

Surprising Facts Series 1

09. Buried and Forgotten by God!

Shocking? Inconceivable? Preposterous? Not at all. But rather, thrilling! Exciting! Marvelous! Christ says **"We are buried with him by baptism." Romans 6:4.** At conversion, the old life dies. The Lord forgives all the past, blots out our transgressions, and even promises He **"will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43:25.** Conversion is called the "new birth" because there is no past. God forgets a person's past at conversion. And baptism symbolizes the burial of the former sinful life. The cross is mentioned 28 times in the Bible, but baptism is mentioned 97 times. This gives us some idea of its supreme importance. And no wonder, for it symbolizes the beginning of a new life, with the haunting, sinful past buried and forgotten forever.

1. Is baptism really essential?

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16.

Answer: This verse makes it clear that baptism is necessary for salvation. Yes, indeed! How could any language or words make it plainer?

2. But the thief on the cross was not baptized, so why should I be?

"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. Psalm 103:14.

Answer: Neither did he restore what he had stolen, as the Lord specifically directs in Ezekiel 33:15. God holds us accountable for what we can do, but He also recognizes the limitations of "dust". He will not require a physical impossibility. Could the thief have come down from the cross, he immediately would have been baptized. This is the only example in the Bible of an exception to this rule. God wanted to make certain that no one would be presumptuous in refusing baptism. Circumstances made it a human impossibility for the thief on the cross to be baptized.

3. There are many ordinances called baptism. Isn't any one of these acceptable, provided a person is sincere and earnest about it?

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephesians 4:5.

Answer: No! There is only one true baptism. All other so-called baptisms are counterfeits.

Note: The devil's "buffet" plan for baptism says, "Take your pick. The method of baptism doesn't matter. It is the spirit that counts." But the Bible says, **"One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephesians 4:5.** It also says, **"Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord." Jeremiah 38:20.**

HOW MANY METHODS OF BAPTISM ARE BIBLICAL?

Triple immersion; Rose Petals; Oil; Water; Pouring; No Water; Wine; Sprinkling; Telephone; Mail; Holy Spirit Only; Immersion; Salt; Not Required: Only ONE method of baptism is biblical, not 14.

4. How was Jesus baptized?

"Jesus ... was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened." Mark 1:9, 10.

Answer: By immersion! Notice that after the ordinance, He came "up out of the water." Jesus was baptized "in Jordan," not on the bank, as many believe. John always found a place to baptize where **"there was much water" (John 3:23)**, so it would be deep enough. The Bible commands us to follow Jesus' example. **"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:" 1 Peter 2:21.** Jesus was baptized by immersion.

Any baptism other than immersion breaks this command. The word "baptism" comes from the Greek word "baptizo." It means "to dip under or submerge or immerse." There are eight different Greek words in the New Testament used to describe the application of liquids. But among these various words, meaning to sprinkle, to pour, or to immerse, only the one meaning "to immerse" (baptizo) is used to describe baptism.

5. But didn't the disciples or the apostles change the method of baptism?

"They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the lord caught away Philip." Acts 8:38, 39.

Answer: No! Please notice that Philip, a leader in the early church, baptized the treasurer of Ethiopia by immersion precisely as John baptized Jesus. And the apostle Paul warned that any who teach contrary to what Jesus taught should be "accursed." **"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8.** No person, no matter how godly, is authorized to change God's words and commands. Philip baptized the Ethiopian by immersion.

6. Since Jesus and the discipl baptized by immersion, who introduced these other so-called baptisms which exist today?

"In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9.

Answer: Misguided men introduced other forms of baptism in direct contradiction of God's Word. Jesus says; **"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Matthew 15:3, 6.** Worship that follows human teaching is "vain." Just think of it! The sacred ordinance of baptism has been changed and made of little consequence during truth's hazardous journey through the centuries. No wonder the Bible exhorts us to **"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.**

7. What must a person do to prepare for baptism?

Answer: There are three simple things a person must do prior to baptism.

A. Learn God's requirements. **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them ... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19, 20.**

B. Believe the truth of God's Word. **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16.**

C. Repent of and turn away from his sins and experience conversion. **"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Acts 2:38. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19.**

8. What is the meaning of baptism?

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Romans 6:4-6.

Answer: It represents the believer following Christ into His death, burial, and resurrection. The symbolism is perfect and filled with deep meaning. In baptism the eyes are closed, hands are folded, and breath is suspended as in death. Then comes burial in the water and resurrection from the watery grave to a new life in Christ. When raised from the water, the eyes open and the candidate begins breathing again and mingles with friends, a complete likeness of resurrection. The great difference between Christianity and every other religion is simply the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In these three acts is made possible all that God desires to do for us. To keep these three vital acts alive in the minds of Christians until the end of time, the Lord instituted baptism by immersion as a memorial. There is no symbolism of death, burial, and resurrection in other forms of baptism. Only immersion fulfills the meaning of Romans 6:4-6.

When I am baptized, I affirm my belief in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Death to sin; Old life buried in the waters; Raised a new person in Christ.

9. But a person shouldn't be baptized until he is certain he will never slip and fall, should he?

"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Corinthians 8:12.

Answer: This is like saying a baby should never try to walk until certain that he will never slip and fall. A Christian is a newborn "babe" in Christ. This is why the experience of conversion is called "the new birth." The ugly, sinful past no longer exists for a child of God. A person's sinful past is forgiven and forgotten by God at conversion. And baptism symbolizes the burial of that old life. We begin the Christian life as babies, rather than adults, and God judges us on our attitude and the trend of our life, rather than on a few slips and falls that we may experience as immature Christians. New Christians are like toddlers learning to walk. They sometimes slip and fall.

10. Why is baptism an urgent matter for a converted sinner?

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16.

Answer: Baptism is a public testimony that the repentant sinner has been forgiven and cleansed by Jesus, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** 1 John 1:9, and that his sinful, traitorous past is behind him. No incriminating evidence against a person exists after conversion. Men and women today stagger and struggle along under heavy loads of guilt and sin. This contamination and burden is so devastating to the human personality that people will go to almost any length to achieve a sense of forgiveness and cleansing. Many have been driven to the psychiatrist's couch, where human beings earnestly attempt to assist other human beings. But the real help is found in coming to Christ, who says to all who approach Him, **"I will; be thou clean."** Matthew 8:3. Not only does He cleanse, but He crucifies the old nature of sin within you. Burial in the water of baptism symbolizes the burial of the ugly corpse of the old sinful life. The ordinance is of utmost importance because it publicly represents the most stupendous provisions ever made for people. Baptism is a glorious event because it symbolizes the burial of the old life of sin and the beginning of a new life in Christ.

11. How long does it take to prepare for baptism?

Answer: That depends on the person. Some grasp things more quickly than others. But in most cases, preparation can be made in short order. Here are some Bible examples:

- A. Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:26-39)-baptized same day he heard truth. Philip baptized the Ethiopian treasurer the same day he accepted Christ as his Saviour.
- B. Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:23-34)baptized same night they heard truth.
- C. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-18)-baptized three days after Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus.
- D. Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48)-baptized same day he heard truth.

At conversion, God: 1. Forgives and forgets our past.

2. Miraculously transforms us into new spiritual beings.

3. Adopts us as His own sons and daughters. Certainly no truly converted person would want to delay baptism, which publicly pays tribute to Jesus for working all these miracles.

God is pleased with people who are baptized by immersion. Is He pleased with your baptism?

12. How does God feel about the baptism of a converted person?

Answer: He said at His Son's baptism, "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**" **Matthew 3:17.** So, today, God is well pleased when a person is baptized by immersion in harmony with His command. Those who love the Lord will always strive to please Him. "**And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.**" **1 John 3:22;** "**Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.**" **1 Thessalonians 4:1.** Is God pleased with your baptism?

13. Can a person experience true baptism without becoming a member of God's church?

Answer: No! God clearly outlines this. Notice the steps:

- A. All are called into one body. "**Ye are called in one body.**" **Colossians 3:15.**
- B. The church is the body. "**He is the head of the body, the church.**" **Colossians 1:18.**
- C. We enter that body by baptism. "**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.**" **1 Corinthians 12:13.**
- D. God's converted people are added to the church. "**The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**" **Acts 2:47.**

Baptism is the official entry into God's church. Being baptized without joining God's church is unbiblical.

14. NOTICE FOUR THINGS THAT BAPTISM DOES NOT DO:

First:

Baptism itself does not change the heart of man; it is a symbol of the change that has taken place. A man might be baptized without faith, without repentance, and without a new heart. He might even be immersed after the example of Jesus, but he would simply come up a wet sinner instead of a dry one; still without faith, without repentance, without a new heart. Baptism cannot make a new person.

Neither can it change or regenerate anyone. It is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit that changes the heart in conversion. One must be born of the Spirit as well as born of water.

Second:

Baptism does not necessarily make a person feel better. It doesn't necessarily change his feelings. Some people are disappointed because they do not feel different after baptism. Salvation is a matter not of feeling, but of faith and obedience.

Third:

Baptism does not remove temptations. The devil is not through with a person when he is baptized. But Jesus is the helper of every believer. He says, **"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** Hebrews **13:5**. No temptation will come without a way of escape. This is the promise of Scripture. **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."** 1 Corinthians **10:13**.

Fourth:

Baptism does not guarantee salvation. It is not a magical rite. Salvation comes only as a free gift from Jesus Christ when one experiences the new birth. Baptism is a symbol of true conversion, and unless conversion precedes baptism, the ceremony is meaningless.

If Jesus is speaking to you about baptism, do not put it off. Baptism is a public expression of your desire to follow God fully.

15. Jesus asks you to be baptized as a symbol that your sins have been washed away. Would you like to plan for this sacred ordinance soon?

Your Answer: _____

Your Thought Questions Answered:

1. Is it ever proper to be baptized more than once?

ANSWER: Yes, Acts 19:1-5 shows that the Bible endorses rebaptism in certain cases.

2. Should infants be baptized?

ANSWER: No! No one should be baptized unless he (1) knows the truth of God, (2) believes it, (3) has repented, and (4) has experienced conversion. No baby could possibly qualify here. No one has a right to baptize a baby. In fact, to do so completely disregards God's direct commands regarding baptism. Misguided men in the church years ago decreed that unbaptized babies are lost, but this is scripturally untrue. It defames God as an unjust tyrant who would destroy innocent infants who died, simply because unworthy parents failed to have baptism administered. Such a teaching is tragic beyond words. It is bad enough to sprinkle babies and call it baptism. It is infinitely worse to hold to the unscriptural concept that babies are lost eternally because careless parents failed to do their duty.

3. Isn't baptism just a matter of personal opinion?

ANSWER: Yes, but not your opinion or mine. It's Christ's opinion that matters. Christ says baptism is important to Him. **"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."** John **3:5**. To refuse baptism is to refuse the direct counsel of God. **"And all the**

people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.” Luke 7:29, 30.

4. How old should one be to qualify for baptism?

ANSWER: Old enough to understand the difference between wrongdoing and rightdoing, and to make an intelligent decision to surrender to Christ and follow Him. Many children are ready for baptism at 9 or 10 years of age, some at 7 or 8. And some are not ready at 12 or 13. No age level is specified in the Bible, because children have different levels of experience and understanding. Some are ready for baptism earlier than others.

5. Can baptism in itself save you?

ANSWER: No! But refusing baptism can cause one to be lost, because it means disobedience. Salvation is for **"all them that obey him."** Hebrews 5:9.

6. Isn't baptism of the Holy Spirit all that is necessary?

ANSWER: No! The Bible shows in Acts 10:44-48 that water baptism is necessary, even when the baptism of the Holy Spirit has preceded it.

7. There is one sin I do not wish to surrender. Should I be baptized?

ANSWER: No! Obviously you are not ready to be buried in the baptismal waters, because the old life of sin is not dead. It would be a criminal act for a funeral director to bury someone who is not dead and equally serious for a minister to baptize one whose old sinful life is not dead.

8. Can you explain Galatians 3:27? "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

ANSWER: Here God compares baptism to marriage. The person who is baptized thus publicly acknowledges that he has taken Christ's name (Christian), just as a bride publicly announces the taking of her husband's name at the time of the wedding. In baptism, as with marriage, several rules always apply:

A. It should never be entered into unless true love rules supreme.

B. It should never be entered into unless the candidate has determined to be faithful through thick and thin.

C. It should be approached with full understanding.

D. It should not be unduly delayed.

Summary: Place a check by the correct answers.

1. The Bible tells us there is one Lord, one faith, and:

___ 15 baptisms.

___ 5 baptisms.

___ 12 baptisms.

___ One baptism.

2. Did Jesus teach the necessity of baptism?

Yes. No.

3. Jesus was baptized by:

Pouring.

Sprinkling.

Immersion.

4. The word "baptize" means to:

Be happy.

Sprinkle.

Pour.

Dip under, or immerse.

5. The many counterfeit baptisms of today were given to us by:

Christ.

The apostles.

Misguided men.

6. Mark the things a person should do to prepare for baptism:

Read the Bible through five times.

Believe the truth.

Experience conversion.

Pray for 10 days straight.

Spend 40 days fasting.

Learn God's requirements.

Repent of and forsake sin.

7. Baptism is a symbol of:

The creation of the world.

The Bible.

Heaven.

Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

The angels.

8. A newly baptized Christian is a:

Spiritual baby.

Spiritual adult.

9. Baptism, when entered into with prayer, sincerity, and understanding:

Publicly acknowledges conversion.

Means no more than going swimming.

Assures a person he will never be tempted again.

10. Is it always necessary for a person to take many weeks or months to prepare for baptism?

Yes. No.

11. Is infant baptism scriptural?

Yes. No.

12. Can a person experience true baptism and not become a member of the church?

Yes. No.

13. Some children are ready for baptism earlier than others.

True. False.

14. Review of Texts:

A. Baptism compared to marriage. **“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Galatians 3:27.**

B. Holy Spirit baptism not enough. **“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.” Acts 10:44-48.**

C. Rebaptism approved by Scripture. **“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 19:1-5.**

D. How God felt about Jesus' baptism. **“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17.**

E. God won't accept men's teachings. **“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:9.**

F. Baptism is essential. **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16.**

15. I want to be baptized by immersion as soon as possible. Yes. No.