

Level 1 Lesson 8.

WATER BAPTISM.

By Don Krow.

Question: "I need to know if you have to be baptized to go to heaven. I love God and was baptized when I was seven years old. I am now eighteen years old, and someone from a non-denominational church told me that no one can be saved and baptized at such a young age. They also said that you have to be baptized to go to heaven, but my Baptist family said that you don't. I just want to go to heaven. I am living for God in every way that I can, but I need to know if I must be baptized again now that I am supposedly of age to be baptized. Please help me ASAP. God bless and thanks."

Response: Salvation and the forgiveness of sins come freely as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 10:43 states: "All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His Name" (New International Version). Salvation comes through faith; that is, trust and reliance upon Jesus and His shed blood to give you a right standing before God. In Acts 10:44-48, the Holy Ghost was given to the believers (confirming their salvation) before they were baptized.

Even though this is true, at other times it seems that the forgiveness of sins happened at the time of baptism (Acts 2:38). This is because baptism is an expression, or act, of faith that was carried out at the time that a person turned to Jesus in repentance and faith (Mark 16:16 says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"). It was also a way of calling on the Lord for a clear conscience (Acts 22:16 and 1 Pet. 3:21).

If you truly turned to Jesus from your heart at the age of seven and were baptized, God accepts your childlike faith. Baptism does have requirements. One requirement is repentance. Did you have a change of heart and a change of mind that resulted in turning from sin to Jesus and His forgiveness (Acts 2:38, 20:21, and 17:30)? Did you exercise faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior (Mark 16:16, John 3:16, and Rom. 10:9-10)? If not, then turn to Jesus now, repent from your sins, turn to His grace to forgive you, and seal that decision to follow Him through water baptism.

Baptism is an act that expresses one's faith in Jesus. Without that faith, the act means nothing. People who turned to Jesus as Lord and Savior were willing to express that faith and openly confess Jesus in this public way. People who say "no" to Jesus' command are showing, to some extent, a dead faith. Faith is dead when people are unwilling to express it (James 2:18-19). Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone. It is always willing to express itself. Baptism was a way of expressing that faith. Baptism is not what saves; it is Jesus. Water doesn't wash away sins; it is the blood of Jesus. But faith applies His blood to you, and sometimes that faith was expressed at the time a person was baptized (Acts 22:16). The question is, have you repented? Do you believe in Him (Jesus)? If so, why do you delay, arise and be baptized!