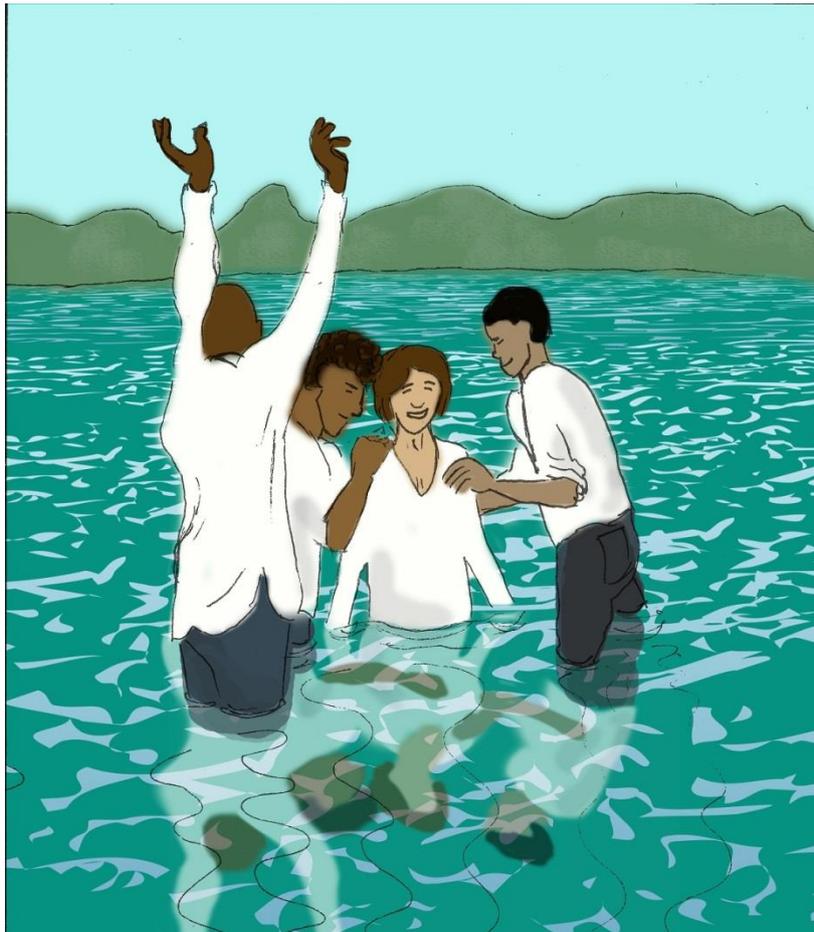




CODE 000

Preparation for Christian Baptism



E.R.B. - B.P. 10112
F-13425 MARSEILLE CEDEX 12
FRANCE
www.ProgressingTogether.com
April 2017

First Lesson: Why be baptized?

Or: How Jesus made the disciples understand the necessity of baptism

A. Introduction

What does baptism mean to you?

Definition

B. The Baptism of John the Baptist

Read the following passages:

Matt 3, Mark 1:1-22, Luke 3:1-23, and John 1:19-37.

1. After reading these passages, describe what baptism looks like.

2. In your opinion, why did Jesus allow Himself to be baptized by John?

3. What is the relation between John's baptism and Christian baptism?

C. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

How Jesus treated the subject of baptism and what He said about the matter:

John 7:37-39:

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

John 14:15-20

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth ... but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you... In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."

This time Jesus explains more clearly to his disciples what the baptism of the Spirit and with fire will be. He told them that He would come "live" in them through the Holy Spirit as God inhabits His temple (1 Kings 8 :10-13). This never happened to the people of God in the Old Testament.

Luke 24:44-49

"And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:4-11

"For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (v5)

D. Christian Baptism

How did Jesus finally introduce Christian Baptism, which His church practices everywhere even today? Matthew tells us at the end of his Gospel.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matt. 28:18-20

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven. " Acts 1:11

Learn exactly what Jesus said about baptism and respond to the following questions.

Key Verse: Matt. 28 :18-20

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

1. Who did Jesus order to baptize the people of all nations ?
2. Who should be baptized ?
3. According to the text, what does it mean to become a disciple?
4. According to Jesus, what is the key element in baptism? The Water? The ceremony?
5. List and review the three study points in this lesson.

E. Conclusion

Why be baptized?

Personal Follow-up for the First Lesson

A. Review the lesson and the key verse

1. Can you give a summary of what you remember from the lesson?
2. Do you remember the key verse?

B. Know the candidate and his expectations of baptism and of the Christian life.

3. What do you think baptism will bring you?
4. What do you expect from the Christian life? What advantages? What difficulties?

C. Discuss what Jesus expected of His disciples

5. What does Jesus expect of you if you are baptized?
6. What does it mean for you to become a disciple of Jesus?
7. According to Isaiah 50:4-5, what is expected of a disciple?
8. How can you listen to His voice every day?

D. Reflect together on the command to evangelize the nations

9. Who is given the order of Matthew 28 to evangelize all the nations? The apostles only? The first generation of Christians only?

10. If this order applies also to us, how do you intend to obey?

Let 1 Peter 3:15-17 inspire your response. (Remember, Peter was there when Jesus gave his command, and knows how to apply it to all of us.)

E. Pray together

- To listen to His voice now
- For the things you have on your heart (For example: family)

F. Homework for next week

- Memorize the Key Verse
- Try the various ways of listening to His voice every day
- Make contact with the group that the candidate will become a part of.

Second Lesson: Understanding and administering Christian Baptism.

Or: How Jesus baptized His own with the Holy Spirit and how He prepared them for the first Christian Baptism.

A. Introduction

1. According to Acts 1:12-14, were the disciples ready to start baptizing immediately?
2. According to Acts 1:4-5, why not?

B. Pentecost

Read Acts 2:1-13.

1. What happens on this first morning of Pentecost?

In Acts 2:11, the pious Jews understand the disciples speaking about the wonders of God.

2. According to Acts 2:26-28, what have the disciples understood at that moment? What are these wonders of which they speak?
3. According to Acts 2:32-33, what marvel of God probably touched the disciples the most in that moment?
4. Do you think those who had arrived because of the noise of the wind understood what was happening?
5. Compare Joel 3 with Acts 2:17-21.

Read Acts 2:37-41.

6. What were the instructions of Peter for those whose hearts were touched?

7. Why didn't Peter command that they be baptized in the name of the Trinity, but only in the name of Jesus?

8. Was it possible for the listeners to receive forgiveness without recognizing Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah-King who would deliver them from their sins? Acts 2:36 (see also Acts 4:12)

Other verses that support the necessity of faith in Jesus as Messiah, Savior, and Son of God: Acts 10:42-43; John 3:35-36

Read Acts 2:41-47.

9. What are the results of Peter's exhortation?

Key Verse: 1 Cor. 12:13

We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Indeed, we all were baptized in a single Spirit to form only one body, in which we are Jewish or Greek, slaves or free men.

It is of this same Spirit we have all received to drink.

1) Does this verse speak to us about baptism of the Spirit done by Jesus or Christian baptism done by the disciples?

2) Jesus baptizes his believers into one body. Is this one body the visible local church, or the invisible universal Church?

3) What, then, is our new identity?

4) Is it obvious now why Jesus didn't ordain Christian baptism any earlier?

C. The Church of Christ

1. Can the universal Church of Christ be seen on the earth?
2. Can the local church be seen?
3. Do you remember the characteristics of the first Christians (Acts 2:42)?

D. Conclusion

According to Peter, what is necessary to be baptized (to be forgiven, saved for eternity and to receive the Holy Spirit)?

Peter did not have any doubt that Jesus would give his Spirit to those who repented and believed. He was therefore ready to baptize them.

It is the Holy Spirit who convicted the people on Pentecost, and the same Spirit who convicts people today. When we see conviction of sin we trust Jesus to baptize them with His Spirit, just as Peter did when he promised them the Holy Spirit if they would believe in Jesus. 1 Cor 12: 3-13 confirms this by saying that all who confess Christ as Lord are baptized by His Spirit.

For Further Study

Two matters of silence

1) What about the baptism ceremony?

In Acts 2, the details of the baptism ceremony are not told, but the results-yes! As in our key verse of Matthew 28, God did not give details on how to administer the baptism ceremony.

2) And the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Peter had promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who converted. (Acts 2:38) 3000 people were converted. Did they receive the Holy Spirit? Surely, otherwise the promise of Peter would have been false. Why does the text tell us nothing about the wind, the tongues of fire, and the gift of tongues descending on the 3000? Perhaps because the new birth by the Spirit of God was not manifested in this way with the three thousand. Even in the following chapters (3-7), nothing is said about a visible manifestation of the Spirit when people accepted Jesus in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 5:14). Later, the Apostle Paul explains how the Spirit of God works. He exhorts us to accept that we, believers, do not have all the same manifestations of the Spirit but we all have the same Holy Spirit in us. This verse is the key verse of today.

Personal Follow-up for the Second Lesson

A. Review the homework and experiences of last week

1. What experiences have you had this week, especially in trying to listen to the voice of Jesus every day.
2. Do you remember the verse from the lesson we studied?
3. How can you explain to a new believer the difference between the baptism of the Spirit and Christian baptism?

B. Assurance of Salvation

4. Do you think that the 3000 listeners that were baptized that day also received the Holy Spirit?
5. Do you think you received the Holy Spirit? Why or why not? Remember what the key verse says.
6. Are you sure you will go to heaven if you die today?
7. If so, why do you think God will accept you?
8. If not, do you have an idea why you lack this certainty?

If you are not conscious of a specific reason, consider the following point:

Salvation is linked to Christ

9. To be saved, is it sufficient to believe in Jesus as you believe in all the other prophets? Why not?
10. Why is only Jesus capable of settling the question of our sin?

11. Do you truly believe that Jesus is all that we have just said?

12. Have you repented? Have you believed?

13. On what do you now base your assurance of salvation? On what you have done or on what Jesus has done?

C. Learn to clarify the Gospel

From Peter, we can learn how to make the Gospel clear to those around us.

14. What misunderstandings did he remove when he spoke to the crowd? (Acts 2:15)?

15. Do you see misunderstandings that you could remove in those around you about Christianity?

16. On what points was Peter unwilling to compromise?

17. Once the misunderstandings are taken away, can you see on what points you must not compromise?

18. Reflect on how your baptism can serve those around you to remove misunderstandings and make known the good news of salvation.

D. Homework for next time

- Memorize the key verse
- Reinforce the link with Jesus every day
- Search for possibilities to clarify and share the Gospel with those around you

Third Lesson: Baptism, the sign of the New Covenant

Or: How did God make the church understand that they were now in the New Covenant.

A. Introduction

After the birth of the Christian Church at Pentecost, the Christians met daily at the temple, and in their houses.

1. In your own words, why didn't the first Christians feel the need to meet in a new "Christian" temple, a place that didn't belong to the Jewish religion?

During his last supper with the twelve apostles, Jesus told them:

"This cup is my blood of the New Covenant, poured out for you." **Luke 22:20**

But He could not explain fully at that moment.

B. The story of Cornelius Acts 10 and 11

1. At Jerusalem, did Peter forbid Christian parents to circumcise their children from now on?

2. Were they told that they had to eat meat or pork?

3. According to Acts 11:19-26, whom did the church in Jerusalem send to the Greeks?

4. Where are the disciples called "Christians" for the first time?

Key Verse: Col. 2:10-12

10. You have been given fullness in Christ who is the head over every power and authority.

11. In him you have also been circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men, but with the circumcision done by Christ,

12. having been buried with him in baptism, and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

1) When the apostle Paul affirms that Jesus is the head of all dominion and all authority, what is He talking about? Use Col 2:8 and 2:18 to help you respond.

2) According to verse 11, why is the circumcision of Christ, not done by human hands, superior to the Old Covenant?

3) What is this “circumcision not done by human hands”?

4) It is not the ceremony of baptism that saves. How do we see that expressed in these verses?

The exterior gesture of baptism is insufficient, just as the exterior gesture of circumcision was insufficient in the Old Covenant:

So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. For the Lord your God is the God of gods... who does not show partiality. Deut. 10:16

C. The Old and New Covenant: a comparison

The sign of the Old Covenant was circumcision.

The Law of Moses was given by God. It was an integral part of the Old Covenant and was composed of three parts:

- 1) The moral law of God
- 2) The ceremonial law that showed with its symbolism the necessity and nature of redemption, as with the laws of purity and sacrifices.
- 3) The civil law of the Jewish people, chosen by God to be the human family of the Messiah.

The sign of the New Covenant is Christian Baptism.

The Law of Moses has therefore been fulfilled by Jesus

The moral law: we can now fulfill it because Jesus lives in us by His Spirit. The Sermon on the Mount aims at this goal.

The ceremonial law is now superfluous, and we can therefore leave it as the Jewish Christians have learned to do under the sovereign direction of God Himself. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows us this.

The civil law no longer applies because in the New Covenant, the people of God are not made up of the Jewish people in a physical place but are formed by the universal Church of Christ all over the world.

The Epistle to the Romans explains this.

D. Conclusion

In accepting Christian Baptism, we accept the New Covenant. According to Colossians 2:10, we declare that in Christ we have all been brought to fullness. We confess that He is above all authority and power that reigns in the world.

In Col 2:6, Paul tells us to walk in Christ in the same way that we have received Him: by faith. Our initial conversion to Christ is only the beginning of this walk. Each time we become conscious of something which we have not yet submitted to Him, this is a time to trust Him to change us

Personal Follow-up for the Third Lesson

A. Review the homework and experiences of last week

1. Can you share some experience of the past week that has happened to you in connection with your walk with God, or with baptism, or has some question come to your spirit?
2. Do you remember the key verse from the third lesson? Can you share the most important point for you?

B. Baptism symbolizes the New Covenant

3. If you are baptized, you place yourself under the sign of the New Covenant. What does this mean for you?
4. God Himself instituted the Old Covenant with the circumcision of Abraham and with the Law of Moses. Why do we need the New Covenant?
5. According to Col 2:11, what does the New Covenant do for us that the old regime was incapable of doing?

C. What to do with the signs of the Old Covenant?

The moral law of God remains valuable for all time, and Jesus is the perfect example because he loved God and His neighbor with all His heart.

6. Can you give an example of a moral law that remains valid for us also?

The ceremonial Law of Moses is symbolic, now fulfilled and therefore obsolete.

7. Can you recognize the ceremonial customs in Islam that resemble the Law of Moses?

The civil law of Moses applied to the people of Israel whom God had chosen as His visible people in a visible territory to be the bearer of the Messiah. In the New Covenant, God declared that now His people are made up of those whom Jesus has baptized with his Spirit, making them become children of God.

8. Do the civil laws still apply?
9. According to Gal 3:23-25, what is the role of the law?

D. Renounce influences that keep us from the fullness of God.

The Christians at Colossae were good believers. In spite of that, Paul writes them a letter to persuade them to watch out for two influences that can remove the fullness that God has given us in the New Covenant in Christ. These two influences are:

The philosophies of this world. (Col. 2:8-9)

10. Can you identify which worldly philosophies have influenced your way of thinking in the past?

11. Have you renounced them? What evidence do you have that you have or have not done so? What step might you still need to take?

The principalities and powers of this world (Col. 2:15-18)

12. Can you identify spiritual powers that influence your life?

13. Make a list of all the contacts you have had with the spiritual world that God has forbidden and clearly renounce them, if necessary with the help of someone experienced in this domain.

E. Questions of conscience and of Christian liberty...

14. Did Peter return to Jerusalem (after his experience with Cornelius) with the purpose of founding an anti-Jewish, anti-circumcision, anti-law church now?

15. Why not?

16. Did the Jewish Christians continue their religious practices as before?

17. What can you conclude for your situation?

18. F. Homework for next week

- Memorize the key verse.
- Complete the list of things that the candidate feels they need to renounce. Pray for the Lord to reveal these things, because it is not always evident.

Fourth Lesson: Baptism unites us with Christ in His death.
Or: How a person benefits from the death and resurrection of Christ.

A. Introduction

Perhaps you have been asking how to know if or when one is truly ready for baptism.

1. Do you need to wait for a certain moment or experience to be baptized?

2. Do you need to pass a certain test of knowledge of the Bible or attain a certain reputation among Christians?

3. Did the apostles give rules?

4. Does the Bible show us how to do it?

B. The story of the Ethiopian eunuch Acts 8:26-40

Observations:

1. What details do we learn about this man?

Read Acts 8:32-33 and Isaiah 53:7-12 together.

2. In your own words, who is the prophet talking about?

3. What do these verses tell us about Him? See especially the last half of verse 11.

In this Old Testament passage we see a clear explanation of one of the key meanings of baptism: cleansing from sin. Earlier in this same passage in Isa 52:15 we read *“So shall He sprinkle many nations.”* Sprinkling was used in the Old Testament Law to ceremonially cleanse from sin or impurity (Numbers 8:7, Ezekiel 6:25). The Apostle Peter would later write describing baptism as cleansing: *“not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God” (1 Peter 3:21).*

4. What do you suppose Philip would have explained about Jesus and how to benefit from his sacrifice? (What would *you* say to explain to someone reading this passage seeking to understand and to be right with God like this eunuch?)

5. Why do you think Philip took the decision to baptize this man?

6. Does the text indicate how one can recognize a person's readiness for baptism?

Key Verse: Rom. 6:3-4

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

1) According to this verse, is it possible to have been baptized without having fully realized our identification with Christ in His death?

2) If this is the case, should we be baptized again?

C. Conclusion

It is right and necessary to present baptism as our union with Christ in His death. It is also necessary to await the reaction of faith in another and to verify that their life gives evidence of that faith. But there are no rules, no exam, nor any trial period prescribed in the Bible. The baptismal candidate will be baptized according to his/her confession of faith.

Personal Follow-up for the Fourth Lesson

A. Review the homework and experiences of last week

1. Do you have the impression of living under the Old Covenant or the New Covenant? Why?
2. Do you remember the key verse?

B. Understand our own shortcomings to be able to benefit from the death of Jesus

3. Does the Ethiopian give you the impression of being a good man or a sinful man?
4. Are people with good moral conduct like him able to be saved without the Gospel? Verify your response with Eph 2:8-9
5. According to Col 2:11 and Rom 6:6, why do we need Jesus, is it only to take away our evil deeds, or is it more than that on the cross?
6. Is there anything in our old nature worth keeping and improving? Must we deliver *everything* to death or not?
7. Do you want Jesus to take only your sin to the cross or all of your old nature?

You benefit from His death to the measure that you allow your old nature to be put to death.

C. How to benefit concretely from the resurrection of Christ

Baptism identifies us with Christ, and all that He did for us. We now belong to Him by rights. We benefit from this reality to the extent we take hold of all this for our particular situation by faith.

8. Do I still experience attitudes and practices that belonged to the old nature?
9. Is this a sign that Jesus has not taken my old life on the cross?

10. How must I react to benefit from my new life in Christ?

D. The responsibility of the baptismal candidate

11. Is the decision to be baptized a matter for the church or the candidate?

12. In Acts 8: 35-38, is Philip or the Ethiopian the one responsible?

13. Why does Philip ask the Ethiopian for a confession of faith?

14. On what confession of faith was the Ethiopian baptized?

15. The Ethiopian recognized that Jesus was the one who the Old Testament had predicted, and he recognized the power of being united with Christ. Why is this confession essential?

16. What does this new confession add to the Old Covenant?

17. The Ethiopian appears to have a great desire to be united with Christ in his death and resurrection through baptism. Does union with Jesus appear to be just as desirable to you, or not? ...And why?

D. Homework for next time

- Memorize the key verse / review the other verses.
- Make a mental list of what characterized your old life in the flesh.
- Make a mental list of what characterizes my new life in Christ.
- Thank Jesus for having exchanged your old life for His life.

Key Verse

Matt. 28:18-20

*“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;
and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

1 Cor. 12:13

*Indeed, we all were baptized in a single Spirit to form only one body, in which we are Jewish or Greek, slaves or free men.
It is of this same Spirit we have all received to drink.*

Col. 2:10-12

*And in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;
and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the putting
the flesh to death by the circumcision of Christ;
having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through
faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

Rom. 6:3-4

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized
into His death?
Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was
raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

Fifth Lesson

Baptism: the sign of our new common identity

Or: How Jesus makes us enter into the Universal and Local Church

A. Introduction

Christ is the only one who can cause a person to be born anew by His Holy Spirit and make them in this way part of the universal family of God. One day, we will see in heaven who really entered His family. But in the meantime, Jesus wants His disciples to visibly bring believers into the visible family of God around the world. These are the local churches (Matt 28:18-20). Today, we will see how God not only wants to give us a new, invisible, spiritual identity, but also a new, visible, common identity.

B. The Roman Jailer Acts 16:11-40.

Read Acts 16:11-31.

1. What did Paul and Silas say to him?

2. Why didn't Paul speak to him of repentance? Wasn't repentance necessary for him to be saved?

3. Compare this response to that of Peter in Acts 2:38. Why this difference?

According to these two texts, repentance and faith both have their place in the process of salvation. Baptism also symbolizes both.

- 4) How do we understand the expression: "you will be saved, you and your family"?

Read the end of the story in Acts 16:32-40.

Key verse

This verse gives us an example of how belonging to the church is expressed in practice.

Key Verse: Heb. 10:24-25.

Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

1) According to the verse, try to deduce what it means to belong to a local church:

“Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds”

“Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some”

“Let us encourage each other”

Acts 16:5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

2) Why does attending a local church make up an integral part of the life of a Christian?

D. Conclusion

Baptism implies not only the change of heart that identifies with Christ, but also the exterior change that identifies the Christian with the disciples of Christ.

In other words, identification with Christ not only unites us with the universal, invisible Church, but it also gets us to unite with the local, visible church of Christ. It matters little if this church is well or poorly formed, or very imperfect!

Christ’s local church expresses this union in a practical way, through our relationships with other Christians. The church becomes a new family.

Personal Follow-up of the Fifth Lesson

A. Review the homework and experiences of last week

1. Union with Christ includes union in His death. Is it really indispensable and why? Respond with the help of Rom 7:18.

2. Union with Christ includes His resurrected life. Do you have this life? If not, why not? What is hindering ?

3. Review the last key verse, Rom 6:3-4. Also review the other verses.

A2. Lessons from the first saints in the Philippian Church in Acts 16

- a. How did Paul know that the following people had become members of the universal, invisible Church of Christ?
 - i. Lydia

 - ii. the jailor

- b. This was not enough for Paul. How did he encourage them to become visible local Christian churches?

- c. What role did baptism play in all of this?

- d. Describe what it must have been like for Lydia and the jailer and their households to have a new identity as believers in Christ.

- e. Can you describe your new identity as you commit yourself to Christ? Who are you in His eyes?

B. How to become a member of the universal, invisible body of Christ

4. According to Rom 8:9, is Christian baptism what makes us become members of the universal Church?

5. According to Romans 8:16-17 and 29, what is my new identity and what results does it produce?

C. How to become a member of the local, visible body of Christ

6. In Acts 16:13-15, what does the attitude of Lydia teach us, in her commitment to the local church of Christ?

7. How do you intend to be part not only of the invisible but also the visible local church?

D. How to live our union in the body of Christ practically

8. Do you remember the three elements of the key verse?

9. How do you intend to put Hebrews 10:25a into practice?

Give some examples of your regularity at meetings.

Give some examples of your communication with brothers and sisters in Christ.

10. Is there already a group of believers in Jesus that recognizes you as someone who is committed to regularly meet and who communicates sufficiently for them to know you and to be known?

D. Homework for next time

- Memorize Heb. 10:24-25
- Make sure that a concrete connection with a local church is established, primarily for the candidate to commit to a group of believers, secondly for organizing the baptism ceremony.

Sixth Lesson

The Lord's Supper-second ordinance of the New Covenant.

Or how baptism and the Lord's Supper complement each other

A. Introduction

Baptism represents entry into the body of Christ through Spirit baptism by faith; it is only done once. The Lord's Supper bears witness to the communion of Christ and His Body (the Church); it is practiced regularly. In this way, many churches only offer the Lord's Supper to those who have had Christian baptism as adults or who have received it as children and have confirmed later that they now believe personally in its meaning.

B. Three meanings of the Lord's Supper

Read Luke 22:14-20.

The three evangelists, Mathew (26:26-29), Mark (14:22-25) and Luke (22:14-20), tell us how Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, the night before His death on the cross.

1. How was the last Passover accomplished?

Principle I - The Lord's Supper is first of all a commemoration of Christ's death for us.

Jesus, the Bread of Life, according to John 6:23-63.

Well before his death, Jesus had already spoken of the spiritual reality of the Lord's Supper.

Jesus told them: *"(v.26) you seek Me...because you ate of the loaves and were filled...(v27) Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you...(v.51) I am the living bread that came down out of heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.... (V.54) He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life....(v.56) He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. "*

2. What would you have thought, if you had been one of the Jews listening?

3. What do you think Jesus wanted to make understood by saying it would be necessary to eat His flesh and drink His blood?

Jesus told them: *"(v63) It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."*

Principle II - The Lord's Supper helps us understand our communion with Christ.**Read 1 Corinthians 10:16-17.**

"...we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

(11:28-29) But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

4. Why does Paul say we need to discern the body of Christ without mentioning the blood?

Dividing the bread of the Lord's Supper together symbolically demonstrates that we belong to one body, and we must do so in a worthy manner, respecting all our brothers and sisters.

Principle III - The Lord's Supper is a celebration of our participation in the Body of Christ, the Church.

He who does not discern the communal nature of the Lord's Supper is exposed to a judgment. It is important to help nonbelievers to discern that the Lord's Supper is for Christians (preferably baptized) and not for everyone.

5. According to 1 Cor 11:31, how can one judge oneself?

The Lord's Supper is offered to all those who have believed and repented, and it can be a powerful occasion for reconciliation between God and men.

Key Verse**Key Verse: John 6:56**

I Am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

C. Conclusion

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two sacraments given by Jesus to His Church. A sacrament is a sacred act, meant to help us claim spiritual realities by faith.

Jesus ordained baptism as a public witness to once and for all be our identification with Him in His death and resurrection. In addition, He gave us the Lord's Supper as a repetitive act so that we would constantly be reminded of His sacrifice for us. In remembrance of Christ, the Lord's Supper is the occasion to commemorate His death for us and declare our communion with Him, even as our belonging to His body which is the Church.

Personal Follow-up of the Sixth Lesson

A. Review the homework and experiences of last week

1. Are your relations with your brothers and sisters in Christ going in the right direction, according to Hebrews 10:24-25? Have you been able to establish a good contact with the group you have joined?
2. Do you remember the key verses?

B. Baptism, sign of the New Covenant

3. When Jesus had given the cup of wine to his disciples, He said it was the cup of the Covenant. According to Luke 22:20, was He speaking of the Old or New Covenant?
4. When God proposes a Covenant, are you making a covenant with God, or is He making an alliance with you? Is it like a contract or a negotiation of conditions?

C. The essence of the Lord's Supper

5. Give three meanings of the Lord's Supper.

D. How to eat and drink the flesh and blood of Jesus

6. Did Jesus speak of eating His flesh and drinking His blood only through the Lord's Supper?
7. According to John 6:63, did Jesus speak of His physical flesh and His blood, or did He speak of a spiritual reality?
8. Does the Lord's Supper have magic power that transmits this spiritual reality, or is it rather a symbol, our act of faith being what permits us to be nourished by His real presence?
9. Is this act of faith exclusively linked to the Lord's Supper?

E. How we must examine ourselves before the Lord's Supper.

10. According to 1 Cor 11:20-34, why did Paul reproach the Corinthians for taking the Lord's Supper unworthily?

11. If I realize that taking the Lord's Supper contradicts my behavior, what do I need to do?

12. What are the consequences if I don't take these instructions into account?

F. Conclusion

13. Are you ready to examine yourself as the Bible says?

14. Is there anything you need to rectify before being able to take the Lord's Supper?

15. If someone asks you how God has prepared you for the day of your baptism, what would you say?

G. Homework

- Memorize the key verse
- Examine whether you are ready for the Lord's Supper, and if there is still something to be put in order, do it right away.
- Make a brief summary of your testimony, oral or written, so that you will be able to give it to others who are present for the happy occasion of your baptism!
- Organize the baptism ceremony with your future church group.
- Answer the questionnaire that reviews the first six lessons.

**If you are ready for the Lord's Supper, you are ready for Baptism.
Rejoice!**

Seventh Lesson

How to prepare your testimony

Or the natural development of the Apostle Paul's testimony.

Read Acts 26:1-23.

1. The introduction of Paul, Acts 26:2-3.

Paul addresses his listeners. Who are they?
What is the context of his testimony?
How does he adapt it to such an audience?

My introduction

To whom will I give my testimony?
Prepare an appropriate introduction.

2. Paul's past, Acts 26: 4-11.

Paul spoke of his youth, of his family and religious environments. He mentioned his religion, his zeal, his wandering, his blindness, etc.

My past

Speak of your past in the same way. Mention your spiritual or religious state, your zeal or indifference, your hardening, or your search, wandering, blindness, thirst, etc.

3. Paul's encounter with Christ, Acts 26: 12-18.

Paul recounts the circumstances which brought him to his encounter with Christ: his state of spirit, how Christ grabbed his attention, how his spirit (heart) was illuminated, and his response.

My encounter with Christ

What are the circumstances that led you to your encounter with Christ?
Mention the state of your spirit, how Christ grabbed your attention, how He illuminated your heart, and what your response was.

What were the first contacts you had with the Gospel?
What role was played by the Bible, Christians, parents, prayer, etc.?
What person had the most influence on you to come to Christ?

4. Conclusion: Paul presents the Gospel, Acts 26:19-23

Paul summarized the Gospel for his audience so that they could also receive Christ as their Savior.

What elements of the Gospel message does he mention? (Check the appropriate responses below.)

- Jesus is the Christ (King-Messiah) promised in the Old Testament
- He died as the sacrifice for the sins of the world
- He rose from the dead on the third day, and He reigns as Lord.
- He appears to the disciples who are his witnesses.

All (Jews and non-Jews) must repent of their works and believe in Him to receive eternal salvation.

My presentation of the Gospel

Prepare to do it yourself.

Think about those who understand your message, about their particular needs for understanding the Gospel. Depending on the time that you have and the results you want to achieve, you can present the entire message or certain specific elements of the Gospel.

Back your message through your personal experience, but also citing the Bible. Maybe you can use the verse or biblical passage which you have spoken the most when you have placed your trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

Questionnaire to review this baptism course (To be done after the sixth lesson)

A. First Lesson: Why baptize

- 1) Why be baptized?
- 2) How did Jesus himself make the disciples understand the necessity of baptism?

Story:

Key Verse

Remarks, Questions, Doubts:

B. Second Lesson: The first Christian baptism in history

- 3) How did Jesus baptize his own the first time?
- 4) How were the disciples baptized the first time?
- 5) What did Peter ask as conditions for baptism?

Story:

Key Verse

Remarks, Questions, Doubts:

C. Third Lesson: Baptism symbolizes the New Covenant

How did God make the disciples understand that they were now in the New Covenant?

What does it mean for us under the New Covenant as opposed to the Old Covenant?

Story:

Key Verse

Remarks, Questions, Doubts:

D. Fourth Lesson Baptism: identification with Christ in His death

8) How to be united with Christ in His death and resurrection.

9) Who is responsible for baptism?

Story:

Key Verse

Remarks, Questions, Doubts:

E. Fifth Lesson: Baptism as the sign of our new common identity

10) How do we become members of the family of God, of the invisible universal Church?

11) How do we become members of the visible local church?

Story:

Key Verse

Remarks, Questions, Doubts: