

ARE YOU BAPTIZED?

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ARE MADE THROUGH
HOLY BAPTISM AND LEARNING GOD'S WORD



⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His
mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the
Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our
Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs
according to the hope of eternal life. **Titus 3:4-7**

REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

The call of repentance goes out to all mankind from God through His Church and His chosen preachers of His Word. To repent means to turn around and go the other way, to be of a changed mind. Repentance is to realize that one is at odds with God in life, thinking, and in rebellion. We inherit this from our first parents, Adam and Eve (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5). The Lord God reveals that we are born into this world spiritually blind, dead, and enemies of God. We do not naturally trust God or believe His Word. We are born in sin and therefore on the road to death, both physical and on the road to eternal condemnation.

Yet in mercy, God sent His Son Jesus Christ into this world to rescue us from sin and death. God raised Jesus from the dead to win for us eternal life in body and soul. For all who believe in Jesus as their Savior from sin and death have eternal life as their gift. And in calling us to this way of thinking and to receive this gift of new life, the voice of God comes through His Church and through His ministers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

At the first Pentecost, the holy apostles of Jesus preached a sermon of law and gospel to those gathered. And a key part of this is heard from the mouth of Peter. Peter preached the law of God in such a way that the hearers were struck with the conviction of shame and guilt and fear of God for breaking God's commandments and rebelling against Him. And so they cried out for help and answer:

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” 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. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized... [Acts 2:37-41a]

This was in keeping with the command of our Lord Jesus to His apostles, just before His ascension (Matthew 28):

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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.

Should everyone be baptized?

The call of repentance goes out to all. All are sinners in need of repentance and salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore Holy Baptism is part of that universal offer of salvation. The pattern we see in Scripture is that for adults, they would normally go through some basic instruction in the Word of God first, and for young children, they would be baptized and then instructed in the faith as they grow older. But this gift is not restricted by age or ability to understand, but is given in the good order of the Lord's church for making disciples (followers/learners) of Jesus unto salvation. Yes, babies too should be baptized! For of such is the kingdom of God (Acts 2:39; Luke 1:39-45; Mark 10:13-16). Babies can trust the Word of God and His mercy! And they also inherit sin as do we adults. *Jesus calls to child-like faith (trust).*

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:3-8

What are the blessings and benefits of Holy Baptism?

They are many, but especially forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. We are given God's name as it is put upon us by the water and the Word. We are given the privilege and duty to pray in God's Triune Name as His children. We are covered with the righteousness of Christ as He lifts the guilt of our sin off of us. We are incorporated into the Church, the body of Christ. We are joined to Christ Jesus in His death and also His resurrection from the dead.

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

²¹**Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... 1 Peter 3:21**

Is Baptism magic?

Baptism is not something that should exist in isolation. It is part of Jesus' command to make disciples by "baptizing and teaching" together. Baptism should always be followed with teaching the Scriptures properly and learning them (on the part of the hearer).

As when a baby is born, there is much more needed after birth, so also when we become Christians and are baptized, there is much more we need for continued life and faith. In other words, we can fall away from faith and salvation in Christ. This doesn't mean that there's anything defective with our baptism or that there's a reason to be rebaptized (which we should not do), but that we have rejected its blessings if that happens. We believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins.

Christian parents need God's grace and mercy through the Word and Holy Supper just as much as do their children. Baptism isn't just a thing to check off of a list or to "get done" as a hoop to jump through. It is part of the ongoing life of faith:

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **Romans 6:1-8**

Of those who were baptized and learn of Jesus through the Word it is said:

⁴²**And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42**