

# Belief, Repentance and Baptism

## Repent or perish!

- “...do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” Luke 13:4-5
- “...that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.” Acts 26:20
- “...not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Pet.3:9 See also 2 Cor.7:10

As we can see from the above verses, the choice for us is between **repenting or perishing**. The word “perish” in the Bible means, “to cease to exist”, so the importance of repentance cannot be overlooked. Repentance involves “**godly sorrow**” (2 Cor.7:9-10) for what we have done in the past (Psalm 51). True repentance also means that we are committed to **changing the present direction** we are heading in and **changing our lifestyle** to that which God approves.

## Repentance and ‘truth’

- “in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” 2 Tim.2:25
- “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.” Psa.51:6

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that true repentance also involves a **knowledge of “the truth”**. When you think of it though, what would be the point of repentance if we continued to believe in false beliefs that are not found in God's word.

## Belief, baptism, forgiveness

- “Repent and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” Acts ch2:38
- “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised.” Acts 8:12
- “Then Crispus the ruler of the Synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptised.” Acts 18:8
- “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts 22:16

(See also Acts 8:36-38, 9:18, 10:47-48, 16:33)

You will notice when reading Scripture that when people **heard and believed** the Gospel message, they **repented** and were **baptised**. Baptism was commanded by Jesus and the Apostles and is a very important and necessary step for us to take. Even Jesus who was sinless, left us the example of His own baptism, which he said, was “**to fulfill all righteousness**” (Matt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21; John 1:29-34). Baptism is the means by which we become participants of the New Covenant in Jesus' blood, giving us **forgiveness of sins** through Him as our Mediator.

## What does ‘baptism’ mean?

The Greek words “**baptizo**” and “**baptisma**” are translated “baptist”, “baptise”, “wash” and “baptism” in our English Bibles. Both of these Greek words have meanings that speak of **full immersion** in liquid. It would be pointless to wash a garment by sprinkling or just pouring some water over it.

## Baptism as a symbol

- “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? 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.” Rom.6:3-4
- “Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Col.2:12

The verses above indicate that baptism is also a symbol of **Jesus' death, burial and resurrection**. By being baptised we are symbolically uniting ourself with His death. When we come out of the water we are demonstrating His resurrection and the start for us of what the Bible styles, “**newness of life**” (Rom.6:3-5). This also shows the need for full immersion baptism.

## Putting on Christ

- “For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ.” Gal.3:27 (see also Rom.13:14)
- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Gal.5:22-24 (See also Col.3:12-17)

When we approach a human dignitary we usually have to respect rules of etiquette. How much more then should we respect **God's holiness** and what He requires of us (1 Pet.1:14-16). After we have repented and been baptised into Christ, we are in effect, “**putting on Christ**”. This means that in our lives from day to day we should try to follow the example that Jesus has left us and obey His commandments. This also means, that as His true disciples, we have to avoid all those things that are the opposite of God's Glory, which the Bible styles, “the works of the flesh”. You will find a rather harrowing list of these in Galations 5:19-21 and Colossians 3:5-9. These evil works are then contrasted to “**the fruit of the spirit**”, or as James styles it, “**the fruit of righteousness**” (James 3:18). This singular fruit of the spirit has nine properties that we all should strive to include in our lives. See verses above.

### Some handy Strong's Concordance numbers to note

“metanoeo”, “metanoia” translated, ‘repent, repentance’. 3340-1 NT

“baptiso” translated, ‘baptist, baptise, wash’. 907 NT

“baptisma” translated, ‘baptism’. 908 NT

“baptismos” translated, ‘baptisms, washings’. 909 NT

All Scripture quoted is from the N.K.J.V.