



**“And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.” (1 Peter 3:20-21 NIV)**

It is apparent from the reference quoted above that the act of baptism is not intended to cleanse the filth of our body (as we would if we were simply taking a bath). The physical act is one of obedience to the commandment and a confession of our faith. It displays the pledge of a good conscience to God. It is the outward sign of an inner commitment to repent from our former sins and to dedicate our life in service to our Creator.

## WHAT DOES BAPTISM DO FOR A PERSON?

### 1. REMOVAL OF CONDEMNATION

We are born in the family of Adam and we are therefore under the condemnation to death that was the result of the sin in the Garden of Eden. Baptism changes our citizenship. We are no longer “without hope and without God in the world”. By baptism, we “have been brought near through the blood of Christ.” and the condemnation has been removed. (see Ephesians 2:11-13 NIV, Romans 5:18-21)

### 2. FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS

It is a principle of scripture that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. (Romans 9:22) When we are baptized, we are figuratively covered by the blood of Christ and the sins that we have committed are washed away. Our robes are made “white in the blood of the lamb.” (Revelation 7:14)

### 3. RESPONSIBILITY

The act of baptism is the acceptance of a covenant with God. There is a responsibility associated with this covenant. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, (at his return) to answer for the things done while we were members of his body. (2 Corinthians 5:10, Psalm 50:4-5) If necessary, we will be resurrected for this judgment.

### 4. HEIRS OF THE PROMISES

When we are baptized into Christ, we become Abraham’s descendants and heirs to the precious promises. (Gal 3:27-29)

### 5. BLESSINGS

There are also many blessings associated with our baptism. Christ is a mediator for his household of believers. (Hebrews 4:15, 10:21) We are reconciled to God through the death of Christ, and then saved by his life as our mediator. (Hebrews 5:10)

What a wonderful blessing that our sins can be forgiven through Christ. (1 John 1: 7-9, Acts 3:25-26)

If we use our mediator and remain faithful, we have the abiding hope that through the grace of God, we will receive the final blessings, eternal life and a place in the Kingdom of God on the earth. (Psalm 133:3)

# Things Concerning

The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

**“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” (Mark 16:15-16)**

### BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

Jesus told his disciples to go through the whole world and preach the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to everyone.

The gospel of Christ is said to be the “power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” and who is baptized. (Mark 16:15-16, Romans 1:16-17)

### BAPTISM ESSENTIAL

The physical act of baptism, (complete immersion in water), has been very clearly designated as an essential part of the salvation process. There are many references in the Bible that demonstrate that baptism is not just an optional extra.

The importance of baptism is highlighted in Peter’s response to a question in Acts 2: “When the people heard this, (the gospel message), they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” (verses 37-38 NIV)

### A NEW BIRTH

Jesus added emphasis to the importance of baptism when he told Nicodemus that we must be born again. He clearly indicated that there

were two phases to this new birth.

“Jesus answered, 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.” (John 3:5)

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Being born of the water is the first step in the new birth. Jesus subjected himself to a water baptism, even though he never committed any personal sins. By this act he acknowledged that he was under the same condemnation to death that he shared with all who are born of a woman, and that submission to a new birth in water was an act of obedience that fulfilled all righteousness.

God honored him on this special occasion by saying “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” (see Matt 3:13-17)

### OUR BAPTISM

If Jesus, who never sinned, was willing to submit to the physical act of being immersed in water, how much more should we who are sinful men and women submit to baptism as our act of obedience to the calling of God.

Our hope for salvation depends on many things, including the grace of God. Baptism is only a step in the process, but it is an essential step.

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LOCAL CONTACT:

Send all Correspondence to:  
“Things Concerning”  
27 Delphian Rd  
Springfield, VT 05156  
e-mail [jimillay@sover.net](mailto:jimillay@sover.net)

**“ Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.”**

(John 3:23 NIV )

#### IMMERSION IN WATER

It is apparent from the location that was being used for baptism that the act involved immersion in water.

If a few sprinkles of water was an acceptable method, John would have been able to baptize anywhere.

He chose Aenon because there was enough water available to perform the ceremony as it had been intended.

The word “baptized” comes from the Greek word “baptizo” and it means to be overwhelmed with water, to be fully wet. The same word is used to describe the process of dying a garment, where it is obviously necessary to dip the entire garment into the dye to change its color.

#### BURIED IN BAPTISM

The act of a full immersion in water is a fitting display of the symbolic meaning of baptism. To be born again by water, we must first bury the old man and his ways. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

When we go under the water, we are symbolically putting our former life to death, and when we come forth out of the water, we are rising (in a typical resurrection) to newness of life in Christ Jesus.

Paul expresses it this way to the Romans: “Therefore we are buried with him 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection;

(Romans 6: 4-5)

#### PHILLIP AND THE EUNUCH

When Phillip met and baptized the eunuch, the account supports the need for full immersion. It also tells us some other important things about baptism. ( see Acts 8:26-39)

#### KNOWLEDGE FIRST

The first stage of the process was the knowledge of the gospel of Christ. The eunuch read the words of Isaiah, but needed a teacher to help him understand what he was reading.

#### SEE, HERE IS WATER

When he learned about the sacrifice of Jesus from Phillip, he understood the need for repentance and baptism. As they passed a river, the eunuch asked the question “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

#### FAITH ESSENTIAL

Phillip responded to the question by saying: “ If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.”

It is apparent from this account that understanding and faith are important elements of an acceptable baptism. An infant or a young child would not be able to meet this criteria. The scriptural model is for adult baptism and we must respect this pattern.

#### CONFESSION

The eunuch responded with his confession of faith. “ I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God”

#### IMMERSED IN THE WATER

They both went down into the water, and Phillip baptized the eunuch. They came out of the water and Phillip left him to rejoice in his new life.

#### REJOICING

The eunuch proceeded on his way rejoicing, as we all should when we rise to newness of life in Christ.

**“Jesus answered, 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.” (John 3:5)**

#### WATER AND SPIRIT

Jesus has told us that being born again of the **water** (through the physical act of baptism), is one of the necessary first steps in the process of salvation. He also mentions that being born of the **Spirit** is the second part of the process and that without both of these births, we cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

We can easily relate to the birth in water, and we understand that our baptism accomplishes this, but what is the Spirit birth?

#### BORN IN STAGES

Being born of the Spirit is something that involves two phases. The first phase is development of the inner man so that we have the Spirit of Christ; so that his words (which are Spirit), dwell in us and we become spiritually minded.

The final phase of being born of the Spirit will not occur until we have been granted immortality through the grace of God at the judgment seat of Christ. We will be truly born of the Spirit, when the Spirit of God energizes our bodies and we are granted an entrance into His kingdom.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF CHRIST IN OUR LIVES

The word “SPIRIT” can be a difficult one for us to understand. In the first phase of our new birth, the spirit of Christ is his influence, working in us so that our minds are transformed, and we become converted as little children.

We receive the influence of Christ through the Word of God. Jesus said:” The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63)

Jesus spoke the words of God. These words are so important to our spiritual life that Jesus said: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”( Matt 4:4)

It is the Word of God that was given under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and this influence is available to us if we read and study the Word.

Peter seems to reflect this entire concept when he says: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

( 1 Peter 1:23)

#### SPIRIT = INFLUENCE

Being born of the spirit is first of all, being born of the word. The Spirit given Word influences us to change our thinking from being fleshly minded to being spiritually minded. (see Romans 8:5-6)

The Word of God must influence our minds so that our character is developed. When we add to our faith, all of the attributes of Godliness as mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-11, the influence of the Spirit will be manifested in our lives. We will then be born of the water and of the Spirit, in a conditional sense.

#### SPIRIT=POWER

The word “Spirit” can also mean power. To be completely born of the Spirit, our corruptible bodies must be made incorruptible, by the power of God.

If we have been born again by the Spirit Word, and have developed a spiritual mind, manifesting godliness in our lives, we have the hope that through the grace and power of God, we will be born of the spirit unto eternal life, and will enter the Kingdom of God.