



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#121)  
John's Baptism.

1

## "BAPTISM"

**AN EXTERNAL EXPRESSION OF AN INTERNAL CHANGE.**

➔ What does the New Testament say?

- ✓ Fakes have greatly distorted what it is.
- ✓ People who have no idea what the Bible says get baptized.
- ✓ It's easy to do the "ritual" without any heart changes.

• All the fakeness, ignorance and distortion does not change the fact that there is a genuine Bible-based baptism that has a real significance!

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### NEW TESTAMENT "BAPTISM" ➔ Where it started.

- ✓ The Jews were already familiar with the concept.
  - The Old Testament contains various regulations related to cleansing and purification, which involve ceremonial washing or bathing.
  - The ceremonial ritual was intended to be a "picture" or "shadow" of spiritual realities (though many Jews focused only on the ritual, and not the reality).

... various **ceremonial washings**—external regulations applying until the time of the new order [= the New Covenant].  
Hebrews 9:10 (NIV)

- (Non-Jews also understood the concept. Some of their false religions included ceremonial washings.)

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- By the time of Jesus, the Jews had also added their own ceremonial washings and rituals, not required by God – Matthew 15:2.
 

... the **ritual washing** before dinner.  
Luke 11:38b (CSB)

When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they have **washed**. And there are many other customs they have received and keep, like the **washing** of cups, pitchers, kettles, and dining couches.  
Mark 7:4 (CSB)
- ✓ "Baptism" in the Old Testament?
  - The word "baptize" is a New Testament Greek word; but parallel concepts are found in the Hebrew Old Testament.
 

So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and **dipped** himself seven times, ...  
2 Kings 5:14a (NLT)

... the one being purified must wash his clothes and **bathe** in water, ...  
Numbers 19:19b (CSB)

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### SO WHEN JOHN THE BAPTIZER CAME, PEOPLE KNEW WHAT HE MEANT.

He is traditionally called John the "Baptist," meaning "the one who baptizes."

- ⇒ Baptism may have been a new word, but it was not a new concept.
- ⇒ John's baptism was the external symbol of the changes that were to occur in the heart.
- ⇒ Since this involved water baptism – he needed to do it in places where there was enough water.
  - ... he **baptized** them in the Jordan River.  
Matthew 3:6b (GW)
  - ... **baptizing** at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there ...  
Jn 3:23b (NET)

Jesus also baptized people in water – though it was actually his disciples who did it (John 3:26; 4:1-2).

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### WHO DID JOHN BAPTIZE? THOSE WHO ACCEPTED HIS MESSAGE.

- ⇒ The "common people." The worst of "sinners" were willing!
- ⇒ Not the leaders. The leaders were too self-righteous to see any need for repentance.
 

... all the people—even the tax collectors—agreed that God's way was right, for they had been **baptized** by John. But the Pharisees and experts in religious law rejected God's plan for them, for they had refused John's **baptism**.  
Lk 7:29b-30 (NLT)

... the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you [religious leaders]. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.  
Matthew 21:31b-32 (NIV)

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## 2 THINGS ABOUT JOHN'S MESSAGE.

### ⇒ ① THE NEED TO **REPENT** FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS!

- This **internal** change of repentance would be represented **externally** by a willingness to **confess** (admit their sins) and to be **baptized** (symbolizing the heart change.)
- They also needed to live in a way that **proved** that their repentance was genuine. (We could also call this the "fruit of salvation.")

As they **confessed** their sins, he **baptized** them in the Jordan River.  
Matthew 3:6 (GW)

John traveled throughout the region around the Jordan River. He told people about a **baptism** of **repentance** for the **forgiveness** of sins.  
Luke 3:3 (GW)

Therefore produce **fruit** that proves your **repentance**, ...  
Matthew 3:8 (NET)

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- John gave the people examples of the "fruit" that would prove their repentance.

"What should we do then?" the crowd asked.  
Luke 3:10 (NIV)

Some typical examples given by John:

"Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."  
Luke 3:11b (NIV)

**EXAMPLE GIVEN TO TAX COLLECTORS:**

"Don't collect any more than you are required to ..."  
Luke 3:13a (NIV)

**EXAMPLE GIVEN TO SOLDIERS:**

"Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."  
Luke 3:14b (NIV)

GENEROUSITY

HONESTY

CONTENTMENT

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### ⇒ ② THE NEED TO **LOOK TO JESUS** FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS!

- This is because **Jesus** is the one who makes forgiveness possible.

But the one who comes after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove his sandals. He will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit and fire.  
Matthew 3:11b (GW)

- Though sinless, Jesus would identify with sinners, by being baptized by John. (After this the Spirit of God would come upon Jesus, and Jesus would begin his ministry.)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be **baptized** by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be **baptized** by you, and do you come to me?"

Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

Matthew 3:13-15 (NIV)

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- Here is John's testimony about Jesus:

John was not the Messiah/Christ. His job was to point to the one who is the Messiah/Christ ⇒ Jesus!

John saw Jesus coming toward him the next day and said, "Look! **This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.** He is the one I spoke about when I said, 'A man who comes after me was before me because he existed before I did.' I didn't know who he was. However, I came to **baptize** with water to show him to the people of Israel."

John 1:29-31 (GW)

John said, "I saw the Spirit come down as a dove from heaven and stay on him. I didn't know who he was. But God, who sent me to **baptize** with water, had told me, 'When you see the Spirit come down and stay on someone, you'll know that person is the one who **baptizes** with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen this and have declared that **this is the Son of God.**"

John 1:32-34 (GW)

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## 2 THINGS ABOUT JOHN'S BAPTISM.

### ⇒ ① IT WAS (AND STILL IS) **IMPORTANT** AND **NECESSARY**!

- His message is still true today: We **still** need the **internal** change of repentance, as well as the **external** expressions of this change: confession, baptism, and the "fruit" of repentance (which we could also call the "fruit" of salvation).
- After Jesus' resurrection, the message of repentance and baptism was **still** the same:

Peter replied, "**Repent** and be **baptized**, each of you, ..."  
Acts 2:38a (CSB)

### ⇒ ② **EVEN SO, JOHN'S BAPTISM WAS INCOMPLETE!**

- Jesus and the apostles all spoke well of John. Yet they **all** said that his baptism was not enough. **This is the very thing that John said!**
- (Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit was needed!)

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## WHAT OTHERS SAID ABOUT JOHN.

### **JESUS' testimony**

[John] has testified to the truth. ... John was a lamp that burned and gave light, ...  
John 5:33b, 35a (NIV)

#### ✓ Jesus spoke well of John.

For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, ...  
Matthew 21:32a (NIV)

I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John.  
Luke 7:28a (ESV)

#### ✓ Jesus proclaimed the same message of repentance.

In those days John the Baptist came ... proclaiming, "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is near."  
Matthew 3:1-2 (NET)

From that time Jesus began to preach this message: "**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is near."  
Matthew 4:17 (NET)

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### The book of ACTS' testimony

- ✓ Both parts of John's message were acknowledged.

#### PART 1

"Before Jesus arrived, John had proclaimed a **baptism** for repentance to all the people of Israel. But while John was completing his mission, he said repeatedly, "What do you think I am? I am not he. But look, one is coming after me. I am not worthy to untie the sandals on his feet!"

Acts 13:24–25 (NET)

#### PART 2

- ✓ It is not enough, even if part of an accurate message.

[Apollos] had been instructed in the Lord's way and spoke enthusiastically. He accurately taught about Jesus but knew only about the **baptism** John performed.

... Priscilla and Aquila ... explained God's way to him more accurately.

Acts 18:25, 26b (GW)

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- ✓ Those who listened to John would look to Jesus for the Holy Spirit. (This was also associated with water baptism).

[Paul] found some disciples [at Ephesus] and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" "No," they told him, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

"Into what then were you **baptized**?" he asked them.

"Into John's **baptism**," they replied.

Paul said, "John baptized with a **baptism** of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus."

When they heard this, they were **baptized** into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:1b-5 (CSB)

The Holy Spirit confirmed all this by sending miraculous signs – v. 6. Perhaps to warn the unbelieving Jews? (See 1 Corinthians 1:22; 14:22.)

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John's baptism was necessary, but it needed Jesus.



✓ We will look more at this next time.

John's *mission* and his *baptism*

are enough to give us

our own mission for this week.

## Our MISSION: Self-review

### 1. How have you responded to John's message?

- ✓ Are you like the common people and the sinners?
- ✓ Or are you like the religious leaders?

### 2. If you claim to have repented... How has it been visibly expressed, so that others know it? What is the "fruit" that proves you have repented (Matthew 3:8)?

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