Lesson 4

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY AND JESUS' BAPTISM

OBJECTIVES

- 1. To learn to be a humble and faithful worker of God, just like John the Baptist.
- 2. To understand the difference between John's baptism and the baptism of salvation after Christ died for us.
- 3. To understand the importance and necessity of baptism.

MEMORY VERSE

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

(Mark 16:15)

PRAYER

- 1. Thank God for gathering us here so that we can worship and learn more about His word.
- 2. Remember that Jesus shed His blood for us so that our sins can be washed away and we can be saved.
- 3. Ask God to help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.



- 1. John the Baptist's life in the desert and his simple lifestyle 2. His work for God
 - Prepared the way for Christ
 - Performed baptism of repentance
 - Exhibited humility and faithfulness while working for God
 - Baptized Jesus Christ
- 3. His persecution and death
 - Got in trouble with King Herod
 - Received persecution and ridicule from the Jewish community
- **4. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs**—Water Baptism is the sacrament for the forgiveness of sins and rebirth.
- 5. Life Application—Testimony: "I Witnessed the Lord's Blood"
- 6. Activity—Bible Bookmark

Background Knowledge for Teachers

John received opposition from several groups of religious leaders in Jewish society. While each religious group had their own strengths, none of them truly led the people closer to God. When John the Baptist came, he not only looked and acted differently, but spoke a different message. God had chosen him to prepare the way for Jesus, so he did it without any desire for fame or profit. As a result, he got in trouble with King Herod and the following religious leaders/groups:

Sadducees

- A wealthy/upper class Jewish priestly party
- Believed only in the first five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy)
- Profited from business in the temple
- A major party of the Jewish council

Pharisees

- Strict group of religious Jews
- · Believed that salvation came by obedience to the law
- Very influential in the synagogues

Teachers of the Law

- Professional interpreters of the law
- Especially emphasized the traditions
- Many of them were Pharisees

Essenes

- Jewish monastic group
- Withdrew from the world and formed communities of their own



Zealots

- Jewish patriots fiercely determined to end foreign rule in Israel
- Also called "dagger men" because this was their weapon of choice

Your students may not be able to relate to the hardships that John went through during his servitude. In countries where there is freedom of religion, we do not usually experience threats to our lives or open hostility because of our beliefs. However, your students may have had to explain their faith to their friends in social settings. For example, they may have had to decline a birthday party invitation in order to keep the Sabbath.

Remind your students that when we truly follow Christ, we shouldn't feel like we are bound by so many restrictions. It is not a loss to know Christ; rather, it is gain for us to know Christ and be in the true church. We must remember that we are chosen by God to be a separate and holy nation. He protects and blesses us, so we should serve Him wholeheartedly and store up treasures in heaven.



5 Minutes

From last week's lesson, we learned that there was a priest named Zacharias. He and his wife Elizabeth were very old and had no children. They asked God to bless them with a child and continued believing that He would answer their prayer. One day, as Zacharias prepared the incense in the temple, an angel appeared to him. The angel said that God had heard his prayers and that his wife Elizabeth would have a son. He was to name him John. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born.

The angel said that he would be like Elijah, equipped with spirit and power. He would prepare the people for the Messiah's arrival and soften many hearts by turning many from evil to good.

Zacharias did not believe this because he and his wife were both very old, so he asked the angel for a sign to show that this was going to be true. If you were Zacharias, would you believe this?

Then the angel declared, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and unable to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

So Zacharias returned home, unable to speak just as Gabriel had said. Can you imagine not being able to speak for months? What would it be like? How would you communicate with your family and friends?

After 9 to 10 months, Elizabeth gave birth to a baby boy. Word spread quickly around town about how God had blessed the couple in their old age. All of their friends and relatives gathered on the eighth day to name the child. Everyone assumed that they would name the child Zacharias after his father.

Elizabeth spoke up. "No! He is to be called John." They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." They gave Zacharias something to write on and asked him what he wanted to name the boy. To everyone's surprise, he wrote, "His name is John."

Immediately, Zacharias could speak again and was filled with the Holy Spirit. He prophesied and praised God.

"Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David." He turned to John and said, "And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."

For Teachers

If time permits, you can ask your students to pair up or get into groups and ask them to communicate *without* speaking. This will help them imagine how difficult it was for Zacharias during Elizabeth's pregnancy.



persecution: the act of treating others badly because of their religion, gender, or beliefsPharisees: a strict group of religious Jews who believed that salvation came by obedience to the Old Testament law

prophesy: to convey a message regarding God's will or a future event through inspiration from God



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

For Teachers

Print out the Bible Discovery Worksheet for the students before class. Distribute the worksheet to the students now. The students will be referring to it throughout the lesson and filling in the blanks. The answers to the worksheet have been underlined in this section. Pause and allow the students to fill in the blanks before moving on.

Today we will learn about the life of John the Baptist. Did you know that John was the cousin of Jesus Christ? He was the son of Mary's sister, Elizabeth. He was a little older than Jesus. He was Jewish and lived in Israel.

According to the Bible, when John grew up, he left his home and went to live in the wilderness.

Let's open our Bibles to Luke 3:2-3.

John began preaching in the desert of Judea.

One day, the word of God came to John in the desert and instructed him to go out and preach.

"While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

Now let's look at Matthew 3:2-4.

John went around preaching, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

We see in verse 3 that John and his works were prophesied by the prophet Isaiah:

" The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'"

John lived a holy life, but he also lived a simple life. Let's look at Matthew 3:4. "Now John himself was clothed in <u>camel's hair</u>, with a <u>leather belt</u> around his waist; and his food was <u>locusts</u> and <u>wild honey</u>."

FOR TEACHERS

Emphasize that John lived a holy and simple life. Remind them that they shouldn't be so unhappy about not having certain things—toys, books, games, etc. —because a lot of times, it's human nature not to be fully satisfied with what we already have.

Because John was clearly a holy man, a lot of Jewish people in Israel began to pay attention to John's ideas and started to follow him around. From Jerusalem and all of Judea, people came to hear John and ask him how to prepare for the Lord. "Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were <u>baptized</u> by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mt 3:5-6).

He taught people to share and be kind to each other, saying, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"

"Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.

When some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He replied, "Don't force people to give you money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

He baptized those who heard his words and wanted to turn away from evil.

People later began to wonder whether John was the Savior that the prophets had said would come to lead the people of Israel and bring peace back to the world. For hundreds of years, the Jews had been waiting for a Savior.

Luke 3:15-18

Many other people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. "Who are you?" the people asked, gathering around John. "Are you a prophet? Are you the Christ and Savior?" John answered them. "I indeed baptize you with water; but One <u>mightier</u> than I is coming, whose <u>sandal</u> strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the <u>Holy</u> <u>Spirit</u> and <u>fire</u>."

For Teachers

John was receiving praise and people were coming to listen to him. But he kept his humility. His words proved that he was humble in his work for God.

You may also mention that the Jews did not and still do not believe that Jesus Christ was the Savior or Messiah. They consider Christ as a prophet. Even today, the Jews are still waiting for a Savior. Salvation has been opened to everyone now. Today, we are the spiritual Israelites; we are the chosen ones.

Some Sadduccees and Pharisees came to listen to John, too. [See *Background Knowledge for Teachers* section for descriptions.] These Pharisees were men who studied the laws of the Jews very carefully and were proud that they followed them so closely. Because of this, some of them thought that they were better than others. They would challenge and question John about his teachings.

Matthew 3:7-10

When John the Baptist saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance." John was the first to label these people as snakes because they killed others with their venom of hypocrisy and false teachings. "Brood" means offspring/children. John the Baptist was saying that these men were like the offspring of their father—the evil serpent. Therefore, he called them to repent and bear good fruit.

The Baptism of Jesus

Let's look at Matthew 3:13-17.

One day, when John the Baptist was at the Jordan, Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by him.

John said to Jesus, "It is You who should baptize Me." Jesus replied, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

So John agreed. Immediately after Jesus was baptized, as He was coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This affirmed to John that Jesus was the true Savior, the Son of God, who would teach the people and show them God's way.

The Death of John the Baptist

Finally, let's look at Matthew 14:3-12.

John continued to encourage the people and preach the good news to them. But John rebuked Herod because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, so Herod locked John up in prison.

After John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have her," Herod wanted to kill John. However, he was afraid to do so, because the people considered him a prophet.

"But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter.' And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus."

* * * * *

Understanding the Difference Between John's Baptism and Water Baptism

FOR TEACHERS

This is an important part of the lesson. The students should understand the difference between John's baptism of repentance and the water baptism that has the power to wash away sins.

John's baptism is a baptism of <u>repentance</u>. It cannot wash away our <u>sins</u>. The baptism after Christ's death is for the washing away of sins. John's baptism was to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. Since Jesus had not died on the cross yet and had not shed His blood for the sins of man, John's baptism could not wash away sins.

FOR TEACHERS

The following passages help prove that John's baptism was only for the purpose of repentance. Emphasize that those who previously received John's baptism had to be re-baptized after Jesus died for our sins.

Let's read the following passages.

- Acts 19:1-6
- Acts 2:38
- Matthew 28:19

Acts 19:1-6

"And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.'

And he said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?'

So they said, 'Into John's baptism.'

Then Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with a baptism of <u>repentance</u>, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.'

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the <u>Lord Jesus</u>. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.'"

Acts 2:38

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Matthew 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Since Jesus had not died yet and the Holy Spirit had not yet descended during John's ministry, his baptisms could not wash away sins. Therefore, in the verses we just read in Acts 19:1-6, those who had received John's baptism were re-baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

In Acts 2:38, Peter replied, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

The water baptism received after <u>Jesus Christ</u> died and shed His <u>blood</u> has the power to wash away our sins.

For Teachers

Emphasize that after John performed baptism, he did not say that the baptized person's sins were forgiven. This could *only* be possible with the blood of a sinless man, Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

When performed correctly, baptism carries the marvelous power to remove all sins because Jesus already died on the cross and shed His blood for us.

* * * * *

Why Did Jesus Need to Be Baptized?

Have you ever wondered why Jesus needed to be baptized? That is a very good question. It is true that Jesus did *not* need to be baptized. He is God after all, and is without sin.

Jesus actually answered the question for us in Matthew 3:15. "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." What did Jesus mean by this?

First, Jesus did not say that He was receiving baptism in order to *attain* or to have righteousness. Jesus was already righteous and without sin. He was baptized to *fulfill* righteousness. Fulfill means to complete and to bring to fullness.

It's important to remember that Jesus was not baptized in order to receive forgiveness for His sins.

Jesus' baptism was a very important moment in His life and ministry. It marked the beginning of His ministry.

His baptism also showed His <u>humility</u> and <u>submission</u> to God and to the ministry of John the Baptist. Jesus still had a fleshly body, which showed the humanity of Jesus.

Jesus constantly gave us examples to follow during His time on earth. Baptism was one of these. Even though Jesus didn't need to be forgiven, He received water baptism to set an example for us. He did not ask us to do something He was unwilling to do. Rather, He asked all who would follow Him to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).

Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

[Hand out the Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs worksheet to the students before you begin. Allow the students to fill it out as you go through the verses.]

Water Baptism is the sacrament for the forgiveness of sins and rebirth.

After we're baptized, we must strive to live a life worthy of God's grace and say no to sin and yes to God's will. We must be separate and holy from the other people in the world. We can't do certain things that they do.

The Importance of Water Baptism

We should receive water baptism in order to...

1. Be Cleansed

"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 2:38)

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)

2. Be Saved

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21)

3. Enter God's Kingdom

"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" (John 3:5)

4. Receive a New Life

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

5. Put On Christ

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

Baptism Requirements

The baptist must be one who has received the Holy Spirit. In addition to adults, infants of believing parents or families may also be baptized (Lk 2:21; Acts 10:44-48; 16:15). The baptism must be administered in the following manner (Mt 3:16; Acts 2:38; Jn 20:21-23):

- In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 19:5; 22:16)
- With the head of the baptism recipient bowed and facing downward (Rom 6:5, 8)
- With complete immersion of the baptism recipient (Acts 8:38)
- In natural living water, such as seas, rivers, or springs (Zech 13:1; Mt 3:13; Acts 8:38)

Check for Understanding

- **1. What was John the Baptist's mission?** To prepare the way for the Lord by preaching the good news of the coming Savior and baptizing.
- 2. What did John the Baptist eat and wear in the wilderness? He ate locusts and wild honey and wore clothes of camel hair and a leather belt.
- 3. King _____ (Herod) threw John the Baptist into _____ (prison) because John rebuked him about Herodias, his brother's wife.
- **4. What happened during the baptism of Jesus?** "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Mt 3:16-17)
- 5. John the Baptist told people _
 - a. To be baptized and to worship him because he was the Christ
 - *b.* That someone more powerful was going to come and that He would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire c. That the world was going to end soon
- 6. What happened to John the Baptist in the end? He was beheaded.
- 7. Who prophesied about John the Baptist? Prophet Isaiah.

\hat{V} Life Application

10 Minutes

5 Minutes

As members of True Jesus Church, we know that baptism is just as important now as it was in biblical times. By studying 1 John 5:8, we know that "there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one." When we get baptized, not only is the Spirit presiding over the baptism, but Jesus' blood is also present in the water. The following testimony demonstrates that there truly is power and the remission of sins during baptism.

I Witnessed the Lord's Blood

April 9th, 1989 was a day in my life that I'll never forget. That afternoon, the True Jesus Church in Ma-Dou prepared to baptize 14 truth seekers at the conclusion of an evangelistic event. The baptism was to be held in the ocean at a nearby beach. Because I had heard about the trick of using red ink, I tagged along out of curiosity to watch the baptism. When everyone had finished singing hymns, I left the group and went further up shore. I found a nice open spot where I could closely observe every detail.

After those who were to receive baptism changed into white robes, they began to walk into the ocean one by one. The baptist, Pastor Chen, was holding a brand new white towel without any sign of red ink in his hands. As the first sister began to be baptized, the seawater around her suddenly changed into a deep shade of red. Were my eyes playing tricks on me? The rest of the ocean appeared a deep turquoise blue against the vast blue sky. How strange! How was it that only the water surrounding her remained deep red?

I rubbed my eyes and watched intently as the second, third, and succeeding persons were baptized. Remarkably, this vision continued with each baptism. More interestingly, when an infant was immersed in the ocean, the color turned into a lighter shade of red. It then immediately changed back to deep red when it was an adult's turn. After the fourteenth person was baptized, the crimson color disappeared and the water was restored to its former turquoise blue.

At that moment, it dawned on me that the Lord Jesus had opened my eyes and allowed me to witness how His precious blood cleanses away all our sins in order for us to inherit God's kingdom. Then I lifted up my head and cried out to God, "Oh, Lord, forgive me! I now know You love the people of the world deeply. For our sake You were crucified and bled to wash the world's sins away. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved." On the way home, I couldn't help shedding many tears of thanksgiving. On the thirtieth day of the same month, I received the baptism of regeneration in Tainan, Taiwan.

Since then, I've come to realize that the key to the grace of the Lord is whether one believes. It is my sincere hope that through this personal experience of mine, everyone will come to know that the True Jesus Church indeed has God's abidance. May all the glory be given to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. Amen.

1. From this testimony, we know that the blood of Christ is present in the water during baptism. How should we live our lives after we are baptized? Give some examples.

We should be separate from the others in the world and strive for holiness and purity. This means that we must keep God's commandments, even if it means refraining from certain activities or celebrations.

2. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to this world to die for us. List the things that you are thankful for. Make a determination to thank God in your prayer every night before you go to bed. Answers may vary.

10-15 Minutes

Activity **Bible Bookmark**

Objective: To remind students about the importance of water baptism and the signifance of Jesus' baptism.

Materials

Construction paper

- Scissors
- Markers

- Single hole punch, optional
- Ribbon, optional

- Instructions
- 1. Measure a rectangle that is 4" wide by 5" tall on the construction paper. Cut it out and fold it in half. It should be 2" x 5" when folded in half.
- 2. On one side, ask the students to write these two verses: Luke 3:22 and John 3:16.
- 3. On the other side, list out the 5 points about the importance of water baptism from the Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs worksheet. They should include the corresponding references (book, chapter, verse).
- 4. Allow students to freely decorate the bookmark (glitter is not recommended, as it will come off in the Bible).
- 5. (Optional) Punch a hole at the top of the bookmark and attach a ribbon.

0	0
"And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove	<u>The Importance of Water</u> <u>Baptism</u>
upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved	1. To Be Cleansed (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
Son; in You I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)	2. To Be Saved (1 Peter 3:21; Mark 16:16)
"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have evertasting life." (John 3:16)	3. To Enter God's Kingdom (John 3:5) 4. To Receive a New Life (Romans 6:4) 5. To Put On Christ (Galatians 3:27)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

- 1. To prepare the way for the Lord by preaching the good news of the coming Savior and baptizing.
- 2. mightier, sandal, Holy Spirit, fire
- 3. "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."" (Mt 3:16-17)
- 4. We should be separated from sin in the world and strive for holiness and purity. This means that we shouldn't do things that are not right in the eyes of God. We must keep God's commandments and love God with all our hearts.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1. John lived a simple life.	
Matthew 3:4	
"Now John himself was clothed in ar	round
his waist; and his food was and"	
2. The work of John the Baptist.	
Matthew 3:5-6	
"Then, all, and all the region around the we	ent out
to him and were by him in the, confessing their sins."	
3. John shows his humility.	
Luke 3:16	
"But One than I is coming, whose strap I am not worthy to loose.	. He
will baptize you with the and"	
Understanding the Difference Between John's Baptism and Water Baptism	
4. John's baptism is a baptism of It cannot wash away our	
5. Those who were baptized by John needed to be baptized again after Jesus died for us. Acts 19:4-5	5 records:
"Then Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with a baptism of, saying to the	e people
that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.'	
When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the	
6. The water baptism received after died and shed His has the wash away our sins.	power to
7. Jesus' baptism also showed His and to God and to the ministry of	of John
the Baptist. Jesus still had a fleshly body, which showed the humanity of Jesus.	
	_
ONLY WATER BAPTISM HAS TH	E

POWER TO WASH AWAY SINS.

Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

Water baptism is required for the remission of sins.

John the Baptist was an important, yet humble, worker of God. In your own words, describe what being humble means.	What do you think the opposite of being humble is? Can you describe it?

The Importance of Water Baptism

Read the verses below and match the verses to each reason for why we should receive baptism. Some reasons may have more than one verse.

Acts 2:38
1 Peter 3:21
Mark 16:16
Acts 22:16
John 3:5
Galatians 3:27
Romans 6:4

1. To Be Cleansed
2. To Be Saved
3. To Enter God's Kingdom
4. To Receive a New Life
5. To Put On Christ

Testimony

I Witnessed the Lord's Blood

April 9th, 1989 was a day in my life that I'll never forget. That afternoon, the True Jesus Church in Ma-Dou prepared to baptize 14 truth seekers at the conclusion of an evangelistic event. The baptism was to be held in the ocean at a nearby beach. Because I had heard about the trick of using red ink, I tagged along out of curiosity to watch the baptism. When everyone had finished singing hymns, I left the group and went further up shore. I found a nice open spot where I could closely observe every detail.

After those who were to receive baptism changed into white robes, they began to walk into the ocean one by one. The baptist, Pastor Chen, was holding a brand new white towel without any sign of red ink in his hands. As the first sister began to be baptized, the seawater around her suddenly changed into a deep shade of red. Were my eyes playing tricks on me? The rest of the ocean appeared a deep turquoise blue against the vast blue sky. How strange! How was it that only the water surrounding her remained deep red?

I rubbed my eyes and watched intently as the second, third, and succeeding persons were baptized. Remarkably, this vision continued with each baptism. More interestingly, when an infant was immersed in the ocean, the color turned into a lighter shade of red. It then immediately changed back to deep red when it was an adult's turn. After the fourteenth person was baptized, the crimson color disappeared and the water was restored to its former turquoise blue.

At that moment, it dawned on me that the Lord Jesus had opened my eyes and allowed me to witness how His precious blood cleanses away all our sins in order for us to inherit God's kingdom. Then I lifted up my head and cried out to God, "Oh, Lord, forgive me! I now know You love the people of the world deeply. For our sake You were crucified and bled to wash the world's sins away. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved." On the way home, I couldn't help shedding many tears of thanksgiving. On the thirtieth day of the same month, I received the baptism of regeneration in Tainan, Taiwan.

Since then, I've come to realize that the key to the grace of the Lord is whether one believes. It is my sincere hope that through this personal experience of mine, everyone will come to know that the True Jesus Church indeed has God's abidance. May all the glory be given to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. Amen.

1. From this testimony, we know that the blood of Christ is present in the water during baptism. How should we live our lives after we are baptized? Give some examples.

2. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to this world to die for us. List the things that you are thankful for. Make a determination to thank God in your prayer every night before you go to bed.

E2 Year 1 Book 1 Lesson 4—John the Baptist Prepares the Way and Jesus' Baptism Homework Assignment

Name: Parent signature:								ture:	Date:		
Weekly Bible Reading: Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading. Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.							mplete	What I Learned from the Bible This Week			
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat				
Read									2		
Pray											

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. (Mark 16:15)

Instructions: Answer the following questions or fill in the blanks.

1. What was John the Baptist's mission?

- 2. This verse emphasizes the difference between John's baptism and water baptism.
- "I indeed baptize you with water; but One ______ than I is coming, whose ______ strap

I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the _____ and _____." (Lk 3:16)

- 3. What happened during the baptism of Jesus?
- 4. How should we live our lives after baptism?