

WHAT ABOUT "AFTER" BAPTISM?

By Keith Greer

"There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," {1 Peter 3:21}

Surely, any honest Bible student can see the need for one to be baptized. Every conversion in the book of Acts is followed by the person being baptized. This is how one "puts on Christ," {Galatians 3:27}; where spiritual circumcision takes place, and one comes into contact with the blood of Christ. "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 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." {Colossians 2:11,12} Yet, what happens "after" baptism?

Many people act like they have "arrived" after they are baptized with their reservation in heaven set in stone! While many would not admit to this, the way they live shows they believe it. Let me offer some thoughts from the pages of God's word for your consideration.

MUST WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. "... even so we also should walk in newness of life." {Romans 6:4} Baptism is a "death," to what? Sin and that way of life! We must change the course of our lives. Can we become Christians and live the same life we lived before we submitted to Him and went under the water?

A SERVANT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. "...you became slaves of righteousness." {Romans 6:18} We must yield ourselves to the Lord's will in our lives, becoming faithful to the Master. How do we know what is righteous? This leads us to our next point.

STUDY AND GROW. "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ..." {2 Peter 3:18} A new convert cannot remain a babe. Just as children progress through various stages of growth in life, so we must in our spiritual life. By so doing, we will learn what God considers righteous and do those things in our lives!

SET UP MY PRIORITIES. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) We must place God first in our lives. This means we will have to submit totally to God.

RESIST TEMPTATION. "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." {James 4:7} We must stay away from anything which could lead us away from our Lord. Abstain from evil, refuse evil companions, and do not place ourselves in "harm's way!" Please read James 1:12-16 and 1 Corinthians 10:12,13.

BE AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. " {Matthew 5:16} Our lives should be a guide for all to see, showing others the way out of sin and towards the light of the gospel!

BEAR MUCH FRUIT. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:8) A Christian must be productive. All children of God are either barren or fruitful. Which are we? Are we sharing Christ with our friends, neighbors, and loved ones? Do we desire to lead others to Christ? If not, how can God consider us to be fruitful?

Well, what do you think? Is "baptism" the end of the line, or just the beginning? When we come to Christ, the work has just begun! Please don't think the task is impossible. It will take effort, it will take the rest of our lives, but it will gain us a crown in heaven! Yes, the road can be difficult and trying at times – but in the end it will be worth the effort! Glory be to God.***