

Noah is an example of one who suffered for righteousness and was saved from the flood. The ark of safety lifted him above the waters, and he was saved through water. The Scriptures say that Christians are also saved through water in I Peter 3:21 : *"And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* NIV.

Baptism saves Christians and water saved Noah and his family. The water that saved Noah destroyed sin from the earth. **In the water of baptism God destroys the man of sin so he may live a new life.** *"Or 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"* (Romans 6:3-4).

Through the waters of baptism the old man is put to death just as God destroyed the sinful world with water during Noah's life. **In baptism Christians are united with Jesus into His death. When a person goes down into the water, he is buried with Christ Jesus.** There the old man of sin is destroyed as men of sin were destroyed in the waters of the flood. The water lifted the ark so Noah was separated from the destruction of the sinful world. In the same way, a baptized believer is lifted to live a new life.

Jesus said, *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved . . ."* (Mark 16:16). When a person is lifted from the waters of baptism, he is lifted from the destruction of the earth that will one day occur. In the water of baptism Jesus Christ becomes the Christian's ark of safety. Jesus will lift up a baptized believer into the ark of safety that will separate him from the coming destruction of the world caused by sinful men.

**Baptism is the dividing line between the old life of sin and the new life of righteousness.** The flood was the dividing point between Noah's old life filled with sinful men and his new life of righteousness. Christians begin a new life as Noah did. As the flood was the dividing line between Noah's old life and new life, so baptism is the dividing line between a Christian's old life of sin and his new life of righteousness.

**In baptism a Christian is putting his trust in Jesus to save him.** Peter wrote *". . . baptism that now saves you also."* Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit when he wrote that baptism saves a person. There are many people who say baptism does not save people. The belief of these people contradicts what Peter wrote. Other people say that Jesus Christ saves, not baptism. To a certain degree that statement is true. Notice the relationship

of Jesus to baptism. Baptism is not the removal of dirt from the body. Salvation does not occur by washing dirt off the body during baptism, but it is the pledge of a good conscience toward God. The pledge of a good conscience toward God. This word "*pledge*" in the Greek language means "*a request*" or "*an appeal*." This verse is translated "*an appeal to God for a good conscience*" in the New American Standard Version. **In baptism a Christian is putting his trust in Jesus to save him.** The believer is asking God to cleanse him of sin, to cleanse his conscience. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse the conscience. ". . . *the blood of Christ . . . cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*" (Hebrews 9:14).

**It is in baptism that God applies the blood to the soul, washes away sin, and gives the Holy Spirit.** On the Day of Pentecost Peter told the Jews that were "*cut to the heart*" the way to be saved. Act 2:38 : *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."*

Ananias told Paul how to have his sins washed away: "*And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name*" (Act 22:16). Paul was told to call on Jesus' name when he was baptized. When one calls on the name of the Lord at baptism, he is asking the Lord for salvation. In baptism Christians are saved by the death and suffering of Jesus Christ.

**If baptism**, which is the time and place of an appeal to God for a clean conscience, **is a work then so is anything that calls on the name of the Lord because the appeal is to God and the work is done by God through faith in Christ.** There is NO OTHER NAME by which we can be saved (Acts 4:8-12). When we are baptized in the name of Jesus we are putting our faith in HIS sacrifice. If I am in quicksand and Jesus puts His hand out to me and I take His hand did I save myself? Was it my work that saved me?

Colossians 2:12 "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also **raised with Him through faith in the working of God**, who raised Him from the dead."

Romans 6:5 "For if we have become united with Him **in the likeness of His death**, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,"

Denying that baptism is absolutely essential to salvation is contrary to scripture. Satan laughs every time someone invites Jesus into their heart.

The conditions for salvation and when and where to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior are clearly laid out in scripture by command and pattern.

The great commission in Matthew 28:18-20 includes baptizing disciples by the very command of Jesus.

On Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out on all the people gathered Peter delivered a sermon that pricked the people's hearts and they asked what they must do to be saved. Acts 2:38; *"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"*

In the Epistles Paul writes to Christians and talks about their baptisms that already happened. He was writing churches. Of course they were baptized, that is how they became part of the body! Romans 6:3; **"baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death"** Galatians 3:27; **"were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."**

Baptism is WHEN you die to self and HOW you enter the body of Christ. You are buried with Him in baptism (in the likeness of His death) and raise in newness like He raised from the dead. The words are clear and intentional and the method God chose is beautiful. You clothe yourself with Christ. Don't forget Acts 2:28; it is also when you receive the Holy Spirit. ALL this is made possible by the plan of God and sacrifice of Jesus.

The scriptures talk about baptism, and also warn about false teachers. You need to pay attention to both. Do not let anyone keep you from eternal life with God and Christ by convincing you that baptism is just a 'good thing'... because without God baptism is simply getting wet. It is the work of God that makes your submersion in water more than a bath. He does that work because He designed that event to be how and when you join Christ's church and have access to the Father.