**How do I know when to be baptized?**

**Introduction**

1. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, and in doing so convicted him of the need to be baptized – **Acts 8:35-36** – ***“What hinders me from being baptized?”***
2. When faithful Christian’s raise their children to know God and His will, it is inevitable that at an early age they will know about the importance of baptism.
3. Like the eunuch, though they know about baptism, they may be left with the question, “What hinders me from being baptized?”, or “How do I know when to be baptized?”
4. These questions should bring us great joy – a soul is interested and concerned about pleasing God!
5. How does one know when to be baptized?
6. NOTE: While this lesson is designed for those who are asking the question themselves, it also functions as an aid for Christian parents, grandparents, etc. in answering those questions for their young ones.
7. I Know I Am Guilty
8. Baptism is Something Sinners Do to Be Forgiven
   1. **The first recorded gospel sermon:**
      1. Peter convicted the people of sin – **Acts 2:23, 36**
      2. The people knew they were guilty before God – **Acts 2:37**
      3. Peter told them the way to be forgiven was to be baptized – **Acts 2:38** – ***“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” (NASB)***
   2. **Paul’s reflection, and case of conversion:**
      1. Paul remembers life before baptism – **1 Timothy 1:15; Acts 26:9-11** – chief of sinners, persecuted the church.
      2. Paul reflected on his sins in sorrow – **Acts 9:9**
      3. Paul was told what to do to be forgiven – **Acts 22:16**
   3. **Baptism is not:**
      1. Something to do because others are doing it.
      2. Something to do because you’ve heard your parents, the preacher, etc. say it's important.
      3. Something to do so that you can do other things – partake the LS, lead in some fashion, etc.
      4. BAPTISM IS SOMETHING SINNERS DO TO BE FORGIVEN.
9. You are ready to be baptized when you know you are guilty of sin and want to be forgiven by God to be right with Him.
   1. **The “age of accountability”:**
      1. This term is not found in the bible, but the concept is.
      2. Jesus said that children are safe (i.e. not corrupted by sin, in no need for forgiveness) – **Matthew 18:1-9; 19:13-15** – both contexts lend not only to humility as a key characteristic of children, but also purity.
         1. **18:6-9** – followed by considerations of sin.
         2. **19:1-12** – preceded by consideration of divorce, and the permanency of marriage, and difficulty of celibacy.
      3. **Children are pure, innocent, and ignorant – they have not yet developed to the point of realizing their own responsibility to God directly.**
      4. Paul referred to the “age of accountability” – **Romans 7:9-11**
         1. Paul was ***“without the law”*** when he was not accountable to it as an ignorant, pure, innocent child – he was alive.
         2. The ***“commandment came”*** to Paul when he understood that he, like his elders, was responsible to obey God.
         3. ***“Sin revived and [Paul] died”*** when he decided to not obey God when he knew he was supposed to.
   2. An indicator of this age where one knows they are accountable to God, but have sinned and are guilty, is the repentant heart this conviction brings:
      1. **Acts 2:37-38** – they were sorry they killed Jesus and wanted to turn away from rejecting Him to following Him – Peter said repent.
   3. Another indicator of this age is the intense desire to be right with God, and to get rid of the guilty conscience:
      1. **Hebrews 9:14** – the blood of Christ cleanses our conscience of the guilt of sin.
      2. Baptism is the activity where God forgives you, thus cleanses your conscience – **1 Peter 3:21** – ***“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (NASB)***
10. **I know I am ready to be baptized when I know I am guilty of sin, not right with God, but desperately want to be right with God.**
11. I Do Not Want To Go To Hell
12. **If hell scares you, and you are convinced you are going there because you are guilty before God, then you are ready to be baptized.**
13. Wanting to escape hell is a good reason to be baptized. (Not the only reason.)
    1. When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John as he was baptizing – **Matthew 3:7, 10-12** – the coming wrath of God, and baptism in the fire of hell is a reason to have sins washed away in baptism.
    2. Jesus warned about hell, then talked about the wide path that led to hell, and encouraged them to go the other way – **Matthew 5:29-30; 7:13-14**
    3. **Jesus spoke about hell more than any other person in the Bible – HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT IT, FEAR IT, AND SEEK TO AVOID IT AT ALL COSTS.**
14. Hell is Terrifying, Sin is the Reason People Will Go There, Baptism is the Way Out
    1. ***“in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)***
    2. ***“and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 13:42)***
    3. ***“He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Matthew 3:12)***
    4. ***“Sodom and Gomorrah…are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (Jude 7)***
    5. ***“And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night” (Revelation 14:11)***
    6. ***“And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:30)***
    7. ***“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8)***
    8. ***“the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels…everlasting punishment” (Matthew 25:41, 46).***
    9. **Mark 16:16** – He who believes and is baptized will be saved – from their sins, and the consequence of hell.
15. I Know I Need Christ’s Cleansing Blood
16. ***“without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22, NASB***)
    1. If I know I am guilty of sin before God, and I want to be forgiven, I must know that blood is necessary.
    2. Life is in the blood – **Leviticus 17:11** – life is in the blood, and it is given by God for atonement (forgiveness).
       1. **Romans 6:23** – wages of sin is death.
       2. **Life in blood – blood shed – life given – death paid.**
    3. The blood of animals is not good enough – **Hebrews 10:4**
    4. The blood of Christ is what we need – **Hebrews 9:13-14**
17. You need Christ’s blood because:
    1. He is the lamb provided by God – **John 1:29; Revelation 5:9-10**
    2. He is human like you – **Hebrews 2:10-11, 17**
    3. He is sinless – **Hebrews 4:15; 7:26-27**
    4. He is the Son of God – **John 1:32-34; 20:30-31; Hebrews 9:14**
       1. Necessary to believe and confess for forgiveness, because He is the only One who can take away your sins – **Romans 10:9-10; Acts 4:12; 8:36-38**
    5. He willingly gave His life to save you from your sins – **John 10:11, 15, 17-18; 1 John 3:16; Isaiah 53:4-6**
18. Baptism is Where You are Washed in Christ’s Blood
    1. **Baptism and Christ’s blood are for forgiveness:**
       1. ***“for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28, NASB)***
       2. ***“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38, NASB)***
       3. I.e. baptism is where you contact Christ's cleansing blood.
    2. **Baptism is into the death of Christ** – **Romans 6:3-4**
       1. Blood = death – baptized into His death = baptized into His blood (therefore, the benefits – forgiveness)
       2. **(v. 4a)** – newness of life when raised.
19. I Know Baptism Is A Commitment To Follow Christ
20. Baptism marks the beginning of a committed life in Christ, separated from sin.
    1. **This was Paul’s whole point in Romans 6.**
    2. **Romans 6:1-4, 12-14** – your baptism is a commitment to a new life devoted to righteousness – you need to know this before you are ready.
21. You need to count the cost of following Jesus – **Luke 14:25-33** – are you committed to living the rest of your life for Him? Are you willing to pay the price for not following Him?
    1. This is not something you are to start, only to quit later – **Luke 9:62**
22. Baptism Starts a Committed Relationship with Jesus
    1. **Galatians 3:26-29** – into Christ, put on Christ, ARE Christ’s.
    2. **Galatians 2:20** – no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.
23. You Must Be Willing to Leave All and Follow Jesus for the Rest of Your Life
    1. **Matthew 16:24-27** – take up your cross, lose your life to save it.
    2. **Matthew 19:16-22** – not like the rich young ruler who was not willing to commit all.
24. **Baptism is not:**
    1. For feeling better only for a moment.
    2. For pleasing parents, grandparents, etc.
    3. For being like my friends.
    4. A free pass to heaven no matter what.
    5. BAPTISM IS THE ENTRANCE INTO A LIFETIME RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AS YOUR LORD!
25. I Want To Go To Heaven
26. “Heaven is a wonderful place filled with glory and grace. I want to see my Savior’s face! Heaven is a wonderful place! I want to go there!”
    1. If this is true for you, along with these other reasons, you need to be baptized!
27. God Motivates Us with the Promise of Heaven
    1. He has prepared heaven for us – **Matthew 25:34, 46; Hebrews 11:13-16**
    2. There is no sin or temptation in heaven – **2 Peter 3:13**
    3. There is no darkness in heaven (contrast with outer darkness of hell) – **Revelation 22:5**
    4. There is no hunger, thirst, pain, anguish, tears – **Revelation 7:16-17**
    5. There is eternal joy there – **Revelation 14:1-3**
    6. We will be able to see the glory of Christ forever – **John 17:24**
    7. Have the goal of heaven – **Matthew 6:19-21**
28. Only Those Washed in Christ’s Blood Can Go There
    1. **Revelation 7:13-15** – those who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.
    2. **Revelation 14:4-5** – those who are pure, follow the Lamb, redeemed, without fault.

**Conclusion**

1. “How do I know when to be baptized?” – a serious question that can be made too complicated.
2. Those who should be baptized:
   1. Know they are guilty of sin.
   2. Do not want to go to hell because of their sin.
   3. Know they need Christ’s blood to forgive them of their sin.
   4. Know that baptism is the start to a lifelong commitment.
   5. Want to go to heaven.
3. Are you ready to be baptized? – ***“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16)***