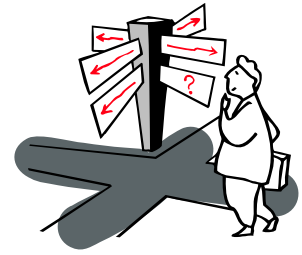


# LIGHT AND DARKNESS

(How to become a Christian)



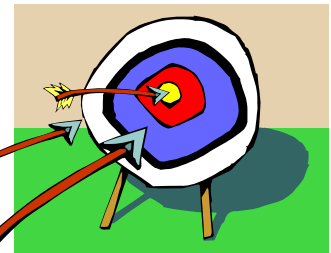
## Introduction

By now you have probably examined the evidence that Jesus lived upon the earth, died upon a cross, rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and in so doing proclaimed victory over death for all who will follow him. You have discovered that the word of God is God's letter to us, teaching us how to have a relationship with him through his Son, Jesus. And you have explored the meaning of biblical faith, that it is more than an intellectual acceptance of Jesus but a life of trusting in his power and promises.

This study is meant to explore what the Bible teaches about sin and God's great gift of delivery from sin through his Son and our trusting in God's promises. Remember to always be like the Bereans, checking out the Scriptures daily to see if all of this is true, Acts 17:11.

Two questions before you begin the study will help you to compare what you have been taught about becoming a Christian and what the Bible teaches. It is important to consider these questions before the study because if what you have always heard is different than what the word of God teaches this will help demonstrate that difference. These questions are not to be a source of argument, but instead an opportunity to make sure that Satan does not confuse us with false teaching. If your answers don't match God's plan then you can encourage one another to take appropriate action.

- a. When did you become a Christian?
- b. How were you saved? (When were your sins forgiven?)



## Darkness

**I Peter 2:9, 10** (Take turns reading)

- This letter is written to Christians.
- Ask what is the theme of these verses.
- It is important to diagram these two verses (see below) to show total distinction between light and darkness.
- Make sure person understands that when one is in the darkness a person is lost.
- When a person is in the light a person is saved.

Darkness	Light
Not a people of God	People of God
No mercy	Mercy
Lost	Saved
Not a Christian	Christian

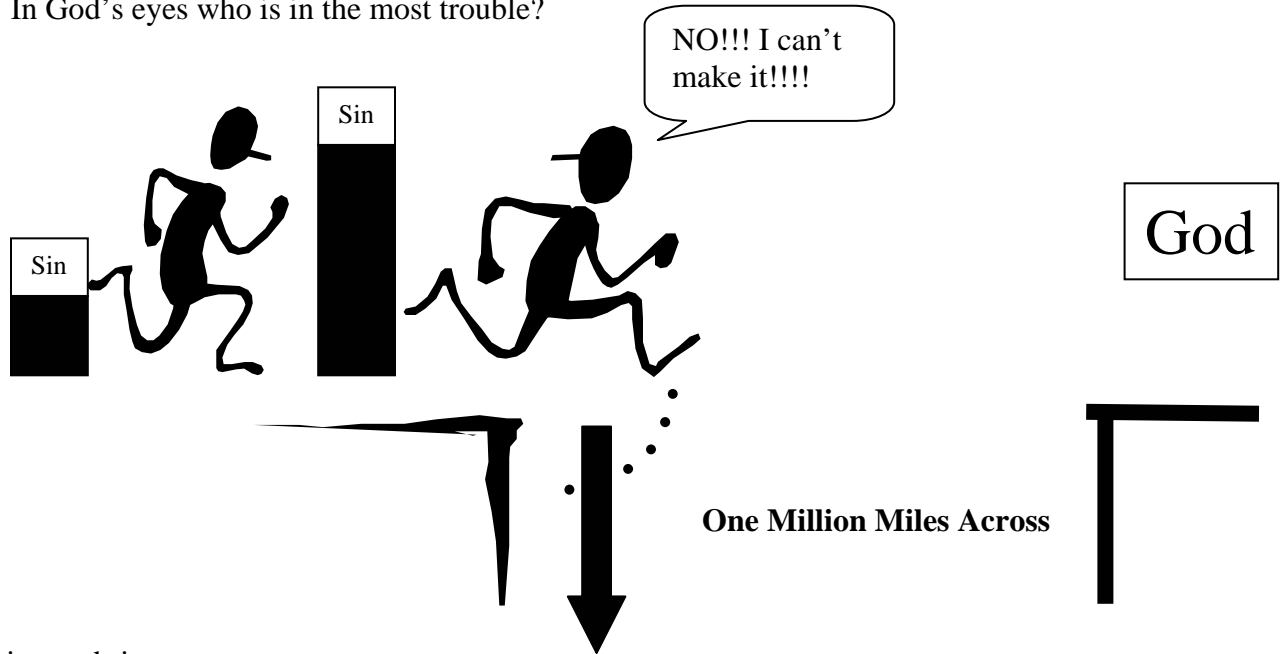
- Note: Every person is either in the darkness or the light, **THERE IS NO TWILIGHT ZONE**.
- The questions we want to answer today are: Where am I? And what, if anything do I need to do about that?

## The Problem with Sin / Darkness

### Romans 3:23 - 24

Questions you could ask.

- Who has sinned?
- In our eyes who below is in the most trouble?
- In God's eyes who is in the most trouble?



Points to bring out.

- Sin is literally “missing the mark.” It is an archery term to miss the bull’s eye.
- Everyone has sinned, therefore both individuals above will fall short of God.
- We fall short of God by the sins we commit.
- In our eyes there are different degrees of sin, in God’s eyes all sin is a problem causing us to fall short of God.

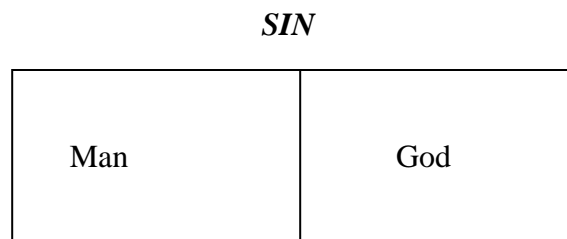
### Isaiah 59:1 - 2

Questions you could ask.

- What separates us from God?
- What are sins and iniquities?

Points to bring out.

- Our sins and iniquities are what separate us from God.
- Sin is the problem in man’s relationship with God.



*SEPARATES*

**Romans 6:23**

Questions you could ask.

- What does our sin earn for us?
- What is the wage earned if someone only commits one sin in his or her life?
- What kind of death is this?



Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pay to the Order of: \_\_\_\_\_

Wage of Sin: ETERNAL DEATH    Signed: God, Romans 6:23

Points to bring out.

- The wages of sin is death.
- Sin is the problem.
- For God to be faithful he must keep his own word. Therefore we can be confident that God will pay us what we have earned unless we accept His gift of life.
- Our only hope is God's gift of life.

**Definition of Sin****I John 3:4**

Questions you could ask.

- What is God's law?
- What does it mean to break the law?

Points to bring out.

- Sin is the breaking of God's word.

**Galatians 5:19 - 21 (sins of commission)**

It is important to get a person to open up and discuss what sins he has struggled with in the past.

- Reason: Make sure person is convicted they are a sinner.
- Best way to get people to open up is to open up yourself.

Questions you could ask

- Why do you think the Bible says that sin is obvious?
- What does it mean to be \_\_\_\_\_? (Fill in the blank with one of the words from the list.)

Points to bring out.

- A lifestyle of sin means we are not saved.
- It is important to know what sin is in a specific manner so we can overcome sin and live for God.

**James 4:17 (sins of omission)**

Questions you could ask.

- What are some things that come to mind when we talk about not doing the good we should?
- Why do you think this is sin?

Points to bring out.

- Things we omit doing that we should have done are also times we sin.
- "Sins of Omission" would include things like not being active with the church, not reading our Bibles, not helping those in need, etc.

## Light: Leaving Darkness and Coming to Christ – The Gospel of Jesus Christ

### The First Gospel Sermon: How to be Saved

**Acts 2:22 - 24** - the message one must believe to be in the light (saved).

Questions to ask:

- What did God use to validate Jesus ministry?
- Whose purpose was it for Jesus to die? Why? (**Rom. 3:21-25a; key point: Jesus is the source of salvation**)
- Why were these people guilty of Jesus death even if some of them were not present at the crucifixion?
- Why are you and I guilty of Jesus death today?
- What did God do to demonstrate the victory that is in Jesus?
- What hope does the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus give you?



Points to make:

- Verse 22 - Jesus is from God - miracles are proof.
- Verse 24 - Jesus was raised physically from the dead and defeated Satan
- Verse 23 - Everyone is responsible for the crucifixion of Christ. (Not all were there at the crucifixion but everyone was responsible - **note Rom. 3:23, all have sinned.**)
- The uniqueness of Christ's death is not the fact he was crucified. **BUT THE FACT HE DIED FOR OUR SINS.**

### Acts 2:36, 37

Questions to ask:

- What was the people's response to the message? (Answer: They were cut to the heart and they wanted to know what to do.)
- Why do you think they were cut to the heart?
- What does it mean to be cut to the heart?



Points to make:

- The reality that we are personally responsible for the death of Jesus should move us.
- The correct response to God is to ask, "What must I do?"

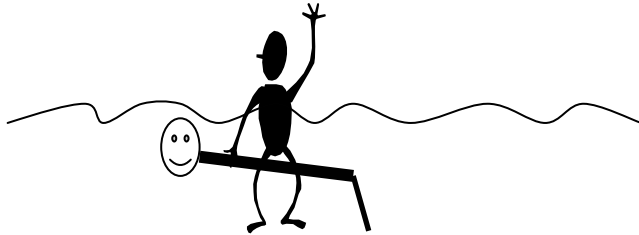
**Acts 2:38**

Questions to ask:

- What does it mean to repent?
- What does it mean to be baptized?
- What does “in the name of Jesus Christ” mean?
- What does God through Peter promise will happen, when based on the belief of Jesus as Lord and Christ, a person repents and is baptized by Jesus authority?
- According to this passage of Scripture at what point are a person’s sins forgiven?
- According to this passage of Scripture when does a person go from darkness to light?
- What role will the Holy Spirit play in the life of a new Christian?

Points to make:

- Repentance is literally to “change the mind” which results in a change of life.
- Baptize means to “immerse”.
- The purpose of baptism is (1) Forgiveness of sin (2) Receive the gift of Holy Spirit.
- The power of salvation is in Jesus and his death, burial and resurrection but the point in time of an individuals salvation is the point in time of their baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 2:40-41**

Questions to ask:

- What message did the 3,000 accept?
- How do you know that these people accepted the message of the death burial and resurrection of Jesus?

Points to make:

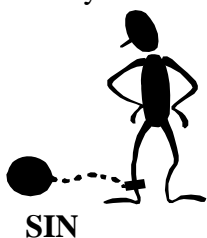
- The message they accepted was the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
- The response to accepting that message was to be baptized.

**Application:**

How does what we have just studied in the Bible on how to become a Christian match with your previous answer on how you became a Christian?

Based on what the Scriptures teach are your sins forgiven or not? Why?

What will you do now that you know these truths?



## **Additional Scriptures Relating to Baptism**

### **Jesus Teaching**

#### **Mark 16:16**

Belief and baptism are both necessary to be saved.

#### **Matthew 28:18-20**

Once people know about Jesus and are ready to follow him they are to be baptized and then taught to obey everything the Lord has commanded.

#### **John 3:1-7**

A person must be born again of the water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven.

### **Teachings of the Apostles**

**See below for examples in the book of Acts**

#### **Romans 6:1 - 4**

Baptism is the sharing participation) in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is more than just a symbol. It is the point in time we die to our old life and are raised to live a new life in Christ.

#### **I Corinthians 12:12-13**

Baptism is the point that we become part of the body of Christ, the church.

#### **Galatians 3:26-27**

Baptism is the point, which by faith in Christ Jesus, we are clothed with Christ and become sons of God.

#### **Ephesians 4:4-6**

There is only one Biblical baptism by this time in the history of the church. I Peter 3:21, written about the same time as Ephesians, demonstrates this baptism is in water for salvation. Paul's teaching in the city of Ephesus in Acts 19 also demonstrates that it is baptism in the name of Jesus, Acts 2:38; 22:16.

#### **Colossians 2:11-12**

Baptism is the point in time when, by faith, we are buried with Christ and raised with Him. It is the time when our sinful nature is cut away. We are forgiven.

#### **Titus 3:4-5**

The washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit are references to baptism. Acts 2:38 proclaims that at our baptism (immersion in water) in the name of Jesus our sins are forgiven, God saves us, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### **I Peter 3:21**

The water of Noah represents the water of our baptism. Water separated, saved Noah from a sinful world and our baptism in water saves us. The power of salvation rests in Jesus but the point in time of salvation is at our baptism.

## The New Testament Plan of Salvation.

- a. Hear - Romans 10:14 - 17
- b. Believe - John 8: 24; Acts 16:31
- c. Repent - Acts 17:30, 31
- d. Confess - Romans 10:9
- e. Baptized - Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21

## Major examples of conversion in the book of Acts

- a. Acts 2:36 - 47 - First Christians on the Day of Pentecost.
- b. Acts 8:4 - 13 - Conversion of the Samaritans.
- c. Acts 8:26 - 39 - Conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch. Interesting to note that baptism is part of the gospel.
- d. Acts 16:23 - 34 - The Philippian Jailer.
- e. Acts 18:5 - 8 - Conversion of the Corinthians.
- f. Acts 19: 1 - 7 - Rebaptism of 12 men at Ephesus.
- g. Acts 9:1 - 18 - Conversion of Paul
- h. Acts 22:3 - 16 - Paul recounts his conversion.

## REFUTING FALSE DOCTRINES

### 1. “Pray Jesus (will come) into your heart”

This phrase is NEVER mentioned in the Bible. They may use Rev. 3:20 about Jesus knocking at the door; however, you must examine ANY Scripture in its context. This Scripture does not tell a person how to become a Christian and be saved. Rather, it tells a Christian how to come back to God after becoming lukewarm. It is addressed to Christians who have ALREADY responded to Christ in faith, repentance, confession and baptism. This passage is addressed to the Church (see Rev. 3:14) and not to outsiders.

### 2. “Accept Jesus into your heart”

This is usually based on Rom. 10:9 and/or John 1:12. The key is to really see what the passages are saying and the context in which they are found. Romans 10 is addressed to Christians (see verse 1) in contrast to the unbelieving Jews (Rom. 10:1 - 4). Paul is not telling his readers (who are already Christians) what to do to be saved, but he is discussing the problem of the Israelites who did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. If anyone wants to know what role baptism played in the lives of these Christians at Rome becoming saved please read Rom. 6:1 - 6. John 1:12 does not teach that receiving Jesus makes you a child of God. IT ONLY GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO BECOME A CHILD OF GOD (see also Gal. 3:26, 27).

### 3. “Baptism doesn’t save you”

By itself, NO! Agreed! It is the blood of Jesus Christ that saves us (Matt. 26:28). We are NOT discussing what saves a person but when a person is saved. We are discussing what a person must do in order to be born again (John 3:5). The clear answer is found in Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3, 4. Jesus shed His blood in his death. We are baptized WITH HIM into His death. That is WHEN we contact the blood of Jesus Christ. That is why I Peter 3:21 says that baptism does save you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

#### 4. “Original Sin”

Ezekiel 18:20 says that each person is responsible for his own actions and NOT those of either his father or his own children. Each person will be judged for what they have personally done. This rules out any idea of original sin. If original sin is true then Jesus was also a sinner because He was also born into the world (Gal. 4:4). The Roman Catholic Church invented the doctrine of the “Immaculate Conception of Mary” (that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived and born without sin) in order to cover up for the false doctrine of original sin.

#### 5. “Infant Baptism”

There is no reason for infant baptism since babies DO NOT inherit sin from their parents (Ezekiel 18:20); also, a baby cannot have faith, therefore babies are not suitable candidates for baptism (see Col. 2:12; Mark 16:16; Gal. 3:26, 27).

#### 6. “Baptism is a work”

The Bible does not say baptism is a work; it is man that teaches such; NOT the BIBLE. The Bible does say that BELIEF (Faith) is a work (John 6:28, 29). But no one who knows the Bible affirms that faith nullifies the grace of God. (See Eph. 2:8, 9). Baptism is not a work, but that which puts us in contact with the blood of Christ so we can be saved (Romans 6:3, 4)

#### 7. “Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace”

False! Men teach this; the Bible NEVER makes such a statement. Rather, Rom. 6:1 - 4 states that baptism is an actual participation in the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ. It is not a sign, seal, or symbol of anything - period!

#### 8. “Baptism isn’t important”

After all, look at what Paul said about it in I Cor. 1:10 - 17! Paul does not diminish the importance of baptism at all. (Paul himself was baptized to wash away his sins; Acts 22:16). In the context, Paul makes the point because he did not want to contribute anything more to the division in the church at Corinth. It is in the context of Paul’s strong appeal against the sin of denominationalism (see also John 17:20 - 23) that he makes this statement on baptism.

#### 9. “Baptism for the remission of sins is Holy Spirit baptism”

False! Acts 2:38 mentions baptism in the name of Jesus is for the remission of sins and Peter makes it perfectly clear that baptism in the name of Jesus is WATER baptism (Acts 10:47, 48).

#### 10. “Baptism in Acts 2:38 is “because of” the remission of sins”

That is a person is to be baptized because he is ALREADY saved; has the remission of sins. FALSE! The same Greek phrase is found in Matt. 26:28. If baptism is because your sins have ALREADY been forgiven, then Jesus shed his blood because our sins were ALREADY forgiven. Such a thought is blasphemous and repulsive to those who know the Bible. Baptism is for the purpose of obtaining the remission of sins.

#### 11. “The thief on the cross wasn’t baptized and he was saved”

One can only speculate as to whether or not the thief on the cross was baptized or not. Both John the Baptist and Jesus baptized many sinners. The thief on the cross may have been baptized. However, such is irrelevant to the case. Because the statement to the thief on the cross was made BEFORE the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ (note Rom. 6:3 - 4). Jesus’ new Covenant (Matt. 26:28) did not come into force UNTIL HIS DEATH (Heb. 9:15 - 17). BEFORE Jesus’ death He had the power to forgive sins any way he wanted to (see Matt. 9:2). FOLLOWING His resurrection Jesus gave specific instructions on how we are to be saved (Matt. 28:18 - 20; Mark 16:15,16). These instructions were carried out by the Apostles and others (see Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21).