



A Scriptural Guide to Christian Baptism

Presented to the Baptism Candidates

THE SACRAMENT OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

The Christian Church recognizes two sacraments as authorized by Christ, **Baptism** and the **Lord's Supper**. Both are related to one's salvation and are authorized by Christ. **A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.** It is given to us as a way and means to receive spiritual grace and God's promise.

There are two parts to a sacrament: (1) **the outward and visible sign** and (2) **the inward and spiritual grace**. The outward and visible sign in baptism is **water**. A person is baptized in water, "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The inward and spiritual grace is **being born again of the Holy Spirit and made a child of God by adoption and grace**; that is dying to sin and receiving a new birth into righteousness.

There are two requirements to be baptized: (1) repentance, which is a turning away from sin, and (2) faith, which believes the promise of God concerning Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the Gospels.¹



1. JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY AND BAPTIZES JESUS

- ❖ *John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. . . . And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:4-11).

- ❖ Paul said, "*John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus*" (Acts 19:4).

2. JESUS' COMMAND

- ❖ ***Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of***

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

- ❖ *He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16).*

3. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

❖ Day of Pentecost

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (Acts 2:36-41).

❖ Simon the Sorcerer

Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me” (Acts 8:9-25).

❖ Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:34-40).

4. THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

❖ Symbol of Salvation

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him (1 Peter 3:18-22).

❖ Identification with Jesus’ Death, Burial, and Resurrection

Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin (Romans 6:2-7).

❖ United with All Christians

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:3-6).

5. THE MEANING OF YOUR BAPTISM

Baptism doesn’t save you—salvation comes by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). Your guilt before God is removed the moment you trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord. But baptism has several important meanings for you to know:

- ❖ **Your Statement of Faith-** Baptism celebrates becoming a new person. You have turned from the old life of sin (repentance) to a new life in Jesus Christ. This sacrament is putting off the old

life, renouncing sin and the evil powers of the world, and pledging your loyalty to Christ. *"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

- ❖ **Your New Identity-** To become Christian is to receive a new identity. A Christian is one who has “put on Christ.” **You are personally identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** As you stand in the water waiting to be baptized, you symbolize Jesus dying on the cross. As you are lowered into the water, you symbolize Jesus buried in the tomb. As you are raised from the water, you symbolize Jesus rising from the dead. **You are saying, I died with Jesus Christ, I was buried with him, and now I am raised with Christ to brand-new life.**
- ❖ **Your Public Testimony-** You are preaching a sermon without using words. You are personally testifying to the inward assurance of your passage from the old life to your new life in Christ.
- ❖ **Your Initiation into the Church-** You are publically joining the Church of Jesus Christ—those who believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Baptism commissions us to use our gifts to strengthen the church and transform the world.



Prepared by Michael VanHook, International Strategic Alliances, May 2015

¹ The Catechism of the Anglican Church

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