

## “Why Water Baptism?”

Water baptism is the opportunity for a person to publicly identify with, and to declare their faith and belief in, Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (past, present, future) and the provision of eternal life. Baptism is an external immersion in water, symbolizing an internal spiritual cleansing by God's Holy Spirit.

In **Matthew 3**, John was baptizing those who came to him at the Jordan River, as they acknowledged their sins against God (**Matthew 3:11**), “I baptize (*Gk. Baptizo = immersion*) you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I; ...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”

Three elements of baptism are mentioned above: water, Spirit, fire.

**Water** symbolizes a cleansed conscience, as we repent of our sin and express our desire to please God.

The **Holy Spirit** symbolizes rebirth, for by the Spirit of God each genuine believer is placed into the eternal family of God.

**Fire** symbolizes judgement, those who do not have the Holy Spirit are condemned to an eternity in hell.

See **1Peter 3:18-21**, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Baptism does not symbolize that somehow sins can be washed away, like the removal of dirt from the body; it symbolizes a person's pledge of trust and belief in God and a desire to obey Him. Water can't cleanse a person's heart, mind, or soul, but genuine repentance, our response to God's Spirit convicting us of our sins, will bring about a changed [cleansed] heart, mind, and soul.

Noah and his family were saved from drowning because they got into the ark; they were saved from the curse of sin because they believed God and obeyed Him.

Jesus is the ark of salvation for all who trust in Him; He alone can forgive sins and guarantee our safe and supernatural arrival in heaven. Baptism is not essential to produce salvation, it is essential to proclaim salvation -- salvation through Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the grave.

See **Romans 6:3-11**, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from

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the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Dead people can't sin! Water baptism represents our desire to leave the old life behind, just as physical death separates a person from physical life, so baptism symbolizes our putting to death the old life of sin, in order to live our new life in obedience to and for the praise, honor, and glory, of Christ the Lord.

Paul put it this way (**Galatians 2:20**), “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

See **1Corinthians 15:1-4**, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Jesus said (**Matthew 28:18-20**), “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

**Acts 2:36-38**, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Notice, true repentance from sins, was followed by a public identification with Christ through water baptism. At the moment of a person's genuine belief in Jesus Christ, God places His Spirit in that person, marking them His child for eternity.

**Ephesians 1:13-14**, “In [Jesus Christ], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

**John 1:12-13**, “But as many as received [Jesus Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Water baptism symbolizes the willingness and desire of a true believer and follower of Jesus Christ, to be brought under the total control and authority of, God's Word, in all things pertaining to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

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Water baptism declares that the change which has occurred inside a person, through the power of God, will be clearly revealed on the outside, through the life of each and every genuine Christian (**2Corinthians 5:17**), “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

Water baptism doesn't save you, it declares that you have been saved! Water baptism is your public confession that you have repented of your sins, trusting God's Son for forgiveness; and that you personally identify yourself as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ who, “died for your sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

**1John 5:11-13**, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

If you have repented of your sins, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, believing in Him as Savior, you should be baptized; not in order to secure your salvation, but as a testimony of your desire to obey and serve the One who has saved you, Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior.

**Revelation 1:8**, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

**Revelation 1:17-18**, “I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.”

“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and to our God, to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing, forever and ever. Amen”

**Revelation 4:11**

**Revelation 5:12**

**Revelation 7:12**

Pastor Mike

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