

Baptism Resources

by Steve Smith

The Acts Hammer of Baptism

One of the best organized baptism studies is the “Acts Hammer” by George Tupper in South Asia. It can be used with any new believer or existing Christian leader on these questions. George calls it the “baptism hammer”– because the Word of God keeps hammering home the same ideas and tearing down common objections.

Here it is in brief:

Acts Hammer (10 passages from Acts):

Pattern: Heard, believed, confessed, and were immediately baptized.

- (1) *Acts 2:41* 3000 baptized in one day after confession of faith
- (2) *Acts 8:6-13* Samaritans, former demon-possessed/sorcerers/sick
- (3) *Acts 8:36-38* Ethiopian eunuch as traveling on road
- (4) *Acts 9:18-19* Saul
- (5) *Acts 10:47-48* Gentiles, Peter commanded Jews not to wait
- (6) *Acts 16:13-15* Women by riverside
- (7) *Acts 16:33* Roman jailer and family
- (8) *Acts 18:8* Ruler of synagogues, family and many believers
- (9) *Acts 19:1-5* John’s baptism not enough
- (10) *Acts 22:14-17* Why are you waiting? (Ananias speaking to Saul)

Five Questions to Ask

- (1) Why? Command of Jesus *Matthew 28:19-20*; Symbolic of dying to sin/ born again to righteousness *Romans 6:1-6*
- (2) When? Immediately *Acts 8:36-38*
- (3) Where? Water *Mark 1:9-11*
- (4) Who? Disciple *John 4:1-2, Matthew 28:19-20, I Corinthians 1:10-17, Acts 10:47-48*
- (5) How? Immersion *Mark 1:9-11*

A number of people I know use the Acts Hammer with **existing Christian leader** who might have objections to immediate baptism or might say that only pastors can baptize.

Generally, as a discipleship lesson on baptism, many people use just a few passages rather than all of the Acts passages (though there is no reason you couldn’t use the Acts Hammer with new believers

as long as it was reproducible for them). Most new believers had no stereotype about baptism, and are willing to be baptized when they see it commanded from Scripture. A number of people are now using the TRT lesson on baptism given in the “How to Train Orally” article, or a variation of it.

Other Sample Baptism Questions

1. Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead?
2. By God’s grace, even if you are persecuted or threatened with jail or death, will you still follow Jesus and never turn back?
3. Are you willing to get rid of all your idols and never practice idol worship again?
4. Are you willing to share about Jesus with others?

Where to baptize – practically

Since you want to immerse people as soon as practically possible, the question comes up: “Where can we do it, especially in the winter time or in dry areas (desert lands), if we have no baptistry?” Usually the easiest way to solve this is to explain immersion to the new converts and ask them for their ideas. Most of them take baths, or know people who do. They can usually come up with a way.

Here are a few solutions I’ve found or heard of:

- A river – even if muddy or cold.
 - One group actually likes to use a river in the winter to see if people are really serious!
 - Another group still uses the river when shallow but may have to roll the person a bit!
- Rent a hotel room with a bathtub. Let the local church or believers pool their money for this.
- The bath tub of one of the church members or converts
- A public swimming pool or hot tub
- The beach, a lake or pond
- An inflatable kiddie pool
- A horse trough
- A 55 gallon drum, trash can, rain pot or clay pot. Immerse them by having them squat rather than lean back.
- A rainwater collector on top of a roof
- Drape a large plastic tarp over four stout wooden chairs and fill it with water.

Who can baptize?

We’ve found it best when the person leading the person to faith baptizes him. This seems to be the most Scriptural in application. What we try to avoid is the concept that only a few, specially educated and ordained people can baptize. There just seems to be no Biblical command, principle or

precedent for that. It also becomes a limiting factor on the CPM: people must wait for someone to come around to baptize them.

At the same time, it is helpful if the person baptizing can gather a group together to witness it, when possible. Often it is helpful if it is in connection with the church or group that prepared the evangelist to baptize the new converts. This creates a sense of bringing the baptismal candidates into the covenant community.

Therefore, in T4T we don't advocate individuals running all over the place baptizing new converts in isolation. Instead, the general Acts pattern was that they were baptized with others that had believed by individuals in a community of faith. (The eunuch story and Saul's, perhaps, were unique situations. There was no one else around, or in Saul's case, they were all afraid to attend!). In some examples, such as Acts 19:1-7, the evangelists baptized a group of believers who *became the first church* (there was no faith community already).

Practically, persons leading others to faith baptize them and bring others for their small group or church to be a part of receiving them into the body of Christ. Sometimes this new group becomes a church; sometimes it joins a larger group.

Be a Doer, not just a Hearer!

Write down how God has spoken to you and what you need to obey as a result: