

# BIBLICAL BAPTISM

The privilege of obeying Jesus Christ

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## JESUS INSTITUTED BAPTISM AND COMMANDED HIS APOSTLES TO BAPTIZE

On the Mount of Olives, before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave his last instructions to his apostles. Among other things, he told them:

"Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation... Whoever believes and **IS BAPTIZED** will be saved." (Mark 16:15-16)

Baptism was instituted by Jesus Christ for all who believe, from every nation, people and race:

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

To render the literal meaning of the Greek text, it could be written as follows:

"Instruct all nations, those who will accept this teaching, baptize them."

From the beginning of the Church, the Apostles carried out their Master's COMMAND.

On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter addressed the crowd gathered in Jerusalem before the upper room where the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was taking place with this urgent exhortation:

"LET EVERY ONE OF YOU BE BAPTIZED." (Acts 2:38)

On that day, THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE were baptized!

Later, after having announced the Good News to Cornelius and to all those who had gathered with him in his house in Caesarea, the apostle Peter in his turn followed the example of his Master, and :

"COMMANDED that they should be baptized in the Name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48)

The fact of ordering it, proves very clearly the importance given to the practice of baptism by Jesus and his apostles. We are therefore, as believers, concerned with the practice of baptism.

# HOW WAS BAPTISM PRACTICED IN THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES ?

## THE MATERIAL FORM

One day, the evangelist Philip was directed by the Holy Spirit to an Ethiopian, a minister of the queen of Ethiopia, who was sitting on his chariot and returning to his country after having come to worship God in the Temple of JERUSALEM.

He was reading the text of chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah, without understanding it. Philip, beginning with this passage, announced to him the Good News of Jesus, the man of sorrows of whom the prophet speaks. As they continued on their way, they came across some water.

Philip had certainly spoken to him about baptism during the interview, for the Ethiopian asked him this question:

"Here is water, what prevents me from being baptized?"

Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, it is possible."

After confessing his faith in the Son of God, the Ethiopian had the chariot stopped. He went down into the water with Philip. Philip baptized him, and they came up out of the water." (Acts 8:26-40)

If it was to sprinkle water on the Ethiopian, there was no need for both of them to go down into the water!

Another text in the Bible confirms this truth, namely the practice of baptism **IN** water and not **WITH** water. It is from the Gospel of John, chapter 3, verse 23:

"John also baptized at Enon, near Salim, because there was **MUCH WATER** there, and people came there to be baptized."

If it was to put a few drops of water on the head, there was no point in choosing a place where there was **PLENTY OF** water!

It is written in the Bible, "As soon as Jesus was baptized, **HE CAME UP** out of the water." (Matthew 3:16)

It is important to give the words of the Word of God their exact meaning in order to avoid mistakes. For this it is sometimes necessary to refer to the original text of the New Testament, written in Greek by the apostles.

**The word "BAPTISM" was translated from the Greek word "BAPTISMA," which in turn is derived from the Greek verb "BAPTIZEIN," which means: to plunge, to immerse. Its literal meaning is: the action of plunging or immersing.**

There is no doubt about this form of primitive baptism. It is indisputable that in the time of the Apostles, baptism was done by **IMMERSION**, by **COMPLETELY** plunging the new convert **INTO WATER**.

All biblical scholars recognize this, and the historical evidence shows that immersion was the NORMAL form for at least the first three centuries.

Here are some quotes from historians and theologians that confirm this:

Martin LUTHER:

"Baptism is a Greek word that can be translated as IMMERSION, as when we dip something in water so that it is completely covered. I WISH THAT THOSE WHO ARE TO BE BAPTIZED SHOULD BE COMPLETELY IMMERSED IN WATER, according to the meaning of the word and the ordinance."  
(Catechism of Baptism, page 131-132)

Despite this wish, he unfortunately continued to practice baptism by sprinkling of newborns.

John CALVIN:

"John the Baptist and Jesus Christ administered baptism by immersing THE WHOLE BODY IN WATER. We see in Acts 8:38, how the ancients used to administer baptism because THEY IMMERSSED THE WHOLE BODY IN WATER. It is now customary for the minister to throw only a few drops of water on the body or on the head of the child.

( commentary, Volume 2, pages 60-62)

"Usage" has replaced the Bible. Calvin recognizes this, alas. Better to obey Jesus Christ and choose the BIBLICAL practice.

BOSSUET (He was bishop of Meaux):

"Baptism was instituted by IMMERSING THE BODY ENTIRELY, this is how Jesus Christ received it and had it given by his apostles. SCRIPTURE KNOWS OF NO OTHER BAPTISM THAN THIS."

Karl BARTH:

"The Greek term 'baptisein' and the German term 'taufen' (from Tiefe: depth), originally, and literally, denote the action of plunging a man or an object ENTIRELY INTO WATER, and then removing them from it."

I could make the list longer.

I have met with erudite Protestant pastors and theologians who know that true baptism, the only biblical one, is believers' baptism by immersion. In spite of this certainty, they prefer to submit to the tradition of their religion rather than that of the Word of God, just like the religious leaders to whom Jesus once said:

"You are very well annihilating the commandment of God to keep your tradition." (Mark 7:9)

On the other hand, I know many Protestants, including several pastors, who have taken the step of obedience to the Word of God by being baptized IN water.

I have also had the joy of seeing thousands of Catholics, and even priests, abandon the path of error, put their faith in Jesus Christ for their personal salvation and then be baptized by IMMERSION.

If you have not yet taken the step of obedience to Jesus Christ yourself, do not hesitate to decide now since you are convinced that **the BIBLICAL BAPTISM IS THAT OF BELIEVERS BY IMMERSION.**

The testimony of archaeology also confirms, if need be, that the baptisteries of the first centuries, replacing rivers, lakes and pools, contained enough water to baptize believers by COMPLETE IMMERSION. Some of them were dug into the ground, with two staircases leading up to them. One descended on one side to enter the water and receive baptism, and then ascended on the other side.

The ancient baptisteries, still visible today, in various countries, constitute irrefutable proof of immersion: in Poitiers, Fréjus, Millau in Aveyron, Aix-en-Provence, Lyon, Carthage, Rome, Constantinople, Tingad in North Africa where Christianity was flourishing at the beginning of the Christian era. In Pisa, there is one dating from the 12th century.

"If the disciples are silent, the stones will cry out," said Jesus. (Luke 19:40)

Immersion is an undeniable historical fact. Catholic theologians also affirm it:

Canon MARTIGNY, of the Pontifical Academy wrote:

"To suit the ancient practice, immersion, the baptisteries of the first centuries had such an abundance of water, that they resembled small lakes or rivers, so that they were called "natatorium" or "piscina." (Socrates - Hist. Eccl. VII:17) Also the bishops were careful to choose, to build their baptisteries, places where there were sources of water." (Dict. Ant. Chrét. - Baptism)

Canon CRAMPON himself annotates Romans 6:3 thus:

"In the early centuries, baptism was conferred by IMMERSION; the catechumen was COMPLETELY IMMERSED IN WATER, from which he immediately emerged."

The BIBLE is formal: **BAPTISM IS PERFORMED BY IMMERSING THE BELIEVER IN WATER.**

**IMMERSION** is the normal material form. Consequently, those who have been "SPRINKLED" are not ACTUALLY "BAPTIZED." If this is your case, make haste to obey the WORD OF GOD.

## THE MISSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Jews practiced partial or total ablutions and ritual baths.

Proselytes, that is, non-Jews called "pagans", who were considered impure by Jewish law and who converted to Judaism, had to immerse themselves entirely in water to be washed of their defilements after having prayed to God to forgive their sins.

"He who purifies himself will bathe in water." (Leviticus 14:8)

The baptism of the prophet John the Baptist is not an extension of those Jewish ritual practices of cleansing the defilements of the body and which are in fact mentioned in the "Manual of Discipline" of the Essenes discovered at Qumram, near the Dead Sea, close to the area where John the Baptist was baptizing.

"The baptism of John the Baptist came from heaven." (Luke 20:4)

John the Baptist had a special mission to prepare the way for the Messiah.

His preaching had as its theme:

- Repentance, "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." (Luke 3:8)
- Confession of sins. "Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him..." (Matthew 3:6)
- Faith in Him (The Messiah) who was to come (Acts 19:4), to offer the acceptable sacrifice of God and take away the sin of the world. (John 1:36)

He was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord." (Luke 3:4)

Many Jews came to hear him from Jerusalem and from all the countries around the Jordan, religious people, Pharisees, priests and publicans, who were considered to be of bad character, as well as soldiers. (Luke 3:12-14 and Matthew 3:5-7)

He said to them, "The long-promised Messiah is here. Repent of your sins, prepare for his coming. He demanded of them, before baptism, fruits of repentance even to the point of sharing possessions: "He who has food, let him share with him who has none." (Luke 3:11)

As an extension of this mission of John the Baptist, the apostles themselves began to baptize.

"Jesus did not baptize himself, but they were his disciples." (John 4:2)

When the day of Pentecost came, the apostle Peter again spoke a message of repentance to the people, just like John the Baptist, asking everyone to be baptized.

**But this time it was no longer the same, but a confession of faith in Jesus, WHO HAD DIED AND RISEN for salvation was added.**

The transitional baptism of John the Baptist was followed by the **baptism of the new covenant**, based on faith in the work of Jesus who had given his life on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST

At the age of 30, Jesus leaves his father and mother and the quiet of his village of Nazareth in Galilee. He comes to John the Baptist at the Jordan River near Jericho to be baptized by him.

But why? Baptism is only administered to repentant sinners, to guilty people who wish to be cleansed. For them, water baptism is the sign of forgiveness.

Jesus is without sin (Hebrews 7:26). He does not need to repent, to be made better. You can't whitewash snow. Jesus is pure, He is without blemish.

But he mingles with the people of Israel who come to be baptized. He assimilates himself to the people and to all sinners. Didn't he come to take on the sins?

Jesus does not begin to reason and argue with John the Baptist who refuses to baptize Him. He simply tells him that "this is proper and right." His baptism is the testimony of His divine sonship, the confirmation that He is the Messiah.

John agrees to immerse Him in the water of the Jordan, and as Jesus emerges from the water, a visible phenomenon appears: "The heavens are opened and the Spirit descends upon Him in bodily form as a dove." (Matthew 3:16) Then a voice rings through the space and utters these words, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

By this act of submission to the will of God His Father, He showed us the way of obedience and abasement.

**Let us joyfully follow His example by being baptized with biblical baptism.**

## **WHO WAS BAPTIZED IN THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES ?**

**1 - ADULTS** able :  
to listen to the Word of God,  
to understand it,  
to believe it.

"Men of Israel, listen to these words!" (Acts 2:22)

"Those who accepted HIS WORD were baptized." (Acts 2:41)

"All who believed..." (Acts 2:44)

**2 - Men and women capable of deciding.**

"When they believed Philip, who preached to them the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the NAME of JESUS CHRIST, MEN and WOMEN were baptized." (Acts 8:12)

**3 - Adult people receptive to the message of salvation.**

"Cornelius had invited HIS RELATIVES and close FRIENDS." (no babies)

"Peter found many people gathered together." (Acts 10:27 and Acts 10:24)

"All who HEARD THE WORD...and Peter commanded that they should **be baptized in the NAME of the LORD**. Whereupon they begged him to stay with them a few days." (Acts 10:44 and 48)

#### **4 - MEN WITH FAITH in JESUS.**

"They were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. They were about twelve MEN in all." (Acts 19:6-7)

"Simon BELIEVED AND WAS BAPTIZED." (Acts 8:13)

"Many of the Corinthians BELIEVED and WERE BAPTIZED." (Acts 18:8)

The Bible teaches that baptism was granted only to those who repented of their sins, believed in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and knew what they were doing when they decided to be baptized.

## **WHAT IS BIBLICAL BAPTISM ?**

### **1 - An act of obedience.**

It is accomplished under the free responsibility of each person.

Jesus and his apostles ordered it. Who am I to dispute and refuse to obey? On the contrary, should I not consider this act of obedience as an immense privilege?

To obey the Master of the universe, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, what a grace!

"Let each of you be baptized." (Acts 2:38)

That little word "each" is about you. But don't forget that this command is preceded by this call, "Repent."

This means that after you recognize your misery and believe in Jesus for a new life, you are invited to confess your faith in the Name of Jesus Christ through baptism.

### **2 - A symbol.**

Being immersed in water, and coming out of it, illustrates in a simple way this miraculous spiritual experience of death to sin, made possible by the death of Jesus on the cross, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

**Baptism provides a concrete image of the new birth that was previously acquired through sincere repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It is the sign, the symbol.**

### **3 - A commitment.**

It is the public confession of a decision made in the heart to follow Jesus and to practice his teaching.

It is the commitment before all of us of a good conscience, a commitment already made at conversion, to live to please Christ, to walk in his footsteps, to not compromise with evil, to keep a pure heart, to remain in communion with Him, to live in peace with one's conscience in the presence of the Lord.

Baptism is a confirmation of this commitment. (1 Peter 3:21)

It is the seal, the external stamp of an inner position taken by giving our heart to the Lord. A kind of signature materializing a decision taken before God.

**By baptism, we confirm our decision to keep our covenant with God through faith in Jesus Christ, to remain among the redeemed written in the Book of Life.**

Our name is not written in the Book of Life at the moment of baptism, but at the moment we accept Jesus as our Savior.

### **4 - An entry into the visible family of the redeemed.**

This is the second step after the New Birth. It introduces us into the visible community of the saved, namely the local church, the assembly of those who have experienced salvation by grace.

"Those who accepted his Word were baptized; and on that day the number of disciples increased by about 3,000 souls." (Acts 2:41)

After his baptism, the baptized person participates with the other disciples in :

- fellowship.
- the breaking of the bread. (Holy Communion)
- prayer.

"All who believed were in the same place." (Acts 2:44)

**Those who have faith and confess it in baptism feel the need to meet together. Baptism brings us into this family of brothers and sisters in Christ. It is a spiritual necessity. Isolation of the baptized is not normal. The biblical way is for those who believe and are baptized to be TOGETHER.**

"They were daily ALL together diligent in the temple." (Acts 2:46)

### **5 - A confession of faith.**



Faith must not be put under a bushel, in the shade, hidden. In the first centuries, baptism was always accompanied by a confession of faith by the baptized person, before the assembly of believers. It was the "public yes" of the decision to follow Jesus.

The baptized person affirms before all to be attached to Jesus Christ, to have faith in Him.  
"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37)

## **BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST**

**"Let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38)**

Is this expression:

**"IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST." (Acts 2:38)**

**or "IN THE NAME OF THE LORD." (Acts 10:48)**

**or "IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS." (Acts 8:16 and 19:5)**

used in connection with baptism a "magic" formula or a confession of faith in Jesus?

The understanding of the texts that speak of baptism "in the Name of Jesus" depends on the little Greek word "EPI." This word translated "IN THE" in Acts 2:38 means "OVER, ON, BECAUSE OF..."

The text should be translated literally as follows:

"Let each of you be baptized for the sake of the Name of Jesus Christ."

or again:

"Let each of you be baptized upon the confession of your faith in the Name of Jesus Christ."

When Peter and John met an impotent man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple in Jerusalem, they said to him, "In the Name of Jesus, arise and walk." And later Peter insisted that it was faith placed in the Name of Jesus, and not something else, that was the cause of the miraculous healing.

"It is BY FAITH IN HIS NAME, that his NAME has strengthened the one you see and know." (Acts 3:6, 16)

It is not a matter of saying the phrase "in Jesus' name" to be heard, but of having faith in his name.

That is why Jesus says:

" Whatever you ask IN MY NAME, I will do." (John 14:14)

When the Pastor asks the prospective baptized person who is in the waters of the baptistery, ready to be baptized:

- "Do you believe that Jesus has atoned for your sins?"

He has him confess HIS FAITH in the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST.

Baptism is done in the CONFESSION of FAITH IN THE NAME OF JESUS, the Savior.

The value of baptism is not in a formula, but in the fact that it is the testimony of a real faith in Jesus.

Baptism follows faith.

Jesus said it clearly:

"He who believes AND is baptized will be saved." (Mark 16:16)

He emphasizes two acts:

**First, BELIEVING.**

**Second, BEING BAPTIZED.**

Believing implies having FAITH IN HIM, in HIS NAME.

"He who believes in ME," He says, "has eternal life." (John 6:47)

Then comes the baptism.

"**If you believe with all your heart**, it is possible," said the evangelist Philip to the Ethiopian who asked him to baptize him. (Acts 8:37)

His baptism was only possible after his confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God and the man of sorrows, having borne our sins, foretold by the prophet Isaiah. (chapter 53):

Was not the apostle Paul baptized by calling on the name of the Lord? (Acts 22:16)

He "called upon", that is, he called upon the Lord by putting his faith in His name to have his sins forgiven.

In Caesarea, Peter preached the Good News in the house of Cornelius and said, among other things: "Whoever believes in Jesus, **through His Name** receives forgiveness of sins." (Acts 10:43)

He did not say, "By baptism into His Name," but "by His Name."

This faith in the Name of Jesus he also preached in Jerusalem. He said to the leaders of the people of Israel, to the elders and scribes:

"There is salvation in no other; for there is **no other Name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

This truth is also taught by the apostle John:

" You who believe **in the Name of the Son of God** have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

When Jesus said to his disciples:

"Baptize them **in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**" (Matthew 28:19)

He emphasized the very clear distinction between the three persons, by the use of the word "AND" which is found in the Greek original and implies:

- In the Name of the Father AND (in the name) of the Son AND (in the name) of the Holy Spirit.

To believe is also to have faith in these three persons of the Godhead:

- in God who so loved the world.

- in his Son whom he gave. (John 3:16)

- in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter whom the Father sends in the name of the Son. (John 14:26)

Baptism does not have its value in a formula to which a magical virtue is attributed, for that would be a return to pagan rites, but in the profession of faith in the person of Jesus Christ and in his sacrifice on Calvary.

## **IS INFANT BAPTISM REALLY BAPTISM ?**

My mother was a very devout Breton woman. The day after I was born, she had me taken to the village Catholic Church to be "baptized" by the priest. That day, according to the religious custom of her time and her country, she added to my first name that of "MARIE", mother of Jesus, with the thought of having me protected by her.

In fact, her maternal gesture was an expression of sincere faith. My "baptism" had no other meaning for her than to put me in the benefit of God's love. Her act of piety corresponded to that maternal feeling which in the past, pushed mothers to bring their children to Jesus to be blessed (and not to be "baptized").

"Then they brought little children to Jesus, that he might lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rejected them. And Jesus said, "Let the little children go, and do not hinder them from coming to me; for the kingdom of heaven is for those who are like them." And he laid his hands on them, and departed from there." (Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15)

Like my mother, I was ignorant of believers' baptism by immersion because I had learned in catechism that "infant baptism made them children of God and of the Church."

Theologians have "assumed" that infants were baptized in the time of the Apostles. They thought they could support their theory with these texts:

"When Lydia was baptized with her household..." (Acts 16:14-15)

"The jailer was baptized, he and all his household...and rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God." (Acts 16:31-34)

"Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his family. And many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8)

During my work in God's service, I have had the joy of seeing many parents accept Jesus as their personal Savior and be baptized with their whole family, their children being grown and old enough to understand and decide for themselves to follow Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: "HE WHO BELIEVES and is baptized..." (Mark 16:16). But theologians have reversed the text and say, "HE WHO WILL BE BAPTIZED and believe!"

We know that according to the Bible, faith PRECEDES baptism:  
"IF YOU BELIEVE WITH ALL YOUR HEART, it is possible," said Philip the evangelist to the Ethiopian who asked him to baptize him. (Acts 8:37)

"Baptism without the baptized person's desire is an arbitrary baptismal practice. it is an injury to the body of the church." Karl Barth.

By "baptizing" babies, we apply the word "baptism" to an act that has nothing to do with the Bible.

Some practice FAITHLESS immersion.  
Others practice sprinkling WITHOUT FAITH.  
**The Bible says: FAITH and IMMERSION.**

**The name "baptism" attributed to an act that has nothing to do with biblical baptism, being inaccurate, all those who have been "baptized" as babies are not in fact baptized.**

Consequently, there is no question of a "re-baptism" when, as an adult and believer, we ask to be baptized since we were not baptized.

Baptism does not save. It does not change life. It does not transform it. It is the testimony of a life changed by faith in Jesus Christ.

The sprinkling of babies did not appear until the fourth century.

Here are the erroneous definitions that were given, long after the biblical practice of immersion of believers, and imposed by ecclesiastical laws.  
The Council of Trent officially fixed this heresy:

"Baptism is the sacrament by which, by means of an external ablution of water, accompanied at the same time by the prescribed formula, man is regenerated to supernatural life... It erases original sin, makes us a child of God and a child of the church..."

Luther preserved in his catechism Catholic sacramentalism and taught:  
"Baptism works forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal bliss. It is the bath by which man is cleansed from original sin and by which the Holy Spirit makes him a born child of God."

These errors continue to be practiced today even though anyone who studies the Bible knows that in apostolic times, neophytes were admitted to baptism only after a profession of faith. Faith was required first, hence the exclusion from baptism of newborns who could not manifest their will. This is

recalled by J. LEBRETON, dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic Institute of Paris, in his book "The primitive Church"; and by Roger MEHL, Professor at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Strasbourg, who wrote:

"In the New Testament, almost all the accounts of baptism involve the prior faith of the baptized and even includes before the act of baptism a confession of faith."

**THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT, there is only mention of baptisms of PEOPLE WHO HAVE BELIEVED, thus people WHO ARE CAPABLE of believing, not "babies."**

**TO BE IMMERSED in water after having believed in Jesus Christ  
is the baptism to be received in order to be in conformity  
with the teaching of Christ and the Apostles.**

## **BAPTISM IN CHRIST** **(Romans 6:3)**

"Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death."

The original meaning of the word "baptize," namely "to immerse," allows us to understand that **"immersion IN Christ"** is not immersion in water. It is a spiritual experience of a changed life, transformed by faith in Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul demonstrates in this chapter 6 of the epistle to the Romans the harmony between the grace of forgiveness and the sanctifying, purifying, liberating grace.

The image of immersion is compared with burial or death.

**"So we were buried with HIM BY BAPTISM INTO HIS DEATH."** (Romans 6:4)

It was not by baptism in water that we were buried, but by baptism into his death. It is the drowning of the old life of sin, it is the breaking away from the vain way of life made of defilement and unbelief, far from God.

"Our old man has been crucified with Him." (Romans 6:6)

Crucifixion with Christ, that is, through faith in Christ's atoning death, we receive forgiveness and deliverance from sin.

We recognize that Christ took our place on the cross, that He took on our sins, that He died bearing our sins in His body on the tree, and so we become, by faith in HIM, one plant with HIM through conformity to His death. (Romans 6:5)

**"Same plant."** By His death He has put to death in me the power of sin. I therefore consider my old life as dead with Him and through Him at Calvary. Having died "with Christ," I am "dead to sin." Sin no longer reigns in me; it no longer dominates me.

God had said to Cain:

"Sin lies at the door and its desires are toward you; but you rule over it." (Genesis 4:7)

What Cain did not do, we can do through Jesus Christ, for through Jesus' death we have the power to rule over sin.

To be immersed in Christ is to accept to come to Christ as we are with all our misery, all our weaknesses, all our defilements, all our sins, without hiding anything from him, and to recognize that it is for us that he died in order to forgive us and to set us free from sin

This first step, this immersion in Christ's DEATH on Calvary, is immediately followed by a "resurrection," a coming out of death to live in the life of Christ, a life of purity, of victory over sin, of freedom and inner peace.

There is no resurrection in newness of life if there is not first immersion in the death of Christ.

Acknowledging one's sin, repenting of it and believing that Christ died to atone for it is the passage that leads to new life.

**"If we have become one plant with HIM through conformity to His death, we shall also be one plant through conformity to His resurrection."** (Romans 6:5)

Grace is offered to us in Christ's death to free us from slavery, from the dominion of sin, and in His resurrection to impart to us a newness of life, a different life, a life free from sin.

Here is an example of an alcoholic man:

He can't help but get drunk almost every day. He makes his home miserable. A friend tells him about Jesus Christ, invites him to a gospel meeting. The hymn "God is looking for you" touches his heart and keeps him thinking for several days. He then makes the decision to come to Jesus Christ. He recognizes his misery, weeps over his sin, asks God for forgiveness and believes in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. From that moment on, alcohol no longer had any power over him. He is freed from it and a new life begins in joy. His home becomes a paradise. Then he was baptized in water to confess his faith in Christ and confirm his commitment to follow him.

The testimonies of those who have believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior are different as to the circumstances, for the sins are various and more or less striking. But each can say, I have passed "from death to life." (John 5:24)

**This resurrection into newness of life through Jesus Christ is symbolized by baptism in water.**

To have been "baptized into Christ," that is, "plunged, immersed," in both his death and resurrection, is to have experienced the SALVATION of one's soul.

**Only then does baptism in water have a purpose.**

One does not die to the old man by being immersed in water, nor does one rise to new life by coming out of the water. Our true death to ourselves does not begin at baptism, but at the cross.

It is at the cross that the old man with his life of sin is crucified and it is faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus that gives us access to new life, to eternal life. We do not change our behavior from the day of baptism but from the moment we believe in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our redemption.

This is why infant baptism is not in accordance with biblical teaching, since it does not symbolize any spiritual experience.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Galatia:

"All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

The Greek word "EIS" translated as "IN" means:

"IN, WITHIN, INSIDE." It implies the notion of going "TO" with an idea of relationship.

In other words, this baptism "INTO CHRIST," is the experience to which Jesus himself invites us:

"He who abides in me (baptized into Christ) and in whom I abide (having put on Christ) bears much fruit." (John 15:5)

It is a union with Christ.

It is a breaking away from the past of a life of sin and the starting of a new life.

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Before we receive baptism in water, we must actually experience this change of life.

The past life is :

Forgiven,

Erased,

Cast into oblivion,

Dead with Christ at the cross.

It has been buried, laid to rest, passed away with Christ in his death. The power of sin has been defeated.

You have been freed from the bondage in which sin held you. The new life in Christ is a free life. There is resurrection in newness of life. Through Christ, you now have power over sin.

**If this change is real,  
if you are a new creature in Christ,  
your baptism in water is not only possible,  
but necessary.**

## **AFTER BAPTISM**

A "baptized" person is considered a "Christian." He has confessed it publicly.

If, therefore, after his baptism he behaves like a "heathen," he will be pointed out and it will be said of him, "Look what he is doing, and he is a baptized man!"

**Baptism is not a spiritual high. The road continues and the baptized person is invited to "walk" according to the Spirit.**

This is why your baptism must be serious. It is not an act done on the spur of religious emotion or to please someone around you, but as you just read, it is a symbol of A LIFE CHANGED BY JESUS CHRIST.

This new life should continue after baptism and constantly reflect the life of Jesus Christ in you.

Believe also in this promise that is made to those who obey the Lord:

"Let 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. For the promise is for you." (Acts 2:38 and 5:32)

## **WHAT PREVENTS ME FROM BEING BAPTIZED ? (Acts 8:36)**

Even though you are convinced of the authenticity of biblical baptism and the necessity of being baptized to obey Jesus Christ, you still hesitate.

You worry about what others, your parents, your friends, the church authorities of your religion will think.

You are afraid to step out of the box of religious tradition or to face the thoughts of your co-workers.

Trust in Jesus Christ. He will help you and communicate to you by his Spirit, the strength and the happiness of being his witness.

He has made these promises:

"I am with you always." (Matthew 28:20)

"I will not leave you, I will not forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

Many people testify to overcoming fears, triumphing over prejudices, and receiving blessings for obeying Christ first.

Perhaps you want to postpone your decision, objecting that you are waiting for your husband or wife to decide to be baptized as well?



The Bible says:

"LET EACH OF YOU BE BAPTIZED." (Acts 2:38)

**The decision is personal. Everyone must obey Jesus Christ. Your salvation and submission to Jesus Christ depends on YOU, alone!**

What brother Ananias said to the apostle Paul, is it not also a call to you? :

**"NOW... WHAT ARE YOU DELAYING?"**

**and this is the order to put into practice immediately:**

**"ARISE, BE BAPTIZED!" (Acts 22:16)**

**Then, like the Ethiopian, right after his baptism, ALL JOYFUL, you will continue on your way. (Acts 8:39)**

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