

## THE TRUE BAPTISM

A young Christian couple asks us to baptize their 3 months old son.

### **Our answer:**

We have underlined the uselessness nowadays, in this end of times predicted by Jesus, of the baptism by water in favor of the baptism in Spirit prescribed by Jesus Himself.

Throughout History, the ritual preceding the baptism was the Jew's circumcision. This practice is still done today. It is unthinkable to a Jew or a Moslem not to be circumcised. Therefore, it was not easy for the Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah to renounce to this useless practice for their salvation. After believing in Jesus, St. Paul had difficulty convincing the Jews that circumcision was useless. He teaches the Galatians: "It is not being circumcised or uncircumcised that matters; but what matters is a **new creation**" (Galatians 6.15). "If I were still preaching circumcision, why should I still be persecuted (by the Jews)" (Galatians 5, 11). And to the Romans: "...Circumcision is not only a visible physical operation, the real Jew is the one who is **inwardly** a Jew, and real circumcision is **in the heart**, a thing not of the letter but of the spirit.. He will not be praised by any human being, but he will be praised by God" (Romans 2, 28-29).

Well before Paul, the prophet Jeremiah (VI B.C) had invited the Jews to the spiritual understanding of the circumcision: "Circumcise yourselves.....apply circumcision to **your hearts**" ( Jeremiah 4,4). And what about the women who are not subjected to circumcision? Don't they have a right to Eternal Life?

Therefore, the circumcision, from the onset, as well as the baptism is a spiritual notion and not a physical one, it is a symbol. It represents the purification of the soul, of the spirit, our conception of life and our spiritual engagement. But can we move ahead without the knowledge? Blindly thrust forward in ignorance? Faith is not an inheritance, but a personal option stemming from knowing the Truth. The ignorance about Christ led the Jews to the physical circumcision and the Christians to the contentment of being baptized by water, ignoring the spiritual dimension only acquired by knowledge: "And eternal Life is this: to **know you**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17, 3). Can we honestly believe that all baptized are automatically saved no matter what they have done?!

The coming of Jesus led us from the circumcision to the baptism because the water symbolizes purification. Those who believed in Him as the Messiah, evolved towards the baptism by water. Hence, Jesus had already said to Nicodemus: "...no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born through water and **the Spirit**; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3,5).

Through Jesus, we have evolved towards a spiritual understanding of the soul's purification.

It is true that Joseph and Mary submitted Jesus to the circumcision. But, they had not yet been instructed by their Son. It is also true that Jesus says to the Apostles: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of **all nations** (not only amongst the Jews); baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teach them** to observe all commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time” (Matthew 28, 18-20). Jesus did not prescribe baptizing with water but by “teaching them”, therefore by the studies which grant the knowledge, because “eternal Life is this: **to know** you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” as Jesus said (John 17.3). The clergy finds the catechism to be sufficient, but it is a false science which does not bring the solid spiritual nourishment of the true knowledge of the Bible. We have known catechists who were even ignorant regarding the number of Gospels, the names and their authors.

Today, we are invited to go beyond the baptism of water, to go from this baptism to **the personal option through knowledge**. The Christians are unable to answer this simple question: “Why are you a Christian?” They have no real knowledge of the Christ. Would they have freely **CHOSEN** to be Christian even if they were born in a non Christian family? Their baptism of water has no salutary value in their spiritual nonchalant life. And the unbaptized who are leading a pure life will have to judge them. Thus, Paul said to the Jews: “The man who, in his native uncircumcised state, keeps the Law, is a condemnation of you, who, by your concentration on the letter and on the circumcision, actually break the Law” (Romans 2, 26-29). Likewise, we say, within this same spirit that the unbaptized who accomplishes God’s precepts, will judge the baptized who fails to accomplish God’s precepts.

To this young couple of believers and Christians who asks me to baptize their 3 months old son I say: “It is up to you to baptize him by the knowledge as he grows up. Look at little 7 year old L. who holds his little Bible in his hands. He was able to find Jeremiah, the Gospel of St. John etc.... He reads with us. This is the real baptism operating in him through his parents, the Baptism (with “B”) to which the Book of Revelation invites us through the recognition of the Beast's identity, the Antichrist: “There is need for shrewdness here (for spirit, for discernment!): Anyone clever may interpret the number of the beast...” (Revelation 13,18). This baptism of discernment renders the spiritual death powerless over us: “Those who refused to worship the beast or his statue...reigned with Christ...This is the first resurrection; the second death has no power over them but they will be **Priests of God** and of Christ...”(Revelation 20,4-6). Therefore, there are no distinctions anymore between men and women: all those who have understood the signs of the end of times and the identity of the Antichrist become priests capable of receiving the divine Savior in their homes around his holy Table (Revelation 3,20)”.

Today, the baptism is in the spirit. Those who are fighting against this apocalyptic “Beast” “have the power to turn water (of the baptism) into blood (of their martyrs in testifying against the Beast)” (Revelation 11, 6). It is up to the adults to make the choice of passing on to their children the knowledge of the biblical prophecies announcing the coming of the Christ and of his enemy, the Antichrist. This is baptism today. It means engaging our entire terrestrial life in order to deserve eternal LIFE.

But how can we understand the Bible? The apostle Philip, seeing the Ethiopian read the Bible asked him: “Do you understand what you are reading?” He replied: “How could I, unless I have someone to guide me? So he urged Philip to get in and sit by his side” (Acts 8, 31-39). It is after being instructed that the Ethiopian asked to be baptized. It is up to the baptized in spirit to assume their engagement by teaching others as prescribed by Jesus (Matthew 28, 19-20).

John the Baptist’s testimony should also be added: “I baptize you with water...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3, 16). Let us underline that Jesus did not baptize, his disciples were practicing this ritual: “...though in fact it was the disciples who baptized, not Jesus himself” (John 4, 1).

This demonstrates that Jesus did not want to entertain the idea of a baptism with water foreign to our Father’s Spirit.

“While Peter” after his speech at Cornelius’s house (a non Jewish Roman), “was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on gentiles too (without being baptized), since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, “could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people now they have received the Holy Spirit **just as we have**?” He then gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards they begged him to stay on for some days” (Acts 10, 44-48). One must notice that the Holy Spirit was already on Cornelius and his family **before** they were baptized! What was the purpose of the baptism with water? Haven’t they not already received the Holy Spirit?

The Baptism in Spirit, in this end of times, was announced by the Holy Scriptures. In his speech Peter goes back to Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2, 17-21 and Joel 3, 1-5): “In the last days the Lord declares: I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy...Even on the slaves, men and women (no distinction between men and women) shall I pour out my Spirit...The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the day of the Lord comes, that great and terrible Day” (Matthew 24, 29 / Revelation 6, 12). And then whoever invokes the name of the Lord shall be saved. Whoever invokes the Lord within the Spirit of the Lord is already baptized, without going through the water, as were Cornelius and his people.

Jesus revealed this spiritual baptism while talking to Nicodemus: “No one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above. What is born from human nature is human, what is born of the Spirit is spirit...You must be born from above...So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3, 4-8).

Is born of the Spirit whoever:

- 1) recognizes the Messiah in Jesus
- 2) sits at his Table to respond to the divine invitation (Matthew 22)
- 3) recognizes the signs of the Christ’s Return and the identity of the Antichrist

For everyone today such are the real circumcision and the real baptism.

“You are clean (purified, baptized) already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you, says Jesus to his Apostles (John 15, 3). The authentic baptism, the unique valid one is the welcoming of the Divine Word. “Let us leave behind us then”, says Paul,” all the elementary teaching about Christ and **go on to its completion**, without going over the fundamental doctrines again: the turning away from dead actions...**the teaching about baptisms...**” (Hebrews 6, 1-3).

While we were talking, our friend D. (she is new among us), a baptized Christian since childhood shows up to listen to what we had to say regarding the baptism in Spirit. She interrupts us in order to relate to us the following: “Last night, I had a dream which shook me up. I saw a person of light telling me: “You have to get baptized”. I answered: “But I have already been baptized!” She noticed that someone grabbed her head and plunged it into a big basin”. She understood, and we all understood that through this dream, the Holy Spirit confirmed our teaching. The baptism with water that she had received was without any spiritual value. She had to go through the authentic baptism: the baptism of knowledge and personal choice.

However, with a pedagogical spirit we did baptize the child, especially because of the presence of certain persons among us. We did this with the same spirit as Jesus did when He agreed to be baptized by John, even though He did not have to. Peter too, baptized Cornelius and his people even though they already had received the Holy Spirit.

From now on, the baptism for the forgiveness of sins, is to receive Christ who is knocking at the door of the heart as He had announced (Luke 12, 35-37 / Matthew 24, 33 / Revelation 3, 20). He desires that we open the door for Him and let Him in so that He can have His Supper with his own. Jesus had said: “This is my Body **for the forgiveness of sins...**Drink from this, all of you, for this is my Blood, the Blood poured out for you and for many **for the forgiveness of sins**”(Matthew 26, 26-28 / Luke 22, 14-20 / John 6, 53-58).

That is the authentic baptism which forgives the sins and gives Eternal Life.