

## 10 August 2006 Repent and be baptized

Israel practiced baptism before John the Baptist but it was mainly an action imposed on Gentile proselytes when they converted to Judaism.

It was a public demonstration representing their abandonment of the old life and beliefs and the beginning of a new life under Judaism.

When Peter spoke to the crowd saying "repent and be baptized", in the Jewish ear he was saying, "Turn away from you old life, trust in Jesus Christ – confess Him as Lord – live a new life empowered by the Holy Spirit who you will receive." "Make Jesus your Lord and your debt to sin will be paid. You will receive the gift His Holy Spirit's presence in your new life."

*Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

The phrase, "Repent and be baptized" even as Peter used it in Acts 2, summed up the whole conversion experience that Paul wrote about to the Romans.

*Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

John the Baptist came along insisting that the Jews themselves needed to be baptized (a radical idea in their minds) as a sign recognizing their sinfulness before God and their desire to change by repenting of their sins - changing their lives.

Note: This baptism was not for the forgiveness of sins but an acknowledgement of their sinfulness.

Again, this was a public sign they were abandoning their old life for a new. John's baptism was personal witness and evidence that the individual recognized the sinful condition they were in and that they needed and intended to change.

Christian baptism continues this symbolism.

It is a physical, public witness and testimony of their new faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior and the new life they had received in the Spirit. Christian water baptism is not a requirement of receiving new life in Christ but is one way of publicly demonstrating they had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and had received that new life.

The baptismal candidate would be required to confirm that Jesus was now their Lord. It was a personal public, profession (confession). Today we generally give them the opportunity to give their personal testimony or answer some questions posed to them by the one baptizing them.

The water baptism that follows is a personal testimony and symbolic act proclaiming that they had received new life from Him and had received (been immersed, washed and cleansed by) the Holy Spirit, God's free gift to those who are His.