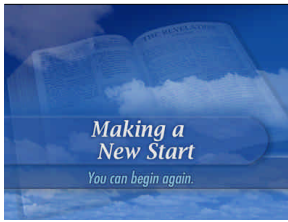


# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



1

**You Can Begin Again.**

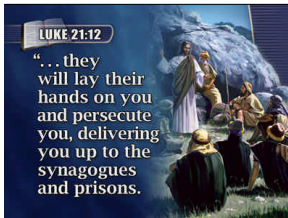


2

**When Christianity came into being in the first century, it was a great threat to the Jewish religion, so Saul, later called Paul, set out to destroy Christianity.**

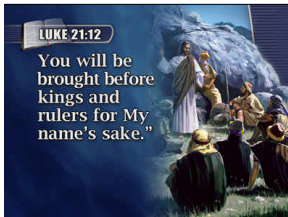
**Jesus had predicted that this would happen.**

**In Luke 21:12 we read:**



3

**(Text: Luke 21:12) "...They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons,**



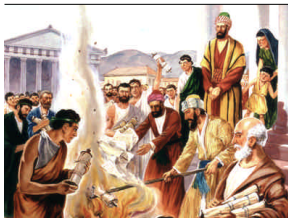
4

**and you will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake."**



5

**This prophecy was fulfilled almost at once as Christianity began growing rapidly.**



6

**One of the men who chose to stamp out Christianity was a man called Saul of Tarsus, a young man the Pharisees considered promising.**

**In fact, he was elevated to membership in the Sanhedrin, which placed him in a very high position of power.**



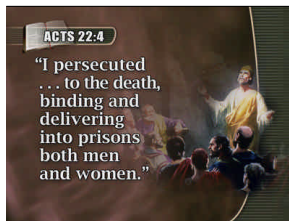
7

**Although Saul was a Roman citizen by birth, he was educated at the feet of the most eminent of the rabbis in Jerusalem-Gamaliel.**

**Saul was zealous for the Jewish faith, and the Jewish leaders recognized him as a staunch defender of their faith.**

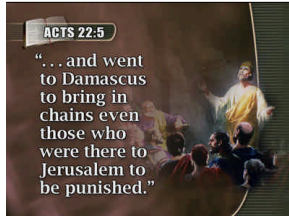
**Saul-whose name later was changed to Paul after his conversion-himself describes what he did to put an end to the Christians.**

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



8

(Text: Acts 22:4-5) "I persecuted to ... the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women...."



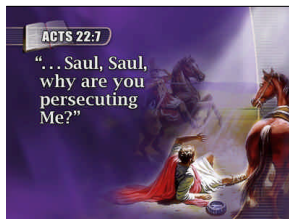
9

I went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished." Acts 22:4, 5.



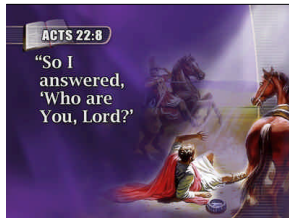
10

As he was on his way to Damascus, a bright light shone out of heaven and struck him to the ground.  
He heard a voice, saying,



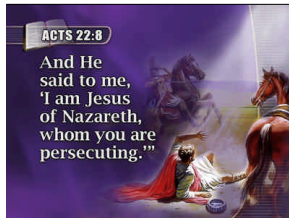
11

(Text: Acts 22:7-8) "...Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"



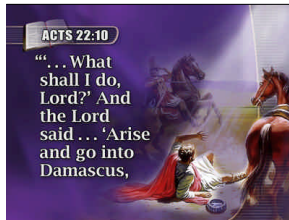
12

and he answered, "Who are you, Lord?"



13

And the voice answered, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting." Acts 22:7, 8.  
The proud Pharisee humbly asked the Lord,



14

(Text: Acts 22:10) "...What shall I do, Lord?" And the Lord said... "Arise and go into Damascus,



15

and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do." Acts 22:10.

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



16

**Saul was blinded by the bright light and had to be led to a room in Damascus.**



17

**For three days Saul had time to think of the suffering and pain he had caused the people of God, and of the times he had avowed that Jesus was not the Messiah and that His followers were deluded fanatics.**

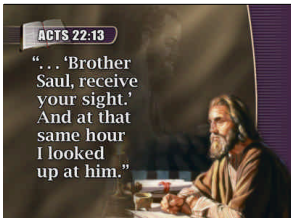
**In testifying against God's people and falsely accusing them, he had accused and testified against the Saviour of the world! What anguish of heart that realization must have brought to Saul.**

**Saul had time to make things right with his Lord.**



18

**He sat in total darkness for three days, and then God sent a prophet to him by the name of Ananias. Then Ananias said to Saul,**

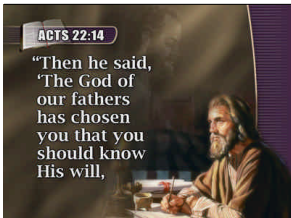


19

ACTS 22:13

"... 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that same hour I looked up at him."

**(Text: Acts 22:13-15) "...Brother Saul, receive your sight. And at that same hour I looked up at him.**

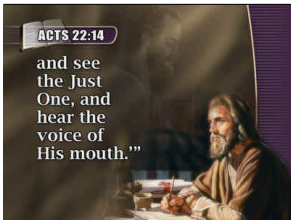


20

ACTS 22:14

"Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will,

**Then he said, The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will,**

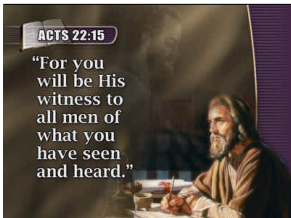


21

ACTS 22:14

and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.'"

**and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.**



22

ACTS 22:15

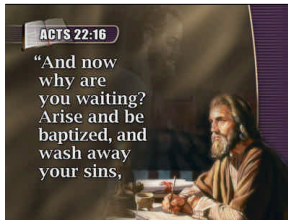
"For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard."

**For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard." Acts 22:13-15.**

**Then, in order for Saul to go forward in his life and shut the door on his past, Ananias said to Saul,**

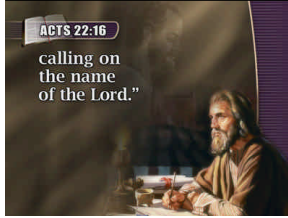


# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



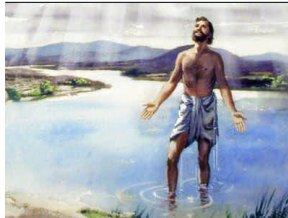
23

**(Text: Acts 22:16) “And now, why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins,**



24

**calling on the name of the Lord.” Acts: 22:16.**



25

**This is the way Saul was to be joined to His Lord forever. Baptism was the doorway to a new life for Saul. Saul needed to be washed clean from the terrible things he had done in the name of his religion.**



26

**His conscience needed to be cleansed. He knew he needed God’s amazing grace and forgiveness. When he was baptized he knew that God had forgiven him. And Saul the persecutor would become Paul, a zealot for Jesus all his life!**



27

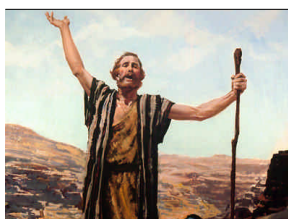
**Have you ever wished you could start all over again and that all of the mistakes you had made in the past could be washed away? God knew that we needed just such an experience,**



28

**(Video: 10 sec) so He instituted baptism as a sign that we would be joined to Him from that time on: a new start-a new life in Jesus.**

**What could more beautifully symbolize death to sin and the beginning of a new life than baptism by immersion-by being lowered beneath the water?**

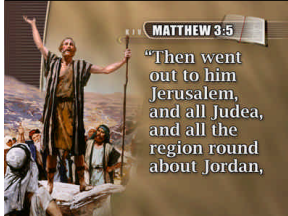


29

**Christian baptism had its origin with John the Baptist, a rugged prophet who appeared in the wilderness of Judea boldly preaching repentance.**

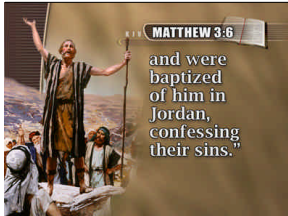
# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.

All roads leading to the Jordan River were crowded with people going to listen to him.  
The Bible says,



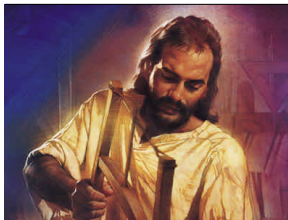
30

(Text: Matthew 3:5-6) "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,



31

and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Matthew 3:5, 6.



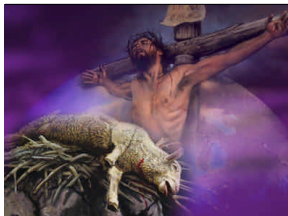
32

Closing the door to this carpenter shop and bidding His mother farewell, Jesus also made His way to the Jordan. When John caught sight of Jesus, he recognized Him and stopped preaching, and pointing to Jesus, John said,



33

(Text: John 1:29) "...Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29.



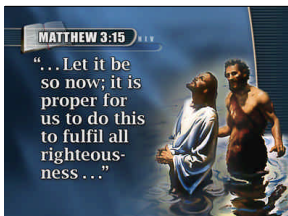
34

John recognized the true sacrificial Lamb who was to die for the sins of all who would accept His sacrifice. When Jesus asked to be baptized, John hesitated. He said,



35

(Text: Matthew 3:14-15) "...I need to be baptized by you..." Matthew 3:14. But Jesus insisted,



36

"...Let it be so now, it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness..." Verse 15.

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.

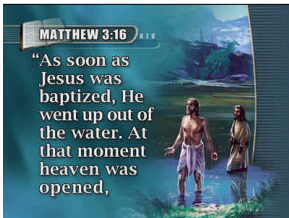


37

John recognized that Jesus had no sinful past to confess. And Jesus certainly did not need to demonstrate His belief in His own resurrection! Jesus asked to be baptized because He wanted to identify with man.

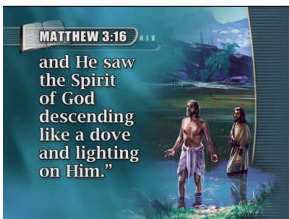
He wanted to leave a perfect example for us to follow. So John immersed Jesus in the Jordan River, for that is what the word baptism means.

The Bible says that as soon as Jesus was baptized,



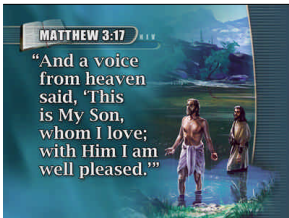
38

(Text: Matthew 3:16-17) "He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened,



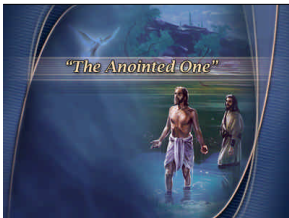
39

and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.



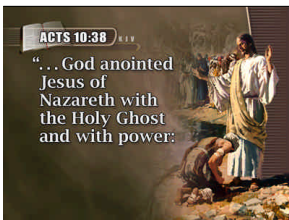
40

And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'. Matthew 3:16, 17 On the wings of a dove, God sent His love and words of encouragement to Jesus, but He did something else.



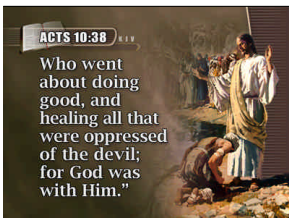
41

As Jesus walked up out of the water and stood with dripping clothes on the muddy banks of Jordan, God publicly introduced Him as His Son-the Anointed One. Christ's baptism marked the beginning of His public ministry, for Peter told Cornelius,



42

(Text: Acts 10:38) "...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power:

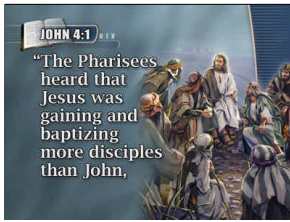


43

Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38. Jesus Himself did not baptize, but the Bible records that His disciples did:

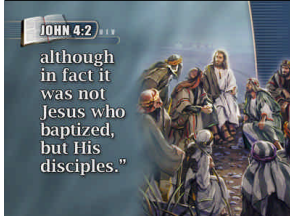


# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



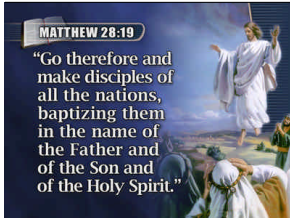
44

(Text: John 4:1-2) "The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John,



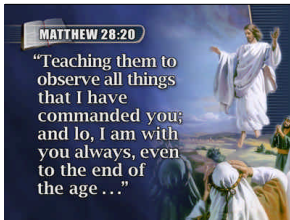
45

although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but His disciples." John 4:1, 2.  
And notice Christ's last recorded command just before His ascension:



46

(Text: Matthew 28:19-20) "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:



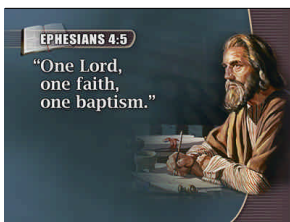
47

teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age..." Matthew 28:19, 20.



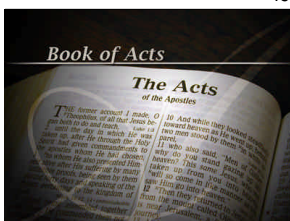
Perhaps you are wondering what mode of baptism Jesus' followers practiced after He returned to heaven.  
No doubt they followed Jesus' example, since they were His disciples.

Paul, one of Jesus' most ardent followers, says that there is only



49

(Text: Ephesians 4:5) "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephesians 4:5.



50

The only detailed account of baptism after the cross is recorded in the Book of Acts-a baptism conducted by Philip, the evangelist.

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



51

As Philip was walking along the dusty road to Gaza,



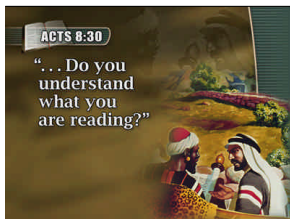
52

he saw the Ethiopian treasurer of Queen Candace, who had charge of all her treasury.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship.

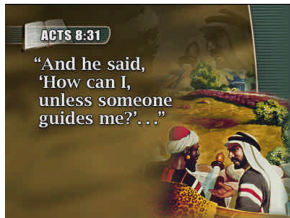
Now he was on his way home, riding in a chariot and reading from a scroll.

Philip ran and over to the man and asked him



53

(Text: Acts 8:30-31) if he understood what he was reading. The treasurer quickly replied,



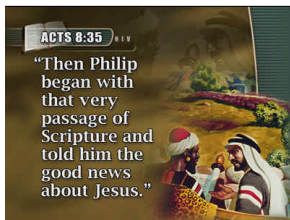
54

“How can I, unless someone guides me?...” He also invited Philip to join him in his chariot.



55

Philip could immediately tell where the text was that the man was reading: Isaiah, chapter 53. The Ethiopian invited Philip to explain it to him. The chapter told of Jesus’ life and the details of the crucifixion of the Messiah.



56

(Text: Acts 8:35) The Bible says, “Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.” Acts 8:35.



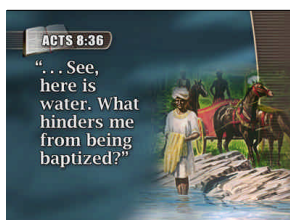
57

What a Bible study that must have been, bouncing along in that chariot! Not only did Philip tell about Jesus, but he evidently explained the significance of baptism, for the Bible says that when they came to a pool of water, the Ethiopian said,



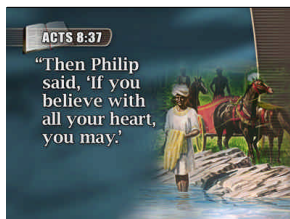
# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.

## 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



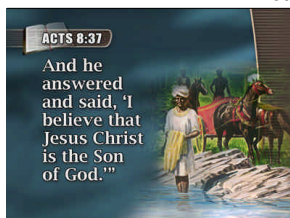
58

(Text: Acts 8:36) "...See, here is water; what hinders me from being baptized?" Acts 8:36.  
Philip replied,



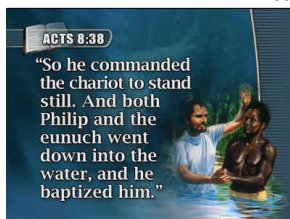
59

(Text: Acts 8:37) "If you believe with all your heart, you may."



60

The Ethiopian said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Verse 37.



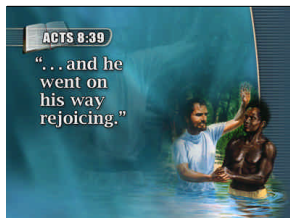
61

(Text: Acts 8:38) The Ethiopian ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water and Philip baptized him." Acts 8:38.



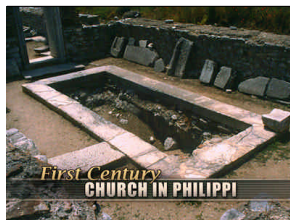
62

Philip immersed the Ethiopian treasurer in the water, just as John immersed Christ when He was baptized.  
And the Bible says that the Ethiopian



63

(Text: Acts 8:39) "...went on his way rejoicing!" That is what happens when we bury the old life of sin and start a new life in Christ.



64

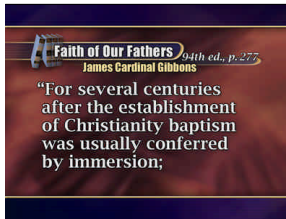
Clearly, immersion was the mode of baptism practiced by the early Christian church.  
In fact, there is no evidence in the New Testament for any other method of baptism.



65

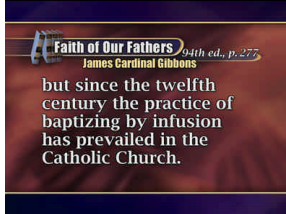
Early church historians and findings by archaeologists both show that immersion was the mode of baptism until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.  
James Cardinal Gibbons wrote:

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



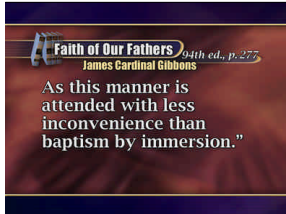
66

**“For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity baptism was usually conferred by immersion;**



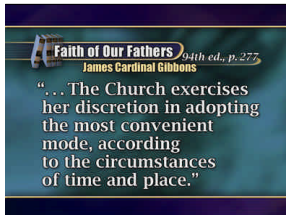
67

**but since the twelfth century the practice of baptizing by infusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church,**



68

**as this manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion....**



69

**The Church exercises her discretion in adopting the most convenient mode, according to the circumstances of time and place.”**

**-The Faith of Our Fathers, 94th edition, p. 277.**



70

**Many tourists today visit St.**

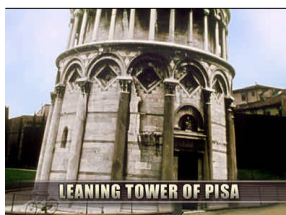
**John’s Church, located in the ruins of the biblical city of Ephesus in Turkey.**

**This church was built as a memorial to the disciple John.**

**The third general council of the church took place in this**

**building in A.D. 431.**

**Of special interest is the baptistery, circular in shape, about twelve feet in diameter and four feet deep, with stairs leading down into the font on two sides.**



71

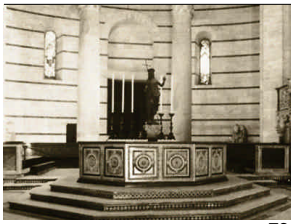
**Most people have heard of the old bell tower in front of the Cathedral of Pisa, in Italy, more commonly known as the Leaning Tower of Pisa.**



72

**Along with the cathedral and the leaning tower is a baptistery, a round building that**

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



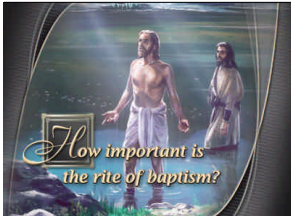
73

encloses a pool about twenty feet across and four feet deep that was constructed in the fourteenth century. Thirteen hundred years after Christ's ascension, the mode of baptism was still by immersion!



74

There are dozens of such cathedrals with large baptismal fonts in Europe. Sixty-six are found in Italy alone, whose construction dates between the fourth and fourteenth centuries.



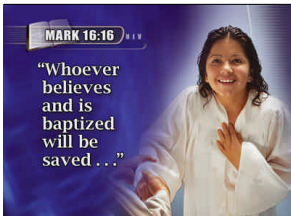
75

But how important is the rite of baptism?



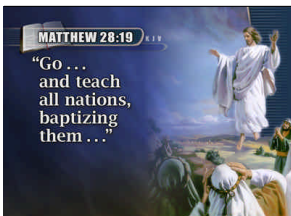
76

Is it really necessary to be baptized?  
The Bible says,



77

(Text: Mark 16:16) "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved..." Mark 16:16.  
How can a Christian prepare for baptism?  
Jesus told His disciples,



78

(Text: Matthew 28:19) "Go...and teach all nations, baptizing them..." Matthew 28:19.  
Teaching precedes baptism.  
Jesus said the baptismal candidate is to be taught



79

(Text: Matthew 28:20) "...to obey everything I have commanded you..." Matthew 28:20.



80

In other words, an individual preparing for the sacred rite of baptism needs to understand Jesus' teachings and be willing to obey them.  
But, more than a mere knowledge of doctrines is needed.  
There must be a commitment of one's life to Christ.



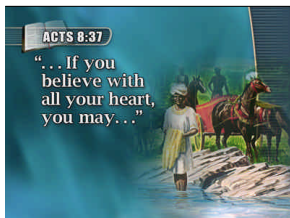
# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.

**When a person unites with Jesus, he naturally begins to live Christ's way.  
He does not want to do anything Jesus would not agree to!**



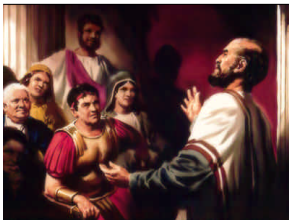
81

**The second step in preparing for baptism is total belief in Christ.  
When the Ethiopian asked Philip if he could be baptized, Philip said,**



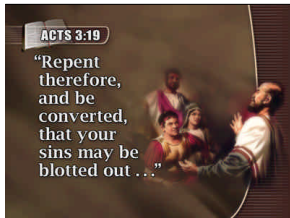
82

**(Text: Acts 8:38) "...If you believe with all your heart, you may..." Acts 8:38.**



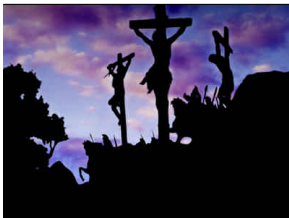
83

**The third step is repentance.  
Peter said,**



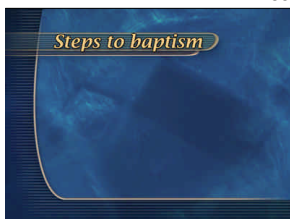
84

**(Text: Acts 3:19) "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." Acts 3:19.  
Repentance means to be deeply sorry for one's sins and to turn from them.**



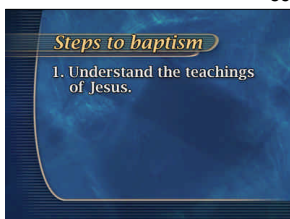
85

**This can only come from a heart that has been to Calvary-a heart touched and softened by the sacrifice made on the cross to save us from our sins.**



86

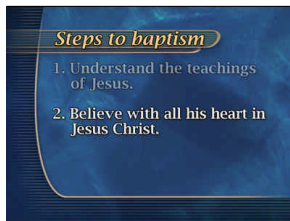
**Let's just summarize these steps in preparing for baptism;**



87

**1. Before baptism the person should understand the teachings of Jesus and be willing to obey them.**

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



88

**2. The person should believe with all his heart in Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord.**



89

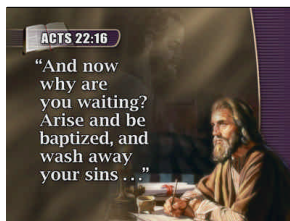
**3. He should confess all sins and repent.**



**Perhaps you have wished at times that you could change your life for the better-but you haven't known just how. By following these three steps in preparation for baptism, you may truly become a new person-from the inside out.**

**Through God's power, you can be changed, reborn, and converted.**

**Then the invitation will be given to you that was given to the apostle Paul:**



91

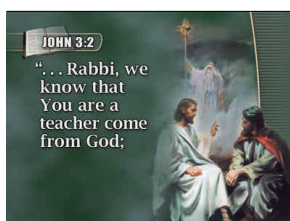
**(Text: Acts 22:16) "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins..." Acts 22:16.**



**One night as Jesus became separated from the crowd, one of the Jewish leaders by the name of Nicodemus came to him under the cover of darkness.**

**He didn't want his peers to know that he was interested in this itinerant teacher.**

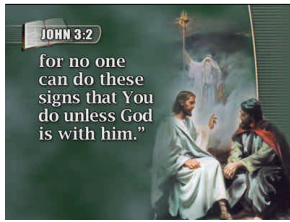
**He flattered Jesus by telling Him,**



93

**(Text: John 3:2) "...Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God,**

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.

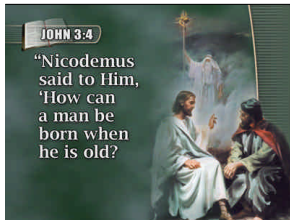


for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with Him." John 3:2.

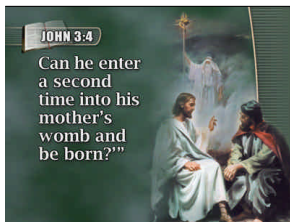
Jesus could read this man's heart, so He cut right to the point and showed Nicodemus what he needed.



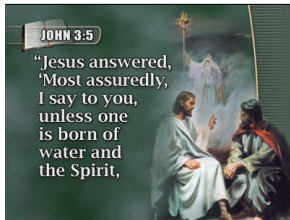
(Text: John 3:3) Jesus said, "...I say unto you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. Nicodemus was puzzled, and he asked Jesus,



(Text: John 3:4) "How can a man be born again when he is old?"



How could he enter into his mother's womb and be born again?  
Then Jesus pointed out that He was talking about a spiritual rebirth, when He said,



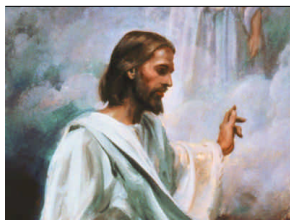
(Text: John 3:5) "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit,



he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5. Here Jesus is talking about a spiritual rebirth that is witnessed to by the water baptism. The reference here is to the fact that the person will be washed in the water of baptism.



No doubt Nicodemus, the proud Pharisee, anticipated entrance into God's kingdom by virtue of his being a natural-born, devout Jew.



However, Jesus made it clear that anything less than a complete transformation of life by the power of the Holy Spirit-as signified by water baptism-was inadequate.



# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



102

**This is the way a person seals his acceptance of the sacrifice given by the Father and made by the Son.**

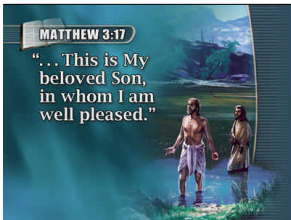


103

**In some ways, this ceremony of baptism takes the place of circumcision to the Jewish people as a sign of their being sealed to God through this ceremony.**

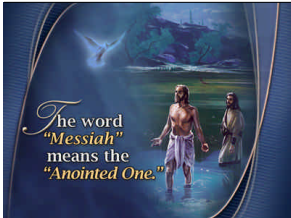
**This is the beginning of the new life in Christ.**

**At Christ's baptism, the voice of God was heard, saying,**



104

**(Text: Matthew 3:17) "...This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17.**



105

**It was at this time, as the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove anointed Jesus, that He became the Anointed One or the Messiah or the Christ.  
That is what the word anointed means in Hebrew and Greek.**



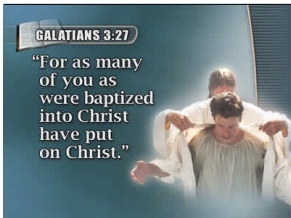
106

**This event marked the beginning of Jesus Christ's public ministry.**



107

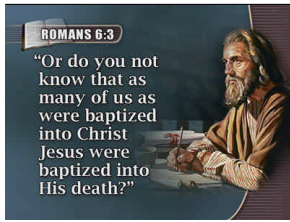
**(Video: 8 sec) Just so, the baptism of the believer marks the beginning of his new life with Christ as his Saviour.  
This event also marks the public testimony of the believer by his baptism that he is joined to Christ, that he has put on Christ.**



108

**(Text: Galatians 3:27) Galatians 3:27 says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."  
Baptism, to the one who has accepted Christ as his sacrifice, shows his faith in the three great facts of Christ's sacrifice.  
Paul said,**

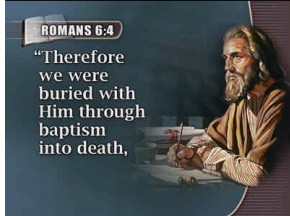
# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



109

(Text: Romans 6:3) "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" Romans 6:3.

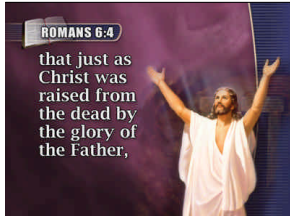
Then he proceeds to point out the next step that the Christian takes in this rite:



110

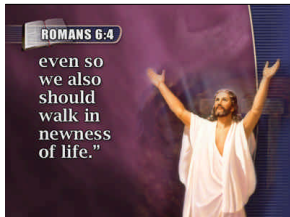
(Text: Romans 6:4) "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death." Verse 4.

But there is a third part to this act of faith.



111

"That just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,



112

even so we also should walk in newness of life." Verse 4.

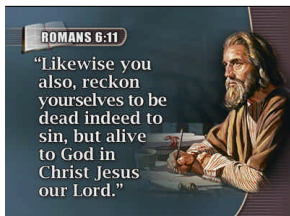


113

There you have it.

The person being baptized has been born of the Spirit and the water!

We publicly demonstrate our faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



114

(Text: Romans 6:11) Paul then tells us, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

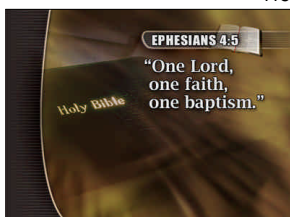
Now can you see why this is such a beautiful part of the Christian's life?



115

It is like the wedding ceremony for the engaged couple. This is their opportunity to publicly witness that they are joined together as long as life lasts.

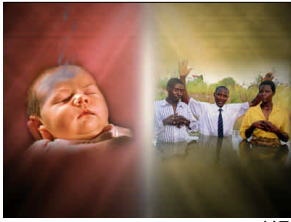
The Bible tells us that there is,



116

(Text: Ephesians 4:5) "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephesians 4:5.

# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.

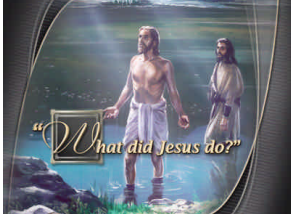


117

Yet in the church, there seem to be so many ways that baptism is practiced.

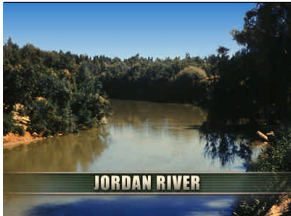
Some sprinkle, some pour, and some immerse.

How can there be one baptism, when there is so much confusion over which method is correct?



118

We only have to ask, "What did Jesus do?"



119

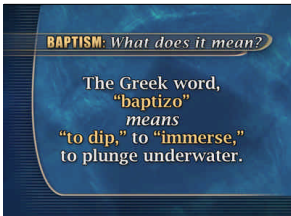
We find that the Bible says that John was baptizing in the Jordan River.

When Jesus was baptized, He "went up out of the water." He was baptized by immersion.



120

In fact, that is what the Greek word



121

baptizo means.

It means to dip under the water or cover over with water.

This is the only method of baptism that represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.



122

One time Paul and his coworker Silas went to the city of Philippi on the invitation of a Macedonian man Paul had seen in a dream.



123

By their preaching, Paul and Silas really stirred up the people of Philippi.



124

So much so that a mob attacked them, and their lives were in danger.

The mob tore off the two men's clothing, and the authorities had them beaten.



## 17 - MAKING A NEW START.

They were taken to prison, where the jailer was told to put them in heavy confinement and to make sure they did not escape.



125

So the jailer put their feet in stocks so tightly that the men suffered greatly because of the painful position they were in. But they did not murmur.



126

Instead, in the utter desolation and darkness of the dungeon, they encouraged each other with prayer and sang praises to God, because they had been found worthy to suffer shame for Jesus' sake.



127

The other prisoners were astonished. Usually, they heard moaning and groaning and cursing. Never before had they heard words of praise and prayer coming from that gloomy cell.

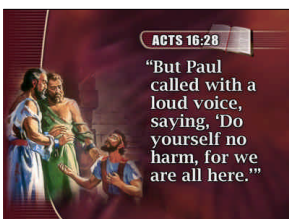
The guards and prisoners wondered who these men were who could be cold, hungry, and tortured-yet still rejoice.



128

At midnight, Paul and Silas were still praying and singing, when suddenly an earthquake shook the prison walls-and immediately, the doors of the prison were opened and everyone's chains fell off.

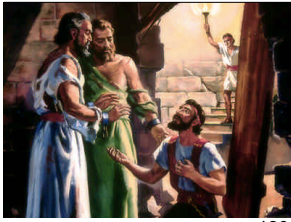
The keeper of the prison came running, and, seeing the doors opened, assumed that all the prisoners had fled. He was in the process of taking out his sword to commit suicide-certain that he would be put to death for letting the prisoners escape.



129

(Text: Acts 16:28) "But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, 'Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.'"

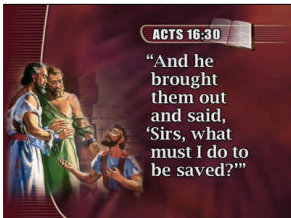
# 17 - MAKING A NEW START.



130

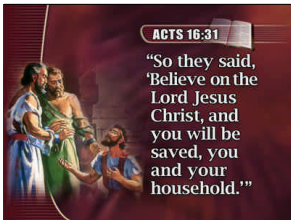
**The poor jailer was awed!  
These men-Paul and Silas-had suffered agony at the hands of  
the jailer, yet they held no resentment and wanted no revenge.  
The jailer knew they were innocent men.**

**He ran and got a light, then went to their cell.**



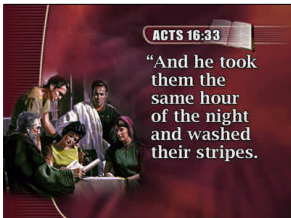
131

**(Text: Acts 16:30-31) “And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’”**



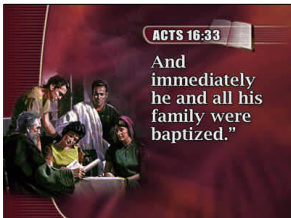
132

**“So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’”**



133

**(Text: Acts 16:33) “And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes.**



134

**And immediately he and all his family were baptized.” Acts 16:33**



135

**(Video: 12 sec) Friends, if you have not understood the meaning and importance of baptism before, or if you have not had the privilege of following Jesus in this sacred ceremony of baptism by immersion, the same question and invitation comes to you that Paul presented to the jailer:**



136

**(Video: 5 sec) “...Why are you waiting?  
Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins...” Acts 22:16.  
Will you say “yes” to Jesus right now?  
If you would like to follow Jesus all the way in Bible baptism,**

# **17 - MAKING A NEW START.**

**I want you to walk to the front of the auditorium so I can especially pray for you.**

**If you want to be baptized, walk down the aisle right now and stand at this altar with your head bowed, so I can pray for you. Don't hesitate. Come...come right now, and I'll pray.**