

IX.2. Lambs to Rams:
Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, Be Immersed

The objective of this lesson is to settle once for all the true process of redemption by which “the world through [Jesus] might be saved” (*Jn 3:17*). In the verse before this it states that “whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”. The same is repeated in *Jn 6:47*. Many will say that all you have to do to be saved then, according to these verses, is believe. To believe according to the true intent of the word is to rely on Christ to save you. That being the case, why wouldn’t I do as He says I must, and what He inspired His disciples to teach (*Act 2:42*), in order to be saved since salvation is conditioned on His word?

Hear (*Gk.191*)

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon (*Gk.1941- to entitle; by implication to invoke [for aid, worship, testimony, decision, etc.]: **appeal [unto]***) the name (*Gk.3686- authority*) of the Lord (*Mat 28:19*) shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of Whom **they have not heard**? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (*Emp. added*) (*See also Gen 4:26; 6:2; Isa 62:2; Act 11:26*)

Before anyone can even know about Jesus and His offer to save them they have to hear that He even exists, that they have a soul and of the necessity to have that soul saved. The glosses for the word for ‘hear’ in the Koine Greek (*the original language of the New Testament*) are to *hear*: give (in the) audience (of), come (to the ears), be noised, be reported, [and] **understand**.

Obviously there is a certain amount of understanding necessary for the hearer to possess in order to comprehend his predicament without Christ. Any who have not the ability to understand is not accountable for sin since they wouldn’t know the difference between good and evil as Adam and Eve learned after they partook of the forbidden fruit in Genesis 3. Thus a

certain amount of comprehension, no matter the level of a person's age or education, is needed before going on to the next step in the salvation process. But according to 2 Thes 1:8 anyone, specifically those accountable for a certain level of understanding, who does not know God and who don't, therefore, obey the Gospel will pay the price of being separated from God for eternity "in flaming fire". This obviously excludes babes, children, a majority of the mentally disabled and such like.

Once a person understands Christ's offer of salvation it is necessary to seek a greater knowledge of it through research of the scripture. Setting aside any bias or predisposal to rebel against authority, the truth will come to light. "You will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart." (*Jer 29:13*) At this point belief is the next step toward obtaining salvation.

Believe (*Gk.4100*)

The glosses for believe are: to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing); by implication to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ). The latter is what the context demands here. "Belief" and "faith" can be inserted interchangeably since they refer to the same thought. The Hebrews writer stated that "without faith it is impossible to please" God (*Heb 11:16*). So often there are folks who make vain attempts to discredit the necessity of following truth in order to be saved that they either read into or reject parts of scripture to 'prove' their point. Both Old and New Testaments plainly speak out against such. (*Deu 12:32; Pro 30:6; Rev 22:18-19*) Many recite Romans 10:9 to discredit baptism as if it doesn't exist in Paul's letter while ignoring chapter 6. In the context of Romans 10:9 the Greek word for "believe" is a synecdoche (*part of the whole*) that includes obedience to God's will. But every step in the process is important since it was inspired by Holy Spirit and relayed to the pen of each writer of the Holy Writ. (*See Jn 1:12-13; Heb 5:9*)

Repent (*Gk.3340*)

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

Now that I've heard (*understood*) of Christ and put trust in Him to save me, what next? The Bible states that "all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God." (*Rom 3:25*) Sin, whether premeditated, purposed, unseen, seen or unintended, separates man from his Creator according to Isaiah 59:2. In Exodus after Moses asked to see God's glory, God told him "you cannot see My face, for no man shall see Me and live". (*Ex 33:20*) How does man resolve this condition? He can't; at least not without mediation. He first must repent of his sin, i.e., have a compunction (*regret*) for having committed his past lawless behaviors. Once his heart is humbled in regret of his ill behaviors he is ready for the next step toward being saved.

Confess (*Gk.3670*)

Act 2:36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus Whom you crucified.

In the last paragraph mediation was mentioned. Any time a person accused of a crime goes before a judge he must have someone he can trust representing him such as a lawyer or counselor with a certain amount of knowledge of civil law. The state has their prosecutor present as the accuser whose job is to see to it that you are punished for your alleged crime. Only in the case of the eternal soul there is more at stake than just some time behind bars. The Judge in spiritual court is Christ (*Jn 5:27*), the prosecutor is Satan and, if you are not ashamed of Him, Christ is also your Advocate. (*1 Jn 2:1*) Satan is not only the prosecutor; he is the one who deceived having caused the sin via temptation in the first place. In this case, confession has not so much to do with past sin as it has to do with admitting an allegiance to Christ. Jesus said "everyone who acknowledges

Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father Who is in Heaven". (*Mat 10:32*)

Now that I've come to the understanding of my need for salvation, I have the faith necessary to be saved by the good news of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, I've reconsidered the wrong I've done and acknowledged that Jesus is the Son of God and only He can save me, what next?

Obey the Ordinance of Baptism (*Gk.907*)

Act 22:16 (*Ananias told Paul*) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Baptism, according to 1 Pet 3:21, is a plea for purification from past sin and thus produces "the answer of a good conscience toward God". It is through the process of "calling on the name of the Lord" in obedience to this ordinance that God answers the penitent sinner. The "calling" is considered a plea and along with immersion is done simultaneously. To be immersed without a penitent heart the process is in vain.

Mar 16:16 He that believeth (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one's spiritual wellbeing to Christ]*) and (*the conjunction*) is baptized shall be saved (*belief not conjoined with obedience is vain*); but he that believeth not shall be damned (*being immersed without believing brings condemnation, i.e., just going through the motions to satisfy a parent or to be intimidated into becoming part of a youthful 'click' for example*).

This is the part of the Bible that most denominationalists have taken a penknife to. They seem to have cut out the obvious references to baptism as if they are of no importance and man has a better understanding than God in His desire to save him. "If baptism is for the forgiveness of sin why was Jesus baptized since He knew no sin"? (*2 Cor 5:21- see also III.2. Jesus as "God With Us"*) "What if I'm in the middle of the desert where no water existed and realized the need for baptism? Can I still

be saved? Do you have that right to judge my pure intentions?" These are just a few of the multitudes of seemingly incessant, rehashed excuses people often give, out of rebellion against God's word, as if they personally ever even experienced such instances. And yes, the Christian has the right to make righteous judgments that align with the word of God (*Jn 7:24*).

Peter, after giving the correlation between baptism and the flood that separated Noah and his household from an ungodly world, explained simply that "baptism now saves you" (*1 Pet 3:21*). Can it be put any simpler than that? Baptism separates us from our past sins qualifying us "to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (*Col 1:12*). In the Great Commission, Jesus told His disciples to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name (*Gk.3686- authority*) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (*Mat 28:19-20*). In other words, teach, baptize and continue teaching. At this point one enters the New Covenant wherein God "will remember (*Gk.3415- recall*) their sins and their lawless deeds no more" (*Heb 10:17*). But what might you ask does baptism represent and from where did it originate?

Under the pattern of the Old Testament as the Levites were initiated into the priesthood, the one ordinance of the initiation process was that they were to be washed of all filth of the body before being permitted to don the garment of a priest (*Lev 16:4*); which is why the laver was so huge since they were to be immersed into it (*1 Ki 7:26; 2 Chr 4:5*). The same was necessary for the high priest. This is where the baptism of John in the Jordan comes into play. Both Jesus and John lived under the Mosaic Law and John was from the tribe of Levi where only Levites were permitted to enter the priesthood. But John's baptism differed from the Mosaic and the rulers of the day took issue because of it since not just Levites were coming to John. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah of which "tribe Moses said nothing about priests" (*Heb 7:14*). This is the process that emulates that of the Mosaic in which God "qualifies" the new saint and transfers him into "the kingdom of His beloved Son" (*Col 1:12-13*). In other words, baptism under the Mosaic was

the shadow of what it represents today; admission into the N.T. priesthood of believers, the church.

The Ultimate Question(s)

More times than not when studying with someone about the necessity of baptism, the concern over a lost loved one becomes the focus of the study. Often questions are asked; “Are you saying that my deceased loved one is lost because they weren’t baptized?” “What gives you the right to judge?” “Why would such a loving God be so harsh to condemn such a good person?” These, among others, are legitimate questions that will need answers if the goal is to save those who are earnestly searching for the truth. If these questions aren’t dealt with scripturally an opportunity to lead someone to Christ will be lost and the church will suffer the consequences of public scorn.

First we need to understand the Greek word for “judge” (*Gk.2919- to distinguish, that is, decide; by implication to try, condemn, punish*). Depending on context, glosses used should fit the thoughts expressed by the inspired writer. One Greek word can stand for several English words and thus the word for “judge” has many meanings associated with it. Context, then, determines the meaning. Jesus said in Mat 7:1 that we are to “judge not, that ye be not judged”. The word for “judge” here demands the gloss “condemn” in the context. Translated, Jesus was really saying that we aren’t the ones to condemn or we will receive the same from God. In Jn 7:24 Jesus said “judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment”. The word for judge here is the same word for judge in Mat 7:1 and along with the word for “judgment” (*Gk.2920*), translated using the correct gloss, Jesus was saying “distinguish or decide what is just”. Putting this together concerning the question of having the right to judge, we are not the ones that have the right to condemn anyone. However, we are commanded to make distinctions between what is right and what is wrong according to the inspired text.

Tit 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing (*Gk.3067-a bath, that is, baptism*) of regeneration (*Gk.3824-[spiritual] rebirth*), and renewing (*Gk.342-renovation [Webster: to make as good as new, restore]*) of the Holy Ghost; (*Baptism is a grace of God and man is subject to be obedient to it to be saved.*)

Often there are times when emotions of our human nature cloud the strength of the “inner man” (*Eph 3:16*) which Satan cannot tempt. We have both natures within. We are made in the image of God (*Gen 1:26-27*) meaning we have a spirit. We are also made from nature having been “formed... of the dust of the ground” (*Gen 2:7*). The devil is focused on the human side because he can’t reach the inner man which is the spiritual “DNA” we all have from God our heavenly Father. It is when we are faced with the truth that we are forced to distinguish between what is right and what is not, especially when it concerns the immortal soul.

So how do we answer the question of the lost loved one? This is where Jesus gives an answer in Luke 16 that should help ease the burden of those with lost loved ones who are deceased. The example Jesus gave of the relationship between the rich man and Lazarus is not to be confused as being a parable since proper names of people were used in relating this story of what happened to the Jews who died under the Old Covenant. (*This teaching continues into the New Testament.*)

Whether it can be determined if Job lived under the Mosaic Law or not, he certainly did what the Law required concerning the poor. Job was wealthy but he “delivered the poor that cried” (*Job 29:12*). According to the Mosaic, if any poor Jew lived “within any of thy gates” they were admonished to “not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother” (*Deu 15:7*). Such was not the case of the rich man here because he paid no attention to Lazarus even though he “was laid at his (*the rich man’s*) gate, full of sores” (*Lk 16:20*). In such a location it would be difficult to ignore Lazarus’ condition. Not

only did he desire “to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table” he obviously needed medical attention.

Jesus went on to say how both the rich man and Lazarus died but notice the difference in how Lazarus was “comforted” and the rich man was “tormented”(v. 25). Both ended up in the realm of Hades (*Gk.86- the place of departed souls*) wherein the dead are held in separation from the body until the judgment (*Rev 20:13; 1 Cor 15:53-54*). The two areas of Hades, paradise and torments, are separated by “a great gulf” (*Gk.5490- chasm*) through which persons from either side cannot cross. This place is mentioned here for a reason. When we understand how the rich man’s concern went from asking Abraham if he would send Lazarus to “dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame” to asking him to send him “to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment” (*vs. 27-28*) we can answer the concern for the deceased loved one.

The rich man, having accepted his eternal fate, was so tormented that he was distressed over his five brothers possibly ending up where he was at death. Therefore, even if a loved one ended up in torment the lost would be in so much worse agony if the living relative or friend did not obey the righteous ordinance of baptism just to excuse it out of concern for them and end up in such a place of misery.

But what if I’m on the way to be baptized and am killed in a car accident? If a bride and groom, with marriage license in hand, are on their way to being married and one is killed in a car accident, are they still married? Does the survivor have legal rights to their betrothed’s possessions? Without quid pro quo the Bible is clear on “whoever believes **and** is baptized will be saved” (*Mk 16:16 along with 1 Pet 3:21*).

God “is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (*2 Pet 3:9*). God gives everyone, since He “shows no partiality” (*Act 10:34*), every opportunity to be in a relationship with Him. Life is a

mist “that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (*Jas 4:14*) so each person is responsible for their own soul’s salvation (*Ez 18:20*). To the one searching for the truth, God is knocking at your door wanting you to have fellowship with Him (*Rev 3:20*).

So, each of the five acts above is necessary for a person to become a child of God, New Testament priest and be added to the bride (*church- Act 2:42*) that Christ is to return for (*Jn 14:3*). But these are not the end-all and shouldn’t be taken as a “once saved always saved” proposition. New babes in Christ must devote “themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (*Act 2:47*). These include continuous Bible study, communion and daily prayer and growth.

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

With the introduction of the Law in Ex 32:28, 3,000 were lost. With the introduction of grace via the Gospel in Acts 2:41, 3,000 were saved.

IX. 2. Questions

1. True or false: According to John 3:16 and 6:47 all that's necessary to be saved is to believe? a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
2. According to 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 what will happen to those who do not know God and do not obey the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? a) they will suffer eternal destruction away from the presence of God; b) they will be annihilated; c) they will be sent to Purgatory.
3. According to Jeremiah 29:13 what must happen in order to truly find God? a) we must seek Him; b) nothing; c) mind our own business.
4. True or false: Both Testaments speak against adding to or taking away from scripture. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
5. Which sin will not separate a person from God? a) the one repented of; b) the one which God will not recall; c) both 'a' and 'b'.
6. How does a court scene compare to the salvation of man? a) it really doesn't; b) Christ is Judge and Advocate while Satan is prosecutor; c) neither 'a' nor 'b'.
7. Concerning salvation, what part of the Bible do most denominations not teach as though it doesn't exist? a) faith; b) repentance; c) baptism.
8. Under the Old Testament who alone could be baptized? a) Jews; b) Levites; c) Hebrews.