

Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved

Baptism for a Christian, who is not aware that he or she is ill, is not an option but a command. If someone with all his or her heart gives their life to Jesus and only a matter of hours afterwards dies, I believe that if they had a heart to arrange to, and receive water baptism, then their salvation is assured.

Let's look now at why a person should receive baptism. Firstly, it is following the example of Jesus, who was himself baptized in the river Jordan (see Matthew 3v13-end); therefore, we should follow his example ourselves and be baptized. Secondly, St Paul in Romans 6 v 3-11, suggests that this spiritually dying to our sinful self-lives as we go under the water, and raising up to a new life in Christ when we come up again out of the water.

A teacher was once giving a lesson to his class and at the end of the lesson, two children in their early teens came up to him and asked, "Is your second name Mark?" The teacher paused, for very few people knew his second name. "Yes" he said, the children went away, only to return at the end of lessons the next day, when they asked another question. "Were you born on 13th March 1936?"

The teacher puzzled at how they were finding out these facts about him said "Yes". Once again he thought little of it, until the children returned with another question on the following day. "Did you become very ill and die on the 2nd of August 1959?" Asked the children. The teacher could not remember such an illness, so he asked where they were getting their information from.

To which they replied they were consulting the underworld through witchcraft and black magic. The teacher then remembered that this way the day he was baptized in full immersion, proclaiming Jesus as his Lord and saviour. What the children had revealed is that the demonic forces and evil spirits consider a person truly baptized in full immersion as being "dead" to them. Although they can harass and hinder that person, they know that their soul is safe forever from them, since the act of baptism.

Acts 19v17 shows that in the days of the apostles, believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit immediately they had been baptized in water. Although for many this is not the case today, it can be, although if a great many people want to be given water baptism it may only be practical to pray for their baptism in the Holy Spirit on another, later occasion; if it is possible to do them both on the one occasion, so much the better.

St Paul's words "Be not drunk with wine but be filled with the spirit" in Ephesians 5v18 is the context of an on-going experience-in other words be continuously filled with the spirit-the Holy Spirit of God. Luke chapter 1v 9-13 says something which few Christians fully understand today. "How much more will your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to those who ask him"? Clearly then we will have to ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit day by day, and the amount we want and ask for will usually be the amount you receive by faith. Ask for just a little and that is all you will receive, ask in faith for a great amount and it shall be given to you. Where possible, full immersion (our whole bodies going under the water at one time) is the biblical example, and the example of Jesus. I recommend it to be the norm for today also. If a sick person cannot get into the water, that person may also have water poured over them, for God is more concerned about a persons inner heart than outward observance. Go

therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising men and women everywhere, in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit, even to the end of time." (Matthew 28v19-end)