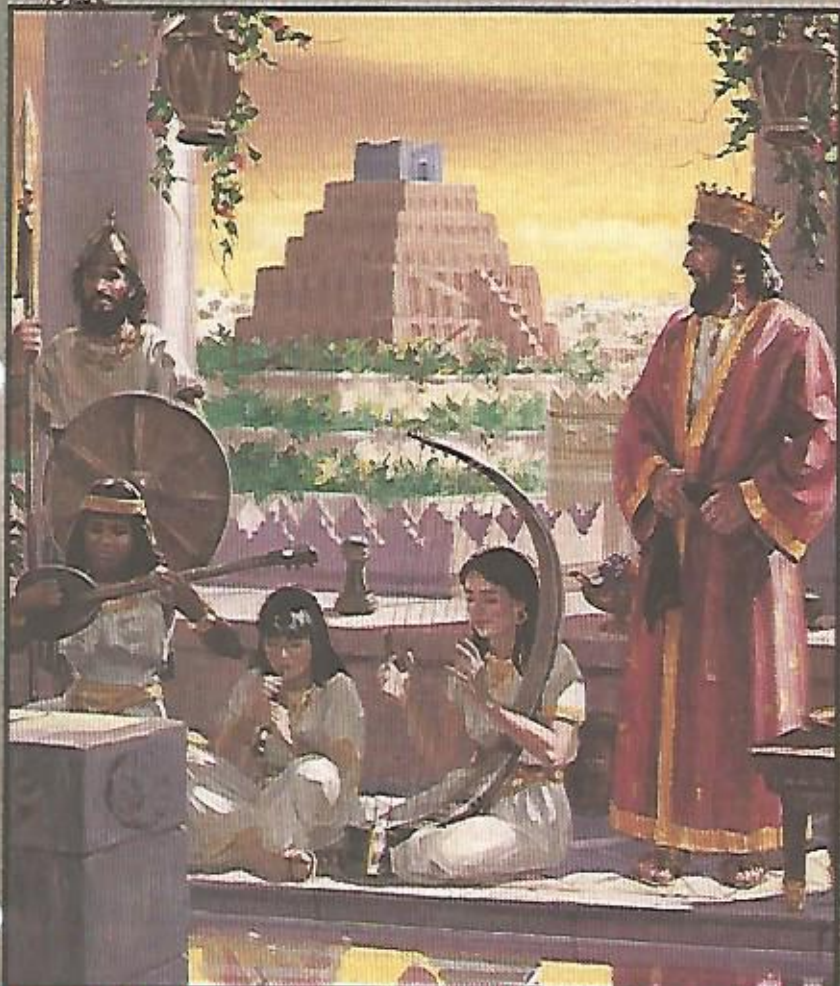




PROPHECY SEMINAR



**WHAT IF NEBUCHADNEZZAR WERE
CONVERTED TODAY?**



One of the most striking truths to come out of our study of the book of Daniel is Nebuchadnezzar's transformation. The regeneration of this mighty heathen king shows that the God of heaven is able and delighted to win difficult people to Jesus Christ. Nebuchadnezzar fought hard against God, but he finally acknowledged His leading. It took a revelation about the future, a startling discovery of the Son of God in the fiery furnace and finally, insanity, before Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the God of heaven as his Lord. Lesson 6 examined the story of Nebuchadnezzar's transformation as recorded in the fourth chapter of the book of Daniel. Let's review it briefly.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S TRANSFORMATION

1. **What was the first thing that Nebuchadnezzar did when his understanding returned? Daniel 4:34 (861) [861].**

"I _____ the Most High and _____
and _____ Him."

2. **What change occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's thinking after his regeneration? Daniel 4:37 (861) [861].**

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, _____ and _____
and _____ the _____ of heaven."

NOTE: Before he acknowledged the God of heaven, Nebuchadnezzar praised and glorified himself only, but his encounter with Daniel's God brings about a remarkable change. Nebuchadnezzar is a new person; the old self-centered Nebuchadnezzar has become a new God-centered man.

3. **What does the apostle Paul say happens when a man is in Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:17 (1114) [1142].**

"He is a _____ creation."

NOTE: The apostle Paul indicates that genuine conversion is evidenced when a person has become a new creation in Christ. It seems that this transformation had occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's life.

4. **What New Testament ordinance symbolizes this change in a person's life that occurs at conversion? Romans 6:3-6 (1089) [1114].**

NOTE: Baptism symbolizes the change from the "out of Christ" relationship to the "in Christ" relationship; a change from a life of dependence upon self to a life of dependence upon Christ. This is what Nebuchadnezzar experienced. If Nebuchadnezzar had lived in New Testament times, his next step would have been baptism.

THE SYMBOL OF BAPTISM

5. **What three things does baptism symbolize? Romans 6:3, 6 (1089) [1114].**

The _____, _____ and _____ of Christ.

NOTE: Just as Christ died, was buried, and rose again, so the Christian dies to self, buries the old way of life in the watery grave, and then rises to new life in Jesus Christ.

6. **What does the word "baptize" mean?**

To _____.

NOTE: Our English word "baptize" comes from the Greek **baptizo**, meaning "to immerse," "to dip under" or "to submerge". Rather than translate the Greek word, we have made it sound like an English word. If the word were translated into English, "baptism" would be called "immersion".

7. **Who went into the water when Philip baptized the eunuch? Acts 8:36-38 (1060) [1083].**

"And _____ and the _____ went down into the water, and he baptized him."

NOTE: When Philip baptized the eunuch, the Bible makes a point of the fact that both of them went into the water. The only reason both would need to go into the water would be if Philip baptized the eunuch by immersion.

8. **Why did John the Baptist baptize at Aenon? John 3:23 (1027) [1047].**

"Because there was _____ water there."

NOTE: If John had baptized by sprinkling or pouring, he could have baptized at Jacob's well. Instead, he chose this particular spot because there was a lot of water there.

9. **What is the only method of baptism that properly symbolizes the correct meaning of baptism? Romans 6:3-6 (1089) [1114].**

NOTE: If baptism symbolizes death, burial and resurrection, then only immersion can properly symbolize those events. When a person is baptized by immersion, he closes his eyes; for a brief moment, he stops breathing, an apt symbol of death. He is lowered into the watery grave, a symbol of burial. Then he is lifted up; he opens his eyes; he breathes again; he begins a new life. Sprinkling, pouring or any method of baptism other than immersion cannot symbolize the true meaning of baptism. If Nebuchadnezzar were living today, he would be baptized by immersion, for that is the Bible way.

WHEN SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

While baptism by immersion is clearly the Biblical way of baptism, there is a question in many people's minds as to **WHEN** a person should be baptized. Some people are baptized while they are still babies, while others wait until they are adults. What is the proper Biblical time for baptism? Does the Bible recognize infant baptism?

10. List three requirements for baptism.

- a. Matthew 28:19 (967) [979] _____
- b. Acts 8:35-37 (1060) [1083] _____
- c. Acts 2:37, 38 (1053) [1075] _____

NOTE: The Bible is clear. Before a person is baptized, he must be taught, he must believe, and he must repent. An infant is incapable of doing those three things. Therefore, infant baptism is not Scriptural. Since baptism symbolizes the change from the "out of Christ" relationship to the "in Christ" relationship (Romans 6:3-6) (1089) [1114], it would be impossible for a person to be baptized unless he had a conversion experience. Baptism is the Bible's symbol that the conversion experience has happened. When a baby is baptized, there is no conversion. In fact, the baby doesn't even know what's going on. The Bible, then, gives no age for baptism. Instead, the Bible says that a person must be taught, must believe, and must repent before baptism. Since it is impossible for a baby to do those things, infant baptism is unscriptural. Baptism is an experience for believers.

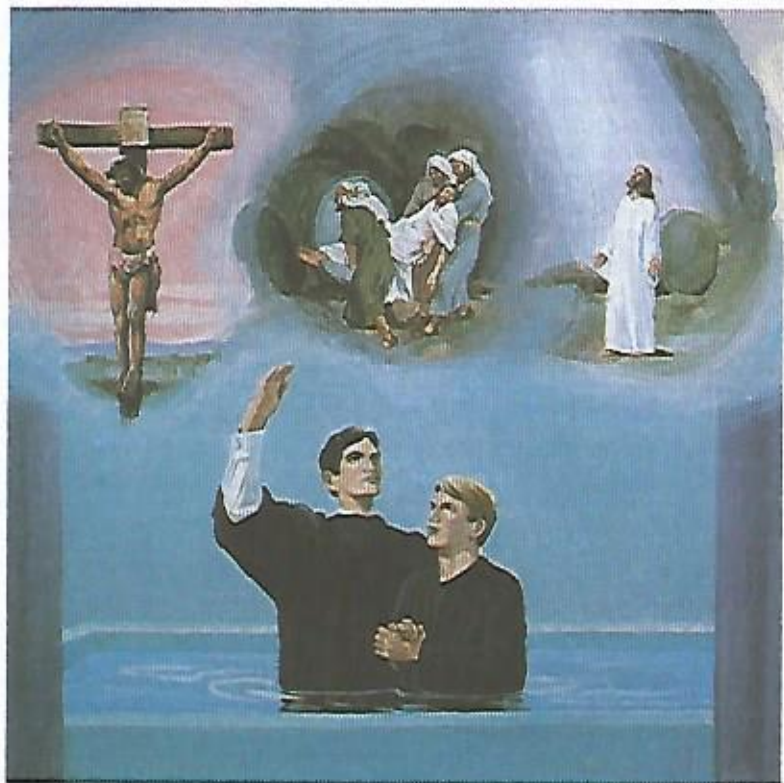
11. Is there any record in the Bible of a baby being baptized?

NOTE: From Genesis to Revelation, there is not a single instance of a baby ever being baptized. In fact, the first record of infant baptism comes from the second century, and then there is only one case in that 100 years. The church in the early centuries would not allow a man to serve as bishop of the church unless he had been baptized by immersion as an adult. They would not tolerate infant baptism because they knew that it was not Biblical. It was not until A.D. 1200 that the church decreed that if babies were not baptized, they would never see the face of Jesus. Likewise, baptism by immersion was the universal practice of the early church. Throughout the early centuries, the church practiced baptism by immersion, as can be seen by the baptismal fonts which still exist today in many of the old cathedrals in Europe.

12. How many kinds of baptism does the Bible recognize? Ephesians 4:5 (1126) [1156].

"_____ Lord, _____ faith, _____ baptism."

NOTE: The Bible recognizes only one kind of baptism, and that is baptism by immersion. There is no other proper method of Biblical baptism.



THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

13. What command did Jesus include in the great commission? Matthew 28:19 (967) [979].

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, _____
them in the name of the Father and of the _____ and of
the _____.”

NOTE: The command to baptize is part of the great commission. The issue of baptism is not a side issue. Jesus considered it of such tremendous importance that He included it in this great commission to His church. We must not take this command lightly.

Jesus says that we are to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He did not say that we were to be baptized in the names of the Trinity, but in the one name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some have misinterpreted this text to mean that we should baptize in the name of the Father, then in the name of the Son, and then in the name of the Holy Spirit, and thus practice triune baptism (baptizing people three times). Since baptism symbolizes our death to sin, burial to the old way of life, and our resurrection to a new life in Christ, then it is only proper to be baptized one time. To be baptized three times would indicate that we need to die, be buried, and rise again three times in our relationship to sin. Likewise, it destroys the unity of the Godhead, because it would indicate that the Christian believes in three gods instead of the one God manifested in three persons.

Thus, the true Bible baptism that Jesus commanded in this great commission is the baptism of believers by immersion.

14. In his Pentecost sermon, how many people did Peter say should be baptized? Acts 2:38 (1053) [1075].

"Repent, and let _____ of you be baptized."

NOTE: No one was excluded. Everyone was invited to be baptized. Peter did not just invite people who wanted to be baptized; he commanded those who repented to be baptized, indicating the absolute necessity of baptism as a response to the conversion experience. Baptism by water is absolutely essential. However, baptism by water is meaningless unless it is accompanied by the inner baptism of the Spirit. Baptism is the outward response to the inward change of life that is taking place in the Christian. Baptism, then, can only mean something when there has been this inward change in a person's life. The physical act of being baptized doesn't save us. Baptism is the natural response of the Christian who has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of his life.

15. How essential does Jesus consider baptism to be? Mark 16:15, 16 (988) [1002].

"He who _____ and is baptized will be _____."

16. What are all believers baptized into? 1 Corinthians 12:13 (1107) [1134].

"By one Spirit we were all baptized into one _____."

NOTE: A person is not baptized into nothing. Paul makes it clear that Christians are baptized into the one body.



17. Into what body are all Christians baptized? 1 Corinthians 12:27 (1107) [1134].

"Now _____ are the body of Christ, and _____ individually."

NOTE: Paul is here writing to the Corinthian church, and he declares that the church is the body of Christ. What an exalted privilege, that the church of Jesus Christ on earth is considered the body of Christ. Paul states that baptism is the Bible means of becoming a part of the body of Christ. "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47) (1053) [1075].

18. Whose name do people take when they are baptized? Galatians 3:27 (1122) [1151].

"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on _____."

NOTE: When a person has put on Christ, he takes on himself the wonderful name of Jesus Christ, and is then placed into a body of loving fellow-Christians who will care for and nurture him. According to the Bible, it is impossible to be baptized and not become a part of God's loving family on earth, the church.

19. Is there any Bible example of rebaptism? Acts 19:1-5 (1073) [1096].

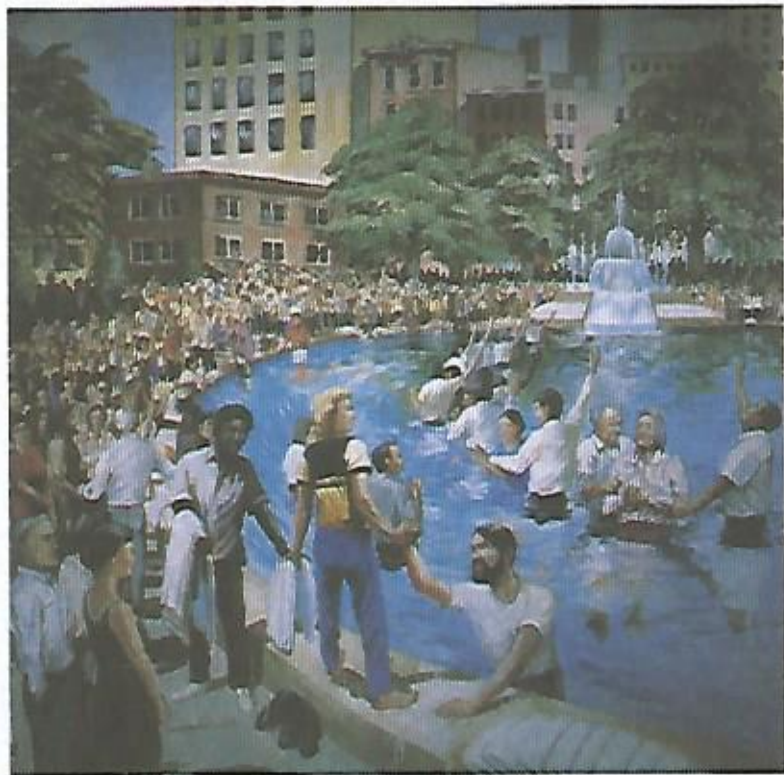
NOTE: The Bible seems to indicate that there are two instances that would warrant rebaptism.

Example 1: Acts 19:1-5 (1073) [1096] tells the story of some disciples who had been baptized through the ministry of John the Baptist. They had not heard about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul took them aside and taught them more fully of the Word of God. When they learned this additional truth, it made such a significant change in their lives that they were rebaptized. From this example, it would seem that rebaptism would be proper when a person learns significant new truth that makes a major change in his life.

Example 2: Likewise, baptism is the marriage ceremony that unites a believer to Jesus Christ. If an individual who has been baptized slips away from the Lord, goes back out into the world and virtually divorces Him, then, when that person returns to the Lord, it would be proper to symbolize reconversion by rebaptism.

20. The apostle Paul was tempted to put off his baptism. When he was delaying, what did God's chosen messenger, Ananias, say to Paul? Acts 22:16 (1077) [1101].

"Why are you _____? _____ and be _____."



NOTE: Because Paul had been such a persecutor of the church, he probably felt he needed to prove himself first. But God sent an angel to Ananias with a special message for the apostle Paul that he should not put off this decision. He had been converted; he had fully accepted Christ as his Saviour; and he had been instructed in the way of the Lord. He was ready to be baptized. Nothing should delay that decision.

- 21. If Nebuchadnezzar had lived in New Testament times, he would have asked for baptism immediately upon his conversion. Since you live in New Testament times, is it your desire to be baptized after the example of your Lord, as a symbol and testimony to the world that you have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of your life?**

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