

RISEN with CHRIST



A BOOKLET ON BAPTISM

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is meant for those who are born again and desire to be baptized. If you are one of them, this booklet can be a blessing to you, by the grace of God.

As you read, please turn to the Bible and read carefully every reference given in the booklet. The entrance of God's Word will give you light (Psa. 119:130). May the Lord bless you.

CHAPTER 1

Why should you be baptized?

Is it necessary for you to be baptized? You should know this on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, not only for your own satisfaction, but also in order that you may be able to give a good answer to friends who may enquire from you why you are taking, or have taken, this step. Here are three Scriptural reasons:

- (1) Baptism is commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (2) Christ Himself was baptized.
- (3) The Apostles preached and practiced baptism.

Let us examine these reasons one by one.

(1) Baptism is commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ:

The Lord's command is recorded in two places: Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16. Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the highest authority both in this world and in the world to come. No man has any right to question His command.

When you take baptism in obedience to Him, you acknowledge the authority of the Lord Jesus, and declare that He is the Lord of all.

(2) Christ Himself Was Baptized

This is the second reason why you also should be baptized. The Lord Jesus Himself set us the example by being baptized (Mail 3:13-15). He is the Lord of all, and He is without sin, yet He humbled Himself and was baptized. With love and humility, He pleads with you that you should follow in His footsteps. Dear child of God, if baptism is good enough for your Lord and Master, is it not good enough for you? The Lord Jesus says "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

In baptism you say that you take the Lord Jesus as your example and wish to be meek and lowly like Him.

Baptism is meant for sinners who have repented (Mail. 3:6). Many repentant sinners came to John the Baptist. They confessed their sins and were baptized. Imagine this one day John the Baptist is by the River Jordan. A Group of murderers, thieves, drunkards and other sinful men, now repentant, have come to be baptized. The Lord Jesus takes His place among them. He took His place among sinners how great is His humility!

Is it not a wonder that the One who never sinned was ready be baptized, but those who have sinned say, it is not necessary?

When we are baptized we say joyfully, my humble Lord Jesus went this way and I am ready to follow Him, because "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord" (Mail. 10:24; Lk.6:40).

(3) The Apostle Preached and Practiced Baptism:

This is the third reason why you also should be baptized. On the day of Pentecost 3000 souls were saved and baptized (Acts 2:38, 41). The apostle Paul himself was baptized (Acts 9:18). Then he explains the meaning of baptism in Rom. 6:3-5. It is far better to follow the example of the apostles than to depend upon our own wisdom, or follow the traditional practices of men.

CHAPTER 2

Who should be baptized?

There are two conditions to be fulfilled before a person can be baptized. He or she must have:

- (1) Repentance, and
- (2) Faith.

Please read Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:1

(1) Repentance:

Not everyone who asks for baptism is ready to receive it. Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to John the Baptist asking for baptism (Matt. 3:7). But John called them 'a generation of vipers' and asked them to bring forth fruit meet for repentance (Matt. 3:8). 'A generation of vipers' is a strong term; but John meant what he said. Those who have not repented of their sins, are by nature children of the devil. Such people cannot be baptized.

Fruits of Repentance:

A man may say that he has repented, but that is not enough. There must be evident proof of his repentance. Such evidence I called "the fruit of repentance" (Mat 3:8). We give below a few examples of such fruits of repentance.

(a) The Prodigal Son, in Luke Ch. 15 repented and returned to his father's house. He came very humbly and confessed, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Lk.15:21).

If you have repented, you too must confess your sins and ask forgiveness not only from God, but also from all those whom you have offended. If you cannot meet them personally, you may at least write a letter to them confessing your fault and asking their forgiveness.

(b) The publican Zacchaeus repented. This happened when he was up in a tree (Lk.19:1-10). He came down quickly and received the Lord Jesus joyfully into his house. He said to the Lord that he would give half of his goods to the poor, and if he had taken anything from any man by false accusation he would restore him fourfold (Lk.19:8).

If you have repented, you too should give up your love for money and for worldly pleasure. If you have stolen or misappropriated anything, you must return such things to their rightful owner.

(C) In Ephesus there were some men who had been using curious arts. They repented after hearing the preaching of Paul. Then they brought together their books and burned them. When their price was counted. It was found that their total value was 50,000 pieces of silver. These books had to be burned so that they might not be read by others and bring harm to them.

When a drunkard repents he will feel very happy to destroy all the liquor in his house. Those who have bad pictures, magazines, or even bad calendars, cannot give them away; they will feel happier to burn or destroy them. There have been cases when young boys and girls have repented and then burnt bad letters and pictures which they had received from their friends.

These are only a few fruits of repentance. As you pray and wait upon the Lord, asking Him to search your heart, He will show you other fruits of repentance which should be seen in your life. When you have obeyed the Lord in all these matters you have a good conscience before God and man.

The answer of Good Conscience:

The Word of God says that baptism is the answer of a good conscience (1 Pet. 3:21). That is why, before a believer is baptized, he or she is asked certain questions like the following:

“Have you repented of all your sins?”

“Have you set right all things before God and man?”

“Have you the experience of being born again by the Holy Spirit of God?”

"Do you have the assurance that all your sins have been forgiven, and that your name is written in the Book of Life?"

"Have you become a new creature in Christ?" according to 2 Cor. 5:17.

"Are you willing to bear shame and reproach for Christ's sake, when the need arises?"

A Deceiver may say, "Yes" to all these questions, but his "yes" will be the answer of a **bad conscience**. Dear Child of God, when you are questioned in the presence of witness and in the presence of God, will you be able to give "the answer of a good conscience?" If you wish to be able, make sure beforehand that you have every necessary fruit of repentance. If you have quarreled with your neighbors or relations, make peace with them. If you have bitterness against anyone who has grieved you forgive him or her. If you have any bad habits like drinking or smoking, give them up by faith in Christ, Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). This is true for you also.

Get ready with prayer and consecration, so that on the day of your baptism you may give the answer of a good conscience.

(2) Faith:

Only those who believe with all their heart can be baptized. There are many who say they are Christians, but they do not believe that the Holy Bible is the Word of God, Written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They do not believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only Savior of the world. Such people cannot be baptized.

Philip preached to an Ethiopian prince. As the chariot in which they were travelling went along, they came to a place where there was water and the Ethiopian asked Philip whether he could be baptized. Philip replied, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" The Ethiopian answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God" (Acts 8:37).

If you believe that the Lord Jesus died for your sins upon the cross, that He has taken all your punishment upon Himself, and has forgiven you and cleansed you in His precious blood, you may be baptized.

Witnessing:

If your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a living faith, it will constrain you to witness for Christ. Have you done this? Have you told any of your friends that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world? Have you told them that the blood of the Lord Jesus can cleanse them from every sin? Have you told them how you were born again, how you repented of your sins and accepted the Lord Jesus as your Savior? Have you told them how the Lord has changed your life, given you new peace and joy, and a new love for prayer and for the Word of God?

It is very essential that you should give witness for Christ. In the Bible this is called "confessing the Lord Jesus with your mouth" (Rom. 10:9,10).

If you have not yet given your testimony with your mouth that the Lord Jesus Christ has saved you, please do so at the earliest opportunity before you take baptism.

CHAPTER 3

What is the meaning of Baptism?

The Greek word "Baptizo" means immersion. When some one is baptized, the whole person is put under the water for a moment. This symbolically represents death, burial and resurrection. When you are baptized you say, symbolically, that you are united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

Union with Christ in His Death:

Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:20). Again he explains, "Our old man is crucified with Christ" (Rom. 6:6). Our sinful nature is like a fierce lion within us. Whatever you may do, you can never get rid of it. There is only one way of deliverance. You must be united with the Lord Jesus in His death. This is exactly what happened to you when you were born again your old nature which troubled you so much, is now crucified with Christ. It is dead believe this, and it will have no more power over you.

When you understand this, it will bring you great joy and victory into your life.

Please read the story of Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1 - 18. When Paul left Jerusalem he was like a fierce dragon. The dragon is said to breathe out fire and smoke. Saul was breathing out threatenings and slaughter (Acts 9:1). As this terrible man proceeded to Damascus, the Lord Jesus appeared to him in a vision. That very moment the old Saul died. He became a new man. Later on he was called Paul. Now he is able to say, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal.2:20).

Like Paul we also can say that Christ's death has become our death. This is what we do symbolically through baptism.

Union with Christ in His Burial:

There are two places in Scriptures where baptism is spoken of as burial; Rom. 6:4 and Col.2:12.

When a dead body is buried, it is put out of sight (Gen. 23:4). When you accepted Christ as your Savior, all your sins were forgiven and put out of sight, as God has said, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).

When you are baptized you show symbolically that Christ's burial has become your burial.

Union with Christ in His Resurrection:

When you come out of the water after baptism, you show in a symbolic manner, that you are risen with Christ (Rom. 6:5). Now Christ is living in you, and that is why you are able to walk in newness of life (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:4).

Satan will oppose you, but he has no power to overcome you, and sin can have no dominion over you (Rom 6:7 and 14). You now dead to sin and to Satan, but alive unto God.

As you ponder over all this, and assimilate the Word of God, and realize, more and more, the fact of your union with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Your joy will be multiplied, your faith will

increase, and your life will become victorious. **Thus, when you are baptized, you can declare triumphantly that you are risen with Christ.**

May the Lord help you to understand the meaning of baptism increasingly day by day, and lead you the enjoyment of a victorious life in Christ.

CHAPTER 4

In whose name should you be baptized?

The Lord Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When you are baptized in this name, it signifies that you are born again, and that you are intimately connected with the father, having the right to call God, "Father". You are intimately connected with the son, because He has become your own personal Savior; you are intimately connected with the Holy Spirit also, because the Holy spirit has come to dwell in you, and your body has become His Temple (Rom. 8:15 and 16; Gal. 4:6; I Cor. 3: 16 and 6:19).

Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

There were some people in Corinth who said they belonged to Paul. Paul makes it clear how absurd this is "Were you baptized in the name of Paul ?" he asks them, Whoever the servant of God may be who led you to Christ, or even baptized you, you do not belong to him, but you belong to Christ, because He is the One who was crucified for you, and that is why you were baptized in His Name.

That brings us to the next great subject: To whom do you belong? To which Church do you belong ? This we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY

We have already seen that when we are born again we are united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. We are risen with Christ. Therefore we should not think in the old terms any more. We are no longer to be described as Jew or Gentile, bond or free. Now we belong to the Household of God. We have become fellow-citizens with the saints. This great

company to which we have been joined is called "The Church of God." All those who are saved, and thereby put together, are called "the Church". As soon as you were saved, you were added to the Church.

There Is Only One Church

You will find in the Word of God that there is only one Church (Acts 2:47; Matt. 16:18). The church is also called "the Body of Christ" (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col 1:18). Just as a man has only one body, so also Christ has only one Body which is His Church.

So, never think or say that you belong to Paul, or to Apollos (1 Cor. 1:12, 13), or to any group or denomination. How can Christ be divided?

Christ Is the Head of the Church

Just as a man's head controls his body, so also Christ controls the Church. There are many societies formed by men, and each has its own Board of Directors. But for the Church which is formed by Christ, Christ Himself is the Head. Under His leadership and control, the Church will be like an Army: "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (S. of S. 6:10).

The Church at Corinth

The Church at Corinth, and the Church at Ephesus are not different denominations. Just as the sea at Cochin, Bombay and Goa are different parts of the same sea, the Arabian Sea. So also the Churches at Corinth and Ephesus are different parts of the same Church. They are Local Churches.

Those who are saved

In Acts 2:47 we read, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" As soon as you were saved, the Lord Himself added you to the Church.

We Need One Another

Every member in the body is necessary to the body. In the same way we also need one another. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1Cor.12:21). When you remember this you will value your fellow believers and love them.

Because we are members in the same body we should suffer together and rejoice together (1 Cor. 12:25, 26).

God Has Given You a Gift

Every organ in the body has a particular function to fulfill. In the same way because you are a member in the Body of Christ, you also have been given some particular gift from God (1 Cor. 12:4-11). You must exercise your talents, and use your gifts for the edification of the whole body and for the glory of God (Eph. 4:16; 2 Tim. 1:16).

A Pillar in the House of God

If you love the Lord with your whole heart and if you are faithful and diligent, the Lord will make you a pillar in the Church (Rev. 3:12).

May the Lord Bless you and accomplish all His glorious purposes in and through you. Amen.

QUESTIONS

1. Mention three reasons why those who are born again should be baptized?
2. Give one reference where the Lord Jesus gave a command regarding baptism?
3. Mention two things in your life which you can call the fruit of repentance?
4. What is the symbolic meaning of being put under the water and taken out?
5. Mention two persons to whom you have witnessed after you were born again?
6. To which Church do you belong?