

Your Baptism

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Your Beginnings

YOU HAVE ALREADY met Jesus! Something has happened in you! It's called "new birth" or "being born again".¹ And now you want to belong to Jesus, follow Jesus, be a disciple of Jesus, and become effective as a servant of Jesus?² You are to be a "fruit-bearing branch" of Jesus, the Living Vine.³

See yourself becoming great for Jesus! Get healed of self-doubts, self-rejections and a sense of failure. Say to yourself: "I'm God's child. Jesus has saved me. All my sins have been forgiven".⁴ I've got new life, the Holy Spirit is within me and I'm never, ever going to run myself down again."⁵ I'm a remarkable person because God has made me so and I'm going to do well." It may help you to receive ministry for the healing of memories and emotions.

Your Choices

Once you are born again, you have to make choices. One of them is: "Shall I be baptised at all?" It's up to you! No one's going to force you to be baptised!

Another is: "Shall I be baptised with and into this particular church?" Baptisms take place in many Christian churches. Which church or group are you happy with?

Are you satisfied it will be a true New Testament baptism? You need to be!

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Water baptism is God's way of activating and affirming the death of our old life and the resurrection of our new life.⁶ It is baptism by immersion of those who are old enough to know they're "born again". Your leaders should also know you're born again and be satisfied you will "hold to the faith".

It's good for babies to be dedicated to God (even to be christened!) but it's not baptism. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptised will be saved".⁷ Baptism should only be for those who are accountable for their own actions, probably no younger than age fourteen or fifteen.

Christian Beginnings

Our Christian beginnings involve four steps. They belong together. These are repentance before God⁸ (sorrowing over our sin and asking God to forgive us on the basis of Jesus dying for us), faith in Jesus Christ (we believe in Jesus Christ and are born again), baptism in water⁹ and baptism in the Spirit.¹⁰

But we do not have two baptisms! Baptism in water and in the Spirit are one single baptism. Your baptism is the Spirit moving upon you, filling you, pouring over you, and you going under the water in water baptism."¹¹ It is being united with the risen Jesus in the Spirit's baptism and united with Jesus in death and burial in the water baptism. Baptism is water and Spirit, a complete baptism.¹² People sometimes say "I've experienced baptism in the Spirit, do I need to be baptised in water?" Yes, you do! Others say "I've been baptised in water and I'm sure I'm born of the Spirit. Do I need to be baptised in the Spirit?" Yes!

In the New Testament there are three baptism "timetables". There is simultaneous water and Spirit baptism,¹³ baptism in the Spirit before baptism in water,¹⁴ and baptism in water before baptism in the Spirit.¹⁵ But the full baptism is both!

So we baptise people in water when they are clearly born again. They may already have Holy Spirit baptism, or may receive during their water baptism. But if not we bring them into baptism in the Holy Spirit immediately afterwards - [which is often accommodated]¹⁶ with speaking in tongues, liberated worship and signs of power. In fact, most who come for water

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baptism are already Spirit-baptised and [may be]¹⁷ tongues-speakers. But often they find a new and more powerful anointing.

The full baptism causes us to be baptised into Christ Jesus¹⁸ (entering the “Christening”, the anointing), baptised into the Trinity?¹⁹ (entering the family of God), baptised into the Body of Christ, His church²⁰ (entering the peoplehood, the “knitted together” body). All this is made effective by our baptism with and in the Holy Spirit (see Chapter 11).

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The Old and New Adam

LET'S SEE THINGS from God's viewpoint. The first Adam (the old Adam) sinned and yielded the earth to Satan.²¹ That's why this world is full of suffering, wickedness, bloodshed and misery - it's hardly God's earth any more, its ruler is Satan. He has taken the rule from man. But God created man to rule the earth and still wants him to do so.

We are all of the old Adam, the first Adam's offspring. Our natural inheritance comes from him. We were all born with the genes of the old fallen Adam life. We had no choice in that, we just came along! And so, like all people, we are sinful, selfish - our bodies, souls and spirits polluted and cursed. So God introduces the new Adam. And the Bible tells us God's new Adam is His Son made man, Jesus, and He is life-giving spirit. Before the earth was formed Jesus was the new Adam dying for our sins, as the Lamb of God.?

Satan is an archangel who has fallen, and God's purpose is for man to defeat Satan. Man must have God's life (Holy Spirit life) to outwit and defeat Satan and his dark powers. God sent the Saviour, Jesus Christ, to be the new head or lead-man, the new Adam, and in Him we are spiritually reborn.¹⁰ He is the last Adam. He reproduces spiritually. ¹¹

The time came when historically (eternally it had already happened) Jesus was born on earth, born of the Virgin Mary, born of the Holy Spirit." And when he was aged thirty, the new Adam, our great originator, leader, representative and example, had to be baptised. God's Son, Jesus Christ, the sinless, perfect man, needed (for our sakes and with us) the full baptism! God prepared a special man (John the Baptist) to bring water baptism, and even Spirit baptism to His Son, Christ Jesus. Jesus was filled with the Spirit from His birth. Nevertheless, in His baptism, He received a special commissioning of Holy Spirit baptism for His new Adam manhood and ministry. He began to proclaim repentance and God's Kingdom.¹⁶ That was the historical start of what we call the church, the collective "New Man", which Jesus builds. ¹⁷

The Baptism of Jesus

When John the Baptist baptised people, this is what he said: "I baptise you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire". 18 John is saying, "If you repent, I'll baptise you but understand my baptism cannot change you - you'll still be weak (still the old Adam) - however, the One who is coming after me, Jesus, He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The new Adam, Jesus Christ will put power within you, will bring the Spirit to you and light a fire of holy passion. You'll no longer be 'Old Adam' people, but New Adam' people!"

Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan - you need a lot of water to be baptised!19 To baptise means to immerse, dip or be saturated or drenched. Sprinkling with water is not Biblical! Before His baptism Jesus said: "It is fitting for us [the word "us" means all those whom He would redeem - that's Jesus talking as the new Adam with all of "us" as His offspring) to fulfil all righteousness" or "to obey all God's holy ways. So He, the new and last Adam, must be baptised, And when Jesus was baptised, the heavens opened and the Spirit of God came on Him and a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."21

The Pattern Baptism

So that's the pattern baptism. It's the baptism of the new "First Man", the new or last Adam, and all our baptisms are meant to be similar, with a supernatural dimension. When you go into the water Jesus Christ, God's Son, is in you and with you. Your baptism is another new Adam or Christ baptism. And just as the Holy Spirit came upon Him, so the Holy Spirit will come upon you because you and Jesus are one. And just as the Father spoke to Him, so the Father will "speak" to you because you and Jesus are one. You will feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit "settles" upon you like a dove and stays with you. You will hear the Father speaking and "saying" (some tell of an audible voice but it is normally Spirit to spirit): "I'm pleased with you. I'm really happy about you. You're my son, you're my daughter and I love you."22 You will find yourself crying, "Father, I love you!" and you'll probably "speak in tongues".21

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Baptised into the Name

DURING THE PERIOD of 40 days between His resurrection and ascension to heaven,⁹ Jesus instructed His apostles (those whom He "sent" in His Name). He had been crucified. He had purchased our redemption, suffered and died for our sins. He had risen from the dead and now before He ascended to heaven, He gave instructions to His apostle-disciples saying, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always to the close of the age."¹⁰ That was their mandate and that is our mandate. They had to do it! We have to do it! It has to be done until Jesus comes in majesty, at the end of this present "old earth" age.

Jesus Christ, through His death, His resurrection, and ascension, has taken full authority through the heavens and on earth'. He is administering everything. He has authority over Satan. He has authority over all demons and fallen angels. He is in charge of the good angels.

We cast out demons in the name of Jesus and in the victory of the Blood of the Lamb. (We've seen them go - hundreds of them!) The highest authority on earth, the highest spiritual authority, the greatest authority, is Jesus Christ. The new Adam is ruling!

So Jesus says, "Go, therefore and make disciples » represent His authority. We go in His name. We announce repentance and remission of sins. We call people to follow Jesus. We make disciples. The word "disciple" means an apprentice, a trainee. Many believe and become disciples of Jesus. And the mature ones among us "disciple" and teach the new ones.

Jesus says disciples must be baptised. Disciples must renounce everything and "take up their cross"¹⁰. If that is your heart, you are ready for baptism. Jesus instructs us to baptise you!

The Two Families

What happens at your baptism? When I was born, they wrote "Noel Stanton" on my birth certificate. But that's only part of it! You get the rest of it from the New Testament: "Noel Stanton in the family of the old Adam under Satan". The New Testament says that every person is either a "child" of Satan in the old Adam or a "child" of God in the new Adam." You don't become a child of God until you're "born again".¹²

We were all born wrong! Our spiritual surname was "Old Adam and Satan". It certainly wasn't "God"! But the time came when my spiritual surname openly changed to "Noel Stanton in the family of the new Adam and God". When does that publicly occur? "Baptised into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."¹³ When we're baptised the name change is declared! We change families! I am no longer Noel Stanton in the old Adam family of the world, the flesh and the devil, but Noel Stanton in the new Adam family of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And so you need to be baptised into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Your baptism confirms your transfer from one family to another! Baptism into the name means baptism into the security and authority of the family.

The Word at Your Baptism

People sometimes question the Biblical authority for baptism asking: "Were you baptised in the Name of Jesus?" or "Were you baptised in the Name of the Trinity?" and so on. They try to pick fault! To avoid this our practice is that those baptising should first ask candidates to strongly declare aloud that "Jesus Christ is Lord" and then for all the following words to be spoken just before each person is baptised:

1. "We baptise you into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ."¹⁴
2. "We baptise you into the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."¹⁵
3. "By the one Spirit you are baptised with us into the one Body, the church of Jesus Christ."¹⁶
4. "In the Name that is above every other name, the Name of Jesus Christ who is Lord, we now baptise you."¹⁷

We find these four "words" in the New Testament. So if anybody ever challenges you as to the validity of your baptism. You say, "I was baptised according to the words of the Lord Jesus and the first apostles which you'll find in the New Testament." That'll see them off!

Now for the Discipling

Jesus said that those baptised need training, just as He trained His disciples. Disciples follow their Master and are to be taught His wisdom, character, authority and methods. 18 And so, you need to be disciplined by your leaders. They represent Jesus. They must teach you - and demonstrate what you are to do. As a baptised “apprentice”, you listen, watch, learn and do. You learn how we love one another, live holy lives, share our wealth and live as His church.19 The marrieds learn to love their wives or husbands and to bring up children as Christians.20 You learn how to cast out demons, heal the sick, proclaim the gospel, lead people to Jesus and build His church.21 What Jesus taught and did must be taught and shown to others. This discipling follows your baptism.

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Like the First Christians

JESUS IS ASCENDED.' He sent the Holy Spirit to baptise the first one hundred and twenty. The Holy Spirit fell on them dramatically with the sound of a mighty wind, fire on their heads, new tongues in their mouths and an anointing of power and joy.? They appeared drunk! (Incidentally if you don't yet speak in tongues do talk to church your leaders about it). Peter spoke, and thousands of people were "cut to the heart" - became aware of their sin.' You've experienced that - heartbreak, conviction, needing God's mercy. You've been cut and opened by the Spirit and the Word and your conscience begins to trouble you. That's how they felt!

And the Holy Spirit, through Peter, said 'Repent (be sorry for your sin, turn away from it and believe in Jesus) and be baptised, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". That was the Holy Spirit's powerful word to the thousands of convicted seekers! Obeying the instructions of Jesus, the apostles made thousands of disciples, baptised them and formed the Jerusalem Community church!

When you and others are baptised and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, a family, a church is formed. You want to be together, to worship together, to love and serve one another, to share things. Selfishness disappears! This is the new Kingdom of God society. Justice, harmony and happiness flourish here. It's the new humanity! It is church community.

And it comes about through the water and Spirit baptism. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of justice. He brings into being the most remarkable society this world will ever see until Jesus comes.

So be glad when class and race divisions disappear and we become a real brotherhood church, a people "of one heart and soul", just like the first Christians.

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Burial and Resurrection

AT OUR WATER baptism we die to sin.' We join Jesus Christ in His death and burial. He has taken our old nature (or old Adam) and He has, in His own death, killed it. That's God's grace in action! His body, containing our dead old nature (the old me) goes into the grave. In our baptism we join Jesus in the grave. We go under the water. Baptism is the grave of our old life.

And so, after your baptism, you say, "I am dead and buried as to my old sinful life, my old Adam life. I am dead and buried with Jesus Christ."

The New Testament says: "Do you not know that! all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?".⁴ Hear that! Digest that! "Baptised into Christ's death". Your old Adam (root, stem and branch) is dead with Him! God says so! You must say so! You "know" - and the Holy Spirit confirms it in you.

But understand this! Your physical body is still old Adam constituted. It is your spirit and soul which carry the new Adam life. Your whole humanity (spirit, soul and body) is saved in Jesus, but the change in your body awaits the coming again of Jesus. Consequently there is, after your baptism, a conflict between the old Adam "flesh" and the new Adam spirit. But you have the Spirit's power to bring the authority of holiness and to win the battle with your "flesh". ⁸

The Spirit's Seal

Don't be surprised if your "flesh" sometimes gets the better of you. But always remember that the Holy Spirit is your "guarantee" and "seal" that all is well. Our "flesh" cannot affect our position in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our "advocate" and "surety" at God's right hand. At your baptism (water and Spirit), the Spirit seals you as owned and protected by God - sealed "for the day of redemption".!!

Resurrection

To be united with the death of Jesus Christ is to be united with His resurrection. In water baptism, you go into His death and burial in order to get into His resurrection. You can't have resurrection without death and burial! Your baptism in the Spirit will not be real day by day unless your water baptism is effective. You must live your life in the authority of your baptism, "reckoning" yourself to be "dead to sin and alive to God".¹³

After your full baptism, you can declare, "We were buried with Him by baptism into death (the death of our old Adam) so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory (or power) of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life". ¹⁴ That is, you have joined Jesus Christ, the new Adam, to walk in "newness". The Holy Spirit resurrects you as He did Jesus! Baptism in the Spirit is our resurrection by the power of God. And the Holy Spirit joins you to Jesus, and Jesus to you! (See Chapter 11 on "Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit")|

All of Grace

Your baptism is God the Father's action! You agree to that action, but it is God working. When you were saved it was God saving you. When you are baptised it is God, in His Son, baptising you. It's all of grace! We cannot do it ourselves!

God, as a free gift, credits to us our baptismal position. He legally in the covenant of grace) unites us with Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. And the Holy Spirit works it out in us.¹⁷

God says, "They are in My Son's death and burial and resurrection". He writes that on the record. You may sin following your baptism. We all do in certain ways - God's standards are very, very high after all. Does that mean he erases your new birth and baptism from the record? No! Jesus is always our priest. ¹⁸ Of course, if there came a time we became apostates that would be different. ¹⁹ But apostacy comes about through continued disobedience, a hardened heart and such a falling away from God²⁰ that His judgment makes repentance impossible. ²¹

You Know!

What then do you do after your baptism? "We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body (that is our sinful humanity, our "flesh") might be destroyed (or annulled) and we might no longer be enslaved to sin."²² You know! It is faith-knowledge! ²³ After your baptism you live in the knowledge that your old Adam, your old life, has died. You

know it by revelation. That's powerful! You don't know it because you're perfect! You know it because God has done it. You know it because your full baptism has taken place.

The enemy comes and tempts you, and, you say, "My baptism carries the authority of God's word and action and I know that my old life is dead and buried." You hold on to that. "Devil," you say, "you may have caused me to sin but I still know that my old life was crucified with Christ, dead and buried with Him."²⁴ You know it! You must express that knowledge. And Satan runs from you.

You Reckon and Yield

"So you must also consider (or reckon) yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." You know it and "reckon it! God has done it. You say, "This is my position, I am dead and buried to my old life."²⁵ You reckon it! You rejoice in it!

"Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments of righteousness."²⁶ You know! You reckon! You yield! You say: "Lord, here I am. I am yielding to you every part of my body and soul.

So long as you travel this path saying, "Yeah, this is the new me. I've got here by God's grace and God's action" and keep on yielding yourself to the Lord, then you'll find victory is yours. Know, reckon, yield! When you do that you'll be walking in the Spirit and everything will be good. ²⁷

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Finding the Fulness

THE NEW TESTAMENT says: "For in Him (in Jesus the new Adam) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily". Just as the first Adam lost the fullness of God for human beings, so the last or new Adam has recovered the fulness. We are now the offspring of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, rather than the offspring of the original Adam.

This fullness dwells "bodily" or humanly in Christ Jesus. The fullness of deity, the fulness of the Godhead dwells again in the human body. The first Adam lost it. Apart from Jesus, no baby that's ever born has been born filled with God! That would be impossible because of the fall. But the last or new Adam has regained the fullness - for us all!

Through your new birth and full baptism you become filled with the Spirit. That's because you are of Jesus! You cannot be filled with the Spirit unless you are of Jesus Christ. He is filled with the Spirit and pours the Spirit into all His redeemed ones who form the new Adam humanity. The fullness of God has returned to the human body in Jesus Christ!

God, in His original creative intention meant the human race to have this fullness all the time and to rule on earth. But sin and the Holy Spirit cannot belong together. If sin comes in, the Holy Spirit goes out! Yet through the blood of Jesus and the gift of grace (not because of your perfection, but because of Him, Jesus!) the principle of sin goes out of our lives. Then the Holy Spirit comes in! So long as covered by the blood of Jesus, in God's sight you are not sinful? You are "justified!" The Holy Spirit can operate within you. Of course, you mustn't grieve the Spirit by deliberate sin.

So you are of God's fullness in the new Adam.¹⁰ The old Adam's people have lost the fullness. Jesus Christ, the new Adam "wins" the fullness back!

Humanity Rules Again

Jesus rules! In Him the new humanity rules! Jesus is Lord of every lord and king of every king. ¹¹ "He is the head of all rule and authority."¹² He has overturned the sordid deal old

Adam made with Satan when humanity surrendered the rule 3. Jesus has regained the rule - for us! We have rule and authority.

We have joined the family of God. We are therefore higher than angels. 14 Angels are not sons of God, not made in the likeness of Jesus.

We rule Satan. We rule the demons. We can call on angels. We carry authority in Jesu's Name.¹⁵

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Circumcision

"IN HIM ALSO you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of flesh in circumcision of Christ." Now "body of flesh" means our flesh humanity", our old humanity, our sin humanity. Our old sinful humanity is to be circumcised.

Circumcision means the removal or "cutting off of something. Our circumcision is not a circumcision made with hands". It is circumcision by the Spirit, who applies Christ's death to us.

But what does circumcision mean for us? When Jesus died on the cross our old humanity died. It was circumcised! Through that action we became people of a new Adam humanity, a spiritual humanity. And we lost, thank God, our fleshly or sinful humanity. Our old nature was cut off, brought to the death. It is the circumcision of our old souls.

God ordered Abraham to physically circumcise all males, by cutting off the foreskin of the penis. It was a covenant sign, marking God's chosen people. God was saying that the physical act points to the day when He would circumcise the whole of the sinning nature and produce a new covenant people "for His own possession". That old-style circumcision points to the saving action of God in the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was circumcised when he was a little boy eight days old (the Old Testament sign). Then on the cross the fullness happened. He was fully circumcised - for us. In His death our old life was cut off, was killed, God has cut away our old life! Our old sinful humanity is circumcised in Christ Jesus. Humanity belongs to God again! And this circumcision of Jesus Christ, the new Adam, brings all His redeemed ones into a covenant relationship with God and with one another.

"And you were buried with Him in baptism in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead." What is "dead" (our circumcised old humanity) needs burial. Buried with Him in baptism! Raised with Him! Isn't that powerful and beautiful? The new Adam humanity rises! And we belong together as this new humanity, being "members of one another" in the Church-Body of Christ'. "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body... and all made to drink of one Spirit".⁸

8

Power in Baptism

COMPARING BAPTISM to Noah's ark, the New Testament says "Eight persons were saved through water." | "Saved means freed, healed, delivered. "Baptism which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities and powers subject to Him." Clearly there is saving grace in baptism. It is not regeneration, new birth, or the first flush of saving faith but there is Holy Spirit power in baptism! Baptism "saves" us!

When Noah, together with his family, went into the ark, there was both judgment and salvation. The water which raised the ark through which Noah and his family were saved, was

the same water that caused the drowning of the rest of humanity. The water brought both death and life. That's like baptism! Under the water goes the old, vile nature, and we rise from the water with our new nature. Risen with Christ! And, like those eight people in the ark we belong to a fresh clean society.

Baptised Again?

Now sometimes we get asked: "If I've already been baptised by immersion, should I get baptised again?"

The normal answer is "No". But, it does depend on whether the original "baptism" was a true New Testament baptism. The New Testament records the case of some people who had been wrongly baptised. They were disciples of Jesus Christ, but Apollos who almost certainly baptised them did not know, at the time, the full revelation of baptism. So they were baptised "according to John's baptism" and not according to Jesus Christ's baptism.?

Twenty-five years ago I didn't know much about baptism in the Spirit, speaking in tongues or the anointing of power. I couldn't lead people into receiving, because it was not my

experience. Yes, we baptised people, but had anyone come up out of the water speaking in tongues or swooning under the power, we would have been shocked! We just weren't moving in that dimension!

After I was baptised in the Spirit I realised that the baptisms may not have been fully New Testament baptisms. We began to know power in the baptisms. And some people felt they needed a more valid water baptism, with the New Testament signs.

One of our leaders had been spaced out on drugs at his water baptism! That was not a New Testament baptism! Quite rightly he wanted a valid baptism. Some were not even born again. They need to be baptised as believers, their first real baptism.

So if you are dissatisfied with your baptism, you should check it through before God, and, if you feel it necessary, talk to your church leaders about it. You must believe in your baptism. If you can't believe in it then something's wrong. Believe in it and say "Yeah! My baptism was good. I'm dead, buried and alive with Christ."

9

The New “Me”!

BAPTISM THEN is our appeal for a clear conscience (a pure consciousness or self-awareness on the grounds that Jesus is risen. We say, "Please, Lord, seeing that the new Adam is risen and I can belong to Him, give to me, through Him, a changed consciousness." This is very important. It is not God's intention that we should find it difficult to live a holy life afterwards. No! God changes us so that it is our nature to live like Jesus! So when we come to our baptism we appeal to God and say "God, look, I'm keen to get baptised but I don't want to strive and

struggle and fight to live a holy life. Please could you make sure I'm so changed inside that I have the spiritual power, and the strong desire in my heart, will, and soul, to live as a new and different person". In baptism you say to God "Give me the inner consciousness that I'm a new me!" You want a new self-consciousness.

We are a trinity

We human beings are spirit, soul and body. We're different to all created species, even to the biggest mammals. And that is because we are self-conscious people. Think about this! You are aware of what you're like! That may sound simple, but in fact it is amazing. You are self-conscious! When you say "I" you mean the person you know, who feels and thinks in particular ways. You say, "Yes, I know who I am. I'm a person who thinks these things. I'm a person who has these feelings. I'm a person who has these desires. I'm conscious of being "me!"

Now that's important! That self-consciousness is the likeness of God. He is conscious of being God. He is self-aware! And so are you! The vegetable creation is basically unconscious. Animal creation is conscious but not self-conscious. Your cat does not think, "I'm me!" He's simply a cat and he's programmed to act like a cat.

We're human beings! We're the "tops" of creation! We're conscious of being "us". We're aware of the kind of people we are! We're a trinity: spirit (our God-conscious part), soul

(mind, emotions, will - our self-conscious part), and body (through the various senses, our world-conscious part).

New Consciousness

So in baptism we appeal to God for a new consciousness. "O God, make me conscious that I've changed. Let me know that I'm a new "me". We want a "clear conscience".⁵

As a new "me" you're going to do the things that the new "me" does. You used to do the things of the old "me". You thought, you felt and desired as the "old me" does. Now God supernaturally works the "new me" in you!⁷ And it's really you! It's not you fighting to reform yourself! It's you! You've got a new spirit and a new heart! You're a new "me". You're baptised!

10

Yes, You're Ready!

SO YOU COME to your baptism: "God, you've got to change me!" That's beautiful! It's already happened in the new birth, and now God completes the change through the baptism in water and Spirit. United with Jesus Christ in resurrection! New! Yes, you'll need help and discipling, but you'll know you have changed. You'll belong to God. You'll belong to your Jesus brothers and sisters! It's amazing!

Rise and be Baptised

"Why do you wait? Rise and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on the Name of the Lord." You are want

ing baptism. Talk to your leaders. Sometimes leaders seem to want perfection before baptism. We say, "Let's believe there'll be such power in the baptism that the change will be obvious to all." But remember only those who are regenerate and willing disciples should be baptised.²

Water baptisms can take place in the sea, in rivers, in lakes, in fountains, in portable baptistries or chapel baptistries. But immersion baptism should always be the same - real, powerful, life-giving.

Come to your water baptism with an assurance that it's in God's will. Move in faith. Faith is so important. Faith that God will work! Come to your baptism saying, "I'm really looking forward to this!" You may be a bit nervous but you're full of expectancy!

You move into the water, guided by those who are baptising. As you stand in the water those who are with you may speak prophetic messages to you. Everyone is joyful and the atmosphere carries power. You, and others being baptised, will be asked to say "Jesus Christ is Lord" before your baptism. Hands are laid on your head. Either side of you are those holding you and actually baptising you. In front of you is a leader speaking the baptismal words.

Your Water Baptism

You fall backwards into the water. Into the darkness, mouth closed, eyes closed or open! The waters close over you. Jesus takes you into His death and burial. You are consciously aware of the dying of the old "you", with its guilt, rebellions and despair.

But now you are rising from the water. Into the light, mouth open, eyes open! Jesus takes you into His resurrection. You are consciously aware of the living of the new "you". You feel peaceful, loving. You feel joyful, uninhibited, free! The power takes hold of you and you may shake and fall. You speak in tongues. You shout out the praises of God.

You're fully baptised into Jesus Christ, new Adam! You're baptised into His people, His brotherhood! You have begun!

11

Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT can be experienced through the laying on of hands with counselling, in group praise and worship when the Spirit “falls” on the company, or on your own.

All true believers should specifically seek baptism in the Holy Spirit. Here are some suggested steps, but this is set out simply to provide a guide. Such "steps" are often overtaken by the work of the Spirit Himself.

Step 1. Thirsting and seeking. There is a strong, almost desperate, desire to be baptised in (or filled with) the Holy Spirit.'

Step 2. Repentance and cleansing. All conscious sin and disobedience should be repented of with a conscious receiving of forgiveness and cleansing through the Blood of Jesus.

Step 3. Self-denial and commitment. Commit your whole life to Jesus, renounce your old self-life and willingly "take up your cross". Be "sold out" for Jesus!

Step 4. Asking and believing. Jesus said we should ask the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit." This asking will have an anointing of faith so that you are able to receive what you have asked for.

Step 5. Receiving. You must yield your whole self (body, soul and spirit) to the Holy Spirit and consciously receive His presence, love, joy and power.⁷

Step 6. Faith action. You will find yourself worshipping (some fall to the floor and may stay in that position for some time with various experiences of the Lord's presence) either with outbursts of joy or more quietly. At this time it is helpful to speak in tongues by activating your voice in the Spirit, refusing to speak in your normal language.⁸

Step 7. Full Release. It is of great importance that you are fully released and freed from restrictions caused by soul-damage in your past, inherited inhibitions and emotional bondage. You may need help with this.

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