

3.18.18 ~ Water Baptism: Why It Is Important...

When a person is baptized, they confess Jesus as Lord and declare, by faith, their trust in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (past, present, future) and for the salvation of their soul (for all of eternity).

Baptism is an external physical washing by men, symbolizing an internal spiritual cleansing by God.

Matthew 3:1-2 *John the Baptist came, preaching and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." 6, "Confessing their sins, they were baptized [Gk. baptizo = fully immersed] by him in the Jordan River."*

John called people to repent [Gk. metanoeo – this means a deliberate change in direction of one's mind and will; from wrong to right, sin to salvation, self to God]!

John called people to confess their sins, preparing them to accept God's cure for the penalty of sin. He isn't asking them to just feel bad about their sinful condition, but to be changed [converted] into a totally different life, a new life, because God was coming in the body of Jesus!

There had been 400 years of silence with no new or direct communication from God. The Word to be given is a message of warning and rebuke to Israel.

Matthew 3:11, *"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*

John made it clear that there was One coming after him who would baptize not with water, but with the Holy Spirit and with fire. John didn't consider himself even worthy to untie this Coming One's sandals, i.e., not even worthy to be his slave.

John contrasts his own water baptism, a baptism of repentance [confessing their sins, they were baptized by John], with that of the Coming One [He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire].

Water symbolizes a cleansed conscience, as we repent of sin and express our desire to do that which pleases God.

The **Holy Spirit** symbolizes rebirth by the Spirit of God, Who places us into the eternal family of God.

Fire symbolizes the eternal judgment that will come to those who do not have the Holy Spirit of God..

Water baptism is immersion into physical water, confessing your own sinfulness and desire to change your behavior to align with what is acceptable to God.

New Testament water baptisms: **Acts 8:26-40** (Ethiopian Eunuch); **10:1-48** (Cornelius' Household); **16:11-15** (Lydia); **16:22-40** (Jailer's Household).

Spiritual baptism is the purging and purifying presence of God Himself in the a person, by which that person goes from death to life spiritually, being born again.

Death came through Adam, life comes through Jesus Christ, enabling us to be born from above by God's Spirit, Who indwells every true child of God.

John 1:12-13, *"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*

John 3:3, *"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."* **6-7**, *"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"*

Acts 2:21, *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

38, *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Romans 6:3-5, *"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in his resurrection."*

Christ died for our sins, and when He died, He not only put to death the power and influence of the old life we received from Adam, but He demonstrated the new life we receive from God.

The baptism mentioned in **Romans 6:3-4** is not water baptism, it is the baptism of the Spirit, by which you are made a child of God; at the moment you repent and believe, you are filled with the Holy Spirit, at the same time you are placed in the Body of Christ, the Church, the Family of God

1Corinthians 12:13, *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."*

1Peter 3:18-22, *"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him."*

Noah and his family were saved from drowning because they were in the ark; they were saved from the curse of sin because they obeyed God and got into the ark. Jesus is the ark of salvation for all who trust in Him; He alone can forgive sins and bring us into heaven.

It was revealed to Paul, and therefore to us, that God's desire was to live in us, through God's Spirit, made effectual by the death and resurrection of God's Son.

Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Dead people can't sin! Physical death separates a person from physical life, baptism symbolizes putting to death the old life of sin, to live the new life in Christ.

2Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" **21**, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

Water baptism is not essential for salvation, it is essential because of salvation.

Water baptism declares that the change which has occurred inside the Believer, through God's Spirit, will now be clearly revealed in the life of the Believer, as he/she continues to Love Christ by obeying God's Word.

John 14:15-17, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. **21**, "Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him." **23**, "If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him."

Pastor Mike

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