

man of sin is "buried" in that watery grave and a new person is "raised up" to a new life in Christ (Colossians 2:11-14; II Corinthians 5:17).

the church (I Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:47).

Baptism is the gospel re-enacted. We "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were committed" (Romans 6:17). Romans 6:2-4 shows this gospel "form" re-enacted as:

Jesus' "death" for sin on the cross means we must "die" to sin.

Jesus was "buried" due to being killed for sin, and we must be "buried with Him by baptism" to end the old life and contact His shed blood.

He was "raised" to a new life, and by baptism we're "raised ... to walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Baptism marks the beginning of a new life, in following Christ in thought, word and deed. Being a transformed Christian prepares you to live and to die with hope in Christ.

~

NAVARRE MESSENGER

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How to Become a CHRISTIAN

by W. Frank Walton

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (II Corinthians 5:17).

The Bible says salvation from sin is only in Christ (Acts 4:12). The most important commitment you'll ever make is deciding to become a true Christian.

What "steps" are revealed in the Gospel to pass from death to life in Jesus Christ the Savior?

Have you done what the Bible teaches to insure you're right with God?

Have you obeyed, in penitent faith, the original gospel of Christ? Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

The Way of Salvation in Jesus

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one

comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). God's Son came into the world to show us the only way back to God. The apostles boldly proclaimed that He's the exclusive way to salvation from sin and death: "there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

God wants you to be saved with Him forever. A true Christian will "glorify God in

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Morning Worship Service_10:00 AM

Evening Worship Service_6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages_7:00 PM

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this name” (I Peter 4:6). Are you a faithful, heaven-bound follower of Christ?

We must trust God's way by following His revelation. “For without faith, it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). This faith is a submissive response to the terms of God's grace in the gospel (Acts 15:11).

A Christian is someone who has, in faith, “obeyed the gospel of our Lord” (II Thessalonians 1:8; cf. Romans 1:5; 10:16; 16:26). Saving faith is a trusting, active response to God's grace, as the believer Abraham demonstrated: “we follow in the steps of faith” (Romans 4:12).

Follow the Original Gospel Standard

How do we get into Christ to receive the gift of eternal life? Some think, just be a good person and follow the golden rule or the ten commandments. Others think you just need a one time de-

cision to “accept Christ and say the sinner's prayer.” Others think, if you're sprinkled as an infant, then you're a Christian. Others say, “Joining the church of your choice makes you a Christian.” Yet, others point to Scripture that teaches a penitent believer in Christ must be “baptized (immersed) into Christ” (Galatians 3:26-27; cf. Romans 6:3; Mark 16:16), and that “baptism now saves us” (I Peter 3:21). It's not who's right but what's right! Beware that man's subjective opinions lead astray (Judges 21:25; Proverbs 14:12; Matthew 15:13ff)

God's Word is the objective standard, and it's always right! Acceptable faith only comes “by hearing the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The “seed of the kingdom” is Christ's “word,” which tells the good news of His saving work for us (Luke 8:11). The gospel seed, sown in a human heart, produced simply Christians in the first century (Acts 11:26). A seed reproduces after its own kind. It

produces the same today. A Christian, who is added to Christ's one true church, is simply someone who has “obeyed the truth” (I Peter 1:22; cf. Acts 2:37-47).

Only the truth of Christ, not human traditions or pious feelings, reveals the divinely authorized steps into Christ. The Hebrews writer, in reviewing how one becomes a Christian, lists these ordained steps into Christ in Hebrews 10:22-23 as (1) faith in Him, (2) repentance of an evil conscience, (3) confession of Christ-centered hope, and (4) cleansing of baptism.

Faith in Christ

The first step to become a Christian is to wholeheartedly believe in Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 16:16; John 6:69). He was sent from heaven as the only Savior from sin (John 8:24). “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (I John 5:12).

become a child of God” (John 1:12).

Repentance from Past Sin

When you turn to Christ, you must turn away from your sin. Sin is wanting our way above all else. It's a rebellious deviation from God's will (I John 3:4; James 4:16). Jesus said, “Except you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). Repentance is a change of mind toward sin and self (Acts 2:38; 3:19).

Sin's not trivial, for it crucified Jesus! True repentance produces the “fruit of repentance” (Matthew 3:8), which is a changed life. Sins such as selfishness, hatred, envy, evil speaking, lying, sexual promiscuity, adultery, materialism, etc. can no longer be continued impenitently (Colossians 3:5-10; Ephesians 4:17-24; I Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 5:19-21; II Peter 1:4). Real repentance is being sorry enough in your heart over your sin that you stop living in sin and change the course

of your life, looking to God's help (Romans 2:4-12).

Confession of Christ's Deity

The next step is the good confession that Jesus is the divine Lord and Christ, the Son of the living God. “If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, you will be saved ... For with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9; cf. Matthew 16:16; I Timothy 6:12). This is a declaration of loyalty to Him, that all He said and did are divinely true. You'll confess Him to others as the life-changing Savior (Matthew 10:32; Mark 5:19-20).

Baptism into Christ for Forgiveness.

Faith's immersion in water is the occasion of being united with Christ and cleansed by His saving blood (Romans 6:3-5, 17-18; Galatians 3:26-27; Revelation 1:5). Baptism's purpose is “for the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21). The old