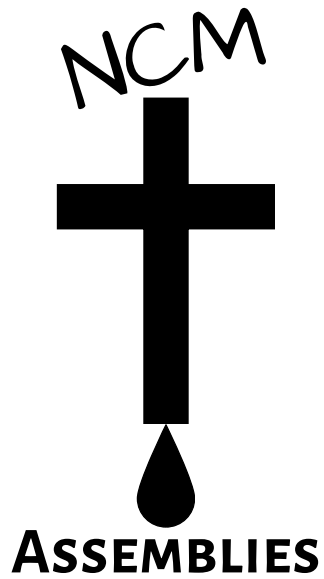


Am I ready

For Baptism?

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Baptism is an important ritual to many Christians around the world. There may be no greater step in our spiritual journey than that of baptism.

Simply put, baptism is a ritual where one is submerged into water for the washing away of sins. The bible tells us that while we can be resurrected based on faith, it is only through baptism that we make it into the paradise (Read: John 3:5).

Perhaps YOU are considering baptism. You probably have questions going into such an important ceremony. It is crucial that you know what you are doing before you are baptized. Are there requirements for baptism? In this booklet, we set to discuss the things you need to know before you are baptized!

The Rewards of Baptism

Yahweh rewards His loyal followers who choose to get baptized. Baptism is more than just a ceremony; it represents our dedication

and love for our Creator. Through baptism, we show Him that we are ready to obey Him, that we choose Him as our only God, and that we want to have a relationship with Him. In return, Yahweh gives to us freely.

Baptism serves as a covenantal promise to Yahweh. Specifically, baptism is the only way to enter into the New Covenant (John 3:5). The New Covenant is said to be better than those that came before it (Hebrews 8:6). That's because Yahweh makes better promises in this Covenant. He promises to forgive and forget our sins in response to our faith. That's not the only reward for the New Covenant. Yahweh promises that those in the New Covenant are part of His Elect, resurrected first of all mankind, and exempt from the Second Death (Romans 8:29).

Those who are baptized are offered a deep, personal relationship with Yahweh based on mercy and grace. It is only through the acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice that we attain this gift. In baptism, we are made new creation, our sins washed away, dead and

buried alongside our Savior. This freedom gives us a chance to start again with a clean slate.

As we move along our spiritual journey after baptism, Yahweh offers a unique gift that no other path can promise: the Holy Spirit. While Yahweh can certainly grant Holy Spirit to any who ask for it, those who are baptized are given Holy Spirit forever (Acts 1:8). Yahweh's own spirit rests within our own, assisting us to keep with Yahweh's standard and helping us to forge an even closer, more intimate relationship with our Creator (**Read: 1 Corinthians 6:19**) The bible shows us that it is only upon our baptism that we receive this special gift (Acts 2:38).

These rewards are amazing, inspiring, and certainly may move you to want to be baptized yourself. Yet baptism also involves work. Let's look at what responsibilities we are given when we are baptized.

The Responsibilities of Baptism

Once you are baptized, you are considered one of God's Elect. Baptism represents a Covenantal promise between God and man. This commitment can come with its share of work.

The biggest undertaking that Christians take on is that of *repentance*. Christians are called to turn away from our sins and strive to do better. This involves in-depth bible studies every day. We must pray for Yahweh to provide us with insight on ourselves and His Word.

Our bible-studies will help us to forge a strong *relationship* with Yahweh God. Remember, baptism is the start of a Covenant - the way God forms one-on-one relationships with man. Any relationship takes work, and the relationship we have with our Creator is no different. In our prayers, we must be transparent with Yahweh, laying bare to Him our fears, desires, anxieties, and joys.

Christians who are baptized ought to be

responsive to the Word of God. The bible may tell us things about ourselves we do not want to hear. Once we are baptized, we have a responsibility to open our ears to Yahweh God and abide by His Word. As often as this can be an uncomfortable process, it can also provide us much comfort. It is through scripture that we know with certainty that Yahweh God loves us no matter our faults. If we are putting our best feet forward, Yahweh God will respond with love and mercy.

Who Can Be Baptized?

Once you know what baptism means to you personally, you may be ready to accept the rewards and responsibilities and move forward with the ceremony. Yet not everyone is eligible for baptism. If you are ready to take this next step, you must be sure that you are in an appropriate place spiritually and physically.

Firstly, the bible does not distinguish between men and women regarding baptism. Both men and women are able to be

baptized equally (Acts 8:12). As long as they have appropriate knowledge and faith, both men and women are eligible for baptism.

Yet there *are* restrictions. Candidates for baptism *must* be believers of the Word (Acts 22:16). They need not know every facet of bible truth, but should at minimum have cursory knowledge of the gospel. Most important, they must possess a strong desire to follow God's way. At minimum, a baptismal candidate should understand their sins and willing to make serious changes in an effort to repent in Jesus' name.

A question posed by many who seek baptism is *what age is appropriate for baptism?* *Should I be baptizing my infant?* It is important to note that the bible does not have a single example of a child being baptized within its pages. In fact, the bible heavily implies that only adults over a certain age are eligible for baptism. That age is twenty years old. How do we know?

While the bible doesn't explicitly say that

only those twenty years or older can be baptized, there are restrictions that Yahweh places on children throughout the Old and New Testament that unequivocally demonstrate that baptism is only for adults. In ancient Israel, only those twenty years or older were counted in the census (Numbers 14:29). It was only after they hit that milestone age that men were allowed to go to war or serve in the temple (Leviticus 27:3, Ezra 3:8). Yahweh's standards haven't changed. He still requires only adults to be able to serve in official capacity in His assembly.

The fact is, children are unable to understand their sins, or comprehend the commitment they are making when they are baptized. Baptism involves personal responsibility; candidates for baptism have to be able to know their own sins and, further, the *consequences* of sin. Children are incapable of meeting that requirement. Yahweh considers all children to be innocent of their sins on this account (Deuteronomy 1:3).

If you meet these requirements, you may be ready for baptism! Let's look at some questions you can ask yourself to test your readiness.

Questions for Baptism

When preparing for your baptism, you need to possess some knowledge of the truth. Here are ten questions baptismal candidates should go over with the elders of their congregation to be certain they are ready:

1. Do I believe that Yahweh alone is the one true God?

2. Do I believe the Jesus is the only begotten son of Yahweh?

3. Do I believe that through his death, Jesus paid for the sins of mankind?

4. Do I understand that it is through the grace and mercy of God that I am saved in Jesus' sacrifice?

5. Do I love God, and want to forge a permanent, deeper relationship with Him?

6. Do I understand that baptism represents a Covenantal agreement with God, and that I will be held to the standards of this covenant for all my days?

7. Do I know myself to be a sinner, and recognize the need for salvation from God?

8. Do I hereby repent of my sins and dedicate myself to the Way of Yahweh?

9. Am I ready and willing to be recognized as a child of God?

10. Do I understand that God loves me despite my failings, and choose to honor Him above all others?

A New Creation

Baptism isn't the end of your spiritual journey, it is only the beginning. There can be no greater misconception that once a person is baptized, they no longer need to

make any spiritual effort. This could not be further from the truth! As a baptized individual, you are a new creation, a living witness to the mercy and love of Yahweh God!

May we use the gifts given to us at baptism to support one another, build up the congregation, and display true love for our communities. Only then can we cultivate the fruits of the spirit that lead us to this step.

There can be no greater reward in this life than serving God, and preparing to live eternally with Him in paradise!

