

## **What About BAPTISM?**

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There is some misunderstanding and confusion about what Jesus Christ teaches about Baptism so let's go right to a rock solid translation of God's word and read what the Bible teaches about this important aspect of the Christian life. The Bible describes two types of baptism... the first is water baptism. The second is baptism of the Holy Spirit. These are two separate and vital events in the life of a follower of Jesus Christ and they both occur after the new birth experience—after you have been born again. It is also not uncommon for these events to occur simultaneously if the person has the correct understanding and has prepared their heart. There is no time limit about how long after one is saved that they should become baptized in water... or in the Holy Spirit. But let me add from decades of experience. The sooner these events occur after being born again, the better. By that I mean, the only reason to wait for either experience in my opinion, is that the believer should have a general understanding of what both baptisms are, and a willingness to proceed knowing the cost and benefits of each. In this newsletter I shall discuss the teachings of our Lord about water baptism only. I look forward to teaching about the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the near future. By the way, Holy Spirit baptism is also called “being filled with the Holy Spirit.” In upcoming teachings, either in an eNewsletter, through WEB-TV, or Video, I look forward to sharing how wonderful, powerful and amazing the infilling of Holy Spirit is and also teach on the most common misunderstandings. For now, why not get your Bible out and let's get started sorting out what and why Jesus teaches His followers to be baptized in water.

## **WATER BAPTISM?**

Baptism by water symbolizes a death, burial and resurrection. Water baptism is not only momentous to the person being baptized, but it also gives witness to his or her family and friends about what happened when they accepted the Lord Jesus. Baptism confirms and strengthens the new believer's commitment to live a life for God. It can also give a new Christian the opportunity to openly testify to others of their experience of having surrendered to Christ. (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:4-6). When you understand the meaning of the original Greek verb baptidzo, the importance of water baptism is clear. It means “to immerse.” Immersion brings the image or picture of burial. Though some churches sprinkle or pour water in the baptismal ceremony, it is when a believer is completely submerged and then raised up out of the water that the significance is more clearly understood. Being immersed in water is the symbol that the old person you were before you accepted Christ is dead and buried. But then the new man is raised up out of the grave, reborn to live a new life by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a wondrous experience and has often been a life-changing event in the lives of many. Now hold on because this is important. Without first making Jesus Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead, water baptism would not have purpose. Water baptism is not the act that saves or makes you a Christian according to scripture. Not at all. What cleanses us from sin is not the water. It's the precious blood of the Lamb. The blood that Jesus shed on the cross is what saves and that alone. (see Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:22; Revelation 1:5). If you feel you've never properly buried your old, sinful nature and dedicated your whole self to the Lord, don't wait any longer—find a place to participate in water baptism! And if you're not sure you have received the free gift of salvation...watch this video called, “Jesus said, You Must Be Born Again.”

## **DO I NEED TO BE BAPTIZED TO GO TO HEAVEN?**

As important as water baptism is, we know from multiple scriptures that baptism is not what saves a person. So the answer to this question is “no.” What does save a person is the new

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birth resulting from faith in the shed blood of Jesus, repentance of sin, confession of Jesus as Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:22; Revelation 1:5; Romans 10:9-10). Some have asked, "If you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, but die prior to baptism... will you still go to heaven? The answer is "yes," absolutely. Remember the thief on the cross next to Jesus who accepted that Jesus was God's Son? Jesus told him, "Today, you will be with me in Paradise." This man did not have time to be baptized but Jesus let him know that he was going to be with Jesus after he died. Some have thought Acts 2:38 tied water baptism to salvation because it says, "You must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

But let's look at this in the context of what was happening. The Apostle Peter had just preached a sermon on one of the most dynamic subjects ever. He preached about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. This sermon was so power-packed that the Bible says it cut to the hearts of the hearers. Acts 2:41 says that they which gladly received His Word were baptized, and 3,000 souls were added to the Church that day. It was believing the Word that was preached which got the people born again. It was not water baptism. While water baptism is not necessary to enter Heaven when your life on earth is over, it does play a significant role in the life of every believer. As stated above, the baptismal waters represent a burial ground. They are a physical point of contact to help you release your faith and grasp with your mind what has already happened to you on the inside. When you invited Jesus into your life, you accepted by faith what He did for you by His shed blood.

When you are immersed in water during baptism, you should see your old nature as being dead, buried and gone. When you are raised out of the water, you should see yourself raised up as a new creation, with a brand new life. In other words, baptism is the outward sign that you are now dead to sin and alive to God! (Romans 6:11-13). "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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: 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." (Romans 6:4-6).

The person being baptized portrays that even though Jesus knew no sin, He took sin's penalty in His own body and died in place of the believer. Jesus was then raised from death the same way the believer receives his new life—by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now he is a new man, raised up to live a life of overcoming sin by the power of the Spirit (Romans 6:10)! If you have been saved but have not been water baptized, I encourage you to consider engaging in this powerful testimony of your faith. As you declare outwardly your identification with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, this symbol will also be a significant reminder to you of what's happened in your life, strengthening you in your Christian journey! You can do it. With God Nothing Is Impossible.

Always your brother,  
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