight. This isn’t about me – it’s about Jesus. Let’s take some time and open our hearts to hear the Spirit’s voice calling us through the Word tonight. Just ask the Savior, “Lord Jesus, what would you have me to do?” If you haven’t followed His example in baptism by immersion, I’m quite sure He’s impressing you to do so, because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do you

## 16 – Making a New Start (Baptism)

sense His voice calling tonight? Can you hear Him saying “What are you waiting for? What would prevent you from committing publicly to Me?” He gave everything for us, dear friend. Why would we not do anything He asks?

Take this little card now that the ushers have placed in your hands. We’re going to go through it together prayerfully tonight.



125

First we want to be very clear on the Bible’s teaching on baptism. The first option on the card reads, “I understand that Bible baptism is a willful, public commitment to Jesus, being immersed under the water (symbolizing the burial of the old life) and being raised to begin a new life with Jesus.” If that has been your understanding as we’ve studied the Bible’s teaching tonight, just check this box. The second option is your opportunity to take advantage of the truths you’ve learned. “I’ve never been baptized in the biblical manner before, but I desire to publicly confess my love and commitment for Jesus! I would like to prepare for baptism in the near future.” If this is your experience, and describes your desire, just indicate your decision to follow Jesus in baptism by checking this second box. Some of you may have been baptized before, but you very openly drifted from your walk with Jesus. You too sense a need to make a new start. For you, we’ve included the third option, “I’ve been baptized by immersion, but I’ve wandered from God’s love. I desire to be rebaptized in a renewal of my covenant with Jesus.” This isn’t something we would urge upon you – it’s between you and Jesus. But if you sense the Spirit calling you to a new start, to a renewed covenant with Jesus, just check this third box. And finally, an option that all of us can choose to check: “I would like to recommit my life to Jesus again today.” Our choice to follow Jesus is a daily choice. If you’d like to join me in just reaffirming your love for the Savior, and your desire to live today and each day for Him, just check this last box as well. Make sure your name is written on the card. Sometimes, as a speaker, it helps me to know where you’re coming from; so, if you’d like, just jot down your religious persuasion.

Tonight is a special night. We’re making lasting decisions to follow Jesus. We want to take a moment to especially dedicate these decisions to Jesus. I would like to invite you all to stand with me right now as we move to our prayer time.

[Appeal continues on next slide]



## 16 – Making a New Start (Baptism)



Tonight I know many of you have been hearing God's voice calling. He's been calling you through His word. He's been convicting you of new truths. He's been impressing you of the seriousness of the times we live in. You've been making decisions – decisions to walk more closely with Jesus, decisions to follow His example and obey His word.

Tonight we're going to have a special prayer of dedication for you, a prayer especially for those who have decided to stand for Jesus and be counted. Jesus said that those who confess Him, He will confess before His Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32). If it's your desire to confess Jesus publically through baptism, and you're making that decision tonight, I want to invite you simply to come forward so we can have special prayer of dedication this evening. By coming you're saying, "Yes, Jesus, I'm making a stand for You. I'm coming forward for You. I want to follow you and be publicly baptized, sealing my decision to follow You and Your truth." If this is your decision tonight, please just make your way forward. Jesus is calling. What would prevent you from heeding His call?

[As individuals make their way forward recognize them with phrases such as "God bless you, brother/sister."]

Is there anyone else whom God is speaking to this evening? Is there anyone else convicted that tonight is the night, now is the time, to make this decision for Jesus? Why wait any longer? Don't put off until tomorrow that which may be done today. I would invite you, even as we kneel [if space allows] for prayer here at the front to make your way to join us. Let's pray together.

*[Suggested Prayer]*

*"Dear Father in heaven,*

*Thank you so much for giving us Jesus. Thank you for the promise that if we confess Him before men, He will confess us before the throne of the universe. Tonight, Lord, we want to confess our faith in Jesus as our personal Savior. Thank you for each one who has made their way forward, each one who has chosen this evening to commit or recommit their life to Jesus in baptism. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to begin anew. Thank you for the privilege through Jesus of having our sins washed away, burying*

## 16 – Making a New Start (Baptism)

*the past, and rising to walk in newness of life in the power of the Spirit. Oh Lord, tonight we are praying for Your special blessing on these decisions. You know each heart and each decision, and we pray that as these individuals prepare for baptism and continue to learn the teachings of Jesus, that you will fill them with Your Spirit that they may indeed be Your loving disciples. Bless their decision tonight. Bless their homes and families. Bless them as they share the truths they've learned with others. And Lord, we pray for everyone here, that we might all be recommitted to You tonight, that each of us might daily renew our walk with You. If there's someone here who is struggling with these decisions, speak to their heart even now. Rebuke the enemy who would discourage or delay them from choosing Jesus. May they not procrastinate, but even now make the decision to follow the truths so clearly taught in Your Scriptures. Before the throne of God tonight, may Jesus confess the names of each one, because each has decided to confess Him before men. This is our prayer in Jesus' name and for His sake, Amen."*

[After prayer, invite those who have come forward to stay by briefly to 1) inform of any baptismal class you may be planning and 2) make sure all who came forward have filled out cards requesting baptism or rebaptism. Have a basket or similar receptacle available to put them in, so they are collected separately from the rest of the cards.]