

How does God Respond When... ... a Believer is Baptized?

Second in a series submitted by Scott Saltsman, Lake Area Christian Church, Fremont, Indiana

The following study assumes the student's knowledge of the fact that one is saved by God's grace, through faith in the person and blood of Jesus Christ. In fact, one may find more than sixteen things that "save" (i.e. faith, grace, blood, knowledge and mercy). However, there seems to be much confusion over the command, purpose and practice of baptism.

Be diligent in this study to read the context of each text cited and discover what God's Word teaches. Let us seek our answer neither in church tradition nor the opinion of scholars. This is a focused effort to discover how the Bible answers the question:

What does God do when a believer repents and is baptized in the name of Jesus Christ?

1. God makes him/her a d _____ of Jesus - along with learning what Jesus taught (Matthew 28:17-20). How were they to make disciples? By baptizing and teaching!
 2. God s _____ him/her (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
 3. God f _____ his/her sins (Acts 2:38).
 4. God gives him/her the H _____ S _____ (Acts 2:38) as a seal (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)
 5. God identifies him with Jesus Christ and w _____ away his sins (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21,38; Romans 10:13; Acts 22:16).
 6. God m _____ him/her into Christ / safety, as Noah was in the ark (Acts 19:1-6; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 10:2; 12:13; Galatians 3:27). See also Colossians 1:13.
If a repentant believer is baptized *into* Christ, then where is he *before* he is baptized?
 7. God b _____ him/her with Christ. (Romans 6:1-11). The believer was dead in trespasses and sins (Romans 3:23; 6:23 and Ephesians 2:1).
 8. God r _____ him/her with Christ (Romans 6:1-11) – to everlasting life (compare with John 11:21-27).
 - ◇ God gives new l _____! The Holy Spirit (Hebrew: ruah; Greek: pneuma) is the breath of life (cf Genesis 2:7 and Romans 6:11). The Holy Spirit is the River of Life! (John 4:14)
 9. God c _____ him/her with Christ - now properly robed for the great wedding feast (Galatians 3:27). After all, God is the Great Host of the Feast.
 10. God circumcises the h _____ – the mark of His covenant through Abraham (Colossians 2:11-14).
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Now another question has been raised: How much of this must a person understand for his/her baptism to be "valid?"

The more a person comprehends, the richer and deeper the ceremony will be. However, shall we require that a person grasp all that the Scriptures teach regarding faith and baptism before he may be immersed in Jesus' name? If someone did not realize that God circumcised his heart at that time, should he be immersed again with fuller knowledge? Where shall we draw the line between complete ignorance and perfect understanding? Who will draw it? It is clear that one must believe in the identity of Jesus and be motivated by that faith to repent and be baptized. His understanding will almost certainly be elementary at his "new birth." Beyond that elementary level, we find no requirement in the Gospel record. Therefore, we would do well to place no burden upon one another other than what is found in God's holy word.

1. God makes him/her a disciple of Jesus - along with learning what Jesus taught (Matthew 28:17-20). How were they to make disciples? By baptizing and teaching!
2. God saves him/her (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
3. God forgives his/her sins (Acts 2:38).
4. God gives him/her the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) as a seal (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)
5. God identifies him with Jesus Christ and washes away his sins (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21,38; Romans 10:13; Acts 22:16).
6. God moves him/her into Christ / safety, as Noah was in the ark (Acts 19:1-6; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 10:2; 12:13; Galatians 3:27). See also Colossians 1:13.

If a repentant believer is baptized *into* Christ, then where is he before he is baptized?

7. God buries him/her with Christ. (Romans 6:1-11). The believer was “dead” in trespasses and sins (Romans 3:23; 6:23 and Ephesians 2:1). He was “separated” from God by his own choice.
8. God resurrects him/her with Christ (Romans 6:1-11) – to everlasting life (compare with John 11:21-27).
 - ◇ God gives new life! The Holy Spirit (Hebrew: ruah; Greek: pneuma) is the breath of life (cf Genesis 2:7 and Romans 6:11). As God breathed into Adam and he became a living soul, so He gives His breath and we have everlasting life. The Holy Spirit is the River of Life (John 4:14)
9. God clothes him/her with Christ - now properly robed for the great wedding feast (Galatians 3:27). After all, God is the Great Host of the Feast.
10. God circumcises the heart – mark of His covenant through Abraham (Colossians 2:11-14).