

WATER BAPTISM



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. A SIGN OF REPENTANCE | 1 |
| 2. FULFILLING ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS | 5 |
| 3. A TESTIMONY THAT YOU ARE HIS DISCIPLE | 10 |
| 4. A TESTIMONY OF YOUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST | 14 |
| 5. A PROCLAMATION OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION
WITH JESUS | 18 |
| 6. THE RESPONSE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE | 22 |
| 7. ANSWERS TO A FEW COMMON QUESTIONS | 25 |

INTRODUCTION

Water baptism is an important experience in our journey as believers in Jesus Christ. All of us who have made the decision to believe and follow Jesus Christ will take this important step at some point. Water baptism is a command given by the Lord Jesus Christ to all who choose to follow Him. Hence, this command must be obeyed. This is a simple study from God's Word to help you understand the meaning and significance of water baptism as you prepare to be baptized in water.

We cover 6 important truths concerning water baptism.

- 1) A Sign of Repentance
- 2) Fulfilling All Righteousness
- 3) A Testimony That You Are His Disciple
- 4) A Testimony of Your Faith in Jesus Christ
- 5) A Proclamation of Your Identification with Jesus Christ
- 6) The Response of a Good Conscience

We also answer some common questions that people ask about water baptism.

God Bless!

Ashish Raichur

1

A SIGN OF REPENTANCE

In the New Testament, the first person who came announcing water baptism and baptizing people was John the Baptist. John came as a forerunner to Jesus Christ. His assignment was to prepare people for the ministry of Jesus and to introduce Jesus Christ to the world.

Mark 1:4,5

⁴ John came baptizing (Greek “*baptize*”) in the wilderness and preaching a baptism (Greek “*baptisma*”) of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵ Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance. This means that those who repented came, and were then baptized by John.

The words “repent” and “repentance” come from the Greek word “*metanoia*,” which means “a change of mind or purpose,” and always involves a change for the better. In the New Testament, repentance has to do with a change of mind and purpose from our own sin and sinful ways and a turning to God, choosing to embrace His ways.

Repentance as it was first introduced and preached by John, was accompanied by the following:

- The confession of sins (Mark 1:5). This meant that they recognized and acknowledged their wrongdoing before God.

- Bearing *fruits worthy of repentance* (Luke 3:8). This meant that their repentance was evidenced through a change in their way of life (Luke 3:11-14).

Hence, it was first a change in mind (way of thinking), which then resulted in a change in life (way of living).

The word “baptize” or “baptizing” comes from the Greek word “*baptizo*,” which means “to dip, to immerse, to submerge, to overwhelm, to cleanse by submerging.” Baptism, which is the act of baptizing, comes from Greek “*baptisma*” simply meaning “immersion,” “submersion.” It is clear, both from the meaning of the words as well as from the practice of baptism in the New Testament and the spiritual significance of water baptism (which we will read later in this study), that when a person is baptized in water, the person is completely immersed or submerged in water. **New Testament water baptism is not a sprinkling of water on a person but a full immersion of the person in water.**

Repent and believe

The message of repentance was and is accompanied by an invitation into the Kingdom of God by believing in the Good News of the Kingdom.

Mark 1:14,15

¹⁴Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

As the apostle Paul explained later to the people at Ephesus:

Acts 19:4

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

So, first we have repentance, which is a change in mind and purpose. We realize that our own ways are doomed. Going the way of sin, the way of the world, the way of darkness or whatever we were following is not taking us into life. We have a change of mind about our ways. We then choose to believe in Jesus Christ, receive the free gift of salvation He provides for us and enter into His glorious Kingdom of Light. We now align our thinking according to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. We repent and believe.

Repent, believe and be baptized

Mark 16:15,16

¹⁵ **And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.**

¹⁶ **He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.**

Acts 2:38,41

³⁸ **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.**

⁴¹ **Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.**

Once we have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, repented and believed in Jesus Christ, we are then ready to be baptized. Repentance and believing in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the salvation He provides is the prerequisite for water baptism.

When we repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are saved from sin and its consequences. Instead of being eternally separated from God in hell, we have been made children of God, saved from eternal damnation, offered salvation and made part of His Kingdom. We are saved by grace

through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8). Eternal life is a *gift of God* and not earned by anything we do (Romans 6:23). When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are saved (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:13).

Water baptism is something that follows our experience of salvation. It is an expression of the salvation we have received having repented and believed in Jesus Christ.

Reflection



- 1) What is the meaning of “repentance”?
- 2) What is the meaning of the word “baptize”?
- 3) What must happen in the person before a person is baptized in water?
- 4) Have you met the prerequisites for water baptism?

2

FULFILLING ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

After John the Baptist began his ministry announcing the baptism of repentance, it is very interesting to note that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God who became Man, Himself came to John the Baptist to be baptized in water. The Lord Jesus had no sin to repent of. He was sinless and perfect, living every moment in obedience to the Father. He was the One, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the whole world. Then why did Jesus still get baptized in water?

We see two reasons given in Scripture as to why Jesus was baptized in water.

This is the One

John 1:29-34

²⁹ **The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

³⁰ **This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’**

³¹ **I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.”**

³² **And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.**

³³ **I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’**

³⁴ **And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”**

John the Baptist was to point out the Messiah, the Savior of the world. God had given John the instruction to baptize in water, not only as a sign of repentance, but also that through this the Lamb of God would be revealed to Israel and to the world. In addition to Him coming and being baptized in water, the Spirit would descend and remain on Him. This would be a sign to John that *“This is He.”* So, this is the first reason Jesus was baptized in water. God the Father had given this as a sign to John, so that John could point out and announce that Jesus is the Son of God.

This was from John’s perspective.

It is also interesting to point out that Jesus was baptized by immersion. Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan and it is obvious that Jesus was immersed or submerged into the water. This can be seen readily from Matthew’s record, *“When He had been baptized (i.e., immersed), 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”* (Matthew 3:16).

To fulfill all righteousness

It is also interesting to see things from Jesus’ perspective. Why did Jesus go to be baptized by John the Baptist? What motivated Jesus to do this even though Jesus fully knew that John was preaching a baptism of repentance, and Jesus Himself had nothing to repent of?

Here is what happened as Jesus approached John the Baptist in the river Jordan.

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

16 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.

17 And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

John the Baptist seemed to have an unusual experience as Jesus came forward to be baptized in water. Suddenly, there seemed to be a recognition that “This is the One,” just by seeing Him come toward John. This was unusual. John had not yet seen the Holy Spirit descending like a dove. The voice from heaven had not yet thundered. And yet, John knew this was not just another person coming to be baptized. This was the Lamb of God, the One who was the entire reason for John’s ministry. John knew that this was the One.

So, John was reluctant to baptize Jesus. But Jesus requested for John the Baptist to baptize Him so that they could “*fulfill all righteousness,*” do all that was right in the eyes of the Father, do all that the Father wanted done at that moment.

There was something about water baptism that was “bigger” than repentance from sin. It was something even the sinless Son of God, the Lamb of God desired to step into. It was an expression of the will of God being released on the earth. Everyone who would say “Yes” to the will of God, to the Kingdom of God being released on the earth, would step into water baptism as an expression of their “Yes” to God.

Like Jesus, when you are baptized in water, you are fulfilling all righteousness. You are doing what is right in the

eyes of the Father. You are doing the will of God. You are saying “Yes” to the will of God being done in your life and to the Kingdom of God being released on the earth through you.

God rewards obedience to His will. Your obedience to God in water baptism will position you to receive His rewards. God is a “*Rewarder*” of “*those who diligently seek Him*” (Hebrews 11:6).

Rejecting the will of God

When John the Baptist came preaching his message of baptism of repentance, the common people received his message gladly. However, the religious leaders, the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes and lawyers refused to receive what John the Baptist was preaching.

So, when Jesus questioned the religious leaders about the baptism of John, they refused to answer and just said, “*We do not know.*”

Mark 11:30-33a

³⁰**The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me.”**

³¹**And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’**

³²**But if we say, ‘From men’ “—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed.**

³³**So they answered and said to Jesus, “We do not know ...**

Their refusal to accept John’s message, which was a call to repentance and to being baptized as a sign of repentance, was a rejection of the will of God.

Luke 7:29,30

²⁹**And when all the people heard *Him*, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.**

³⁰ But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

Today, when we repent, believe in Jesus Christ and are baptized, we are doing the will of God. We are accepting God's will for us. We are completing all righteousness, doing all that is right in the sight of God. We are saying "Yes" to the will of God being done in our lives. We are saying "Yes" to the Kingdom of God being released on the earth through us.

Reflection



- 1) Why did Jesus go to be baptized in water by John the Baptist?
- 2) Based on what you learned in this chapter, when you are baptized in water, what are you expressing?

3

A TESTIMONY THAT YOU ARE HIS DISCIPLE

The invitation to be a disciple

During His earthly ministry, great crowds came to listen to Jesus and to receive healing and miracles for their needs. The Lord Jesus challenged people to not just listen to Him and receive miracles, but He gave the call for people to choose to become His disciples. He taught people what it meant to be His disciple and what it would cost them. It was not going to be easy but the invitation was open. Anyone could choose to be His disciple.

Here are a few things Jesus said on what it means to be His disciple.

- 1) The goal for all disciples was to become just like their Teacher and Master, Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:25).
- 2) Disciples must be willing to face ridicule, false accusation and persecution just as their Master did (Matthew 10:25).
- 3) Disciples are not greater or above their Master (Matthew 10:24), which means disciples must walk the same path their Master walked. There are no shortcuts for disciples.
- 4) When disciples are perfectly and thoroughly trained, then they will be like their Master (Luke 6:40).
- 5) Disciples believe and live by their Master's Word (John 8:31).

- 6) The love that disciples have for their Master must supersede their love for any other earthly relationship (Luke 14:26).
- 7) Disciples must carry their cross daily (Luke 14:27). The cross represents a place of suffering, separation and sacrifice.
- 8) Disciples must forsake all for the sake of their Master (Luke 14:33). This means the disciples' love for their Master is greater than their love or affection for anything or anyone else in this world.
- 9) The way others will know we are disciples of Jesus is by the love we show through our lives (John 13:35).
- 10) Disciples will *bear much fruit* so that the Father will be glorified through their lives (John 15:8).
- 11) Disciples will do the works of healing, miracles and deliverance just as Jesus did (Matthew 10:1; John 14:12).

Water baptism for disciples

During His earthly ministry, the disciples of Jesus baptized those people who received the message and ministry of Jesus Christ and were ready to follow Jesus. It was not an easy decision to make as the religious leaders were taking notice and were angry with Jesus, His teaching and ministry. Nevertheless, people came to Jesus, and His disciples baptized them in water.

John 3:22

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.

John 4:1-3

¹ **Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John**

² **(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),**

³ **He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.**

So, the 12 apostles (or disciples) of Jesus were already familiar with the practice of baptizing those people who received the message that Jesus preached and chose to follow Him as His disciples. Also, please keep in mind that this was water baptism by immersion as practiced by John the Baptist since these disciples and Jesus Himself were baptized by John.

Water baptism and the Great Commission

After His resurrection, just before His ascension, the Lord Jesus gave what we commonly refer to as the “Great Commission.”

Matthew 28:19,20

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,**
²⁰ **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.**

The Great Commission is the Lord’s command to go and make disciples of all nations. The words translated “*make disciples*” is the Greek word “*matheteuo*,” which means “to become a pupil,” “a learner,” “one who follows one’s teaching”; someone willing to learn, be instructed, taught and trained in the words of the Master to be like the Master. It indicates thought accompanied by endeavor. As we have seen earlier, a disciple is one who has made a choice to become like Jesus and to observe (follow) all that the Lord Jesus has commanded us. Included in this command to make disciples, is the command to baptize them (those who choose to become disciples) in water. We are to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, thus identifying with the God of the Bible.

Water baptism is therefore a testimony to all, that you have made the choice to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. You have decided to go on this journey to learn, be taught and trained, so that you can become more and more like Him. You

have decided that you are willing to go through this process even though there may be ridicule, persecution, suffering, sacrifice and so on. You have made the decision to follow Jesus Christ as a disciple, and there is no turning back.

Disciples baptize disciples

As a side note, we point out that, once a person decides to become a disciple of Jesus Christ and has been baptized in water, that person can share about Jesus Christ with others, make disciples and baptize them in water. Disciples can baptize new people who choose to become disciples of Jesus Christ. For example, Philip was a helper (deacon) in the church at Jerusalem. He went and preached about Jesus in Samaria and he baptized these new believers in Samaria (Acts 8:12). Philip also baptized the Ethiopian man who was the financial officer of the queen of Ethiopia (Acts 8:37,38).

It was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias who baptized Saul, who later became the apostle Paul (Acts 9:10,18).

Reflection



- 1) Review the 11 statements made in this chapter on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Ponder on what these statements mean to you personally in your life.
- 2) Have you made your personal choice to believe in Jesus Christ and to follow Him as a disciple?

4

A TESTIMONY OF YOUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

After the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven, the 120 disciples received the empowering of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. They began preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ to people, starting from Jerusalem and then on to other cities.

The Good News of Jesus Christ

The Good News of Jesus Christ is that Jesus came to be the Savior of the world from sin and its consequences. Jesus Christ died in our place taking upon Himself the punishment for our sins. He broke the power of sin, satan, sickness, set us free from the powers of darkness and gave us the free gift of salvation. He died on the cross, was buried, rose up on the third day and showed Himself alive to about 500 eyewitnesses before He ascended into heaven. Anyone can receive the free gift of salvation that Jesus Christ gives by repenting and believing in Him. When we embrace Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are born again, made children of God, brought out of darkness into His glorious Kingdom and so much more. This is the Good News! Religion cannot do this for us. We cannot get this by our own piety, good works or religious efforts. It's a free gift—all we can do is receive it through faith.

If you believe in Jesus, come and be baptized

What we see recorded for us in the book of Acts is that as the

Good News of Jesus was preached, the invitation was given for people to believe in Jesus Christ. And then, all who believed in Jesus were invited to profess (make a public declaration, a public testimony) of their faith in Jesus Christ by being baptized in water.

Here are some of the recorded instances in the book of Acts when people were baptized in water.

- believers on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41)
- believers in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:12,13)
- Saul (who later became Paul) (Acts 9:17,18; Acts 22:16)
- the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:47,48)
- believers at Philippi (Acts 16:14,15,31-34)
- believers at Corinth (Acts 18:7,8)
- believers at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-5)

A public confession

For many of these people in the Early Church, being baptized in water was not an easy decision. Many of them were persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. But they took their stand of faith boldly, knowing in whom they believed.

The Lord Jesus had promised that if we confess Him before people here on earth, He will confess or acknowledge us before the Father that we are His own!

Matthew 10:32,33

³² **“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.**

³³ **But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.**

Water baptism is a public confession of your faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord of your life. It is you acknowledging, testifying and declaring before people that you believe in Jesus Christ to save you from sin and have received His free gift of salvation.

Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus

As recorded for us in the book of Acts, once people believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, they were baptized in water, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Here are a few of these references.

Acts 2:38

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 8:16

For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 10:48

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Acts 19:5

When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, it means that you are identifying yourself with Him. You are publicly identifying with Jesus. This also has spiritual significance, which we will explain in the next chapter.

The use of the term “in the name of the Lord Jesus” also denotes by whose authority and as who’s representative we are doing this. So, when someone baptizes “in the name of the Lord

Jesus,” it means that by the authority Jesus Christ has given to us through the Great Commission (see the previous chapter), we are administering this water baptism to the new disciple. We are doing it in His name, on His behalf, as His representative fully authorized and empowered by Him to do so.

Hence, when we baptize people, we say, “In Jesus’ name, I baptize you, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” This means we are doing it with the authority Jesus Christ has given us, and we are baptizing this person, who through Jesus Christ is identifying with the God of the Bible.

Reflection



- 1) Have you understood and do you fully believe in the Gospel (the Good News) of Jesus Christ?
- 2) Are you ready to publicly acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

5

A PROCLAMATION OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS

There are two practices the Lord Jesus has placed in the Church—water baptism and the Lord’s Table. Both are powerful ways to proclaim what Jesus Christ accomplished for us through His death and resurrection. As directed by the Lord, the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:26, “*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.*” So, when we partake of the Lord’s Table, we are announcing, declaring and making a proclamation of our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and His second coming.

Similarly, water baptism is a proclamation of our identification with Jesus. We are announcing and proclaiming to the visible and invisible worlds what has happened to us because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross. This is a spiritual reality in us. This has already happened to us. **Water baptism is the symbolic expression and a powerful proclamation of what has already taken place to us in the spirit.**

Here is what the apostle Paul states,

Romans 6:3,4

³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

⁴ 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.

Colossians 2:12

buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

When we were born again, God brought us into Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). We are in Him, spiritually one with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). The Holy Spirit put us into Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Spiritually, we are already in Christ. Not only that, because we “are” in Him, we were also identified with His death (crucifixion), burial, resurrection, ascension and seating. This is called identification.

- **Identified in His death (crucifixion):** When Christ died, we died with Him. The old sinful nature, “*the old man was crucified with Him*” (Romans 6:6). We no longer have an old sinful nature inside. We are now *partakers of the divine nature* (2 Peter 1:4). The power of sin over our lives has been broken and we are no longer slaves of sin (Romans 6:14).
- **Identified in His burial:** When Christ was buried, we were buried. This means we are separated from the old life. The old has gone. The new has come. We are a new creation and the old has no more claim over us or any part in us (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- **Identified in His resurrection:** When Christ was resurrected, we were raised up with Him (Ephesians 2:5). This means we are brought from death to life, from the power of satan unto God (Colossians 1:13). We now walk in a new life in the Kingdom of God. We have a new way of living. The powers of darkness have no hold on us.
- **Identified in His ascension:** When Christ ascended, we ascended with Him (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1-3). We, therefore, set our affection on things above. We live with a

renewed mind where we see life from heaven's perspective. Our life is hidden with Christ in God.

- **Identified in His seating:** When Christ was seated on His throne at the right hand of the Father, we were made to sit together with Him (Ephesians 2:6). We are seated in a place of authority and dominion in Jesus Christ with Satan and all his demonic hosts underneath our feet.

Water baptism is a symbolic expression of all this. When you go under water (immersed, submerged), it symbolizes your death (crucifixion) and burial with Jesus Christ. When you come up out of the water, it symbolizes your resurrection, ascension and seating with Jesus Christ.

When you are baptized in water, you are making a proclamation to the visible and invisible worlds that you have been spiritually identified with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension and seating. It is a symbolic action and is very powerful. At the moment of water baptism, you can expect the power of the cross to be administered to you through the work of the Holy Spirit. If there is anything of the past life (sins, addictions, shame, trauma, etc.) taunting you and threatening to hold on to you, boldly announce to it that its power over you has been broken. Expect your proclamation in water baptism to cause a breaking of all and anything of the old life.

The apostle Paul stated that we, therefore, have “put on Christ.”

Galatians 3:27

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

We are so one with Jesus that when people see us, they should see Jesus. We are to be clothed with Him. The

Holy Spirit transforms us day by day into His image so that progressively, people will see Christ in us because we have put on Christ.

Reflection



You have been spiritually identified with Jesus Christ in

- 1) His death (crucifixion) (Romans 6:6),
- 2) His burial (Romans 6:4),
- 3) His resurrection (Ephesians 2:5),
- 4) His ascension (Ephesians 2:6) and
- 5) His seating (Ephesians 2:6).

Based on what has been stated in this chapter, reflect on what each of these five aspects means to you personally.

6

THE RESPONSE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE

The apostle Peter mentions Noah's ark in which eight people were saved from the flood waters. He then points to water baptism as being symbolic of this—that we too have experienced salvation through faith in Jesus Christ who has been raised from the dead and are seated at the highest place in heaven.

1 Peter 3:20-22

²⁰ **who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.**

²¹ **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,**

²² **who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.**

As Peter mentions water baptism, he points out that baptism is not the outward washing that removes dirt from our skin, but to the fact that our conscience has now been made clean (washed) and is good toward God. This of course has happened through faith in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, His blood washed and continues to wash our sins away. We have been made the righteousness of God in Christ. We are clean in His eyes, accepted in His presence and beloved of God. Our

conscience is good and clean toward God. There is no sense of guilt, shame, accusation or condemnation within us that hinders us from relating to God in any way. Only Jesus Christ can bring us into such a relationship with God. **Now you are baptized in water because your conscience has been made good and clean toward God through Jesus Christ. Water baptism is the answer or response of someone who has a good conscience toward God.**

We maintain a good conscience before God through faith in Christ's finished work for us and obedience to Him in daily life.

1 John 3:20-22

²⁰ For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

When our conscience is clear, our heart does not condemn us, and we are confident before God. If our heart condemns us, that is, if our conscience is not clear, there is something "accusing" us inside. God knows all things, so we just need to confess, acknowledge and ask for the cleansing of His blood over any known and unknown sins as instructed in 1 John 1:9. We then continue to walk before God with a clean, clear and good conscience through faith in Christ. We continue to walk in obedience to Him, doing what is pleasing in His sight. We maintain a good conscience before God.

Reflection



- 1) As discussed in this chapter, what does it mean to have a “good conscience” toward God?
- 2) Even after water baptism, how do you maintain a good conscience toward God in your daily lives?

7

ANSWERS TO A FEW COMMON QUESTIONS

In this chapter, we provide brief statements as answers to some common questions. The theology and scriptural basis for these answers have already been addressed in the previous chapters. Hence, that is not repeated here.

1) What is the right age to be baptized?

Scriptures does not prescribe an age at which a person is to be baptized. So, we ought to go with the prerequisites given to us in Scripture, which are—a person should have repented and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord to be baptized. This cannot be done by an infant, and hence, infant baptism is something that is not prescribed in Scripture. However, a person at any age, when she or he can understand the message and meaning of the Good News of Jesus Christ and personally repent and believe in Jesus Christ, is ready to be baptized in water.

2) Is there a waiting period from receiving salvation to when a believer can be baptized in water?

No waiting time is required. In all the instances recorded for us in the book of Acts, as soon as people made a commitment to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, they were baptized in water. However, in order to help people understand the meaning of water baptism and to do it out of their own free will, it is good to take time to explain the meaning of water baptism and give them time to make their own decision to be baptized in water without any outside coercion and compulsion.

3) What is the “baptism formula” we use?

Based on the Great Commission given to us by the Lord Jesus and what was practiced in the book of Acts, we use, “In Jesus’ name, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

4) Who is authorized to baptize another believer?

Any disciple who has been baptized in water can administer water baptism to another person who has decided to follow Jesus Christ.

5) Do I need to be re-baptized?

Since sprinkling water on an infant is not a biblical pattern of New Testament water baptism, this cannot be considered water baptism. Hence, a person who was sprinkled as a child would need to be baptized (completely immersed or submerged) in water once they have personally received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

For some, perhaps their parents or friends encouraged them to get water baptized and they did so as a ritual, but without genuinely experiencing salvation through faith in Christ. In such cases, we encourage people to get baptized in water, having believed in Jesus Christ.

In some cases, people may have strayed from their faith and walk with God and feel in their own hearts that they wish to be re-baptized as a sign of them returning to the Lord. They are welcome to do so as an act of their own personal choosing.

6) Is water baptism necessary for salvation or is it an expression of salvation?

Salvation is entirely by grace through faith in Christ. Water baptism is an expression of having received salvation. Although during His earthly ministry Jesus (through His disciples) baptized those who chose to follow Him, the Lord promised paradise to the thief on the cross, leading to salvation. The thief on the cross did not have the option of being baptized. Similarly, there would be many who may decide to believe in Jesus Christ in their final moments on earth and may not have the opportunity to be baptized. They are saved through faith in Christ. For those of us who are saved, water baptism is a matter of obedience that we must promptly fulfill.

7) Can we be baptized for the dead?

Some people quote 1 Corinthians 15:29 to ask if we can be baptized in “proxy” for those who are already dead.

1 Corinthians 15:29

Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?

In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul is establishing the truth that there is life beyond the grave and there is the resurrection from the dead. In doing so, he makes a single statement referring to the “they” (not us), who baptize for the dead. The “they” are those who of course were not of the Christian faith, but people who had a superstitious belief that by performing some sort of baptism-like custom they could affect the afterlife of their dead. He is not endorsing their practice but only pointing to their practice to indicate that even

they have belief in life after death. There is no Scripture in the New Testament that in any way indicates baptism for the dead. Hence, the answer to the question is a loud and clear “NO!” We do not baptize on behalf of the dead.

DO YOU KNOW THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did revealed God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus did many miracles on the earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame to walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So why then would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, ***“For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23)***. Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross. Then, three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven.

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so, He came to provide a way for the entire human

race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and to believe in Him wholeheartedly.

“... through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins” (Acts 10:43).

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you decide to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me, you shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I decide to believe in You and to accept what You did for me by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins.

Thank You Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You.

Amen.

ABOUT ALL PEOPLES CHURCH

Our vision at All Peoples Church is to be salt and light in the city of Bangalore, a voice to the nation and to the nations.

All Peoples Church is a **Jesus loving, Word focused, Spirit filled,** family church, an equipping center, a missions base and a world outreach.

- As a **family church**, we grow together as a community in Christ-centered fellowship, caring and serving each other in love as the assembly of God.
- As an **equipping center**, we empower and equip every believer to live victoriously, mature into Christlikeness and fulfill God's purposes for their lives.
- As a **missions base**, we engage in meaningful ministry to bless our city, nation and the nations with the full Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Word of God and supernatural demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit.
- As a **world outreach**, we serve locally and globally by nurturing godly leaders and Spirit-filled churches who can impact their regions for the Kingdom of God.

At APC, we are committed to presenting the complete, uncompromised Word of God in the anointing and demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We believe that good music, creative presentations, brilliant apologetics, contemporary ministry techniques, latest technology and so on, can never substitute the God-ordained approach of proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4,5; Hebrews 2:3,4). Our theme is Jesus, our content is the Word, our method is the Holy Spirit's power, our passion is people and our goal is Christ-like maturity.

With our main base in Bangalore, All Peoples Church has several other church locations in India. To get a current listing and contact information of All Peoples Church locations, please visit our website at apcwo.org/locations or send an email to contact@apcwo.org.

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ALL PEOPLES CHURCH BIBLE COLLEGE

apcbiblecollege.org

All Peoples Church Bible College and Ministry Training Center in Bangalore, India, provides Spirit-filled, anointed, hands-on training and equipping for ministering in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit along with a doctrinally sound and intellectually stimulating study of God's Word. We believe in developing the whole person for ministry emphasizing godly character, deep roots in the Word of God and powerful demonstrations of signs, wonders and miracles, all flowing out of an intimate relationship with the Lord.

At All Peoples Church Bible College (APC-BC), in addition to sound teaching, we emphasize the love of God in demonstration, the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural work of God. Several young men and women have been trained and sent out to fulfill God's call over their lives.

We offer three programs.

- One-year Certificate in Theology and Christian Ministry (C.Th.)
- Two-year Diploma in Theology and Christian Ministry (Dip.Th.)
- Three-year Bachelor's in Theology and Christian Ministry (B.Th.)

Classes are held each weekday, **Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon, Indian Time (UTC+5:30)**. We offer three learning options.

- **On-Campus:** Attend in-person classes at the campus
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Chrysalis Counseling is a ministry of All Peoples Church & World Outreach.

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All Peoples Church ministers beyond its own borders as a local church by reaching out across India, especially North India, with a special focus on (A) Strengthening Leaders, (B) Equipping young people for ministry and (C) Building up the Body of Christ. Several training seminars for young people and ‘Christian Leaders’ Conference’ are held throughout the year. In addition, several thousands of copies of publications are distributed free of cost in English and other Indian languages with the purpose of equipping believers in the Word and in the Spirit.

We invite you to partner with us financially by sending either a one-time gift or a monthly financial gift. Any amount that you can send to help us in this work across our nation will be greatly appreciated.

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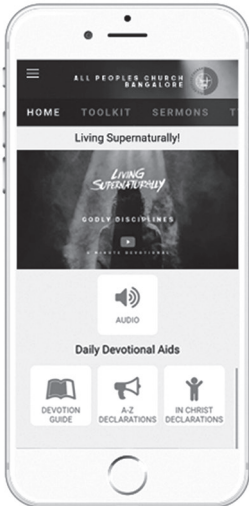
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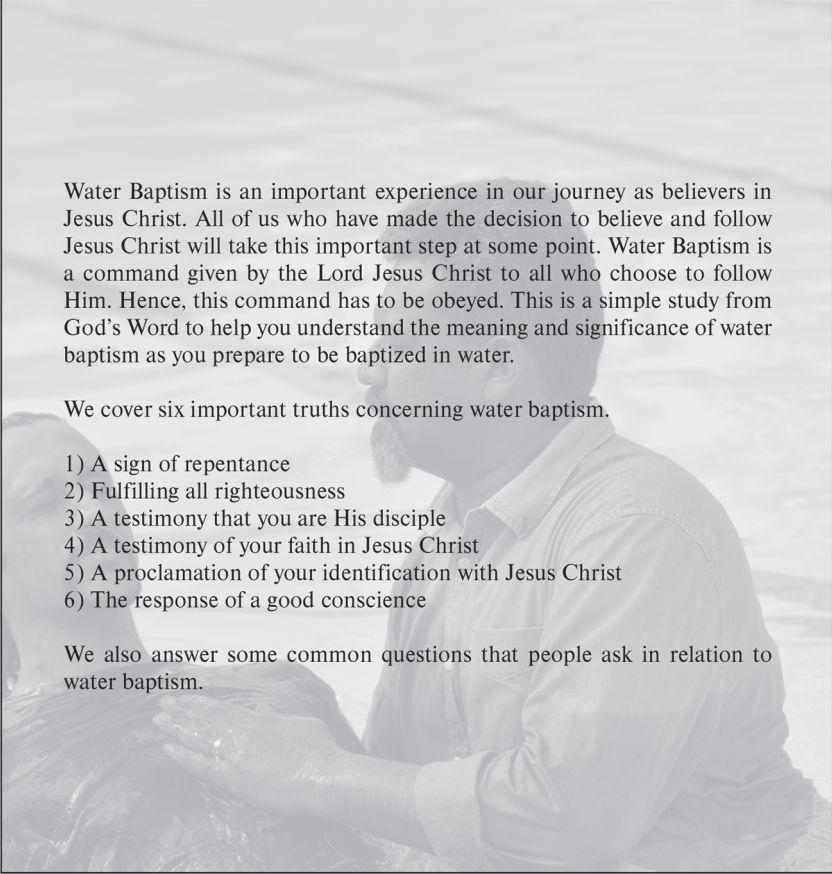
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IF YOU LOVE IT, TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT!

A grayscale photograph of a man with a beard being baptized in water. The man is kneeling, and another person's hands are visible, pouring water over his head. The background is a bright, hazy outdoor setting.

Water Baptism is an important experience in our journey as believers in Jesus Christ. All of us who have made the decision to believe and follow Jesus Christ will take this important step at some point. Water Baptism is a command given by the Lord Jesus Christ to all who choose to follow Him. Hence, this command has to be obeyed. This is a simple study from God's Word to help you understand the meaning and significance of water baptism as you prepare to be baptized in water.

We cover six important truths concerning water baptism.

- 1) A sign of repentance
- 2) Fulfilling all righteousness
- 3) A testimony that you are His disciple
- 4) A testimony of your faith in Jesus Christ
- 5) A proclamation of your identification with Jesus Christ
- 6) The response of a good conscience

We also answer some common questions that people ask in relation to water baptism.

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