

# The Three Essential Elements of Baptism in the New Testament

**Repentance** from one's sins, which are offenses against God that make one liable to punishment in the coming judgment (cf, Mk. 1:15; 6:11-12; Mt. 11:20-24=Lk.10:13-15; Mt. 12:41=Lk. 11:32; Mt. 3:11-12)

Involves a definitive break with one's past life and society's familiar and required ways of structuring life.

- 1 Kings 8:47 (cf. 2 Chron. 6:37): "if they turn their heart...saying, 'We have sinned and acted perversely and wickedly,' if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart"
- Ezek. 18:30-31: "Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions you have committed."

Sin against God causes idols to be taken into the heart, which leads on to sexual immorality and to violence, and there must be a definitive break with these things.

- Ezek. 14:6: "Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn away your face from all your abominations" (contrast v.7: the one "who

separates himself from Me, taking his idols into his heart")

- For idolatry as associated with and leading on to sexual immorality, see Acts 15:20,29; 21:25; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5; Rev. 2:14,20-21; 9:20-21; 21:8; 22:15.
- For idolatry as associated with violence and bloodshed, see Ps. 106:38; Ezek. 16:36-38; 22:3-4; 23:37; 33:25-26; 36:18, etc.
  - In these passages, sexual immorality is often associated with and leads on to violence against another (even against a lover or one's own children).

**Confession** of faith in Christ as the unique and unsubstitutable Lord and Savior (1 Tim. 2:5), using the words of the Church's baptismal creed

- By this, one accepts the Church's faith in Christ as one's own faith, so that there is one Lord, one faith and one baptism. (Eph. 4:5).
- This confession of faith should be made verbally and from the right motives (cf. Rom. 10:10).

**Washing** with water/ dipping in water

- A public act associated with the confession of sins (Mt. 3:6; Mk. 1:5) and repentance (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:4=Lk. 3:3; Acts 2:38; 13:24; 19:4)
- Performed in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:12,16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; cf. 1 Cor. 1:13,15) or (more comprehensively) the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19).
- Through baptism one enters into the death of Christ and is buried with him, putting to death our old self and destroying the power of sin, so that death no longer has dominion over us (i.e., power to enslave us) (Rom. 6:3-14).
- Through baptism as the "washing of regeneration" (Tit. 3:5), one receives the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; cf. Mk. 1:4=Lk. 3:3) and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11=Lk. 3:16=Acts 1:5=Acts 11:16; Jn. 1:33; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:13 cf. Mt. 3:16; 28:19; Acts 10:47), is made part of the one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and share in Christ's rising from the dead to new life (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).