

What does the baptism represent and what is the need for it?

There might be many different opinions on baptism among people. What we actually need to look at is the word of God. To be baptized doesn't mean to be saved. It doesn't mean that, but I think it completes the new birth and the salvation. It is something commanded by our Lord and performed by the disciples and all the believers.

Peter, in his sermon to those three thousand that got converted, said: “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)

I don't think that it is the most important by itself, but the fact that is placed next to the repentance in the scripture means that is something to be considered seriously. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

One of the previous verses, in John 3:3, tells us about the importance of being born again, as this is the only way to see His kingdom, and this exact verse tells us in a more particular way what this new birth consists of. It tells us that we must be born of water and the Spirit. When it speaks about the Spirit, we know that it refers to the Holy Spirit, which comes into our life as a sealing showing that we belong to Him and comes after we accept Him and repent sincerely. This is a very important part. The other one is to be born of water, which has to do with baptism. I know that certain people interpret being born of water as a natural birth (and they might be right in some cases), but to me, it has a connection with baptism.

Obviously, there are cases when someone accepts Christ, and suddenly something happens to him; he dies and doesn't have time to get baptized, like the thief being crucified on the side of Jesus, for example. He didn't have time for baptism, but he still got saved and went to heaven. (Luke 23:42,43)

This, anyway is not our case. In a normal life and circumstances, living as Christians and having Christ in our hearts, we need to get baptized. This is also a kind of confession that we are making in front of the people and the church. We declare to others that we belong to Christ and confess it publicly because they see

us getting baptized and compromised with the Christian faith. In this way, they know that we decided to follow Christianity in a deeper way. It is like a testimony we are giving. We testify that we follow Christ, and if it is not true (because someone can get baptized without really following Christ and without comprehending the meaning of it), then we will bear the consequences. It must also go with our lifestyle because when we declare something, we need to stand behind our words.

Saying that I belong to someone, that I represent someone means that my life and behavior define that person in front of those who see me. Same as messengers sent by someone like a king or a ruler to another place or country. They represent him. The people from that place have probably never seen that ruler, but through His messengers, they can have an idea of who that person is. That's why it is a serious task to do that and represent God. It cannot be done in any way.

We represent God, the one above everything, the Creator of the universe and King of kings. And the word tells us that we need to confess His name and not be ashamed of it. By baptism, we make a compromise with God that we will serve Him, that we will seek His kingdom with everything and for a lifetime. And this kind of attitude is required from us by Him. Sooner or later, He demands that from us. He tells us to go deeper with Him into the faith. And this is a serious decision. It cannot be taken lightly. And the only one who is able to fulfill this compromise and pact with Him, is the one who is born from the Spirit. Because only His Spirit in us can help us to perform this, to be able to follow Him to the end. This might sound hard to accomplish, but following God isn't something to be taken lightly. We need to trust in Him because only He can help us carry on until the end. This isn't something that we can do by ourselves. It is by faith. Baptism cannot be considered a mere ritual, as something that each person needs to do just because he goes to church or likes the service there. No. It is a compromise taken for a lifetime with God.

But this is also what He demands from us. To follow Him to the end. It might look really hard and unimaginable when someone didn't experience His Grace and His forgiveness.

“Do not rush with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.” (Ecclesiastes 5:2)

Even though He warns us not to say or make vows lightly, He wants us to get into that position **through Him**. He can enable us to do it. We cannot be baptized with water only, because we won't be able to accomplish the vow we are making in front of Him and others.



Because at the moment we get baptized, we confess that we belong to Him now, but how can it be if we don't have His Spirit in our life? We also cannot remain just with the baptism of His Spirit (which is very important and fundamental) because sooner or later, He will want us to compromise ourselves for life with Him.

He wants people who follow Him for life, not people who take this as a fashion or something temporarily. They need to have at least that desire, even if they don't know exactly how everything will go. He can accomplish it in them. And we see in the scripture people like Peter who said they would never deny His name, but after that, they failed ([Matthew 26:33-35; 26:69-75](#)). The reason is that they didn't have His Spirit yet at that time. (I am speaking about Peter denying Jesus, which happened before the Holy Spirit was given.) Our own compromise, or words only, don't accomplish His will.

I remember when I accepted Jesus in my life and received His Spirit. I was so full of joy and happiness. I felt the burden falling off me. I was seeing everything

in a new way and light. But I remember that I still wasn't sure if I would follow God for a lifetime. I was just living and enjoying the moment. I also remember that I was still deliberately committing certain "small" sins. I wasn't so sure, so compromised. God was manifesting His Grace over me, but it was like I was with one foot in the world and the other with Jesus.

It didn't take long before I understood that I had to make a serious decision to take the path to follow Jesus wherever and however He wants, with all my heart. This is when I believe we can make a decision. It happens after we experience something from Him. When we know clearly His Spirit and Grace. Before knowing that, in most cases, it is impossible to make a decision. How can someone make a decision about something that he doesn't know? How can he appreciate His mercy? Before this happens in his life, before mercy appears in his life, he can only try to inquire and set himself in research for God and won't be able to make any solid decisions for God.

So, I understood that I had to get baptized and take the path with Jesus seriously. I remember that after doing that, I became much more compromised and serious about my walk with Him and stopped being in the world and Him at the same time. The way I looked at sin changed as well. I became more cautious toward it.

It is like the situation of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt. What caused them to come out? What caused Pharaoh to release them? It was the last plague. That was the angel of death crossing through the whole of Egypt. We know that Egypt spiritually represents the world, the slavery of sin, and the Pharaoh represents the devil. The Pharaoh couldn't bear anymore with the nation of Israel, especially after the last plague, and released them. The final plague was the hardest as the angel of death passed across the land of Egypt, and all the firstborns died. All of them, besides the ones found in the Israeli's homes, because had marked their doorposts with the blood of the sacrificial lamb. ([Exodus 12:1-30](#))

They were spared, not because they were more special or because they were His nation, but because of the **blood of the lamb**. As they got delivered and released from Egypt that night, we conclude that we need that blood to be delivered from sin and the slavery of this world. The sacrificial lamb represents Christ, who was crucified and shed His blood for us.

We need the blood of Christ; we need His forgiveness. Without that, it is impossible. But we also see that until the moment when they had to pass through the sea, the Egyptian army was still after them. Here it comes when I said that even

after accepting Christ, the world was still after me, that there were still worldly desires in me, and I wasn't hundred percent sure whom to follow. There were still connections and robes that were tying me to it.

And after crossing through that sea, through that water that represents the baptism, they got delivered completely as the waters returned and covered the Egyptian army that couldn't cross the sea and remained in its depth. (1 Corinthians 10:1,2) (Exodus 14:1-31)

This happened after making that solid decision about whom they would serve. It is quite easy to make this decision when we have Christ in our life; it is complicated when we don't. A person can get baptized without really making any compromise with God and deciding to follow Him because that person never really had Christ in His life. That's why only water baptism doesn't save us. It is wrong for people to think that they have something more in them just for the fact that they got baptized. Baptism is effective when they already have Christ living in them, and in this way, the work of salvation of God in their life is complete. Obviously even after being baptized a believer will still struggle with sin and the enemy will still be attacking him, but now he doesn't belong anymore to him, he is not a slave anymore, but belongs to God. And there will be a path to walk and follow with trials coming sometimes, but there is a victory in the One who overcame. He is faithful and He will accomplish His work in us.