

FOLLOWING JESUS

If any man serve me, let him follow me... (Jn 12:26)

Lesson 6 Baptism

Outline

Introduction

I. What is baptism?

- A. Definition from the language
- B. Definition and purpose from Scripture examples
 1. Scriptural baptism must use the proper mode: complete immersion
 2. Scriptural (God-recognized) baptism must involve a proper candidate
 3. Scriptural (God-recognized) baptism must be performed by a proper authority.
- C. The symbolism or picture of baptism
- D. There is only one Heaven-recognized baptism
- E. Summary

II. Why is baptism important?

- A. Baptism is an open identification with Christ and His work on Earth
 1. Scriptural baptism identifies us with Jesus Christ
 - a. Baptism makes us a PUBLIC disciple of Jesus Christ
 - b. In baptism we emulate our Example Jesus Christ
 - c. Baptism is a submission to Jesus Christ's Divine authority
 2. Scriptural baptism provides proper identification with Christ's TWO authorities on Earth: The Local New Testament Church and its Pastor
 - a. Scriptural baptism identifies us temporally and physically (in time and space) with a specific local body (called-out assembly or church)
 - b. Scriptural baptism pictures our agreement to submit to that local body's authority over us!
 3. Scriptural baptism identifies each local church as a unique, separated, local, independent body
 - a. How does baptism picture the local, visible assembly?
 - b. Peter's converts were *added* to something!
- B. Baptism pictures essential Christian truth
- C. Baptism is the most basic step of obedience to God
 1. Why was Jesus baptized?
 2. Submitting to baptism is obedience to an Apostolic command
 3. Practicing baptism is obedience to the Great Commission

III. Who can be baptized?

- A. Anyone who is already saved
- B. Examples

IV. There are essentially two heresies involving baptism

- A. Heresy 1 — Baptism is the door of salvation or at least has salvific effects
- B. Heresy 2 — Any mode will do

PART 1

Introduction

Baptists literally get their name from the ordinance of baptism. But of course, baptism is not just a Baptist doctrine; it is a **fundamental** Bible doctrine. And because it is first a BIBLE DOCTRINE, it is therefore also a Baptist doctrine. True Baptists are Biblicists!

Baptism is also a divisive doctrine and has historically been such. This is because Truth is always divisive. Truth, by definition, divides and separates! And so, the proper practice of baptism goes a long way in **separating** scriptural Holy Spirit-led and empowered New Testament churches (called-out assemblies) from mere "religious organizations".

- I use the term "religious organizations" to mean those groups that might call themselves a "church" but Christ does not recognize them as one of His local churches because they do not teach the Truth. These organizations have no Holy Spirit empowerment or leadership. We are called to be separate from such groups!

And the doctrine of Separation is another truth that our ecumenical World hates. It too is divisive! Our “religious world” is dominated by tolerance-worshipping, ecumenists who insist that not only tolerate other beliefs (which we will do), but now that we must also celebrate other beliefs (which we will not do)! And, yes, while we are to love people, God does call us to be people separated from the sin and heresy that many religious groups practice and promote. Paul wrote in II Cor 6:17, *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.* The *unclean thing* in this context was idolatry. As genuine Christians we must be separated not only from sensuous, carnal, and materialistic living but ALSO from heretical doctrine and idolatrous false religions.

- The bottom line is that **we must realize that every group that calls itself a church is not!** Again, the World judges this belief to be narrow, judgmental and arrogant. But it is God Who makes the distinction. Jesus in the Revelation (v 2:1-7) warned the church at Ephesus that if they did not correct a grave heart issue, He would remove the leadership and the authority of the Holy Spirit, identified in this scripture as the *candlestick* (v 6). Yes, God can and does “decommission” His own local bodies, and at that time they cease to be a true New Testament church. An assembly of people is made a New Testament church NOT BY A SIGN above the door or an INCORPORATION document, but by the administrative leadership and empowerment of the Holy Spirit! And so, if The Holy Spirit is removed, that body ceases to be one of the Lord’s local bodies. It becomes just a human religious organization.

And two good litmus tests for identifying one of the Lord’s churches are the practice of the two ordinances commanded by Christ: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. In fact, the more I study these two ordinances (which, by the way, are the ONLY ordinances), the more convinced I become that one of the major reasons that God instituted them was 1) to serve as a standard of **identification** and 2) **distinction** (separation).

The definition of and the scriptural observance of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper by themselves will just about separate true, local, Holy Spirit-empowered and led New Testament churches from pseudo-churches (religious organizations).

And so, because Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are critical defining-and-separating ordinances, and since these are the only ordinances that Jesus left for His local bodies to regularly observe, it should not be a surprise to learn that both became focal points for Satan’s attack upon God’s Truth and His local churches. **Baptism and the Lord’s Supper were THE lighting rods that drew the brunt of the attack by the enemies of truth in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. The Catholic church’s attack upon these two ordinances brought centuries of persecution upon Christ’s local scriptural bodies.** Literally millions of God’s born again saints in local New Testament churches died torture-filled deaths at the hands of autocratic church-states (Catholic Church-states), primarily because they would not compromise the doctrines of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as they are taught by Christ and His Apostles in the Holy Scriptures!

Consequently, since Satan focused his attacks using these two ordinances we might rightly conclude...

- 1) that they are **significant** New Testament doctrines, i.e., they are to be understood, taught, protected through proper observance and uncompromisingly defended, and
- 2) that they are critical in helping to identify a genuine (God-recognized), local, Holy Spirit-led church and finally, and
- 3) that their pictures depict critical doctrines (and this, by the way, are why they are called pictorial ordinances).

And those conclusions would be correct!

And so, with baptism ensconced as a separating doctrine (i.e., a strong identifier of scriptural New Testament churches) and a doctrine that has caused more shedding of martyr’s blood than perhaps any other doctrine, then some might assume or even believe that baptism must in some way be essential to salvation itself. But it is not! Neither baptism or the Lord’s Supper have salvific effects, i.e, neither have anything to do with getting us born-again or keeping us born-again!

But, ironically it was the heresy of baptismal regeneration that became the focus of the conflict between the...

1) heretics of the **apostate universal church, i.e., the Catholic church** (one of the latest components of the Great Whore pictured Rev 17:1-5, 18) and

2) born-again believers in **Holy Spirit-led, local, independent churches of Jesus Christ.**

Starting as far back as about mid-3rd century A.D. (250 A.D. according to J. M. Carroll¹), in that Satan-inspired, corrupted hierarchy that eventually became known as the Universal or Catholic Church, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper (called by them the Holy Eucharist) heretically evolved into sacraments. **Sacraments** are 1) religious laws and 2) ritual religious observances that false churches teach men to perform in order to procure and then maintain their salvation, i.e., sacraments are the foundation for a works-based salvation. Salvation-by-works (and sacraments are a type of works) is taught by...

- 1) the Catholic or Universal church, which is headquartered in Rome (Rev 17:18),
- 2) many (if not most) of Catholicism's Protestant offspring (Lutheran, Episcopal, and etc.) (and by the way, TRUE BAPTISTS ARE NOT PROTESTANT!),
- 3) other denominations such as Nazarenes and Churches of Christ (these also teach that baptism is necessary for salvation, which reduces salvation to a works-based obedience).
- 4) most non-Christian cults such as Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists and
- 5) most other world religions (e.g., Hinduism, Islam, Orthodox Judaism) [NOTE: Buddhism is atheistic and teaches that there is no Supreme Being, Heaven or Hell.]

Therefore... since baptism has no salvific effects, then logically we should ask questions like these...

- What then IS baptism's significance; what makes baptism so critically important?
- Why do genuine Baptists make such a big deal over baptism, e.g., insisting upon the correct candidate, the correct mode, and the proper authority) if baptism has nothing to do with salvation or the preservation of salvation?
- Why were millions and millions of our forefathers in the faith not only willing to die, but DID die at the hands of vicious, Satan-inspired, heretical and debauched state churches... all for the sanctity of this doctrine?

Friends, does it really make any difference what I believe about baptism? Millions of martyrs have believed so!

These are some of the questions we will address and answer in this lesson.

* * *

I. What is baptism?

A. Definition from the language

- The words *baptism*, *baptize*, the proper noun *Baptist* (and its other forms) occur about 115 times in 11 New Testament books. So even from the preponderance of appearances one would conclude that baptism is a significant doctrine.

All of these 115 occurrences are near-transliterations of four Greek words. "Transliteration" means

¹ Carroll, J. M. 1931. The Trail of Blood... Following the Christians Down Through the Centuries or The History of Baptist Churches From the Time of Christ, Their Founder, to the Present Day. Initially copyrighted by the Ashland Ave. Baptist Church, Lexington, KY. Booklets now reprinted by Challenge Press, Emmaus, PA, sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, <http://www.lvbaptist.org>

that instead of translating the foreign word into an English **meaning** (e.g., translators could have translated the Greek word *bap-tid'-zo* into whelm, dip, plunge, submerge or immerse), the **sound** of the Greek pronunciation was spelled out in the English alphabet, creating a new word in our language.

- The Greek noun is *bap'-tis-mah* (equivalent to our word “baptism”). The literal meaning of this Greek noun is the act of immersing, submerging, and then emerging.

The infinitive (un-conjugated verb) form, *bap-tid'-zo*, is equivalent to our phrase “to baptize”. It connotes “to make fully whelmed or wet”, hence to submerge, plunge, or immerse.

In secular culture this Greek verb was commonly used to describe the dying of a garment. So when you dye a garment, do you just sprinkle the cloth with the dye? No, of course not! You plunge the textile completely under the liquid dye (and you leave it immersed, often for hours, and sometimes days, to make sure every fiber of the textile soaks up that dye.

- Now, as you would expect, there are other very common Greek words which mean “to sprinkle” and “to pour”. The word *hran-tid'-zo* means “to sprinkle” and “pour out” is from *ek-kheh'-o*. My point is that if God wanted His born-again converts sprinkled or poured upon then He would have certainly inspired His New Testament authors to use those very common words. But He did not! He inspired the use of the noun *bap'-tis-mah*, which means **immersion** and the verb *bap-tid'-zo*, which means **to make fully whelmed**.

Clearly the picture of these Greek words is total immersion in water.

- It is also important to note the several occasions where the act or concept of “baptism” is used **figuratively** in Scripture. These examples help even more to reinforce the immersion concept of the word.

- **Example 1** — In Mat 20:20-23 we read a question Jesus asked of his disciples James and John.

- **Mat 20:20-23** *Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be **baptized** with the **baptism** that I am **baptized** with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

The context of Jesus' question in v 22, *Are ye able...* is the imminent arrest, the mock trials, the humiliations, the horrible scourging, and finally the crucifixion where the Sinless One became sin for the human race.

Jesus chose the word *baptism* to create an awesome mind picture. He was about to be “whelmed”, “plunged into”, “immersed” into a most horrific series of events. And so Jesus asked James and John if they were willing and able to be plunged into, to be immersed into, to be whelmed by those same horrible sufferings that He Himself was soon to face. Not really understanding what He was about to go through, they answered in the affirmative.

- **Example 2** — Another example is the figurative use of “baptism” found in Acts 1:4, 5.

- **Acts 1:4, 5** *And, (Jesus) being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be **baptized with the Holy Ghost** not many days hence.*

Here Jesus promised an immersion but it would not be in liquid! This immersion would be in a Person! In these verses Jesus foretold the coming of a new ministry for the Holy Spirit: it was His role as the *Parakeltos* (translated *Comforter* in the KJV). God would immerse the local Jerusalem church into the Holy Spirit.

- **John 14:16** *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever....*
- **John 14:26** *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*
- **John 15:26** *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me....*

This new dispensational role or job for the Holy Spirit would be one of administrative headship, leadership, empowerment, guidance, comfort and protection of a brand new institution: the New Testament Church institution and the individual realities, each local, visible manifestation of that institution. [NOTE: The institution is just the concept. The reality is local bodies.]

Jesus ordered His assembled born-again believers, to *...tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high* (Lu 24:49). **And so, 50 days after Passover, came the fulfillment of the Jew's Feast of Pentecost. That local, visible assembly of Christian Jews in Jerusalem, was whelmed, enveloped by, plunged or dipped into, the Holy Spirit** as He started to lead, empower and protect the institution of the local New Testament Church. This had absolutely nothing to do with the salvation of those present. Those 120 waiting and praying worshippers were all already born-again believers! In fact it is most likely that the vast majority were direct disciples of our Lord, and previously, of John the Baptizer!

And by the way, this immersion (baptism) into the Holy Spirit was a one-time event with continuing effects in all scriptural local churches. Central Baptist Church is now—almost 2000 years later—still reaping the effects of that immersion into the Holy Spirit, i.e., we are being led, administered and empowered by the Comforter because of that once-for-all-time **whelming** on the Day of Pentecost.

- So whether used literally, i.e., to be completely whelmed or plunged under the surface of a liquid, or figuratively, e.g., to be dipped or whelmed into sufferings or into the empowerment of the Comforter as He leads New Testament churches... the language is plain: **the word baptize means to dip, plunge, immerse, or completely whelm.**

There can be no mistake or argument, even by those who consciously choose to defile the mode by sprinkling or pouring. Therefore, when pseudo-churches choose sprinkling or pouring as their mode for baptism, they do so 1) in **knowing violation** of the literal meaning of the Greek words and 2) in **knowing violation** of the many Scripture examples of the ordinance performed. And we will look at those Scripture examples next.

B. Definition and purpose from Scripture examples

1. Scriptural (God-recognized) baptism must use the proper **mode**: and that mode is complete **IMMERSION!**

- Jesus' own baptism

- In Mark 1:10 we read about Jesus' baptism at the hands of John the Baptist. This scripture reads, *And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him....* John had completely immersed Jesus in the Jordan. Note that Jesus came UP and OUT of the water.
- But some might argue, couldn't "*coming up out of the water*" mean that they had waded down into the Jordan River and were now simply walking up out of the Jordan River? After all, much religious art, both old and new, depicts John and Jesus ankle deep or waist-deep in a river, and then John sprinkling or pouring water upon Jesus' brow. Surely there is some historical truth taught in these paintings! Well, there IS history portrayed; the Catholic Church had corrupted the mode! But in these paintings no Truth is portrayed, at least as far as mode is concerned.

The first graphic (see next page) is a painting (with watermark) by Mr. Jason Jenicke of Kansas City, KS, advertised for sale on his website. Mr. Jenicke is unarguably a talented painter, but not a student of Scripture! As it turns out Mr. Jenicke is a Roman Catholic, which helps to

explain his fundamental ignorance of Bible Doctrine.

The second graphic (also next page) is a 15th Century work (1466) by master Andrea di Cione, who was a teacher of Leonardo da Vinci. Obviously di Cione had never read the Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism. You will note that Jesus and John the Baptist are ankle-deep in the backwater of the Jordan River. Is this being "buried" in baptism?



The obvious counterpoint is, "Why would anyone wade out into a muddy, stagnant river if sprinkling or pouring were adequate and acceptable modes?" The obvious answer is, "You absolutely wouldn't!" It would make no common sense!

- Furthermore, John's favorite baptismal **location** strongly suggests total immersion. First, Matthew tells us John baptized *...in Jordan*, (Mat 3:6, 13-16). The point is that John baptized in a **river, and NOT in a baptismal font**. My point is that sprinkling or pouring could be performed in a house, with a cup, but immersion requires a river!



Second John v 3:23 tells us the specific location: *...Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there*. We understand from the arid climatology of Israel during Jesus' day that the Jordan was an oft-intermittent stream. The rainy season would produce a flowing and even flooding stream. But at the height of the dry season, the river could almost dry up in its more shallow areas, leaving water only in deep pools. It is likely that John baptized at one of these deep pools, and probably a spring-fed pool, because the proper noun *Aenon* means "place of springs". It is derived from the Hebrew word *ah'-yin* which can by analogy mean "a fountain".

And so, why did John need *much water*? Obviously, he was **IMMERSING**. Only the mode of **immersion** requires a lot of water. Again, sprinkling or pouring could be performed in a house with a cup.

- Philip and the Ethiopian Treasurer

- Philip's baptism of the Ethiopian treasurer strongly suggests immersion. Lets look at Acts 8:36-39.

- **Acts 8:36-39** *And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both*

*Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they **were come up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

- It appears that the *certain water* they came upon was fairly deep for ...*they went down both into the water*. Again, if sprinkling or pouring were adequate modes then surely they would have stayed in the chariot and used a few ounces of the Eunuch's drinking water.

And then there is...

- Paul's use of baptism as an **picture** of being placed in Jesus and into his death (Rom 6:1-7; we are *IN CHRIST*, Rom 8:1).

- Let's read Paul's argument in Rom 6:1-7. There are some really deep concepts in these verses; there is great spiritual richness! And quite honestly, much of it I still may not yet understand or see! But when we read it for what it says and seek to understand it simply, we will even then find great meaning and understanding.

- **Rom 6:1-4** *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ** (placed inside Jesus and the Holy Spirit) **were baptized into his death?** 4 Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism into death**: that like as **Christ was raised up from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

- Paul is using the figure of baptism to PICTURE OUR DEATH TO THE OLD LIFE, THE OLD SIN-CHASING NATURE, and our emergence into a new life and walk! Just like Jesus went down into the grave (was buried) we too die to this life and to self! In this way water baptism pictures that we are new creatures in Christ.

- Finally in Rom 6:5 Paul compares the figure of baptism to a "planting".

-**Rom 6:5-7** *For if we have been **planted** together in the likeness of his death* (the immersion process pictures the process of burial), *we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin* (at salvation the spirit is freed from the bondage of sin; it becomes new, clean and holy, unable to ever again be tempted by sin).

I believe v 5 conclusively proves that baptism is total immersion. When we bury a corpse do we sprinkle just a few dirt clods on top of the casket and when we plant a seed do we scatter a few bits of dust on top? No, on both counts. We completely cover the body and the seed. **The mode of scriptural baptism is whelming; it is total immersion IN water.**

And when we are *baptized into Jesus Christ* (by the Holy Spirit at our salvation), we are placed INTO His life and at the same time Paul teaches that we also were immersed into His death, picturing our death to the old sin nature.

- So, scriptural (God-recognized) baptism must be according to the proper **MODE** and that mode is **ONLY immersion**.

2. Scriptural (God-recognized) baptism must involve a proper candidate

- Only born-again believers should be baptized. We use the label "believer's baptism" for this very reason. And how is one born-again? Through repentance and faith in Jesus' sacrifice!
- BUT, since we can't know the "heart" or see the spirit, we can't really know for sure if a person has trusted in Jesus. We have to look for secondary evidence of the new birth! This is what John did!

If you study John the Baptizer's ministry [NOTE: And by the way, the purpose of John's ministry was to prepare a base of baptized believers for the coming Messiah] you will discover that he was very particular, discerning, and even strict about whom he would agree to baptize. Let's read the account in Mat 3:5-8.

- **Mat 3:5-8** *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6*

And were baptized of him in Jordan, **confessing their sins**. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 **Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance....**

John baptized many—even multitudes—but there were a few he adamantly refused to baptize (and those were the Pharisees and Sadducees). WHY? It is because baptism isn't just some flippant, come-one-come-all religious rite to make us feel "good". There was something missing in the demeanor of these men that told John the Baptizer that they were not qualified to BE baptized! John said in v 8 it was *...fruits meet for repentance*. Let's look at this demand more closely.

- John wanted to see *fruits...* (v 8). And what are *fruits* in this context? Well, what is a fruit? A fruit is perhaps the most obvious and undeniable **outward evidence** or proof of the identity of a plant. A tree full of red, ripened apples is undeniable proof that we are looking at an apple tree. A vine loaded with watermelons is unarguable proof that we are looking at a watermelon vine.

So John was looking for *fruits*: i.e., **OUTWARD EVIDENCE** that was proof of the **INWARD REALITY** or **IDENTIFICATION**. He wanted to know if these religious leaders had truly been born-again or if they were religious impostors. And then in the rest of these verses John qualifies those *fruits*.

These fruits or evidences had to be *meet* (from *ax'-ee-os*), meaning deserving of, comparable to, suitable for, indicative of, commensurate with, corresponding to, or worthy of...

...repentance! Repentance is a changing of the mind and direction, usually associated with contrition and sorrow expressed toward God, when a person realizes their sinfulness before Him.

SO, This *fruit* (evidence) that John looked for was to be indicative of a repentant heart! And the religious leaders failed the test. Instead, he saw great pride and self-righteousness!

- And so, here is the critical question: "What kind of *fruit* does genuine repentance produce?" What does repentance look like?

I believe John watched for one thing and one thing only: **CONTRITION!**

Contrition is an outward expression of an inward brokenness over one's sins! Note again Mat 3:6, *...And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins*. Those accepted by John for baptism were **confessing their sins**. This word translated *confessing* (from *ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o*) means **to acknowledge or to agree fully**. Very simply, John was looking for those who agreed with God about what he said about sin and in particular, **THEIR sin!** These were broken-hearted because of their sinful conditions (i.e., those who had experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit).

Friends, I grow more and more convinced each day that I read and study the Scriptures of this one fact: a so-called repentance that does not cause our hearts to break over our sins, and then shun those sins, is only an intellectual or "head belief" and that kind of belief will lead its owner directly into Hell!

- If we want to know what genuine repentance toward God looks like, we have only to consider Jesus' very poignant parable of the praying publican and the self-righteous Pharisee, as rehearsed in Luke 18:9-14. And by the way, Jesus told this parable to expose the self-righteous attitudes held by those very Pharisees that had gone out for John's baptism. Turn there and read it with me.

- **Lu 18:9, 10** *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a **Pharisee**, and the other a **publican**.*

Now let's stop right there. Out in the open, for all to see and admire was...

- 1) a dedicated, religious, works-rich Pharisee. This man was the pinnacle of religiosity in 1st century Israel. In this parable Jesus compares the Pharisee to...
- 2) a tax-collector, who was *standing afar off*, no doubt in a corner or shadow, ashamed and broken.

Jesus' choice of these two characters immediately polarized the minds of Jesus' audience, who were themselves the self-righteous religious leaders. What a contrast Jesus painted in their minds! It was the ultimate contrast in their opinion: a publican and a Pharisee... why, this was night and day!

A publican was a private contractor, a hireling of Rome, who made his living by extorting more taxes from his own people (the Jews) than Rome actually required. His extortion was legal, understood, and approved by Rome; anything over and above what Rome required was the publican's fee. Since these hirelings had the power of the sword behind them, what they demanded became law. So, you can imagine how much the general populace hated these men. They were seen as traitorous crooks and most publicans probably WERE heavy-handed extortionists. Truly, there probably wasn't a greater contrast between two men, especially in the minds of Israel's self-righteous leadership.

Now let's continue with the story in Luke 18 with verses 11, 12.

- **Lu 18: 11, 12** *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus **with himself**, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

Note that phrase *with himself*. The import of that statement was that the Pharisee's prayers were not rising above his head! This man was an example of over-the-top, self-righteous arrogance.

But, note the striking contrast between the attitude of the self-righteous Pharisee and the Publican detailed in v 13: *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* The publican recognized who and what he really was. From his words we can conclude that he had indeed taken advantage of his position and had become a cheating, defrauding, and covetous extortionist! And when the Spirit of God finally got a hold of that man he became broken-hearted or contrite, and he poured out his plight toward God (NOT toward man for restitution or acceptance... but toward God!) To smite one's own chest is a pretty strong testimony of inward agony and self-loathing.

- Friends, the Lord makes it ultimately clear in this parable of the Pharisee and publican that **contrition** is absolutely necessary if we are 1) to be born-again and then 2) if we are to maintain our fellowship with Him after we are saved. Consider these verses.
 - **Ps 34:18** *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*
 - **Ps 51:17** *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
 - **Is 57:15** *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*
 - **Is 66:2** *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*
- So, John readily baptized those who showed contrition (sorrow) over their sins. Matthew writes it like this: they were *confessing their sins*. Again, that word *confessing* does not mean that they were detailing every sin they had ever committed and admitting them publicly to the Baptizer. The word (*ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o*) means to acknowledge, to assent to, and to agree fully with (Strong's Concordance). John agreed to baptize those who, like the parable's praying publican, acknowledging their sinfulness before God. They were admitting their state, they were agreeing

with God. This usually produces contrition. And I guarantee you that their attitude was obvious to John. John looked for the fruit of contrition as a proof for proper candidacy!

- Scriptural baptism must employ the proper **mode**: total immersion in water. And it must involve a proper **candidate**: a born-again believer. But that isn't all. Next week we will start with a third and final critical requirement for scriptural baptism.

3. Scriptural (God-recognized) baptism must be performed by a proper authority.