

# MAKING DISCIPLES



## STUDY 07 BAPTISM

TEACHER EDITION

# BAPTISM

**Big Idea: A saving faith in Jesus saves at the point of baptism. Baptism is the point where one obtains the forgiveness of sins. Key word: "rebirth"**

Baptism is an essential part in the plan of salvation. In this study, we will explain the "Why of baptism;" the "What of baptism" and the "How of baptism."

## I. Why Baptism?

### Matthew 28:18-20

**Q. What do you see here?**

- Baptism is a major component of the Great Commission.
- It is not an option. It is commanded.
- It is part of being a disciple of Jesus.

### Acts 2:36-39

**Q. What does the audience believe when they say "What shall we do?"**

- They believe that Jesus is the Messiah and they are responsible for his death.
- They believe God has made Jesus both "Lord and Christ."
- They are expressing their guilt. They want to know what to do in order to be saved.

Teacher tip: It is important to emphasize that at this point the people in the audience in Acts 2 are not saved. They are asking what to do to be saved.

**Q. What does Peter tell them?**

- He tells them to repent and be baptized. Both repentance and baptism are commanded, not just suggested.
- When they repent and are baptized, they will receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- This plan is promised to every one for all time.

Teacher tip: Be sure to explain that baptism literally means "immersion" or "dunking."

**Q. Does repentance and baptism occur before one receives the forgiveness of sins or does it occur afterwards?**

- Both repentance and baptism occur BEFORE one receives the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Q. Did you do this?**

## II. What Is Baptism?

### John 3:1-7

**Q. What do you see here about baptism?**

- Baptism (being born of water) is a "rebirth." It is necessary to enter the kingdom of God.
- Here, water and the Spirit are closely linked with being born again.

### Romans 6:1-7

**Q. What do you see here about baptism?**

- When one is baptized, they are baptized "into Christ."
- When baptized, one is sharing in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- Baptism is the point at which a person enters a new life.

Teacher tip: Explain that one cannot be baptized into Christ if they are already "in Christ" just like one cannot go "into a room" if they are already in the room. Therefore, one must be outside of Christ (lost) in order to be baptized into Christ (and be saved).

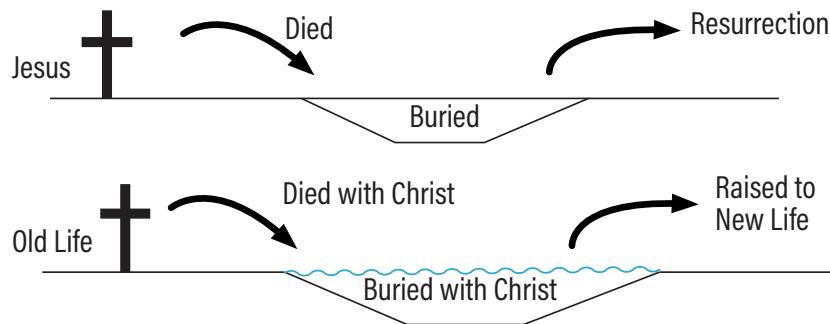


# BAPTISM

Teacher tip: Be sure to show this illustration to the seeker when teaching this lesson.

Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is now available.

Baptism is a participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.



## Acts 22:6-16

Paul encounters Jesus, he repents, prays, fasts (Acts 9:9-11) and is healed by Ananias. Yet Paul did not yet have his sins washed away at that time.

**Q. What does Ananias tell Paul to do to wash away his sins?**

- Arise and be baptized. (Acts 22:16)

We see in this passage that baptism is the point when one's sins are "washed away" which is consistent with previous passages on baptism.

Baptism is:

- For the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).
- The point when one is born again (John 3:5).
- The point when one enters Christ and begins to experience the new life (Romans 6:3-5).

Teacher tip: It is important to emphasize that Paul was not saved when he repented, fasted or prayed. Ananias made it clear that Paul needed to be baptized in order to have his sins washed away.

## 1 Peter 3:18-22

**Q. What do you see here about baptism?**

- Water separated the lost from the saved.
- The water of Noah symbolizes Christian baptism which is the point that separates the lost from the saved.
- Baptism saves you by the resurrection of Jesus and your internal pledge to God.

## III. How Is One Baptized?

### Colossians 2:12-13

**Q. What do you see here about baptism?**

- One is buried with Christ in baptism and raised through their faith. Scriptural baptism occurs with faith.
- It is essential that there be faith at that point. Therefore, anyone who cannot have faith cannot be baptized.
- Baptism is the point where faith saves.

## Conclusion

### Acts 8:26-40

**Q. What do you see here about baptism?**

- It is done in water. Water is the element in which one is baptized.
- There is an eagerness to be baptized.

**Q. Based upon what you have learned, why do you think the eunuch was eager to be baptized?**

- The eunuch most probably knew that when he was baptized, he would be born again, participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, be saved, receive forgiveness of his sins, have his sins washed away, be baptized into Christ, and have a new life in Christ. Why would he NOT want to be baptized?

**Q. Do you want to imitate the eunuch and be baptized?**

Additional scriptures: Acts 19:1-5; Tit 3:3-7; Eph 4:4-6; Heb 10:19-22; 1 Cor 12:12-3; Ez 18:19-20.

See Appendix G for more resources on Baptism.



# FALSE DOCTRINES ABOUT SALVATION

**Big Idea:** There are many non-Biblical ideas about how one is saved. It is important to recognize what Jesus and the Bible does and does not teach about how to be saved.

## Acts 20:28-30

There are some very important prerequisites that precede a biblical baptism for the forgiveness of your sins: faith, repentance and discipleship. Where many teachings about baptism go wrong is they get the prerequisites and order out of line. Even the early church needed to be aware of false teaching infiltrating the church.

Teacher tip: Pick those teachings where you think your seeker will struggle. Not all teachings need to be necessarily taught to all seekers.

## Concerning Catholic Teachings...

### Original Sin

This is the idea that because of Adam and Eve's sin, we are all born in a state of spiritual death. Therefore, we inherit original sin at birth.

Exodus 34:6-7 says that children certainly suffer consequences of their parent's sin. When their parents divorce, do not love God, abuse them, or do not deal with their own character, it will inevitably affect their children. However, God does not hold the children spiritually responsible for their parent's guilt. This scripture does not mean that we inherit any original sin.

Ezekiel 18:19-20 teaches that the soul that sins is the one that will die. We are each responsible for our own sin.

### Infant Baptism

This doctrine refers to the practice of baptizing infants before they are old enough to make their own faith decision to have their original sin forgiven.

The scriptures are very clear on prerequisites for baptism: Colossians 2:11-12 states that one is buried in baptism through your faith in the working of God. Q: Can an infant have faith? (See also Hebrews 11:6, Romans 10:17).

Acts 2:38 commands us to repent when we are baptized. Q: Can an infant repent?

## Concerning Protestant Teachings...

### Faith Alone Saves You

This doctrine became popular with Martin Luther during the reformation period (16th century A.D.) in reaction to the "works doctrine" of the Catholic Church. It is interesting to note that Luther did not believe the book of James should be included in the Bible. Why? James contradicts this false doctrine.

James 2:19-26 says that while faith is necessary, faith must be active in order to be credited for righteousness. Other elements of a saving faith would include discipleship (Matthew 28:18-20), and repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). It is at the point of baptism, when combined with repentance and discipleship, that faith saves since that is when we participate in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6) and have our sins washed away (Acts 22:16).

Faith without deeds is dead. Faith does save. The idea of faith alone is problematic.

### Once Saved, Always Saved

There are many churches that teach that once you have been saved, it is impossible to lose that salvation.

Many scriptures refute this teaching such as Hebrews 6:4-8, Hebrews 10:29-30, and 2 Peter 2:20. God does not force anyone to continue to have a relationship with him against their will. God gives us the freedom to continue to have a relationship with him, to continue to know him better, or to turn our backs and walk away to do our own thing.

Stubborn refusal to repent of sin can certainly lead to a hardened heart that no longer responds to God. God's grace is magnificent. We should never want to test where that line lies!





# FALSE DOCTRINES ABOUT SALVATION

## Pray Jesus into Your Heart / Accept Jesus as Your Savior

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This doctrine originated in the 18th century and became popular in Christian revivals in the early 20th century. It is the belief that you only need to believe in Jesus, accept him as your personal savior, and pray for salvation.

This doctrine is often attempted to be justified by Revelation 3:20. This verse, however, was written to the church, to people who were already baptized disciples. This is NOT a verse about initial salvation; it is about how to get right with God as a lukewarm church member.

Romans 10:9-10 is another verse that is used to attempt to justify this false teaching. The context is critical. This passage is addressed to the Israelites in Romans 10:1. They struggled with faith that Jesus was the Son of God. So Paul emphasizes having Jesus as Lord and belief that God raised him from the dead.

Romans 10:9-10 does not mention all element needed for salvation. It does not mention that Jesus is God in the flesh, it does not mention that there is only one God and not multiple gods. The fact that Paul does not mention baptism likewise does not mean baptism is not necessary since it is written to the Roman church where all members were baptized into Christ to have a new life (Romans 6:1-5).

Acts 22:8-16 is a great example connecting faith, repentance, and baptism. They must all go together for salvation.

## Baptism Is a Mere Symbol

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This is also known as an "outward sign of an inward grace." It assumes that one is saved before baptism, and that baptism only symbolizes the salvation that occurred before.

This false conclusion evolved in conjunction with the previous two false doctrines. If faith alone and praying Jesus into your heart saves you, what role does baptism have? Baptism is downgraded from its importance to a mere symbol to justify these other false teachings.

But Romans 6:1-5 states that baptism IS an actual participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is the outward expression of what is actually occurring: participating in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. This is when new life begins.

Acts 2:38 states that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, not because we are already saved.

1 Peter 3:20-21 states that we are saved at the point of baptism, and it is compared to Noah being saved through water during the flood.

## The Thief on the Cross

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The story of the thief on the cross is found in Luke 23:39-43. The argument is that since the thief was never baptized, then we don't need to be baptized to receive forgiveness.

However, the thief on the cross lived and died under the Old Covenant. Baptism in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins only began after Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection when the New Covenant begins on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

People under the Old Testament had to offer sacrifices at the temple in order to be forgiven. Jesus told the thief he would be forgiven and be with him in Paradise without offering sacrifices. Jesus makes an exception for the thief. Jesus could do that because he is God.

But today under the New Covenant, Jesus has ordained that faith, repentance, discipleship and baptism are necessary for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).

## Conclusion

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We are saved BY grace (Ephesians 2:8), THROUGH faith (Romans 3:22), AT Baptism (Acts 2:38).



# APPENDIX G: BAPTISM RESOURCES

**Big Idea:** The purpose of baptism is a controversial topic today. But it was not controversial to the Early Church Fathers nor to the inspired writers of the New Testament. This study shows how both the Early Church Fathers and the Bible writers agree that baptism was and is for the forgiveness of sins.

We will explore 4 baptism resources:

1. Early Christian Writings on baptism;
2. New Testament Conversions;
3. Video resource on "Is baptism necessary for the forgiveness of sins?"
4. The origin of the "Sinners Prayer" where one prays a prayer to receive Jesus for salvation.

## I. Early Christian Writings on Baptism

**140-230 AD TERTULLIAN** "Baptism itself is a corporal act by which we are plunged into the water, while its effect is spiritual, in that we are freed from our sins" (Baptism 7:2).

**TERTULLIAN** "The prescript is laid down that 'without baptism, salvation is attainable by none' chiefly on the ground of that declaration of the Lord, who says, 'Unless one be born of water, he hath not life.'" (On Baptism, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, pg. 674-675)

**TERTULLIAN** "'Unless a man has been born again of water and Spirit, he will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens.' These words have tied faith to the necessity of baptism. Accordingly, all thereafter who became believers were baptized. So it was, too, that Paul, when he believed, was baptized" (On Baptism, chap 13).

**110-165 AD Justin Martyr** "As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all... And for this we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe." (Justin Martyr, "First Apology," Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 183)

**120-205 AD IRENAEUS** "This class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus they have renounced the whole faith... for the baptism instituted by the visible Jesus was for the remission of sins... but there are some of them (Gnostics) who assert that it is unnecessary to bring persons to the water. Rather, they mix oil and water together, and they place this mixture on the head of those who are to be initiated... This they maintain to be redemption... Other (heretics), however, reject all these practices, and maintain that the mystery of the unspeakable and invisible Power should not be performed by visible and corruptible creatures... These claim that the knowledge of the unspeakable Greatness is itself perfect redemption" (Against Heresies, bk. 1, chap. 21, sec. 1, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, pg. 345).

**IRENAEUS**, "And dipped himself says [the Scripture] seven times in the Jordan." It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized. Rather, this was a symbol for us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean from our old transgressions by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord. We are spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, just as the Lord has declared: "Unless a man is born again through water and the Spirit, he will not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Fragment 34).



# APPENDIX G: BAPTISM RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

## Does This Mean That Early Christians Believed One Earns Salvation by Works?

No, the early Christians did not teach that we earn salvation by good works. As in the following quotes, they taught that salvation is through faith and not by “works done in holiness of heart.” Faith is the means through which God justifies by grace, and that no one receives salvation without the grace of God.

**Clement of Rome** wrote, “[We] are not justified by ourselves. Nor by our own wisdom, understanding, godliness, or works done in holiness of heart. But by that faith through which Almighty God has justified all men since the beginning.”

**Polycarp** wrote, “Many desire to enter into this joy, knowing that ‘by grace you are saved, not of works,’ but by the will of God through Jesus Christ [Eph. 2:8].”

## Are Faith and Works Mutually Exclusive?

So we might ask how could the early Christians say “We are made clean from our old transgressions by means of the sacred water;” “they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner;” “without baptism, salvation is attainable by none;” and “Baptism itself is a corporal act by which . . . we are freed from our sins” and yet still believe they are saved by faith and not works?

There is only a problem if one believes that salvation by faith and works are mutually exclusive. But that is just a modern-day fallacy. The early Christians did not teach that faith and works are mutually exclusive.

The early Christians replied that while one receives salvation as a gift through faith, there are conditions to receive the gift. But the conditions when met does not mean one earns the gift, but only that they met the conditions. There are two different types of works: one is works of merit, where one earns something as a result of their effort. Then there are works of acceptance where one performs some function in order to receive the gift. Salvation by grace through faith occurs when one loves and obeys God in faith. If a king wants to give his son half his kingdom if the son first brings him a bushel of apples, the son did not earn his half of the kingdom due to his work; it was only a small condition for him to receive the portion of the kingdom.

Likewise early Christians had no problem proclaiming that salvation is through faith, yet also identifying that the point in which faith saves is at baptism. They believed that salvation is a gift from God, that it cannot be earned or deserved. But they believed that faith saved when it obeyed the provisions of God on which to accept the gift.

## II. New Testament Conversions

The Bible teaches in numerous places that salvation is by grace through faith (John 3:16, Eph 2:8-9).

But the questions are:

1. What are the necessary elements that accompany an initial saving faith in order to be justified by faith (Romans 5:1-2)?
2. When does faith save?

This study of New Testament conversions answers these questions.

There are several places where there are more specific details about the essential elements that accompany an initial saving faith and when faith initially saves. These are found in:

1. Acts 2:36-38 – the day of Pentecost;
2. Acts 8:9-13 – the conversion of the Samaritans;
3. Acts 8:26-40 – the Ethiopian Eunuch;
4. Acts 10:1-47 – the conversion of the household of Cornelius;
5. Acts 16:11-15 – the conversion of Lydia and her household;
6. Acts 16:30-34 – the conversion of the Philippian jailor;
7. Acts 18:8 – the conversion of the Corinthians;
8. Acts 9, 22 – the conversion of Paul.

**As we study these conversion stories, let’s remember that there is only one plan of salvation.** All these conversion stories do not necessarily include each element of conversion, but put together we can see how God wants us to respond to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to receive his “gift of eternal life” (Romans 6:23).



# APPENDIX G: BAPTISM RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

## 1. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-38)

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The apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit. It is the beginning of the New Testament covenant. Peter preaches that Jesus is the Messiah and that God rose him from the dead. Peter proclaims that God has made Jesus both “Lord and Christ” (2:36).

The people are cut to the heart and ask “what shall we do?”

All people are saved by faith (Eph 2:8; John 3:16). But Peter gives two definitive requirements in order to be saved by faith and be born again:

1. Repentance
2. Baptism (Acts 2:38)

Peter says that repentance and baptism are “for the forgiveness of sins.” **Peter states that an initial saving faith includes repentance and baptism.**

## 2. Acts 8:9-13 – the conversion of the Samaritans

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Philip goes to Samaria and preaches the gospel to the Samaritans. How do they respond? Acts 8:12 says they “believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Here we see two elements:

1. They believed the message, that is they had faith.
2. They were baptized (Acts 8:12). Why were they baptized? Acts 2:38 tells us that their baptism was for the forgiveness of sins.

**This tells us that the point when faith saves is the point when a person is baptized for the forgiveness of their sins as we saw in Acts 2:38.**

## 3. Acts 8:26-40 – the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch

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Philip goes on a road from Jerusalem to Gaza. He encounters an Ethiopian Eunuch who is an official of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians.

Philip tells him the “good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35). They come to some water and the eunuch wants to be baptized as a result of hearing the good news about Jesus. So Philip baptizes him.

Here we see that when the good news of Jesus is proclaimed, baptism is the response. Why? We see the answer from Acts 2:38: **The eunuch is baptized when Jesus is preached because baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins and is the point when faith saves.**

## 4. Acts 10:1-47 – the conversion of the household of Cornelius

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Peter is called by the Holy Spirit through a series of events to proclaim the good news to a gentile for the first time. Peter told them that “everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43).

The gift of the Holy Spirit fell on those who were listening to Peter’s message. Uncircumcised gentiles were never previously allowed to be part of God’s family. But Peter realizes that God is now allowing them in.

Peter then says “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47). Then Peter “commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:48).

What is “baptism in the name of Jesus Christ?” It is a water baptism. Acts 2:38 tells us that baptism in the name of Jesus is “for the forgiveness of sins.”

**The filling/baptism of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius told Peter that he could baptize them for the forgiveness of sins. Their faith saved them (Acts 10:43) when they were baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. This is consistent with the other conversion accounts.**





## APPENDIX G: BAPTISM RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### 5. Acts 16:11-15 – the conversion of Lydia and her household

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Paul went to Philippi and found Lydia and other women praying. “The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us saying ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’” (Acts 16:14-15).

Why were they baptized? Paul’s preaching of the good news included baptism. Lydia considered herself “faithful to the Lord.” Acts 2:38 tells us that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins.

**Lydia considered herself faithful to the Lord because she responded to the gospel. We see that the gospel included baptism for the forgiveness of sins. This is consistent with other conversion accounts.**

### 6. Acts 16:30-34 – the conversion of the Philippian jailor

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After Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, an earthquake occurred, the Philippian jailor came to them and asked “What must I do to be saved?”

Paul said “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). Are there any elements associated with faith/belief or is it a faith only salvation?

We read further that the jailor washed their wounds (indicative of repentance), and that he and all his family were baptized at once. He rejoiced with all his family that he had believed in God.

We see evidence of:

1. **Belief** in the life of the jailor.
2. Also **repentance**, (as we saw in Acts 2:38) that accompanies an initial saving faith.
3. We also see they were **baptized**. Baptism would have been in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38).
4. After they were baptized, it is then that they rejoiced.

**Their belief in the Lord Jesus had saved when it was accompanied by repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins. They rejoiced afterwards. This is consistent with other conversion accounts.**

### 7. Acts 18:8 - the conversion of the Corinthians

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Paul preached the gospel in Corinth. Acts 18:8 says “Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together, with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.”

**Here again, we see that when the gospel is preached, people respond with belief and baptism. This is consistent with other conversion accounts.**

### 8. Acts 9, 22, 26 – the conversion of Paul

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We see his conversion story in Acts 9:1-19, 22:1-16 and 26:12-18. Paul is a persecutor of Christians. Jesus appears to him on the way to Damascus.

Paul is blinded. Then “for three days, he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank” (Acts 9:9). Ananias comes to him, heals him and proclaims “And now, why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16).

Paul is told very clearly what he is to do and why. He comes to a belief in Jesus during his three days of blindness. We also see he has repented by the way he responds afterwards. Now he was to be baptized to wash away his sins. It was at this time that he was to call on the name of the Lord.

**Baptism is the point, when it is accompanied with faith and repentance, when one’s sins are washed away. This is consistent with other conversion accounts.**



## APPENDIX G: BAPTISM RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### III. Video Resources

Keydogo video on "Is baptism necessary for the forgiveness of sins?" It is a logical and Bible-based discussion about this topic with points and counter points.

[https://youtu.be/MRb6oiQnrww?si=J\\_7djJCIUhBC3l5v](https://youtu.be/MRb6oiQnrww?si=J_7djJCIUhBC3l5v) (22:05).

### IV. History of the Sinner's Prayer

The Sinner's Prayer is more popularly known as the Four Spiritual Laws. It is the belief that one can pray Jesus into his or her heart and that baptism is merely an outward sign. Historically, no one ever held this belief until relatively recently so it is a late development. This article explains its origin.

<https://stevekinnard.wordpress.com/2017/01/11/church-history-13-the-sinners-prayer/>

