

8

# Every Nation and Tongue



“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).



**An Amazing Fact:** *Grüner See, or Green Lake, is a renowned, beautiful park in Austria that’s nestled among the Hochschwab Mountains. Every spring, as the winter snow melts and runs down the mountains, the park’s plentiful trees, flowers, trails, and benches are submerged under 40 feet of crystal-clear, cold water. However, the lush area is reborn in the summer when the floodwaters finally recede.*

**J**ust before His glorious ascension into heaven, Jesus gave His followers a wonderful duty and privilege:

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved (Mark 16:15, 16).

This is the great commission—sharing the good news of salvation with the entire world, without regard to a person’s location, station in life, or reputation.

In Revelation 14:6, the first angel is depicted carrying out this very commission, broadcasting the everlasting gospel to the whole world. In our first lesson, we learned that this angel is a symbol of Christ’s body, His church, in the last days. So, the great commission includes not only the apostolic church but ours as well.

Notice that this commission is connected with a special ordinance called baptism. When a person is presented with the everlasting gospel and chooses to live by it in faith, he is invited to participate in this wonderful ceremony.

2 Why? What is so special about it? Let’s find out ...



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*When you see a blank, look up the passage in your Bible and write in the missing word.*

1. Revelation 14 speaks of a message that would go to every tribe, tongue, and people. What important Christian ordinance is connected with that message?

**Matthew 28:19.** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, \_\_\_\_\_ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

**ANSWER:** Baptism is the Christian practice connected with salvation in the last days.

2. What does the word “baptize” mean?

**Colossians 2:11, 12.** In Him you were ... \_\_\_\_\_ with Him in baptism.

**ANSWER:** The Greek word for “baptize,” *baptizo*, means “to submerge,” “plunge under,” or “immerse.” *Baptizo* is always used in the Bible in reference to the ordinance of baptism. A person has not been baptized unless he has been laid—“buried”—under the water.

3. What does baptism symbolize?

**Romans 6:4.** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into \_\_\_\_\_, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Acts 22:16.** Arise and be baptized, and \_\_\_\_\_ away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

**ANSWER:** Baptism symbolizes Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Christians undergo this rite as a public acknowledgment and acceptance of what Christ did for them.

Notice how perfectly immersion represents those events: When a person is baptized, he is laid backward into the water until his body is fully covered and his breath suspended. This represents a death and burial, a washing away, of his old life of sin—for Jesus died to take away our sins. Then, the person is lifted out of the water, taking their first breath. This represents rebirth, for just as Jesus was resurrected, so is the person able to begin a new life through Him.

#### 4. What other ceremony does the Bible compare to baptism?

**Galatians 3:27.** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have \_\_\_\_\_ Christ.

**ANSWER:** The Bible compares the rite of baptism to a wedding ceremony. As a woman traditionally takes her husband’s name in marriage, so Christians take—or “put on”—the name of Christ and, thereafter, are called Christians. A wedding is a public declaration of love and commitment, and so is baptism. Both ceremonies celebrate the commencement of a new step in a relationship. (See also Isaiah 54:5; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25.)



#### 5. What biblical qualifications must precede baptism?

**Matthew 28:19, 20.** Go therefore and make \_\_\_\_\_ of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, \_\_\_\_\_ them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

**Acts 8:36, 37.** And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you \_\_\_\_\_ with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

**Acts 2:38.** \_\_\_\_\_, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

**ANSWER:** Baptism publicly signifies one’s acceptance of the everlasting gospel—an acknowledgment of Christ as Savior and of salvation through Him alone. A person must also believe in God’s Word and commit to following all of His commandments.

As we learned in a previous lesson, when you embrace the good news that Christ died for your sins, you will repent of those sins—that is, turn away from them. This is a personal decision that is made with sincerity and the whole heart. These are the prerequisites for baptism.

Who, then, should not be baptized? Infants and toddlers do not fulfill these conditions; neither do those who have passed to their death. Those who may have been coerced or deceived into the act don’t meet the requirements either. Baptism must be a free-will choice to be made with a clear understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

### 6. According to the Bible, how many varieties of baptism are acceptable?

**Ephesians 4:4, 5.** *There is ... one Lord, one faith, \_\_\_\_\_ baptism.*

**ANSWER:** Today, many varieties of baptismal ceremonies are practiced by different Christian denominations. Some churches pour water over a person; others sprinkle water; still others immerse a person three times in a row or, in contrast, only a person’s head. Some supplement the rite with other rituals involving oil, wine, or salt. Some churches teach that baptism is optional.

According to the Bible, neither one of these variations could be considered baptism. There’s only one way to baptize someone—by a single, complete submersion into water. That’s it. Significantly, there are scriptures with the Greek words for “pour,” *katacheó*, and “sprinkle,” *rhantizó*, but neither is used to define or refer to baptism.

It makes sense: There’s only one God and one time Jesus died for your sins (Hebrews 10:12–14); there’s only one way to be saved (Acts



4:12). So why would there be multiple ways to be baptized, a ceremony that symbolizes the outward expression of your faith in that one path to salvation?

Introducing these various forms of baptism, whether for the sake of convenience, tradition, or otherwise, distorts and obscures the plain Word of God.

### 7. Are there examples in the Bible of people being baptized?

**Mark 1:9, 10.** *Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was \_\_\_\_\_ by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting.*

**Acts 8:38, 39.** *And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he \_\_\_\_\_ him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away.*

**ANSWER:** Examples of baptism in the Bible are consistently described as full immersion, including the account of Jesus' own baptism.

The Bible also notes that John the Baptist chose where to baptize people based on the amount of water available—"because there was much water there" (John 3:23). While pouring, sprinkling, and even partial immersion does not require substantial bodies of water, full immersion does. (See "From Mikvah to Baptism" at the end of this lesson.)



## 8. Why did Jesus need to be baptized?

**Matthew 3:13–15.** Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to \_\_\_\_\_ all righteousness.”

**ANSWER:** The Bible says that Jesus never sinned (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). Since Jesus didn’t need to renounce and die to an old life of sin, what was the point of His baptism?

Jesus chose to be baptized as an example to His people. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ... that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness” (1 Peter 2:21, 24). This was a crucial step in Christ fulfilling all righteousness. In this way, we could follow the pathway, the plan of salvation, He forged.

Remember from Lesson 6 the order in which one walked through the sanctuary: Upon entering the courtyard, one first came to the altar of sacrifice, then the laver. It is the same in a Christian’s journey; one must first recognize and accept Christ’s sacrifice on the altar before deciding to be symbolically washed clean in baptism.

Christ’s example leads us all the way from the courtyard into the holy place and finally into the most holy place, recreating us to “become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). (See also Romans 6:6–13.)





## 9. But doesn't the baptism of the Holy Spirit replace baptism by immersion?

**Acts 2:38.** Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Acts 10:44, 46–48.** While Peter was still speaking these words, the \_\_\_\_\_ fell upon all those who heard the word. ... Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the \_\_\_\_\_ just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

**ANSWER:** John the Baptist said concerning Jesus, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11). This in no way means that one replaces the other.

The Scriptures clearly distinguish the two baptisms in the Christian journey. In Acts 2, water baptism comes before the Holy Spirit is given; in Acts 10, it is the other way around. Baptism by water is a ceremony representing a person's public acceptance of the gospel; baptism by the Holy Spirit is a gift through which God performs the gospel's transformative work in your life. What is clear in the Bible is that both are experienced by those who believe in Jesus Christ.





### 10. Is rebaptism ever necessary?

**Acts 19:2–5.** They said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you \_\_\_\_\_?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard this, they were \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**ANSWER:** When the apostle Paul was preaching in Ephesus, he met 12 men who had been baptized by John the Baptist but had never heard of the Holy Spirit. Upon receiving this substantial new light, they were rebaptized. Thus, we can conclude that rebaptism is biblical if an individual did not learn or accept the full gospel message the first time.

Naturally, if a person was baptized without meeting the other prerequisites (see question #5), he should be rebaptized upon doing so. Likewise, if a person has drifted or turned away from living by the gospel truth, he should be rebaptized upon returning to the Lord. Rebaptism is also appropriate if a person was not originally baptized with the biblical method of immersion.

## 11. Is baptism connected with joining a church?

**1 Corinthians 12:13.** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one \_\_\_\_\_.

**Colossians 1:18.** And He is the head of the body, the \_\_\_\_\_.

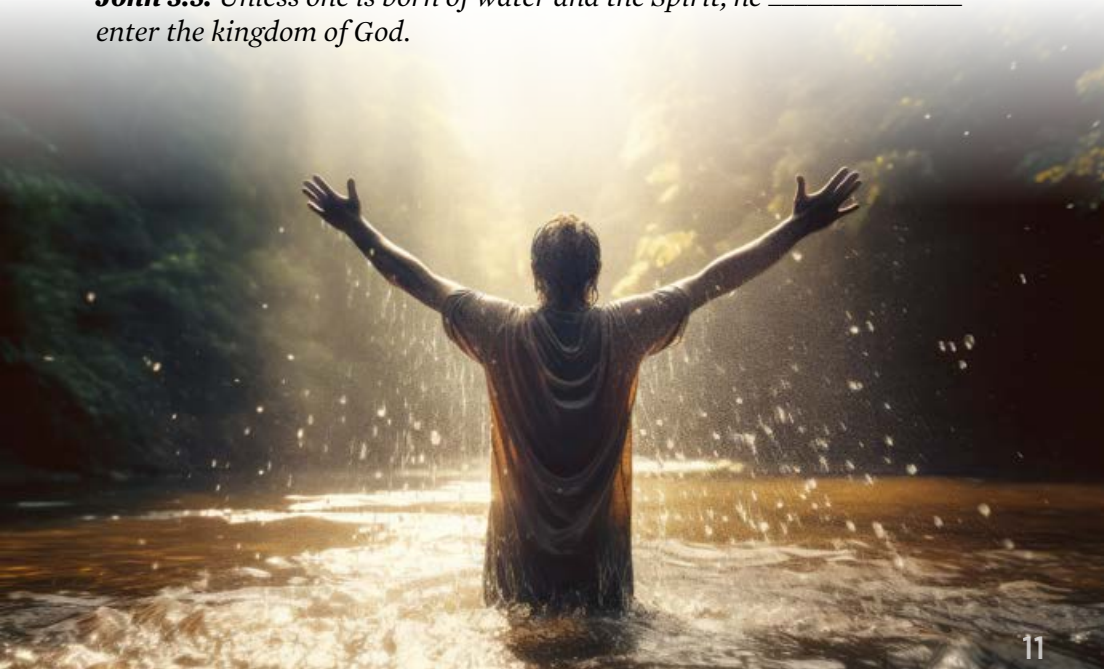
**ANSWER:** Yes, the Bible says that every believer who is baptized is baptized into the church. Consider the example recounted in Acts: Upon hearing the gospel truth from the apostle Peter, “those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (2:41). Several verses later, the Bible explains what the newly baptized were added to: “The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (v. 47).

Colossians 1:18 is referring to Jesus as the head of the church. When you are baptized, you become part of Christ’s body, just like a baby belongs to a family (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26). As a family nurtures its baby, so does the church family nurture a newborn Christian.

## 12. Is baptism required to be saved?

**Mark 16:16.** He who believes and is baptized will be \_\_\_\_\_; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

**John 3:5.** Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he \_\_\_\_\_ enter the kingdom of God.



**ANSWER:** Baptism, like any other work, does not save you. It also has no power in and of itself to help you overcome temptation, to make you obedient, or to transform your character. As we've learned, you are saved only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is Jesus, working for you and in you, who has the power to save.

Also, notice that in Mark 16:16, it's your belief that makes the difference between salvation and condemnation. Baptism is simply the public evidence that goes along with your belief. Much like keeping the Ten Commandments, baptism is the outward sign that you have heard and accepted the gospel.

The thief on the cross is a biblical example of someone who was saved without being baptized (Luke 23:42, 43). But it is also important to note that it was physically impossible for him to be immersed in water at that time. The more important question is: Why wouldn't a person want to be baptized when it is possible? Why wouldn't a person who realizes he is saved want to publicly renounce his old life of sin and declare his commitment to the Savior?

When Christ was baptized, God the Father said in response, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). Shouldn't believers similarly desire to please God? (1 Thessalonians 4:1; 1 John 3:22). Not wanting to be baptized may be an indication of not truly wanting to follow God and be saved (Luke 7:30).

### 13. Would you like to begin preparing for the sacred rite of baptism?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_





## ***Lesson 8 Supplemental Material***

### **From Mikvah to Baptism**

Many people believe that the rite of baptism began with John the Baptist at the Jordan River (Mark 1:5). But this is not true. John the Baptist was practicing an ordinance that had been around for many centuries.

The idea of ceremonial washing has its roots in the Jewish *mikvah*, a bath in which people are cleansed, through immersion, from ritual impurity. Even today, interestingly, those converting to the Jewish faith are immersed in a *mikvah* as part of their initiation. One of the earliest biblical references is found in Exodus 29:4, which describes the priests being washed—most likely at the laver before ministering in the sanctuary.

Also of note, the apostle Paul identified the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt (14:21, 22) as a symbolic kind of baptism. When they crossed the Red Sea, “all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:2). In a sense, the Israelites were “buried” at the bottom of that body of water, representing the end of their old life of slavery to a sinful, heathen nation. They came out on the other side, having been delivered by God (Exodus 14:29, 30) to start a new life of obedience to Him. As the Bible says, “Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses” (v. 31).

The rite of baptism isn’t just a New Testament invention. God has revealed in His Word that baptism is intrinsically connected to the plan of salvation, existing “from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

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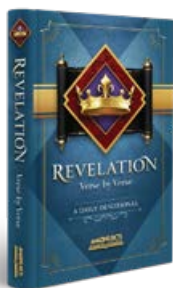
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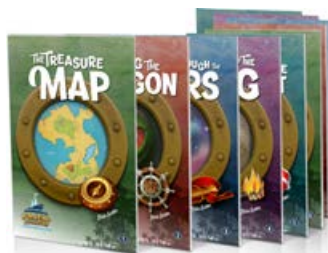


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Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:6–12

