



## IS BAPTISM REQUIRED FOR SALVATION?

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***Does a person need Baptism in order to be saved? Is this salvation by works or grace? If it's not required then why do it at all? What does the Bible say?***

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9). The most misunderstood scripture in all of Christendom. Many believe that this means there are no works for the Christian to do to be saved. Of course this is man’s idea of what the scripture says, instead of letting the bible interpret itself. The “works” Paul is speaking of is *our works*, not God’s works. Many fail to quote the next verse that says, “For we are *his workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus unto *good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*”(v.10). God’s works are the works of grace. That grace being his holy righteous law! “Be *gracious* to me *through your law*” (Psalm 119:29 NIV). This gift of how we are to be saved was given to us by God through his grace. *This way is grace!* Without this law, all of mankind would be lost! We would be uncivilized barbarians with no rule of law. Man cannot by himself come up with the Ten Commandments. It was a gift from God, “For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more *they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness* shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:17). “...for all thy commandments *are righteousness.*” (Psalm 119:172).

### **Jesus Loved God’s Works**

Many a time Jesus was asked about the way of Salvation. The rich young ruler asked him plainly, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16). That is simple and to the point. Now did Jesus respond the way most mainstream Christians would respond today? Would Jesus have said “Nothing” like Christians today? Let’s see what Jesus said to the man: “but if thou wilt enter into life, *keep the commandments.*” (v.17). He told him, the law of God is the way of Salvation! Jesus even lists the commandments in no real order, “He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, “Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (vv.18-19). The Bible here clarifies just what commandments he is speaking of, the commandments of God, *not* the commandments of men! The Ten Commandments *are* God’s works! (see Ex 32:16).

Another time Jesus performed a miracle of the feeding of the 5000. After this many were searching for him for more food, not for salvation, and he said to them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

“***Labour*** not for the meat which perisheth, ***but*** for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.” (John 6:26-27). Jesus told the people to “labor” and seek for the spiritual food which is the word of God, him that endures unto eternal life. A gift given by Christ! No man can come up with the law of God, it’s a gift. And we receive that gift by the Holy Spirit as we shall see. Jesus reveals to them that work, “Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we *might work the works of God?*” Jesus answered and said unto them, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*” (vv.28-29). Bible says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...” (Acts 16:31). Notice belief is a “work of God” not men. Faith is a work.

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“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” (Acts 15:11). Does this have anything to do with the Law? Yes! It has everything to do with the Law, especially the first, second, fifth, and Tenth commandments!

The First Commandment reads, “I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Ex 20:2-3). Many people have probably read this passage many times, but do not understand its full meaning. The Commandments of God are commandments of “faith” (Ephesians 2:8; Psalm 119:29; Deuteronomy 32:20).

In Hosea, God repeats this very commandment and adds this to it, “Yet I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: ***for there is no saviour beside me.***” (13:4). so what is God telling us here in the first Commandment of Faith? TO BELIEVE ON YOUR SAVIOUR! Are we not to do the same in the New Testament? Yes! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...”

The Commandment goes on to say, “I *am* the LORD thy God [the Savior], which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” What did God do in Egypt? The Bible says that Israel was a “...people *saved* by the LORD,” (Deut 33:29). God always presented himself as Savior to Israel, “Look unto me, and be ye saved,” (Isaiah 45:22). God saved Israel from Egypt as Jesus saves us now from the bondage of Sin.

But not only did he save Israel, he redeemed Israel as well. “Thou in thy *mercy* hast led forth the people which thou hast ***redeemed***: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.” (Ex 15:13).

“But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and ***redeemed*** you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” (Deut 7:8).

“Thus saith the LORD, *the Redeemer of Israel*, and his Holy One,” (Isaiah 49:7). Are we not “redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Gal 3:13), by the blood of Christ? Do we not find “redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” (Ephesians 1:7).

He is our Justifier as well, “In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be *justified*, and shall glory” (Isa 45:25). We are “justified by faith” as Paul says; *this is all in the first commandment in God’s law. And who is the “LORD” or “YAHWEH” in the Old Testament? The one who became Jesus in the New, “Before Abraham was, I AM.”* (John 8:58). Jesus is the Great “I AM” of the Bible, and **only he can be the redeemer, Justifier, and Savior of Men.** Yahweh said, “I, *even I*, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.” (Isaiah 43:11). So, the law says to BELIEVE ON YOUR SAVIOR, REDEEMER, AND ARE JUSTIFIED BY YAHWEH WHO IS JESUS!

Jesus, in the New Testament, in the Gospel of John, when he was preaching to the Jews, said, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). The “he” is in Italics. Many scholars know that Jesus used “I AM”

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“ego emi” and is the divine name of God, “If ye believe not that I AM”— “Here (as in John 8:58) our Lord claims the Divine name, I AM, Ex 3:14.” (Welesley’s Explanatory Notes). Jesus said we must believe he is the great “I AM” of the Old Testament or we will not be saved. The first Commandment in the law says the same thing, to believe in our Savior the Great “I AM,” who save Israel from Egypt, out of bondage. Jesus applied the first and Greatest Commandment to himself. If we break it we lose Salvation!

Jesus continues, and in this chapter he is explaining the first commandment in the law almost word for word, He said, “As he spake these words, many believed on him.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (vv.30.32).

But then, those that believed started getting a little cocky with Jesus, “We be Abraham’s seed, and were *never in bondage to any man*: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?” (v.33). How can they say such a thing, Israel was in bondage in Egypt. How quickly they forget. But, here Jesus is telling them, exactly what the first commandment says, that He is YHWH, and he is the Savior come to set us free from bondage, but this time it’s not slavery from a another nation, but from sin. “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [“slave” (Strong’s #1401)] of sin.

“And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

“*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*” (vv.34-36). Jesus, the great “I AM” if we believe in him, he shall make us free from bondage, bondage from sin. “I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Not only did God save Israel out of Egypt from slavery, but he saved them from that sin sick society, and those sins of Egypt actually made its way into Israel, like the sin of the making of the golden calf. God saved them from sin as well as slavery. Jesus is saying that if you do not believe that he is the great “I AM” the Savior, then “ye shall die in your sins” The breaking of the first commandment results in the loss of salvation—Believing on Jesus, ***which is the keeping of the first commandment of faith is how we are saved.***

Now there are many that believe on Jesus but it’s in name only. Jesus prophesied that many would come in his name, and do great works but they were “workers of iniquity.” (Matthew 7:23); Christian in name only but not in works. People who believed on Christ wanted to kill him, and Jesus told those people who believed on him that they were of the devil because of their “deeds” or works (John 8:30-47). Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;” (John 8:32). They did not continue in the word of God. They rejected it even though they believed on him. Though we believe we must continue in his word. Isaiah writes, “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and ***worketh righteousness, those that*** remember thee ***in thy ways***: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: ***in those [ways of God] is continuance, and we shall be saved***” (Isaiah 64:5). Notice God’s ways are his righteousness that the believer works in his life, and if we continue in them “WE SHALL BE SAVED”! This is the exact message Christ was giving those that believed on him to continue to believe what he says. Many believe on him but don’t believe what he said! Christian in name only but not in works!

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The Bible says, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: *the devils also believe, and tremble.*” (James 2:19). The devil knows there is a God, but trembles, why? He does not continue in his word, but disobeys like so many people today, they believe but don’t obey. Christ told them you believe on me but don’t obey. To conclude then, those who really believe on Christ, continue in his word, the law of God, not in name only but by works, these are the real Disciples of Christ.

### **So What of Baptism?**

Is Baptism a commandment of God? John the Baptist when baptizing, Jesus came to him, “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

“But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?”

“And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: ***for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.*** Then he suffered him.” (Matthew 3:13-15). All of God’s commands are righteousness (Psalm 119:172). Jesus said he came to “fulfill all righteousness” He also said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, ***but to fulfill.***”(Matthew 5:17). To “fulfill” means to “do” it. Or some may say to “carry out” (Thayer’s). Regardless how they want to word it, it means to do, perform or carry it out. So is baptism part of the law of God? And if so, then it is required for salvation!

### **Baptism in the Old Testament**

The ritual of baptism was already around in John’s time. We read, “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

“And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism...” (Matthew 3:5-7). This ritual was known and practiced in the time of Jesus. Edersheim writes, “But we have also positive testimony (which the objections of Winer, Keil, and Leyrer, in my opinion do not invalidate), that the baptism of proselytes existed in the time of Hillel and Shammai. For, whereas the school of Shammai is said to have allowed a proselyte who was circumcised on the eve of the Passover, to partake after baptism of the Passover, the school of Hillel forbade it. This controversy must be regarded as providing that at that time (previous to Christ) the baptism of proselytes was customary (Pes. viii. 8, Eduy. v. 2).” (Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Appendix XII, p.1571). It is interesting that the Jews claim that they received this ritual from the law, which can also be substantiated in the New Testament as well.

In his footnote Edersheim says, “It is remarkable, that Maimonides traces even the practice of baptizing proselytes to Ex. xix. 10, 14 (Hilc Issurey Biah xiii. 3; Yad haCh. vol. ii. p. 142 b). He also gives reasons for the ‘baptism’ of Israel before entering into covenant with God. In Kerith, 9 a ‘the baptism’ of Israel is proved from Ex. xxiv. 5, since every sprinkling of blood was supposed to be preceded by immersion. In Siphre on Numb. (ed. Weiss, p. 30 b) we are also distinctly told of ‘baptism’ as one of the three things by which Israel was admitted into the Covenant.” (ibid, footnote 1394, p.675).

In the Gospel of John we read that “And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

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“For John was not yet cast into prison.

“Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and *the Jews about purifying.*” (John 3:23-25). Baptism was a purification ritual, to be cleansed of sin. This was done in the Law of God by the priests (Num 19:7). This is why the priests asked John by what authority does he baptize? (see John 1:25).

Where in the law do we find immersion or baptism? Edersheim writes, “Hitherto the Law had it, that those who had contracted *Levitical defilement* were to immerse before offering sacrifice...the immersion being, as it were, the acknowledgment and symbolic removal of moral defilement, corresponding to that of *Levitical uncleanness*...there are indications of a deeper insight into the meaning of *Levitical baptisms*” (ibid, p.675, emphasis added). In the Old Testament we read of the priest being washed and then anointed to be the Priest of Israel. Christ baptism was him being washed and anointed by the Holy Spirit to be Israel’s Messiah, King and High Priest. Christians are baptized because in the Kingdom they will be kings and priests of God (Rev 5:10).

Paul wrote in Hebrews 9:10, “Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Here speaking of the Old Testament laws. The word “washings” is “baptismos” (Strong’s #909). The word baptism means, “washing” (Strong’s #909). Brown Driver and Briggs Hebrew Word Definitions says, “...of washing prescribed by the Mosaic Law (Heb 9:10)”

In the book of Acts we read, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be **baptized**, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16). Paul said of the Church, “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,” (Ephesians 5:26). Titus 3:5 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;” The “works of righteousness” here notice Paul says “*which we have done.*” In Isaiah 64:6 we understand this to mean our righteousness “our iniquities,” meaning our ways not God’s which is his law, for sin is the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4).

The JFB Commentary says, “**with the washing of water** — rather as *Greek*, ‘with,’ or ‘by the laver of the water,’ namely, *the* baptismal water. So it ought to be translated in Tit 3:5, the only other passage in the New Testament where it occurs. As the bride passed through a purifying bath before marriage, so the Church (compare Rev 21:2).” (Emphasis theirs). And it is “by the word” meaning the word of God, the law of God they follow to justify performing this ritual.

Baptism is an Old Testament law. Notice the high Priest when he is prepared, “And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *and shalt wash them with water*... Then shalt thou take *the anointing oil*, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him” (Ex 29:4, 7).

In Exodus 19 God wanted to make all of Israel a nation of “Priests” (v.6). Before God came down to anoint them with the spirit of God, and give them his law Israel was to be washed, “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, **and sanctify them** today and tomorrow, and let them **wash** their clothes” (v.10).

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The Levites were washed as well, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, “Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, *and cleanse them.*” “And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: *Sprinkle water of purifying upon them,* and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and *so* make themselves clean.”(Numbers 8:5-7).

In Numbers the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter God says, “This *is* the **ordinance of the law** which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel...” (v.2). it speaks of the “water of separation: it *is* a purification for sin.” (v.9). the ashes of the red heifer were also used in this water purification ritual as the purification for sin.

There are more examples but we can see that baptisms were a “law” in Israel for the washing and the purifying of sin. Then the time of the “reformation” came as Paul spoke of, when baptisms of course are still done, *but the sacrifices need not be performed because Jesus is our only and permanent sacrifice*, “But this man, after he had **offered one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down on the right hand of God;” (Heb 10:12). The sacrificial law is still in place just “reformed” from the blood of bulls and goats to the blood of Jesus Christ. He is now our sin offering, peace offering etc... “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*” (Heb 10:10). We need not sacrifice anymore; Jesus is our one and permanent sacrifice.

Paul also gives another Old Testament example of baptism in 1 Corinthians the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter speaking of the Red Sea crossing he says, “And *were all baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;” (v.2). They were washed by water from their former life in Egypt, a symbol of sin.

The Apostle Peter speaking of the flood in Noah’s time says, “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls *were saved by water.*” “The like figure whereunto *even baptism...*” (1 Peter 3:20-21). The old sinful world was dead, and the new world awaited them. So clearly baptism is in the law of God, and clearly understood by the prophets, Apostles, Moses, John the Baptist and Jesus as being part of the law of God. Jesus said, “Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”(Matthew 3:15). All of God’s commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172), and baptism is in the law of God!

### **Grace are ye Saved**

Now if baptism is part of the law of God, and we are saved by grace, then is baptism required for salvation?

Let’s put all the scriptures together:

- “For by grace are ye saved **through faith**” (Ephesians 2:8).
- “Be gracious to me THROUGH YOUR LAW” (Psalm 119:29 NIV).
- “grace reign **through righteousness**” (Romans 5:21).

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“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them *that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God* and our Saviour Jesus Christ:”(2 Peter 1:1).

- “all thy commandments *are* righteousness.” (Psalm 119:172)
- “but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17).

Looking at the Biblical evidence the answer would have to be yes! And Peter the Apostle agrees, “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls *were saved by water*.

*“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:” (1 Peter 3:20-21). To clear the parenthesis the CEV Translation says, “But baptism is more than just washing your body. It means turning to God with a clear conscience” Peter showing the true and deeper meaning of baptism, of repentance and turning to God. But baptism does save us! It is one of the commandments of God that must be obeyed because God commands it! God’s law is the way of salvation and baptism is part of the law of God. If it was not part of the way of salvation, why even mention it in the New Testament?

Jesus says, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

“He that *believeth and is baptized shall be saved*; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16). He or she who believes God, believes the Bible, and believes in keeping the law of God which includes baptism shall be saved!

### Two Parts to Salvation

Many do not realize salvation comes in two parts. The first part is salvation from sin. The second part is the saved person receives the Holy Spirit after baptism, grows in grace, and knowledge, keeping the law of God, enduring to the end, and he or she shall receive eternal life.

First, what does this word salvation mean?

The expression to be saved means TWO different things:

- 1) Deliverance from trouble or danger — deliverance from sin and its consequences, from DEATH. We often hear of the expression "to save someone from a house that is on fire. "You would want to be saved, to be rescued from the penalty of sin.
- 2) Salvation means to preserve — to keep, i.e., to keep us alive eternally and given eternal LIFE.

The Holy Scriptures says that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23).

You need deliverance from the eternal DEATH penalty that you already have incurred — from that everlasting punishment, which is death that you have brought on yourself as the penalty of violating God's law. Everyone has sinned and brought that penalty upon himself.



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In order to be delivered from total and eternal death, in order to save your life one must accept the offering of the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, and God lifts the death penalty from you and you are justified in God's sight by the blood of Jesus (This is the first part of salvation).

After this is the preservation. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be *preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Thess 5:23). Being blameless in God's sight by keeping his law and staying faithful to him (This is the second part of salvation) (*Read our booklet just what do you mean-Salvation for more details*).

### Saved from sin

Baptism belongs to the first part of being saved from sin through the sacrifice of Jesus.

After knowing what sin is, which is breaking his law, coming under the judgment of God because all have sinned, one must accepting what Jesus did for the whole world on the cross, He, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: "Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation [Atoning Sacrifice] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission [Passing over] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" (Rom 3:24-25). God out of his grace provided a Lamb to be sacrifice for the sins of the world, Jesus. Abraham recognized this (John 8:56) when he said, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen 22:8). All who accept this sacrifice and have "faith in his blood" God will "pass over" all this sins we committed in the past.

How is this done? Baptism is performed, why? It is to seal the covenant between you and God. Peter said, "Then Peter said unto them, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). One cannot just say I accept the Lord as my personal savior and that's it! One must make a commitment! One must show it, by entering into a Covenant with God, a "Marriage" of the Lamb (Rev 19:7, 9). God told Israel, "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although *I was an husband unto them*, saith the LORD:" (Jer 31:32). A Covenant is a marriage. "for I am married unto you" (Jer 3:14). This is how you show your faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, being "baptized into *his* death" (Rom 6:3).

### The Symbolism of Baptism

Baptism is a symbol of circumcision, "*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: "*Buried with him in baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

"And you, being dead in your sins and *the uncircumcision of your flesh*, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" (Col 2:11-13; see also Rom 6:3-6).

Circumcision was, "token of the covenant betwixt me and you." (Gen 17:11)

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It's a "seal of the righteousness of the faith" (Rom 4:11). Once Baptized, the covenant is ratified accepting the sacrifice of Christ in Baptism. This is how *one really accepts* the sacrifice of Christ, in BAPTISM!

"For this is *my blood of the new testament*, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28).

We are "baptized into *his* death" (Rom 6:3).

"He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved...*" (Mark 16:16). Saved from his or hers past sins (part one of salvation), and then one receives the gift of the Holy Spirit (part two of salvation).

"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:" (1 Peter 3:21). Accepting the sacrifice of Christ being baptized into his death "will wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16) by water which was a symbol of his death.

Baptism is for the "remission of sins," (Acts 2:38), for our past sins, and we are "saved" from sin and its penalty coming under the judgment of God. God's grace-providing the Lamb to die for the sins of the world we are saved, and "*There is therefore now no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom 8:1). "death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom 6:9). The death penalty is lifted because Christ paid the penalty for us in our stead.

What does the actual ceremony represent? One, as we have shown above is the washing away of our sins. (Acts 22:16).

The other is a burial and a rising from the grave. Colossians 2:12 says, "*Buried with him in baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Neither sprinkling nor pouring is a burial, one must be immersed in water totally to be baptized.

Notice further, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

"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 6:3-5). Here is the real meaning of baptism. It has a dual meaning to it as well. A burial of the old self, (vv.6-7) and a rising of a new and different you. A righteous forgiven person sanctified and walking in a new and different way. Notice what Paul says about the old and the new life, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

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**“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”** (1 Corinth 6:9-11). The old person was put to death, no longer living that life again. Also they were “washed” of their sins by the baptismal pool, and are sanctified in Jesus name.

This is also a type of the resurrection of the dead in Christ. Believers will put off this body, and receive a new body, and resurrected immortal body, and receive eternal life. So this ceremony looks forward to the kingdom of God and the resurrection.

### **Baptized “in the name” of Jesus**

So what exactly happens during the baptismal ceremony?

The person is asked “have you repented of your sins”?

“Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior”?

When these are answered the minister says I hereby baptize you “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). What does this mean? The word “name” in Greek is “ὄνομα onoma” (Strong’s 3686). It means what a person or thing is called, but it also means “(2)...for all that a ‘name’ implies, **of authority**, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the ‘name’ covers: (a) of the ‘Name’ of God as expressing His attributes, etc., e.g., Matt. 6:9; Luke 1:49; John 12:28; 17:6,26; Rom. 15:9; 1 Tim. 6:1; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 13:6; (b) of the ‘Name’ of Christ, e.g., Matt. 10:22; 19:29; John 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; Acts 26:9; Rom. 1:5; Jas. 2:7; 1 John 3:23; 3 John 1:7; Rev. 2:13; 3:8; **also the phrases rendered ‘in the name;’ these may be analyzed as follows: (1) representing the authority of Christ, e.g., Matt. 18:5 (with *epi*, ‘on the ground of My authority’);**” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words under “name” emphasis added). Many come “in the name of Christ” meaning by his authority. Many demons were cast out in “his name.” Christ, by his authority things were done.

Jesus baptized no one. His disciples baptized for him. They did it in his name, or by his authority or command, it was attributed to him. So it was like Jesus was doing it himself. The disciples were doing it in his stead. “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized...When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, **“(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)”** (John 3:22; 4:1-2). The disciples did it in Jesus stead, in his name, by his authority. Jesus uses human instruments, those who believe and are subject to him to carry out his will.

What of Matthew 28:19 that says, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” Should we baptize in this way, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

This Baptismal formula is only mentioned once, in Matthew 28:19? Why is that? Compare the accounts in the Gospels (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:4-8). The majority of scriptures show to baptize “*in the name of Jesus.*” The inspired Apostle Peter

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answered the crowd about being saved, “Repent, and be baptized every one of *you in the name of Jesus Christ* for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (verse 38), see also Acts 8:12-16; 10:48; 9:5-18 & 22:16: 19:1-6. It was always in the name of Jesus. Was the Baptismal formula in Matthew 28 part of the first century church doctrine?

The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed. (1920), II 365 states: “The Trinitarian formula and triune immersion were not uniformly used from the beginning... *Baptism into the name of the Lord [was] the normal formula of the New Testament. In the 3rd century baptism in the name of Christ was still so widespread that Pope Stephen, in opposition to Cyprian of Carthage, declared it to be valid.*” (Emphasis added). If baptisms were done in the name of Jesus, why were they not done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? It’s in the Bible, or is it? Is this the original rendering of Matthew 28:19?

Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christianity*, page 295 states: “The testimony for the wide distribution of the simple baptismal formula [in the Name of Jesus] down into the *second century* is so overwhelming that even **in Matthew 28:19, the Trinitarian formula was later inserted.**” (Emphasis added). Historical and textual proof shows that the original text was “in my name” and not the Triune formula as we have today in our Bibles.

The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, I, 275 writes: “It is often affirmed that the words in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost are not the *ipsissima verba* [exact words] of Jesus, but...**a later liturgical addition.**” But how did it get into the Text?

**Brief Lesson on Textual Criticism:** Textual Criticism is “Determining, as best we can, the original text of the document” and has “its eyes fixed firmly and solely on the original text” (*An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism, by Rich Elliott of Simon Greenleaf University*). Basically it’s the study of manuscripts and determining what the originals say.

Under this discipline the Bible stands out like no other manuscript in the ancient world. F.F. Bruce one of the greatest New Testament scholars says of the Bible, “There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as does the Gospel and the New Testament” (*The book and the Parchments, p.178*). When we compare all of the manuscripts together we can get the originals sayings and quotes from the Bible as originally written, (see *General Intro to the Bible by Geisler, p.404*).

### **Old Testament Reliability**

*Before 900 A.D.* we had no copies of the Old Testament. *Until 1947*, and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scrolls were copies of the Hebrew Scriptures that date as old as 125 B.C. The copies of these texts are exactly the copies we have today in our Bibles, and the Old Testament is the same today as it was in the days of Jesus Christ (*For a detailed study of these Texts, and others, read the Books by Josh McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict, and A Ready Defense, Norman Geisler, and William Nix, A General Introduction To the Bible and The Old Testament Documents, Are they Reliable and Relevant? by Waltar C. Kaiser Jr.*).

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## New Testament Reliability

*Geisler* writes, “The overwhelming evidence for the reliability of the New Testament manuscripts over other books from the ancient world is summarized in the following comparisons”:

(Complete N.T.).

**Author/ Book New Testament Date Written-A.D. 50-100**

**Earliest copies- c.50A.D. Thiede’s work (fragments)**

**c.114 (fragments) c. 200 books c. 250 (most of N.T. c. 325 (complete N.T.)**

**Time Gap-+20 yrs, 100 yrs, 150 yrs, 225 yrs.**

**No. of Copies-5,366 % Accuracy-99+**

*(From Geisler and Nix, General Introduction To The Bible, p.408; Theide’s addition made by Peter Salemi from Theide’s Work Eyewitness to Jesus, emphasis added).*

The accuracy of the bible is 99%, (see also Bruce Metzger, Chapters in the History of New Test Criticism says 99:5%).

There are errors in the bible, but those errors constitute LESS THAN 1% of the New Testament. And, most of these errors in the N.T are “copyist errors” (ibid, p.467).

But none of these affect the message of the Bible. To illustrate, note the following telegrams:

- 1) “Y#U HAVE WON TEN MILLION DOLLARS.”
- 2) “YO# HAVE WON TEN MILLION DOLLARS.”

Even if we receive only the first telegram we know what the exact message is in spite of error. The New Testament manuscripts have a much smaller percent of significant copyist errors than this telegram. Further, with over 5,300 manuscripts (compared to a few telegrams), the real message of the New Testament is no more affected than is the message of the telegram (see Norman Geisler Into, p.469).

## “How are these variants counted?”

“There is an ambiguity in saying that there are some 200,000 variants in the existing manuscripts of the New Testament *because those represent only 10,000 places in the New Testament. If one single word is misspelled in 3,000 different manuscripts, it is counted as 3,000 variants or readings.* Once this counting procedure is understood, and the mechanical (orthographic) variants have been eliminated, the remaining significant variants are surprisingly **few in number**. It should be remembered that the production of multiple copies of manuscripts by printing and photocopying are relatively recent developments in the production of books.” (ibid, p.468, emphasis added). So the copyist errors are easily eliminated and corrected.

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## How significant are these variants?

“There are only 10,000 places where these 200,000 variants occur...Westcott and Hort estimate only about one eighth of all variance have any weight, and most them [the one eighth] are *merely mechanical matters such as spelling or style*...Mathematically that would compute to a text that is 98.33% pure...” (ibid, p.474). So the Bible is accurate aside from the copyist errors that can easily be corrected.

Many people believe that the Catholic Church corrupted the Bible to fit its own beliefs. But for this to occur it would be absolutely impossible. F.F. Peters writes, “[The] New Testament... [was] the most frequently copied and widely circulated books of antiquity” (The Harvest of Hellenism, p.50). It was impossible for one group to control the Bible, therefore if the Catholic Church attempted to do that, we would see the evidence in the manuscripts which WE DO NOT!

So what of Matthew 28:19? How did this get into the text? Was it intentional to promote the trinity? Absolutely Not!

“It looks, therefore, as though the words got into the text (perhaps from the margin) in the Church of North Africa [Alexandria]; and that the Syrian Churches did not have them in the MSS. at their disposal.” (Bullinger, *Word Studies on the HOLY SPIRIT*, pp.48, 49).

Geisler & Nix explains: “Sometimes *marginal notes* were incorporated into the text under the *misapprehension that they were part of the text*. A. T Robertson suggests that this is the explanation of the angel’s disturbing the water (John 5:4).

“The textual note at Romans 8:1 in the NKJV (which follows the KJV) indicates another illustration where the last portion of a verse was added to the text. *It may have been added as an explanatory note at first, and then it became part of the manuscript texts that were the basis of the Textus Receptus reading*. A comparison of the RV, ASV, RSV, NAB, NASB, and NIV renditions will show that they all adopt the shorter reading. An obvious example of a judgmental error by a sleepy scribe who added to a miniscule copy is found in 2 Corinthians 8:4-5, as the scribe interpolated into the text, ‘it is found thus in many copies,’ *as though it were part of Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians instead of a marginal annotation...*” (p.471, emphasis added).

The text of Matthew 28:19 was a marginal note on the side put there by the copyists of Alexandria, ***those who started the doctrine of the Trinity, and it eventually incorporated itself into the text***. It was not done intentionally as one writer shows: “Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort believed that these minor additions/alterations had either happened accidentally or *occurred when a fragment of commentary from the margin had been incorporated into the text*” (The Battle for the Book, David Marshall, p.74, emphasis added). Thank God for Textual Criticism so **we can correct the small 1% copyist’s errors in the N.T. and get the true TEXT of the Bible!** So the correct rendering for Matthew 28:19 is “in my name.”

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## **Who should do the Baptizing?**

Who is authorized to baptize? As we have read in the Bible, it must be a believer, a follower of Christ who has the spirit of God within him, and is baptized. But should he be a minister? an Apostle? or just a lay member?

In Acts Peter says that he and the Apostles were baptized, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost *as well as we?*” (10:47). When the gentiles received the Holy Spirit Peter knew that they had to go through the same steps as the Apostles. So the Apostles were baptized, and were authorized to perform baptisms.

What about others? Phillip was not a minister or an Apostle, but a deacon, chosen to perform physical acts like wait on tables (Acts 6:2-5). Yet he preached the Kingdom of God, “and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12). Then later the Angel of God (v.26) led him to baptize the Ethiopian Eunuch, “See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” (Acts 8:36-38).

Look at the example of the Apostle Paul. He said, “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

“I thank God that *I baptized none of you*, but Crispus and Gaius;

“Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

“And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

“For *Christ sent me not to baptize*, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” (1 Corinth 1:13-17). Paul’s mission was not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, and he was an Apostle chosen by Jesus. Paul most likely had lay members baptize under his supervision. We must realize that it is *Christ who is baptizing you through a human instrument*. Christ is the head of the true church of God, and the one doing the baptizing. So it does not have to be someone of high rank in the church to baptize, only by someone who is baptized regardless of title in the church.

## **Sprinkling, Pouring, or Immersion?**

So by what method does one baptize? Some churches pour water on people’s heads. Many paintings show John the Baptist pouring water on Jesus’ head. They all think that this is baptism. It is interesting to note that the word “sprinkle” occurs only a few times in the New Testament, and is always in connection with the blood of Christ--but never referring to baptism. The word “pouring” is also mentioned several times in the New Testament--but not once as a form of baptism!

Notice what the New Catholic Encyclopedia says regarding baptism: “It is evident that baptism in the early church was by immersion. This is implicit in the terminology and context.... That

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Baptism took place by immersion is evidenced by Paul's presenting it as "being buried with Christ [Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12]" (pages 56, 58). The older version of the Catholic Encyclopedia tells us that "The most ancient form usually employed was unquestionably immersion...in the Latin Church immersion seems to have prevailed until the twelfth century" (article, "Baptism").

In the year 1155, Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Baptism may be given not only by immersion, but also by effusion of water, or sprinkling with it. But it is the safer way to baptize by immersion, because that is the most common custom" (quoted by Wall, History of Infant Baptism, Vol. II, pp. 391-393, emphasis ours).

Also Brenner--after a full investigation of the administration of baptism through the centuries--wrote: "Thirteen hundred years was baptism generally and regularly an immersion by the person under the water, and only in extraordinary cases, a sprinkling or pouring with water; the latter [sprinkling or pouring] moreover, was disputed--nay even forbidden" (Brenner, Catholic History, p. 306).

But pouring and sprinkling were beginning to grow common in the 14th century, gradually prevailing in the Western Church. It is quite plain that they were late innovations of men which had become the custom in the Catholic Church. The word "baptize" is not an English word per se. It is a Greek word. And the New Testament was written in the Greek language. In translating the Bible into English, the translators left this word un-translated. Literally, in the Greek, the word is baptizo.

The definition is "immerse." It means to "plunge into" or "put into." It does not mean "to sprinkle" or "to pour." The Greek word for "sprinkle" is rantizo and "to pour" is cheo. The Holy Spirit inspired only the use of the word baptizo, meaning to immerse, when referring to baptism. Therefore, sprinkling or pouring are not forms of baptism. Immersion--being placed completely down under water--is. John the Baptist, "...was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there **was much water there**: and they came, and were baptized." (John 3:23). Much water would not have been needed if it was just sprinkling or pouring.

Baptism symbolizes the burial of the old carnal, sinful self. Only total immersion can properly symbolize death and burial; sprinkling or pouring are not symbols of a burial or bathing by any stretch of the imagination!

Let's look at some examples in the Bible.

When Jesus was baptized, notice what happens, "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

"And *straightway coming up out of the water*, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:" (Mark 1:9-10). The People's New Testament writes, "The Greek preposition translated 'out of' is *ek*, which means out from within. ***This could only be true of immersion***...The baptism took place in the river Jordan, and was doubtless by immersion. Dr. Whitby, of the Church of England, on this passage, says: 'The observation of the Greek Church is this that he who ascended out of the *water must first descend into it. Baptism is therefore to be performed, not by sprinkling, but by washing the body.*' Dr. Schaff, the great Pede-baptist



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scholar, says: ‘While the validity of baptism does not depend on the quantity or quality of water, or the mode of its application, yet immersion and emersion is the primitive and expressive mode to symbolize the idea of entire spiritual purification and renovation.’ Dr. Schaff also says: ‘The Greek word *baptize* is derived from a root that *means ‘to dip,’ ‘to immerse.’* These views are endorsed by all the great Pede-baptist scholars.” (Emphasis added). As we have proven above baptism is a burial, and a washing of the body in a bath. The only way to understand baptism is by immersion.

Philip when he baptized the Eunuch it says, “...and they *went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch*; and he baptized him.

“And when they *were come up out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:38, 39). There was no purpose whatever for Philip to actually go into the water, except for the reason there was no other way he could plunge the eunuch into the river. Had sprinkling or pouring been the proper method of baptism, Philip would have needed only to bend over and scoop up the water in his hands. The above biblical evidence clearly shows that immersion--being placed completely under water--was the only method of baptism practiced by the original Holy Spirit-inspired Church of God.

### **“What shall we do?”**

On the day of Pentecost, many heard the message Peter gave about Christ and his resurrection. “Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter without hesitation gave the answer, “REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38). Peter gave the answer step by step. First “Repent!” What is repentance?

Jesus preached repentance, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent* ye, and believe the gospel.” (Mark 1:15). But does this mean to feel remorse or guilt over misdeeds? Or to have some sort of emotional experience? Paul said, “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that *ye sorrowed to repentance*: for ye were made *sorry after a godly manner*, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

“For *godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation* not to be repented [regretted] of: but the *sorrow of the world worketh death*.” (2 Corinth 7:9-10). The “sorrow of the world”-the human physical emotional sorrow, the self centered guilt which often results from misdeeds and mistakes-does not lead to true repentance! It leads to death! The People’s New Testament says, “Not godly sorrow, but remorse. The sorrow of Judas was remorse. In the case of many besides Judas, it has resulted in despair, which has led to destruction of life, or to eternal death.”

This wellspring of remorse; this self pity that many feel when they “repent” can be nothing but sorrow directed toward the self! How many have confused self pity with repentance. How about you? Do you know the difference between emotional sorrow experienced by many as they “go to the altar” and the genuine godly sorrow which leads to true repentance?

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What is the godly sorrow Paul speaks of? The People's New Testament writes, "The difference of repentance from sorrow and regret is seen when *we bear in mind that it means the change of mind and heart wrought by godly sorrow for sin.*" (Emphasis added).

Look at Job's repentance, "Wherefore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:6). He realized that he was weak and just a man, and had a change of heart. God afterward encouraged his friends to do the same, repent, change their ways, and be righteous, "And it was *so*, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is right*, as my servant Job *hath*.

"Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is right*, like my servant Job.

"So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.

"And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before" (42:7-10).

Paul said we must be transformed, have a change of mind. The fleshly carnal mind, "*is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" (Rom 8:7). He goes on to say, "And be not conformed to this world: *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what *is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*" (Rom 12:2). A conversion must take place in your mind. Peter says, "Repent ye therefore, and be *converted*, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" (Acts 3:19).

What converts the mind? "The law of the LORD *is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*" (Psalm 19:7). The only thing that can change a person from sinner to righteousness is the law of God. "...not knowing that the *goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*" (Rom 2:4). This is the change of heart, the godly sorrow that converts a man, to seek God and his ways. This is true repentance! God will plant the seed which is the word of God, through the preaching of the Gospel (Matthew 13:23). He then "understands it" and continues from that time on in repentance. So repentance is to stop going your way, and start going God's way, which is keeping the law of God!

The Next step is being baptized. Being washed of all of your sins that you have done in the past, "for the remission of sins" and accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior, sacrifice, and soon coming King.

Step three, "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]." (Acts 2:38). Notice it's not the person, the Holy Spirit, but the "gift" of the Holy Spirit. When does this occur, and by what method?

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Notice when the gift of the Spirit is given to them in Acts the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

“Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God [repented], they sent unto them Peter and John:

“Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

“(For as yet he [“it” neuter] was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)” (vv.12-16). Note that even though the people had been previously baptized in water, they did not yet have the Holy Spirit. This plainly shows that the Holy Spirit is not given immediately at or by water baptism--and yet Acts 2:38 shows that baptism does precede the giving of the Holy Spirit. The “laying on of hands” (Heb. 6:2) is the key that solves this apparent enigma. “Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”(Acts 8:17; 19:5-6). The Holy Spirit is given to a person by prayer and the laying on of hands of God's ministry following baptism. When one receives the Holy Spirit, like the branch attached to the vine, you become Jesus' possession, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom 8:9), and you bear the fruit of righteousness, “which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23).

Jesus said, “I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:” (John 15:5). And how do we abide in him and he in us? “And hereby we know that he abideth in us, *by the Spirit which he hath given us.*” (1 John 3:24). The evidence of one having the Spirit is he or she keeping the law of God, “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him” (1 John 3:24).

Receiving the Spirit of God, is receiving the mind of God. We have the “mind of Christ” “For who hath known the mind [“Spirit” Old Test quote Isaiah 40:13] of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But **we have the mind of Christ.**” (1 Corinthians 2:16). The book of Romans says, “O the depth of the riches both of the *wisdom and knowledge of God!* how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

“For who hath known the *mind of the Lord?* or who hath been his counsellor?” (11:33-34). The “Spirit of God” is contrasted with the “spirit of man” (1 Corinthians 2:11). Man's mind contains his wisdom, creativity and his morality. God's mind, his spirit contains the same; his thoughts, his morality, and his nature which is his law.

In contrast to human nature we put on God's nature, “Peter said, “According as his *divine power* hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: ***that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,*** having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:3-4). What are “these” Peter speaks of? It has something to do with “escaping” the corruption in the world. It means the “things” “life,” “knowledge” and “goodness” “given unto us” by the “divine power” which is the Holy Spirit. Paul said to be “partakers of the Holy Ghost” (Heb 6:4). The divine nature is given to the Christian at baptism when he or she receives the Holy Spirit. Then you mind the “things of the Spirit.” (Rom 8:5). These things are, “That the

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*righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom 8:4). God’s law! Once this occurs you are in the repentant stage of walking in the spirit and not the flesh. You, when you receive the Holy Spirit are given a new nature, God’s divine nature.

We must continue in the divine nature, God’s law, if we do this we will not wither and die. Jesus said, “continue ye in my love.

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” (John 15:9-10). If we do not Jesus warned, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.” (John 15:6).

Isaiah writes the same thing, “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways... in those [God’s ways] is **continuance, and we shall be saved.**” (Isaiah 64:5). We continue in the law of God and we *shall be* saved, meaning given eternal life! That’s what your bible says! Why? When we continually feed the spirit by fulfilling the law of God, then the spirit grows, and the divine nature flourishes and lives in us, Christ in you. Jesus living his life over again in you! If we do not, it will wither and die. Jesus said “abide in my love.” (John 15:10) “...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*” (Rom 5:5). His love is the law of God (1 John 5:3). Those who do not continue in the law of God will eventually, if they do not repent lose salvation! “...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17).

After this receiving of the Holy Spirit, you become a begotten Child of God. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom 8:14-17). Begotten, not yet born. Born again we will be at the resurrection.

Peter says, “Being born again, [Grk. “anagennao”] not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Peter 1:23). The Greek word means, “begotten again.” (Strong’s # 313). Look at the context, “seed” begets. A woman is begotten, or made pregnant by the seed of the man. That incorruptible seed is the Holy Spirit given after the laying on of hands. So when it says we are the “children” or “sons” of God, we are the “begotten” children of God not yet born. (*Read our booklet The Purpose of Human life for more details*).

### **How Long should you Wait?**

So how long should baptism be put off? Again we read of the Eunuch. Once he understood and was convicted, he did not delay, “See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

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“And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” (Acts 2:36-38). After the preaching of the Gospel, and he was convicted, and believed God, and he did not hesitate to be baptized.

Many put off baptism. They feel they are too infirm, too old, and too weak--or they feel they are “not ready” yet spiritually. Some even think they must be perfect before being baptized. But how could a person be “perfect” before he receives God's Holy Spirit, which helps us to *become* perfect? All 3000 people who baptized at Pentecost, were they all Bible scholars? No! These were people who wanted to change their lives and follow God with a deep conviction.

One must understand that there is a growth process after receiving the Holy Spirit. One starts out as a “babe” in Christ. Peter said, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:” (1 Peter 2:2). Feeding on the word of God, growing, “in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). There is progression, and development of Godly character. Notice what Paul says, “For when for *the time ye ought to be teachers*, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as *have need of milk, and not of strong meat*.”

“For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of **full age**, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:12-14). Paul was concerned because the ones, who have been in the church the longest, should not be taught the first things that they learned, but should teach those things. Strong meat is what they should feed on, the deep spiritual things of God, and move on from the basics, yet not forgetting them either, because they have to teach them to the “babes” in Christ.

One simply cannot expect to “know it all” when he is baptized. It is a matter of a lifetime of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ after one is baptized. The truth is, none of these excuses is acceptable in God's sight. If a person knows that God commands baptism, knows that he should be baptized, and his conscience convicts him and he “counts the cost”--then he should be baptized as soon as possible.

When Paul was first converted, and learned that Christ is the Son of God whom he had been persecuting, did he procrastinate about being baptized? See Acts 9:1-18, especially verse 18. Once his mind was made up and convicted, he was baptized!

One must also “count the cost” (Luke 14:28). “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?” *Yes count the cost!* Many T.V. Evangelist call on people to “come down to the altar” or “make a decision for Christ.” But how many of them tell their listeners to “count the cost”? How many of them even know what the costs are? Many do “accept Jesus” in a moment of emotional remorse over past sins, but few know *what God requires of the Christian*. The evangelist did not tell them what sin is, and how to repent.

Contrary to popular belief God requires a Christian to do something. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*”(Matthew 7:21). What is the will of the Father? “thy word is truth”

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(John 17:17). Jesus said to obey the word of God, it is truth, and the bible is the will of God. *The cost then is your life! Literally!* This is not just another “spiritual way” of saying you must “give your heart to the Lord.” We must be a “living sacrifice.” (Rom 12:1). “And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” (Matthew 10:38).

You must make your decision, that you will finish, and “endure unto the end” (Matthew 24:13). Jesus said, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62). Once all this is taken into account and the decision is made, then there should be no delay.

### **Should Children be baptized?**

This of course many in the Christian religion baptize infants. Some use the example of Cornelius and Philippian jailer’s “household” (Acts 10; 16:31-33) as proof to baptize children. But this is merely an argument from silence. The Scriptures nowhere indicate whether or not their households included any children under adult age. Those baptized in their house must have been mature enough to understand the prior conditions of salvation and able to truly repent and believe. It is highly unlikely that young children in the household would have been baptized.

When we read of Philip’s baptism as a result of his preaching it says, “they were baptized, both *men and women*” (Acts 8:12). Only the adults were mature enough and ready for baptism. The average person does not mature till about the age of 25. Only a mature mind, one which can truly “count the cost” (Luke 14:28-30), should consider baptism. Generally speaking, only mature adults should be baptized.

Even older children have not reached the maturity and stability of judgment where they have the self-discipline to truly repent, and believe. It is only near and at adulthood that the average person is sufficiently mature to comprehend the real significance of baptism. Only then do many seem capable of making a meaningful commitment to Christ. An immature mind may experience an emotional feeling of temporary remorse. This may often be falsely construed as repentance, when it is only momentary, and soon forgotten. It is much like “puppy love.” How many teenagers, 13 to 18, have a number of temporary emotional experiences of feeling sure they are “in love” and cannot be talked out of it?

They usually grow out of it, but in rare cases, of course, they may really “know their minds”-- though this is the rare exception, and not the rule. So it is with repentance and belief. Experience shows that many who are baptized prematurely abandon their baptismal commitment at a later time. Of course this is not always the case. A number of fine young people have been baptized and have been remarkably faithful to their calling as Christians.

Jesus set us the example of what we should do regarding infants and young children. But it did not include baptism! There is no record of Jesus ever having commanded baptism for children, nor is there any biblical record of the early New Testament Church having performed such baptisms. Nowhere in the Bible is there an example or command for this common practice of our day.

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The Bible shows Jesus merely laid His hands upon and pronounced blessings on little children (Matt. 19:13; Mark 10:13-16). This is what the ministry does regarding children. To give them that same blessing of their future inheritance of partaking of the Holy Spirit for salvation.

### **Baptized into a Denomination?**

We must realize that we are “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Romans 6:3). Not in some church organization of denomination. We become part of the body of Christ. “we all baptized *into one body*” (1 Corinth 12:13). There is one true church with many branches scattered all over the world but still one church. It is something that you cannot join, but God calls you into. Notice “ye are *called* in one body;”(Colossians 3:15). God puts you into the church by calling you into it, and by you responding to that calling. Then you become “chosen” when baptized. After this you are “faithful” by remaining, and continuing in the law of God till the second coming of Jesus Christ, “...for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and *they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*” (Rev 17:14).

### **The “Doctrine of Baptisms” Heb 6:2**

In the book of Hebrews, Paul wrote about the “doctrine of Baptisms” plural. The Bible speaks of three baptisms. John speaks of it in Matthew the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with fire*” (v.11). He spoke of Baptism of water, which symbolizes repentance, and the washing away of our sins, and the burial of the old man.

Then there is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that we receive after baptism by water, with the laying of hands. When Peter preached to the gentiles the Holy Spirit came upon them and Peter said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Acts 10:47).

Peter then told to the church in Jerusalem about this. Peter said, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

“Then remembered I the word of the Lord, *how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*”(Acts 11:15-16). So after baptism by water and then one lays on hands, and the Holy Spirit is given, this is baptism by the Holy Spirit.

Other times in the Bible it is called, the Holy Spirit “came upon them.” One must remember “baptism” means “immersion.” So one is completely drenched or covered by the spirit of God.

One example, Saul in the Old Testament who became King of Israel, when God changed his heart, “...behold, a company of prophets met him; *and the Spirit of God came upon him*, and he prophesied among them.” (1 Sam 10:10). Saul was immersed in the Holy Spirit.

Now one might ask why these Gentiles did receive the spirit *first*, then were baptized? The reason is given by Peter, “And they of the *circumcision which believed were astonished*, as

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many as came with Peter, *because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

“For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God... Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did unto us*, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, ***Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.***” (Acts 10:45-46; 11:17-18). It was to demonstrate to the Jews, “But in ***every nation*** he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” (Acts 10:35). God needed to physically demonstrate that salvation was not only of the Jews, but non-Jews as well so the spirit came upon them first for God to show them that salvation is also given to the gentiles, then they were baptized by water. So a lesson was taught to them, but the order is, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

In Samaria men and women were “baptized” (Acts 8:12). Then, “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

“Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

“(For as yet *he [Grk. “It”] was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*)

“Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 8:14-17). When the Apostles laid their hands on the baptized members, then the Holy Spirit came upon them. This is the *general order* even though would God change it in certain situations to teach a lesson or to prove a point or maybe certain extraordinary circumstances would arise, but other than that the general order would be that of Acts 2:38.

Finally, there is baptism of “fire.” This baptism is the baptism that no one wants. John says, “Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he *will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*” (Matthew 3:12). This is lake of fire for the unrepentant sinners who refuse to obey God after coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Notice to whom was John speaking? Verse 5... “Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan.” Now are we to suppose that ALL Jerusalem and ALL Judaea, and all this region was RIGHTEOUS, or at least REPENTANT, and seeking salvation? Not at all! The whole population came in great crowds — largely out of curiosity. Did John baptize them all? Not at all! Many were, confessing their sins. But others were not. Notice: “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, ‘O generation of VIPERS, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance’” (verses 7-8). John is speaking to these hypocrites whom he calls VIPERS, whom he refused to baptize, who are awaiting the WRATH TO COME, as well as to those who repented and whom he baptized. So notice, SOME of those in his audience to whom John spoke were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, *later*. Others are awaiting the WRATH TO COME, which shall burn them with unquenchable FIRE! There are two classes of people here, awaiting two opposite fates — one to receive the Holy SPIRIT, the others GAHENNA FIRE!



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Notice the 10th verse: “And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the FIRE.” He is speaking of the fate of the wicked, which shall be cast into the lake of FIRE, which is the second death (Rev. 20:14), and standing before him were those to receive that fate!

The refuse, the twigs, the “chaff” will be burnt up and be ashes, “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; **and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.**” (Malachi 4:1).

But didn’t Paul say there is only “one baptism.”?

“*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Although the word means number “one” primarily, Paul did not mean it in this way here. The context is, “Endeavouring to keep the **unity** of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (v.3). Paul is speaking to the church saying we have more things in common than differences. We have the **same** “Lord, faith, baptism.” Jesus used the same word when he said, “I and *my* Father are one” (John 10:30). Not an absolute one in number but in unity as in these passages.

JFB Commentary writes, “**‘Similarly ‘faith’ and ‘baptism’** (the sacramental seal of faith) are connected... The Church is one in unity of faith (Eph 4:5; Jud 1:3); unity of origination (Eph 2:19-21); unity of sacraments (Eph 4:5; 1Co 10:17; 1Co 12:13); unity of ‘hope’ (Eph 4:4; Tit 1:2); unity of charity (Eph 4:3); unity (not uniformity) of discipline and government: for where there is no order, no ministry with Christ as the Head, there is no Church [Pearson, Exposition of the Creed, Article IX].”(emphasis added).

### **Baptism for the dead?**

Some churches practice “baptism for the dead,” also known as “vicarious baptism.” It is based on the belief that one person can be baptized for a dead person who was not a Christian. This dead person supposedly will then be offered salvation.

Vicarious baptism is based on just one scripture which says. “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?” (1 Corinth 15:29). Is this true?

First, let’s look at the true rendering of this verse. The Greek word for the English “for” is the same word used throughout the New Testament, *hyper*, which means, according to the Greek-English Lexicon (Thayer), “Up, over, etc., Lat. *super, over*, a preposition, which stands before either the gen. or the acc. according as it is used to express the idea of state and rest or of motion over and beyond a place.”

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Since the use in 1 Cor. 15:29 is in the *genitive*, notice what Thayer says, “With the GENITIVE; cf. W. 382 (358) sq. 1. prop. of place, i.e. of position, situation, extension: *over, above, beyond, across* . . . Lat. *pro, for*, i.e. *for one's safety, for one's advantage or benefit*.”

Specifically, when dealing with 1 Cor. 15:29, Thayer says, “. . . *in the place of, instead of*” (Thayers, p.638-639). NOTICE! The meaning of the term *huper* from the Greek *does not mean* “*on behalf of*”! It means INSTEAD of, or “*in the place of*.”

Notice the original rendering of the verse, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for (Gk. *huper*, meaning IN THE PLACE OF, or INSTEAD OF) the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for [(*huper*) IN THE PLACE OF, or INSTEAD OF] the dead?”

“And why stand *we* in jeopardy every hour?

“I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:29-31). Notice Paul included “we” and “they” together. Who are these people? Christ is the Head of a *living Church*, and said He would be with that Church down through the *many generations*. He said the Church would never cease to exist!

*But*, unless there were newcomers; new converts, being baptized to *replace* those who died (baptized IN THEIR PLACE, INSTEAD of the dead-) then, as that older generation ceased to exist, there would *be no church*. As part of Paul's argument, he explains to the Corinthians that the church continued to baptize newcomers to “fill up the place of” the dead; *replacing* those who died, thus tying the rite of baptism directly to the hope of the *resurrection*, which it partially foreshadows.

Now verse 29, “Paul again returns to the argument for the resurrection...But if Christ has not risen, and the dead rise not [v.16]...” (People's New Testament; Gill's Commentary). So if we join the two verses together, verses 16 and 29 we can understand what Paul is saying, “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: Else what shall they do which are baptized for (Gk. *huper*, meaning IN THE PLACE OF) the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for [(*huper*) IN THE PLACE OF] the dead?” If there is no resurrection what shall those who replaced the dead in Christ, *the newcomers to the faith* do? Paul says. Why are they baptized for if there is no resurrection? This is the true meaning of the verse.

This was NOT authorization for living persons to be baptized a dozen, or a hundred times for unknown, dead persons, which makes a travesty of the *whole point* of baptism! The most obviously *logical* explanation is found in remembering what we learned about *infants* being baptized. Baptism should follow *repentance*; a *conscious* act by a living, breathing, human being! Baptism is an act of voluntary submission to God's will! It is the act of a *living* person, “acting out” the terrible consequences of sin, obeying God's command willingly.

The dead are completely inert; unconscious, oblivious! It is nonsensical to assume a living person can somehow be “baptized” for some person who died, when the dead person is incapable of thought; of understanding scripture; of repentance, and acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior!

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## **Re-Baptism?**

During the early days of the New Testament church, a Jew by the name of Apollos, was a man “mighty in the scriptures.” Apollos received the “baptism of John.” He heard certain things about Christ, and taught the things that he understood through the “baptism of John.” (Acts 18:25). While in the synagogue, “Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the *way of God more perfectly.*” (v.26). so he had knowledge, but the members of God’s church increased his knowledge of Christ and then, “helped them much which had believed through grace:” (v.27). He helped those in Achaia with the work of God.

Later Paul came to Ephesus and found this group of disciples who were like Apollos. “Disciples of John the Baptist, who, like Apollos, had been instructed and baptized by the followers of the Baptist, and had joined the fellowship of the Christians.”(Vincent Word Studies). Paul like Aquila showed them “the way of God more perfectly.” He asked, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

“And all the men were about twelve.” (Acts 19:2-7). There was nothing wrong with John’s baptism, Jesus received baptism from John. But so many things happened after John, that they were not aware of, so many truths, that Paul showed them “the way of God more perfectly.” They lacked the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, and this lack made a huge difference in their lives. So Paul re-baptized them.

Do you feel this way yourself? Do you need to understand the way of God more perfectly? Do you now feel that you need further instruction in the word of God? If so, then perhaps You should seriously consider re-baptism.

## **Baptismal Council**

If you feel God is calling you into his church. You have repented of your sins and want to make the next step, and take the plunge into the church of God, and receive the Holy Spirit. Please call, text or write to us for counseling.

## **Question**

What about the Thief on the cross? Some say that thief on the cross did not need baptism. But how could Jesus or the Apostles baptize him in that situation? Were they both to come down baptize him then put him back up on the cross? No! In certain situations there are exceptions. This is one is a perfect one.

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And yes God said he would be in the Kingdom. But will he be a resurrected saint? Or resurrected back into his body and receive his first chance for salvation in the second resurrection? To receive the Holy Spirit to grow in grace knowledge and build the Godly character God wants him to build. Either way he will be there, it's up to God to judge whether he will be immortal, or flesh, and be in either the first or second resurrection.