

## Preparation For Baptism

### Introduction

Mainstream Christianity's view of water baptism fails to accurately represent the true biblical teaching on the subject. This holy and sacred ceremony has been distorted and corrupted by the traditions of men to the point that it has become merely a "religious experience." As with many doctrines of the Bible, men have misused and distorted the Scriptures to reflect their own viewpoints.

Baptism, by God's standard, is the most profound event that will ever take place in a person's life. If you are being called by God and considering baptism, it is absolutely essential to come to a full and correct understanding of this life-changing event.

Naturally, you'll have questions. For example: How do I *prepare* spiritually for baptism? What does God *require* of me in order to be baptized? And, what *exactly* takes place at baptism? These and other important questions will be answered in this booklet.

In preparing for baptism, you should realize that *only God* can know the heart: "[T]he righteous God tries the heart and the reins" (Psa. 7:9). A minister cannot truly know your heart—but can only offer counsel and come to a reasonable conclusion that you are truly repentant in your desire to be baptized.

This booklet will also cover the subject of *re*-baptism—for those who have already been baptized but are considering being baptized again.

This publication is primarily an overview. Because there is so much more to study and understand on this subject, additional material will be provided to help you in preparing for baptism.

### God's Calling

Those desiring baptism **must first be called and chosen by God**. Jesus made this absolutely clear in his teachings. "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). The word "draw" in the Greek is *helko*, which means "drawing by an inward power." It is important to understand that it is *God* Who does the calling. God calls you and leads you to Himself; you do not choose God. Jesus said, "You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain..." (John 15:16).

God searches the hearts of men to determine who truly wants to change their way of life and conform to His will. When He discovers such a person, He proceeds to call them and lead them towards baptism. But not everyone responds to God's calling—and God has given man *freedom of choice*, so that we can each make our own decisions. This will be covered later in this study.

If you have been called of God, you must respond by beginning to live His way of life. Then, He will lead you to a true understanding of the importance of baptism.

### Counting the Cost for Baptism

Baptism is not to be taken lightly. It represents a person's **lasting commitment** that he or she will turn away from the ways of the world, with all of its lusts and enticements, and wholly follow God's ways. In considering baptism, be absolutely certain that you have made a definite determination in your heart to follow the will of God. Your whole desire should be to learn to love God and to rely on Him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). You should *not* be baptized if you have any doubt as to your belief in God or that His Word is the standard by which to live.

In preparation for baptism, you must "count the cost"—understanding that such a commitment to God is for *life*. There can be no turning back. At baptism, **you enter into a covenant with God**. Thus, baptism becomes the most crucial decision you will ever make! Jesus explains what it means to "count the cost" in the Gospel of Luke. He said,

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“If any man comes to Me, and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:25-27).

Christ clearly shows here that it is imperative that one be willing to **give up everything**—including the self—in order to truly become His disciple. This passage is sometimes erroneously taken to mean that a person must turn his or her back on their spouse, children, parents, etc. Quite the contrary—Christians have a responsibility to love and care for their families. What Jesus is expressing in this passage is that we are to love our families *less* by comparison.

Continuing, “For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and **count the cost**, whether he has *sufficient* for its completion; lest perhaps, after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, Saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish’? Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war, does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand? But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off, he sends ambassadors and desires the *terms* for peace. In the same way also, **each one of you that does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be my disciple**” (verses 28-33).

Christ used the example of “counting the cost” to demonstrate what is involved when contemplating a major decision in life. Baptism is just such a decision, involving *total* dedication to God the Father and Jesus Christ. When you accept Christ as personal Savior, you proclaim your willingness to change and obey God in *all* things. Your earnest desire must be this: “And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).

The Gospel of Matthew provides us with a similar quote from Jesus about “counting the cost.” “Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies *shall be those of* his own household. The one who loves father or mother **more than Me** is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter **more than Me** is not worthy of me. And the one who does not **take up his cross** and follow Me, is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it: and **the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it** (Matt. 10:32-39).

God the Father and Jesus Christ desire that you fully dedicate your life to them. This does not mean you should shun your family, friends or loved ones. However, if and when required, you must put God *first*—above *all* others.

An excellent example of dedicating one’s life to God can be found in the book of Genesis. It is the story of Abraham’s calling by God and demonstrates his dedicated response. “And the LORD said to Abram, ‘Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house into a land that I will show you. And I will make *of* you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed’ ” (Gen. 12:1-3).

Notice Abram’s immediate response: “Then Abram departed, even as the LORD had spoken to him. And Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran” (verse 4). There was no hesitation on Abram’s part because he had *true* faith in God—which was counted to him for righteousness. Note also that Abraham did not forsake his family, but took them with him under his care (Gen. 12:5).

Abram, later named Abraham, left his home land and trusted in God for his well-being: “By faith Abraham, being called *of God* to go out into the place which he would

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later receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went, **not knowing where he was going**” (Heb. 11:8).

This is what you and I as Christians face when we make a commitment to follow God and His way. It is simply not known exactly where God may take us. But whatever the future holds, you can be assured that God will be involved and will deliver you out of trials and tribulations. It is all a question of belief, faith and commitment to God.

“Counting the cost” for baptism is something you need to think deeply about before making any commitment before God. You must genuinely want to change your life and be obedient to God—regardless of circumstances. If you fully understand this and are absolutely repentant before God—and you accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior—then you are well on the road to baptism.

### Defining Sin

Preparation for baptism requires an understanding of exactly *what* is sin. Sin is defined as the breaking of God’s laws and commandments. Anything that a person does that is contrary to the laws and commandments of God constitutes sin. The apostle John wrote, “Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness” (I John 3:4).

Jesus Christ put it this way, “Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19). He also said, “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My Commandments” (John 14:15). God’s laws and commandments are of the utmost importance to Him. Paul was inspired to remind us of what God said through the prophet Jeremiah: “I will give My laws in their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds” (Heb. 10:16). These passages clearly prove that the laws of God have not been abolished, as some wrongly assume.

When God formed man in His own likeness and image (Gen. 1:27), He instilled within each individual what is called the “spirit of man” (Zech. 12:1)—which makes possible the human *mind*. Thus, each person is *free* to make choices and decisions *for themselves*, whether good or evil. This was God’s decision from the beginning, that mankind would have “freedom of choice.”

Adam and Eve were created sinless—but with the same freedom to *choose* between good and evil. God instructed them to *not* eat of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:17). But through the deception of Satan the devil they defied God and ate of the forbidden tree—and sin entered into humankind. Because of this original sin, mankind became subject to Satan’s influence—resulting in what Paul calls the “law of sin and death” in every individual (Rom. 7:14-25).

The father of all sin (John 8:44), Satan’s rebellion against God began before the world existed. “You *were* perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you” (Ezek. 28:15). Satan tried to exalt himself above God’s throne (Isa. 14:13), but was cast down to the earth in shame. This caused Satan to have a deep-seated attitude of resentment toward God.

Since Adam and Eve, Satan has directed his attacks at those whom God has chosen. And Satan would like nothing better than for a person to sin against God by not keeping His laws and commandments. And sin seemingly lies around every corner. God’s laws and commandments are designed to *protect us* from harm by *defining* sin. Without the laws and commandments of God, we would never *know* what is sin and what is righteousness (Psa. 119:172).

The “wages [what we earn] of sin *is* death...” (Rom. 6:23). God gave mankind two choices, the option of receiving eternal life or eternal death. He stated, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, that both you and your seed may live” (Deut. 30:19).

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This verse is talking about eternal life and death—and this is a *personal choice* that you too must make.

When one sins, it is directly against God. King David understood this principle. In his prayer of repentance he said, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge” (Psa. 51:4). This passage shows that God will be justified when His judgment comes. No one will be able to say, “You didn’t tell us.” God has provided His Word so that everyone can understand *what* sin is—and how to overcome sin by baptism and by the blood of Jesus Christ.

You need to grasp the fact that *everyone* has the “law of sin and death” working within themselves—and that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). David understood this: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51:5). The apostle Paul added, “Therefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and by means of sin *came* death; and in this way, death passed into all mankind; *and it is* for this reason that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

Understanding the significance of sin is vital in preparing for baptism. Does this mean that after you are baptized, you will never again sin? No, for we all stumble from time to time. But after you are baptized and have begun to strive to live God’s way, you will **no longer live in sin**, as does much of the world.

How then can one be free from the clutches of sin and be accepted by God—and stand before Him in righteousness? Because of God’s love and holy righteous character, He has provided a Savior Who takes away the sins of the world. The apostle John wrote, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate [one who takes our side] with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world” (I John 2:1-2). *Propitiation* means a continuous atoning or ongoing source of mercy.

Jesus Christ came to this earth in order to die for the sins of mankind. John the Baptist made this important statement: “Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the epitome of God’s love for mankind. This selfless act provided a way for mankind to be forgiven for their sins and transgressions.

As you prepare for baptism, it is absolutely essential that you go to God the Father and confesses your sins before Him. If you are honest and sincere in your quest for forgiveness, He will not only forgive your sins but will also forget them. At that point, you will stand before God cleansed by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave this example to be followed: “But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly.” Upon heartfelt confession, God accepts our repentance and totally forgives the sins.

Notice this encouraging psalm: “The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in steadfast love. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. **He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities**, for as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. **As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us**” (Psa. 103:8-12).

The prophet Micah related a similar passage: “Who *is* a God like You, Who pardons iniquity and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not keep His anger forever because He delights *in* mercy. He will turn again; He will have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities. Yea, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:18-19). Your commitment to God is to recognize that you have sinned against Him, confess your sins, and believe that they can be forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ.

In preparing for baptism, you need to carefully reflect on your life, examining

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how you have lived—and develop a deep desire to change your former ways. You can accomplish this by making God a part of your daily life, yielding to God in every way.

Be encouraged, God loves everyone—and wants to play a big role in your life!

### Understanding Godly Repentance

Most so-called repentance today is not genuine, and is nothing more than an emotional experience or a fleeting feeling of remorsefulness. If you have *godly* repentance, however, you will produce the fruit that God desires—which is *change*. You will demonstrate an earnest desire to change your life completely and live according to God's will. By earnestly seeking genuine repentance, God, in turn, will grant you the **gift of repentance**, teaching you how you should live. God is able to do this by the power of His Holy Spirit, which will be covered in the next section.

Worldly, human repentance includes much outward emotion, often conjured up because of guilt. But true repentance before God comes from a person's innermost being, and results from a person wanting to change their life completely. Genuine repentance is vital if you are to establish a relationship with God—for God is not interested in those who are superficial, but in those who truly desire a close and personal relationship.

The Greek word for “repentance” means a *turning about*—such as in actually abandoning sin and moving away from it. In essence, it is a fundamental and thorough change in one's own heart *from* sin and *toward* God. A repentant person's heartfelt desire in life would be to change themselves—in their innermost being—into the type of person that is pleasing to God. Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). If you are to develop the mind of Christ, you must earnestly desire to repent daily of sin.

A perfect example of repentance can be seen in David's prayer before God after his affair with Bathsheba and the death of his child. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (Psa. 51:1-3). David was confessing his sins before God with sorrow and lamentation. This is the kind of repentance—and humility—God desires to see in you.

David continued, “Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me” (verses 9-12).

David exercised godly repentance—and God, in His mercy, listened to David and forgave all his sins.

God's greatest desire is for *everyone* to come to repentance. The apostle Peter wrote, “The Lord is not delaying the promise of *His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; He is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9).

When you come to God in genuine humility, remorseful for the sins you have committed, He *will* forgive your sins—and cast them away. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:12). Notice Isaiah 43:25: “I, *even I, am* He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins.” Upon godly repentance, God is able to remove your sins even from His mind.

Isaiah also wrote: “ ‘Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool’ ” (Isa. 1:16-18).

Indeed, God has provided a way for us to completely change our lives—through

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repentance and water baptism. When Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost in 30 AD, there were those in attendance who were fully convicted by his preaching and wanted to learn more about God's way of life. Peter told them, "Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The key is *repentance*—turning around and going the other way—so that sins can be forgiven.

Jesus Christ preached exactly the same thing when He came into Galilee saying, "The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Christ was showing that repentance and belief in God go hand-in-hand—and are required for water baptism.

Repentance is an ongoing process which takes place daily. A repentant attitude demonstrates humility and shows God that we *fear* Him—which means to stand in awe of His almighty power. Repentance also means that we are willing to fully submit to God's will—to keep the commandments of God. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely My commandments" (John 14:15).

Having an ongoing repentant attitude means that we are walking in the light of God. The apostle John wrote: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ. These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full. And this is the message that we have heard of Him and are declaring to you: that God is light; and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth. However, **if we walk in the light**, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (I John 1:3-10).

Again, repentance leading to baptism is only the start. After you are baptized, receive God's Holy Spirit, and begin to grow in grace and knowledge—and begin to draw close to God (James 4:8)—you will over time come to an even greater depth of repentance.

### Understanding the Holy Spirit

Following genuine repentance and baptism, God freely gives us the gift of His Holy Spirit. As previously stated, there is a "spirit in man" that God has formed in every human being (Zech. 12:1). But even with this "human" spirit, man is still *incomplete*—another Spirit is needed in order to fulfill our potential as members of God's family. When you are baptized and receive God's Spirit, you become a *complete* person—and possess the power needed to lead a godly life. This profound *gift* will guide you in your spiritual life, enabling you to overcome all things.

Under the New Covenant, the laws and commandments of God are written in our minds—inscribed in our hearts (Heb. 8:10; 10:16). The gift of the Holy Spirit imparts the very *mind* of Jesus Christ. As mentioned earlier, Paul wrote, "**Let this mind be in you**, which *was* also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Without the Holy Spirit from God this would be impossible!

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come after His resurrection and final ascension into heaven. He said to His disciples, "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you" (John 14:16-17).

This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, 30 AD, when the apostles were

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gathered together. “And when the day of *Pentecost*, the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled, they were all with one accord in same place. And suddenly *there* came from heaven a sound like *the* rushing of a powerful wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1-2). This was the *gift* of the Holy Spirit, which had come upon them, just as Jesus had promised. While the Holy Spirit comes *from* God, it is not a separate entity. (For a thorough understanding of the Holy Spirit, additional material is available upon request).

When you receive the Holy Spirit, you become a begotten child of God the Father. “For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.... And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:16-18). The Holy Spirit was not offered under the Old Covenant; but because Jesus paid the penalty for man’s sins with His blood, the Holy Spirit has been offered under the New Covenant. “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!” (I John 3:1).

The Holy Spirit must be *utilized* if it is to be of help. You can exercise the Holy Spirit by praying to God, by studying the truth of His Word, and by having a close personal relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit will reveal the truth of the Scriptures to you as you who draw close to God. “But *when* the Comforter comes, even the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that one shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you” (John 14:26).

Stephen, who was martyred for Christ, confronted the Sanhedrin concerning their resistance to the Holy Spirit. “O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so also *do* you” (Acts 7:51). We too must be careful to never resist the Spirit of God.

As you build a close, loving relationship with God, His Holy Spirit will guide you in all things—giving discernment, wisdom, knowledge and a true understanding of the Scriptures. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you can go forward and build on the foundation laid by Jesus Christ.

### The Meaning of Water Baptism

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. He preached about repentance of sin and the importance of being baptized. He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). Continuing, “Then went out to him *those* from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins” (verses 5-6). Baptism is by full immersion—thus “much water” was required (John 3:23).

After accepting Jesus as personal Savior, you must be baptized by *complete immersion* in water for the remission of sins. Various religions use different forms of “baptism”—such as sprinkling, pouring water over one’s head, bathing in oil. However, the Scriptures clearly show that water immersion is the correct form of baptism. Note Jesus’ example: “And after He was baptized, **Jesus came up immediately out of the water...**” (Matt. 3:16).

The meaning of baptism is found in what it pictures. Water baptism symbolizes the death and burial of the “old self.” The water pictures the grave, wherein the “old self” is dead and buried. Coming up out of the water symbolizes one being raised to a new life in Jesus Christ. “Therefore, **we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death**; so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should **walk in newness of life**” (Rom. 6:4). Paul added, “Therefore, if anyone *be* in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (II Cor. 5:17).

Following baptism, hands will be laid on you so that you may receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit of God. At that very moment, you become a begotten son or daughter

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of God. “According to His own will, He begat us by *the* word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings” (James 1:18). From that point forward, you must strive to live by the laws and commandments of God—and, over time, develop the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5).

After godly repentance for the forgiveness of sin and baptism by immersion, you are justified and put in “right standing” with God the Father. Paul explains how this takes place. “*But* [you] are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past” (Rom. 3:24-25).

As a newly converted believer, you will live in a continuous state of grace before God. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith **into this grace in which we stand**, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (Rom. 5:1-5).

Through baptism, you are given a new beginning—because the “old self” has been buried in a watery grave. With diligent, determined effort—and the help of God’s Holy Spirit—you can begin the lifelong journey toward the Kingdom of God and eternal salvation.

### **What Takes Place at Baptism?**

You and the minister will both enter the water, which must be sufficient for total immersion. The minister will then ask you some very important questions concerning your commitment and readiness for baptism. You will be told that you are not being baptized into any organization, but into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (because it comes from the Father).

Following a prayer affirming your commitment to God, the immersion takes place. After you come up out of the water, the minister will apply the laying on of hands and ask God for the begetting of His Holy Spirit—commending you as a newly begotten Christian into the hands of God the Father and Jesus Christ. The baptism is complete, and there is great rejoicing over you as a new brother (or sister) in Christ.

God the Father, Jesus Christ and the angels will all be rejoicing as well. Jesus said, “I tell you likewise, *there* shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, *more* than over ninety-nine who have no need of repentance” (Luke 15:7).

### **Who Should be in Attendance**

This is your decision. You may prefer to have only a few close friends and family members attend, or you may choose to invite many brethren and family members. You may prefer to be alone with the minister, which is proper as well.

### **What Happens After Baptism?**

After baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to walk in “newness of life.” From that point forward, you will naturally desire to develop a close relationship with God, to learn as much as possible from His Word, and to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18). Will you stop sinning automatically? No! Sin will always lie “at the door”—but it can be suppressed and conquered through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. However, as a new Christian, you will not be *living in sin*, as does most of society.



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Jesus Christ said, “*Even* the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, **and shall be within you**” (John 14:17). The Holy Spirit of God will **prick your conscience** whenever you have evil thoughts or do wrong things. This is how God’s Spirit works to help us repent and go forward in submission to Him.

You will definitely face trials as you grow spiritually. Trials are God’s way of building character in us, but His Holy Spirit will guide you through such difficulties. God wants you to rely on Him for all things; when you humbly come to Him in prayer and ask for His intervention, He responds. This is His promise to all who have been called of God. (Please read and study I Pet. 1:1-9 and James 1:2-5.)

### **What about Re-baptism?**

Some have asked about being re-baptized. Re-baptism is strictly administered on an individual basis and depends largely on the circumstances involved. For example, a person may be a candidate for re-baptism if they have come to see that they were not properly prepared at the time of their original baptism. Perhaps they were pressured into baptism, which should never be the case. Some may have been baptized in a church organization in which they were not given a proper scriptural foundation. Perhaps some have not had the required laying on of hands.

If one feels strongly that he or she needs to be re-baptized, this is between them and God—and they should not be denied such a request. Finally, there may be occasions involving a demon problem which make re-baptism necessary.

### **Summary**

God’s greatest desire for you as an individual is that you become a member of His Spiritual Family—and baptism is the first step in that direction. If you are considering baptism, ask God for His wisdom and guidance—for He has promised, “In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way” (Heb. 13:5).

If you have read and understood the information in this booklet and feel you are ready for baptism, please contact us. We will be most happy to assist you in this life-changing event.

God bless you as you prepare for this most wonderful and momentous occasion!

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