

Baptism “For” the Remission of Sins (Acts 2:38)

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- **illus.: denominational church growth tactics**, not teach doctrine in the assembly
 - in the Lord’s church we teach and study doctrine, which we’ll do tonight (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**)
- **lesson:** Acts 2:38, baptized “for” the remission of sins – **point greatly disputed in religion today**
 - **pic, background:** Jordan River, South of the Sea of Galilee, many baptized

➤ Historical overview of baptism

- **Jews were practicing ceremonial washings (baptisms), before the time of Christ (Heb. 6:2a)**
- - **pic.:** ritual font (baptistry), near southern entrance of temple where 40+ ritual baths have been found, very possibly used on Pentecost when 3,000 were baptized
- - **John the Baptist:** baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins (**to the extent forgiveness extended under Mosaic Law**) (**Mk. 1:4**)
- - **Jesus while on earth:** Jesus baptized through apostles, more people than John at one point (**Jn. 4:1-2**)
- - **Pentecost:** baptism for the **remission of sins (complete and total forgiveness, unlike under the Mosaic Law)**
- - **Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21 (Peter) baptized, forgiveness of sin, now saves us**
- - **Christians, 2nd - 3rd centuries**
- - **Justin:** The First Apology of Justin - read except (attached), show snippet on PP
- - **Tertullian:** Of the necessity of baptism to salvation - read except (attached), show snippet on PP
 - **Tertullian fought against the Gnostics**, who taught against baptism, which we see in some denominations today
- - **Tertullian:** Is baptism necessary for salvation? - read except (attached), show snippet on PP
 - **we’re fighting the same battle early Christians fought** – baptized for remission of sins
- - **A.D. 251: "clinical" or "sick" baptism** administered to the sick
 - **no reason** not to immersed sick in water – **excuse**
- - **A.D. 1331 Council of Ravenna:** sprinkling was recognized as a substitute for immersion by the Roman Catholic Church
 - **accepted false teaching that babies born sinners**, with sin of Adam
 - **today, still believe unbaptized babies go to hell**, even if die in womb (Catholic Encyclopedia)
- - **today: 4 major teachings – we must study to know which one is correct**
 - **not be baptized** – **doctrine originating with Gnostics**
 - **should be baptized as a matter of obedience**, but to necessary to be saved – **Reformed doctrine**
 - **baptized for the remission on sins - babies christened (baptized) because they’re born sinners, and confirmed later when older** – **3rd century doctrine**
 - **baptized for the remission of sins, people who believe, repent, confess**, not babies – **doctrine of Christ**

- **“Baptism for the remission of sins” is one of the most distinguishing doctrines of the Lord’s church**
 - illus.: people ask, how do I find the right church
 - first: check to see if they use a **Scriptural name**, and teach **baptism for the remission of sins for those who believe, repent, and confess Christ**, and you’ll **eliminated most churches**
- - illus.: Jesse L. Sewell – **cost, price**
- - illus.: Lucious and Missouri Thornhill – **cost, price**
- - illus.: The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches – **distinguishing doctrine**
- - quotes
 - **application: still today, we are often rejected by men for teaching the truth of Acts 2:38**
 - this is a **distinguishing doctrine** of the Lord’s church
 - **price to pay** to believe and practice truth
- **What is baptism “for”?** – *eis* (Acts 2:38)
 - **Acts 2:38 “for”**
 - - **verse and definition (Kittle) – explain**
 - “In Acts 2:38 *eis* denotes the direction of an action to a specific end as it does in Matt. 26:28; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3” (Gerald Kittle, Editor, Translated By: Geofferey W. Bromiley, Volume II).
 - - **illus.: PP - go to the store for milk / repent and be baptized for the remission of sins**
 - - **confusion with English word “for”:** sometimes it means “because of” and other times it means “to obtain, receive” like in Acts 2:38
 - illus.: hanged the man for murder / went to the store for some milk
 - hanged “because of” murder
 - went to the store “ to obtain” some milk
 - **Which is it in Acts 2:38? – go to God’s word for the answer**
 - **Heb. 4:12** God’s word, living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword
 - - **What does the Bible tell us? – baptized to receive forgiveness**
 - **Matt. 26:28** same phrase appears as in **Acts 2:38**
 - Received Text exact same / Nestlé extra pronoun in Acts 2:38 “your”
 - - **comparison: Matt. 26:28 with Acts 2:38**
 - **When did Jesus obtain the forgiveness of man’s sins?** – before or after shed blood (**Heb. 9**) - **after**
 - **When do we receive forgiveness of our sins?** – before or after baptized - **after**
 - - **Other information in the Bible**
 - **Mk. 16:16** believe, and, baptized, saved
 - **illus.: not hard to understand**, honesty and sincere heart required
 - **high school kids** stop by, raised church, believe saved before baptized, read verse, asked them what it meant based on their knowledge of the word “**and**”, they correctly interpreted, in opposition to their church
 - - **1 Pet. 3:21** baptism now saves you – **lost unless baptized** - illus.: at fair, man had a children’s train ministry, talked about salvation, I told him I believed 1 Pet. 3:21
 - - **Rom. 6:3; Eph. 1:3** baptized into Christ (**Gal. 3:27**) - all spiritual blessings in Christ; therefore not saved (forgiven) until baptized into Christ

➤ **More info on BibleStudyGuide.org**

- **different translations bear out the meaning – none, “because of”**

- "for the forgiveness of your sins" (New American Standard Bible, Revised Standard Version, New International Version, Douay-Rheims Bible)
- "unto the remission of your sins" (American Standard Version)
- "for the remission of sins" (New King James Version, King James Version)
- "so that your sins may be forgiven" (New Revised Standard Version)
- "to remission of sins" (Young's Literal Translation)

- **translation of *eis* in Acts 2:38 by commentators – none, “because of”**

- "for the putting away" Abbott, **Church of England**, "Commentary on Acts"
- "For, to or toward" Alexander, **Presbyterian**, "Commentary on Acts"
- "unto, for, in order to" Axtell, **Baptist**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "for, unto" Benson, **Methodist**, "Commentary on Bible"
- "for, unto" Bickersteth, **Church of England**, "Commentary on Acts"
- "end toward which" Butcher, **Presbyterian**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "in reference to" Adam Clark, **Methodist**, "Commentary on Bible"
- "unto, to" Dill, **Baptist**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "is always prospective" Ditzer, **Methodist**, "Wilkes-Ditzler Debate"
- "aim, purpose" Godet, **Presbyterian**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "purpose" Goodwin, **Congregationalist**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "in order to" Harkness, **Baptist**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "the object to be obtained" Harmon, **Methodist**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "unto, in order to receive" Harper, **Baptist**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "unto" Hovey, **Baptist**, "Commentary on John"
- "unto, to this end" Jacobus, **Presbyterian**, "Commentary on Acts"
- "denotes object" Meyer, **Lutheran**, "Commentary on Acts"
- "with a view to" McLintock, **Methodist**, McLintock & Strong Encyclopedia
- "might receive" Schaff, **Presbyterian**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "in order to" Strong, **Methodist**, "Shepherd's Handbook"
- "unto, to the end" Summers, **Methodist**, "Commentary on Acts"
- "into, to, toward" Thayer, **Congregationalist**, Greek-English Lexicon
- "in order to" Willmarth, **Baptist**, Baptist Quarterly, 1878

- **want to study reasons given for Greek being interpreted “because of” see Robertson’s comments**

Summary / Inv.

- **we are baptized “for” the remission of our sins**
- **we are lost before obeying the Lord in baptism, and saved after – 1 Pet. 3:21**
- **confident in your faith**
- **inv.: obey**

The First Apology of Justin [110-165 A.D.]

"And for this [rite] we have **learned from the apostles** this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become children of choice and knowledge, and may **obtain in the water remission of sins** formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who **chooses to be born again**. . . ."

(Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson; Revised and arranged with notes A. Cleveland Coxe, Ante-Nicene Fathers; Volume 1; The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishing, Inc., 1994; p. 183)

Tertullian; Chap. XII Of the necessity of baptism to salvation [145-220 A.D.]

When, however, the prescript is laid down that "**without baptism, salvation is attainable by none**" (chiefly on the ground of that **declaration of the Lord, who says, "Unless one be born of water, he hath not life"**), . . .

(Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson; Revised and arranged with notes A. Cleveland Coxe, Ante-Nicene Fathers; Volume 3; Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian I. Apologetic; II. Anti-Marcion; III. Ethical; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishing, Inc., 1994; p. 674-5)

Tertullian [145-220 A.D.]: Is baptism necessary for salvation?

For the **law of baptizing** has been imposed, and the **formula prescribed: "Go," he says, "teaching the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."** (Matt. 28:19) **"Unless a man has been born again of water and Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens."** (John 3:5) Those words have **tied faith to the necessity of baptism**. Accordingly, **all who became believers after that time were baptized. . . .**

(Tertullian, translated by David W. Burcot, *A Glimpse at Early Christian Church Life*; Tyler, TX: Scroll Publishing Co., 1989; p. 109-10)

Story of Jesse L. Sewell

Story told by **H. Leo Boles** in "The Christian Journal"

"Jesse L. Sewell was born in Overton County, TN in 1818. He **grew up in a Baptist community and became a Baptist preacher** of some note in his native county. In the course of time, he **learned the truth about Acts 2:38 (i.e. that baptism was in order to obtain remission of sins) from reading the New Testament**. He **began preaching this and it caused considerable confusion in the Baptist church**. A Baptist preacher by the name of **Jenkins Thompkins** began to discuss Jesse Sewell's departure from Baptist doctrine, and this resulted in a discussion of the errors taught by the Baptists."

"Finally, the **Baptist association brought charges against Sewell**. He was **convicted and excluded from the Baptist church**. The clerk asked how to make the record of the charges in the minutes of the association? The moderator told him to write **"for teaching heresy."** To this, **Sewell replied that would be recording a falsehood and that they could not make a true record in any other way than by stating that he was excluded for preaching faith, repentance, and baptism, for the remission of sins, as taught in Acts 2:38**. After some discussion, it was finally agreed that the record should be made as Sewell suggested, hence he was **excluded from the Baptist church for preaching Acts 2:38**. The minutes so record it." - **H. Leo Boles** in "The Christian Journal." (excerpt from article by Tommy Thornhill, lavistachurchofchrist.org)

Story of Lucious and Missouri Thornhill

Tommy Thornhill tells the story of his grandparents:

“They were **members of the Mount Olive Baptist** church near Polk City, FL. In 1914, they had occasion to **attend a gospel meeting** being held in the area, and one evening during the meeting, **both obeyed the gospel, and that same night** were **baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins as per Acts 2:38**. As a result the **Baptist church they had been attending took action to exclude them from the Baptist church**. According to the minutes of the meeting held to exclude them from the Mount Olive Baptist church, **they were voted out of the Baptist church**. What was the reason given and recorded in the minutes of that meeting? ‘**Lucious and Missouri Thornhill are excluded from the Baptists because they have departed from both the Bible faith and the Baptist faith.**’” (excerpt from article by Tommy Thornhill, lavistachurchofchrist.org)

Excerpts: The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches

It is not a question as to whether he can be saved without baptism, but whether he can be a true disciple, and refuse or neglect thus to obey and confess his Savior. . . . **Baptism may not be essential to salvation, but it is essential to obedience** (Edward T. Hiscox, *The Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches*, Valley Forge, PA.: The Judson Press, 1964, Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 64- 15797, pg. 86-87).

Then regards the efficacy of baptism Hiscox says:

Baptism, therefore, is an act of obedience, and as such brings the candidate into a more intimate and exclusive fellowship with his Lord; but **it possesses no power in itself to remit sin, to change the heart, or to sanctify the spirit** (Hiscox, *op. cit.*, pg. 88).