

QUESTION: If you don't receive the Holy Spirit at the time you are baptized in water, then what is the significance of water baptism?

ANSWER: Water baptism is SYMBOLIC of what has ALREADY happened to you when you BELIEVED on Jesus Christ for your salvation. You were DEAD in your sins, and you have been RAISED to NEW LIFE in Christ Jesus. **Going down under the water and coming up again is SYMBOLIC of your dying with Christ and being raised with Him.** Our word BAPTIZE comes from the Greek word "baptizo" which means "to be identified with" and also "to be placed into". When you are baptized in water, you are making a PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION with Jesus Christ! You do it in order **to be obedient to God** - He wants you to make that public identification, so that friends and family members will see that you are now identified with Jesus Christ, and a follower of His. In the spiritual realm, you have already been BAPTIZED into the Body of Christ, or "placed into" the Body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit (the Baptism of the Holy Spirit) the moment you believed and were born again.

- **Romans 6:3-5** "Or do you not know that as many of us as were **BAPTIZED into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into His death**? Therefore we were **BURIED with Him through baptism** into death, that just as Christ was **raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **NEWNESS of LIFE**. For if we have been **united together in the likeness of His DEATH**, certainly we also shall be in **the likeness of His RESURRECTION.**"
- **Colossians 2:12 & 3:1-3** "**Buried with Him in baptism**, in which you also were RAISED with Him through faith in the working of God, who **RAISED Him from the DEAD.**" "If then **you were RAISED with Christ**, seek those things which are above [heavenly things], where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For **you DIED**, and your life is HIDDEN with CHRIST in God."

Definition: "BAPTIZED into His DEATH" - Remember, the word "baptized" means IMMERSED, PLACED INTO, IDENTIFIED WITH. Because **we have been placed IN CHRIST**, and **CHRIST ALREADY DIED to sin**, then **WE HAVE DIED to sin** - we are also identified with His death. In fact, it is a great mystery, but God's word says we were actually CRUCIFIED with Jesus.

- **Romans 6:6-7** "Knowing that **our OLD MAN was crucified with Him**, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be SLAVES of sin. For **he who has died** has been freed from sin."
- **Galatians 2:20** "**I have been CRUCIFIED with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but **CHRIST lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
- **Ephesians 2:1 & 4-5** "And you He made alive, who were **dead** in your trespasses and sins." "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when **we were dead** in trespasses (sins), **made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved)."
- **John 1:12-13** "But as many as **RECEIVED Him**, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, even to those who believe in His name. **Who were BORN** not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God.**"
- **John 3:5-7** "Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **BORN of water and the Spirit**, he **cannot** enter the kingdom of God. That which is **born of the flesh is FLESH**, and that which is **born of the Spirit is SPIRIT**. Do not marvel that I said to you, '**You must be BORN AGAIN.**'"

Definition: "BORN of WATER and the SPIRIT" - Water is used in scripture to represent the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Jesus is NOT talking about water baptism here, but of God's washing and cleansing us when we are BORN AGAIN. Nicodemus knew what Jesus was referring to - Ezekiel 36:25-27. In Ezekiel 36, God describes the New Birth and the spiritual cleansing that happens when we are born again, and His Spirit comes to live in us.

- **Ezekiel 36:25-27** "Then I will **sprinkle CLEAN WATER on you**, and you will be clean; **I will CLEANSE you** from all your filthiness and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a **new spirit within you**; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes."
- **Titus 3:5** "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy **He SAVED us, through the WASHING of regeneration** (NEW BIRTH) and renewing of the Holy Spirit."
- **Ephesians 5:25-26** "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and **CLEANSE it with the WASHING of WATER by the WORD.**"

All these scriptures are speaking of **SPIRITUAL cleansing**, not of being washed in literal water, or of being baptized in water. Water baptism DOES NOT SAVE YOU or do anything more than GIVE A PUBLIC PROFESSION of your faith in Christ. It is an act of obedience to Him, and **an OUTWARD PICTURE** of what has already happened to you ON THE INSIDE when you believed (the "washing" of regeneration). In Acts 10, we see the Holy Spirit falling upon the Gentiles as Peter preached the gospel and they believed even while they sat in their seats. Then, Peter commands them to be baptized in water.

- **Acts 10:44 & 47-48** "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word." "Can anyone forbid water, that these should be baptized **who HAVE RECEIVED the Holy Spirit** just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."