

*After*  
**BAPTISM**  
*What?*

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**THERE** are important things that come before baptism, as well as those that come after we are baptized. Before baptism, if we are to become a real Christian, we must count the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:27-30). Then with this there is repentance and the public confession of faith in Christ that must take place (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:35-38). Now through baptism we enter into a new life (Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17). As a Christian, there are many wonderful promises and great privileges laid out before us. But we must understand there are great responsibilities, too.

Before becoming a Christian, we counted the cost inasmuch as we were able, being limited by what we knew. However, we entered a commitment to follow Christ wherever this would lead us. He not only is our Savior, but the Lord of our lives. It was like signing a blank check. We signed it, but the exact amount was left blank to be filled in by the Lord himself. Then as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, we are made to realize more exactly the extent and fullness of this commitment. We learn more and more about what follows baptism. We have committed ourselves to a lifetime of putting it into practice.

What follows baptism? Let's check this out more in detail from the Scriptures. That's what this little article is all about. We want to make a "go" of it in being a real Christian.

**WHAT FOLLOWS BAPTISM IS  
IMPLIED IN BAPTISM**

**1. Baptism Is for the Remission of Sins and  
to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)**

The New Testament makes it plain that our sins are taken away upon being baptized, as we are baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:11-13). Saul (Paul) was told to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). The blood of Christ does this (Revelation 1:5). If our sins are taken away, forgiven, it is implied that the life of sin is not the way

we should be living now. Paul questioned the Christians at Rome, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1,2). The apostle John plainly stated, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin [does not make a practice of sin]..." (1 John 3:9). He just before this had written, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth [goes right on sinning] hath not seen him, neither known him" (Read 1 John 3:5-10). In understanding this, also read 1 John 2:24 and 1:8-10. He is not saying we cannot sin, but that we do not make a practice of sinning. Following baptism, we resolutely pursue a life of righteousness. The Lord did not come to save us in our sins, but from our sins (Matthew 1:21). And since we received the Holy Spirit that implies we are to live a holy life (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

## **2. Baptism Is a Burial and a Resurrection (Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12; 3:1)**

Again Paul wrote in Romans 6:4, "Therefore we are buried with him [Christ] by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life." Indeed, physically speaking, baptism is a burial as the Greek word for baptize is *baptizo*, which means to immerse, to dip. The representation in baptism is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. These truths are called the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Then, when we become a Christian, it is said that we "obey the gospel" (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17). Even as Christ was crucified, buried and raised from the dead, we, spiritually speaking, are to do the same. Not only is something physical taking place when we are buried in the watery grave of baptism, spiritually we have died to sin, are burying the "old man" of sin and are being raised to walk in "newness of life." And Paul adds an additional parallel to this in Colossians 3:1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." This follows baptism.

## **3. Baptism Is the Climaxing Part of Being Born of Water and the Spirit, the New Birth (John 3:3, 5)**

Looking forward to his coming kingdom, Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This is parallel in thought and meaning to 1 Peter 1:22 and 23, which reads, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born

again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” Likewise Acts 2:38 and 1 Corinthians 6:11 should be understood in this connection (as well as Titus 3:5).

In conversion, a new birth has taken place. We have become children of God. Following a natural birth, a newborn baby comes into the world hungry. In the same vein of thought, the apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:2 instructs new Christians, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” This follows baptism. He had just written in 1:22 and 23 that “being born again,” we should “love one another with a pure heart fervently.” This fits in well with what the apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:14, “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” It is natural for brothers and sisters to love one another. They really don’t have to put forth an effort. Likewise it should come naturally, spiritually speaking, to love brothers and sisters who are in the family of God. This comes with true conversion. This comes with baptism.

#### **4. By Baptism We Enter into God’s Grace and the Fullness of Salvation (Mark 16:16; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21)**

In giving the Great Commission, our Lord and Savior asserted in Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” Titus 3:5 explicitly says, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost [Spirit].” Following this, it goes on to say that thus we are “justified by his grace” (3:7). Peter states in 1 Peter 3:21, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” The figure is the water carrying Noah’s family over to a world cleansed of sin by the Flood. The water of baptism within itself and by itself alone can do nothing, but as a composite of all the spiritual prerequisites coming together “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” we are therewith saved. It is not “baptismal regeneration” as some would belittlingly say.

How great and glorious is the occasion of salvation! The blessedness of this experience overflows in joy and happiness. Philip baptized the Ethiopian in Acts 8, and when they were come up out of the water, “he went on his way rejoicing” (8:39). In Acts 16:33 and 34 we find that at the “same hour of the night” when the

Philippian jailor was baptized, he “rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” We have accepted God’s “amazing grace.” The joy of salvation is ours following baptism.

But in our joy we need to remember Paul’s solemn admonition in Philippians 2:12 that we should “work out your [our] own salvation with fear and trembling.” This follows baptism. We have accepted salvation. But we have a personal responsibility involving our salvation. Now we are to apply ourselves and bring our salvation to its conclusion, “that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1). And let us remember what the writer of Hebrews soberly asked, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). This is a serious matter.

But a blessed assurance and invitation is ours since we have entered into God’s grace. This implies that the throne of grace in heaven may, can and should be frequently approached. We have a “high priest” in heaven, Jesus, who has tender feelings for us. Consequently, Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Contrary to what some believe, let us never forget that a person can fall from grace. This is found in black and white in Hebrews 12:14 and 15, and Galatians 5:4. We can also receive God’s grace in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1). So, with Paul, we point you to the Word of God. “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). Let us always be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (2 Peter 3:18).

All of this follows baptism. What has taken place in baptism implies what should follow baptism. Let us realize what has taken place and live accordingly.

## **SCRIPTURES SHOWING WHAT FOLLOWS BAPTISM**

### **1. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)**

Now in further examining what follows baptism, let us notice the Great Commission. Matthew’s account lays it out quite plainly for us, as the Lord on the peak of his resurrection glory imperatively gives directions as to what His disciples were to do next. We read, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost

[Spirit]: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age]. Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20). The gospel is to be taught (preached) to all people, thus producing faith and helping them count the cost before entering into discipleship. Upon being baptized and following baptism, they are more in particular to be taught to "observe all things" that Christ has commanded. The apostle Paul looked upon the responsibility of the preacher in doing this as very important (Acts 20:26, 27; 1 Timothy 4:16). The new Christian will find throughout the New Testament what is involved in observing all things that Christ has commanded. This follows baptism.

## **2. The Converts on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36-42)**

These people cried out to Peter and the rest of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, following the crucifixion of Christ, wanting to know what they should do. They were told, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]." Peter continued. This promise is given to "you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This inclusively included every person who would ever be converted. We all come to God the same way as we become recipients of God's grace. Upon saying this, Peter exhorted and urged them to, "Save yourselves from this untoward [crooked] generation." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." There was no gainsaying, like so many times experienced today when we appeal to these very words of the apostle Peter, but "they that gladly received his word were baptized." And here in verse 42 of Acts chapter 2 we see what followed baptism.

Yes, they were baptized, and following baptism we read that they "continued stedfastly..." What they continued steadfastly in can be looked upon as public worship, or each part can be broken down and examined individually as each new convert puts it into practice. They continued steadfastly in "the apostles' doctrine." This involved the apostles' teaching (echoes of Matthew 28:20). They were being taught, and they unhesitatingly put what they learned into practice. "Fellowship" is next listed. In their sharing this is evident, and as we find elsewhere in the New Testament



“fellowship” means giving (Philippians 1:5; 4:15). We give; we share. “Breaking of bread” follows. We believe this refers to the Lord’s Supper. Read 1 Corinthians 10:16 and Acts 20:7. The early church observed the Lord’s supper every Lord’s Day (Sunday, the first day of the week), and the day of Pentecost fell upon the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:15, 16). How fitting that the church on the day of its inception observed the Lord’s Supper. Verse 42 concludes with “prayers.” The church was born in a prayer meeting (Acts 1:14), and now continues and thrives in an atmosphere of prayer. It is the lifeline of the church and especially of the new Christian as he moves on into the Christian life. All of these things followed baptism, whether looking upon this as the public worship or individually lived out in the life of each person. Let us likewise be steadfast in this matter.

### 3. Admonitions in Colossians (Colossians 2:12; 3:1 and Following)

Colossians 2:12 reads, “Buried with him [Christ] in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Then, fittingly, Colossians 3:1 (and following) resumes the thought. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” Obviously this follows baptism.

Colossians 3:1 and what follows in this chapter highlights what comes after baptism. Let us study this carefully and put it into practice.

#### “Things Above” and “Things on the Earth”

- “If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above*, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1).
- “*Set your affections on things above*, not on *things on the earth*. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (3:2,3).
- “Mortify [put to death] therefore your members which are *upon the earth*; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection [passion], evil concupiscence [evil desire], and covetousness, which is idolatry” (3:5).

#### “Put Off” and “Put On”

- “But now ye also *put off* all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (3:8).

- “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have *put off* the old man with his deeds” (3:9).
- “And have *put on* the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (3:10).
- “*Put on* therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies [tender mercies], kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (3:12,13).
- “And above all these things *put on* charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness” (3:14).

#### “Let” These things Take Place

- “And *let* the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (3:15).
- “*Let* the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (3:16).

#### “All in the Name of the Lord”

- “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (3:17).

#### 4. The Admonitions in Hebrews 10:22-25

The writer of the epistle of Hebrews in Hebrews 10:22 and following may well have baptism, and what should follow baptism, in mind. A parallel is drawn from the Old Testament. The priests washed in the laver and were cleansed before entering the temple to serve God. Being aware of this, the Hebrews’ writer admonishes, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” With the “let us” admonition, he continues with thoughts in this connection.

Having drawn near with cleansing, there is the admonition, “*Let us* hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).” As we “hold fast,” another admonition follows, “And *let us* consider one another to provoke [to stir up] unto love and to good works.” We are to encourage one another in the Christian walk (“unto love and good works”). With that being said, the following is added, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day

approaching.” Faithful church attendance is to follow baptism, as we are admonished to be a source of encouragement and help to one another.

This 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews is concluded with a fitting admonition. “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:35-39).

IN CONCLUSION, let us never forget the great responsibilities that come with being baptized, and at the same time let us always remember the many wonderful promises and privileges that are decidedly ours. Being a Christian is the most rewarding and promising life that can be lived, and as the apostle Paul asserted, “Having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:8). And so “for the joy that is set before” us, “let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1, 2). Heaven awaits. Amen. □



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