



Baptism

A NEW BEGINNING



PANORAMA OF PROPHECY

A BIBLE STUDY SPECTACULAR!

**Begins Friday,
October 15**
with Doug Batchelor



**Broadcast LIVE from
the new W.O.R.D. Center**
October 15 – November 13, 2021
7:00 – 8:30 PM PT

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

PASTOR DOUG BATCHELOR



During a deeply troubling time for him and his kingdom, King David wrote, “Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. ... I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me” (Psalm 69:1, 2). After the devastation caused by the lingering COVID pandemic, social unrest, and global economic crises, so many troubled hearts are likewise drowning in despair.

People can’t help but anxiously wonder what catastrophe might next erupt to shatter our already fragmented, sin-saturated planet. Have you read the news about the unprecedented spike in suicides, violence, and addictions since 2020? It’s a fact that Satan’s solutions for those searching for relief and meaning will always lead to death.

Are we willing to toss them the life jacket of Bible truth before it is too late?

The Savior said, “*The thief [Satan] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and ... have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10). Jesus is always the answer! His Word offers lifesaving peace, power, and purpose that can give people you care about the information they need to make an informed decision for Christ.

That’s why, after a year of lockdowns, Amazing Facts is swinging open the doors to the new W.O.R.D. Center—all for the cause of evangelism. Beginning

October 15, we’ll begin broadcasting a 26-part evangelistic series called *Panorama of Prophecy: A Bible Study Spectacular*. This timely series will provide an unobstructed view of prophecy and current events while revealing how vital Bible truths (hellfire, the Sabbath, health, the mark of the beast, the millennium—just to name a few) provide powerful, hope-filled answers.

By God’s grace, this will be a live event with a full audience—and it can also be seen around the world on AFTV, 3ABN, Facebook, and YouTube.

But for this to be a successful event, we need you. Would you or your church be a crucial part of this extraordinary opportunity to bring the three angels’ messages to a world in darkness? We may not have many more opportunities to share every aspect of this message openly, so please prayerfully consider hosting the event at your church. For more information about how to participate

and get free access to resources, please visit panoramaofprophecy.com today.

Never has the world been riper for hearing Bible prophecy. The signs of the times are clear—and lost, confused souls are searching now for something they can cling to. Someday soon, probation will close. Let’s act while the doors of mercy are still open. Together, let’s lead searching souls into an eternal, joyful relationship with God! 📖



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Connect with Amazing Facts

From the Mail Bag

ACROSS THE POND

I am from Nigeria but have relocated to Edinburgh, Scotland. I always enjoy listening to your messages, and I praise God for the way you explain the difficult Bible questions that people have. Many souls are being touched by your messages here, and I would like to share a testimony with you.

A 70-year-old woman born and raised Catholic listened to your messages on YouTube, especially regarding the Sabbath. She followed your counsel to look for a church that followed the Bible. She walked into the only Sabbath-keeping church in Edinburgh one Sabbath during the winter. The Spirit of God touched one of the members, who recognized her as being a visitor and engaged her in a discussion. She agreed to go through Bible lessons and has expressed an interest in getting baptized. Praise the Lord!

This woman has not stopped listening to your messages, which she often compares with the Bible study that we have together every week. I promised her that I would get in touch with Pastor Doug to let him know that God has used him to bring one soul here in Edinburgh into His kingdom! I pray that God will continue to use you for His glory. *Temitayo*

I am writing to you from Papua New Guinea. Our church has a ministry for the deaf community, and we are reaching about 50 deaf people in the capital. Your video translation of the *Revelation Now* meetings is being spread out to this community. Thank you! Only in heaven will you see the results of your dedicated ministry. *Maranatha! Nohelani*

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Baptism

A NEW BEGINNING

By Pastor Doug Batchelor



An Amazing Fact: A small spring that produces just one gallon of water a minute (a steady stream about as round as your little finger) will produce 1,440 gallons a day. That adds up to over 10,000 gallons a week. When used conservatively, that's enough water to keep a household of four alive and clean, while also irrigating a small garden. It's amazing how much life and cleansing can come from such a small amount of water.

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37, 38).

Water. We need it to live.

On average, a person can survive without food for *weeks*. However, a person can survive without water for just three days.¹ Furthermore, by drinking an optimum amount of water, a person will think more clearly, have more energy, and even decrease the risk of certain cancers.

Water fights for you too. A natural cleanser, it helps to dissolve harmful bacteria, fungus, radioactive substances, and the like. Water helps to both bring to life and keep life going. It is, you might say, an all-in-one.

And it is, with good reason, used as a potent symbol in the Bible. Let's take a look at how this illustration is used to represent a vital step in the Christian life: baptism.

What Christ Did for Us

The Bible emphatically declares that we all sin (Romans 3:23). And our sin, individually and collectively, causes immense destruction: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it" (Isaiah 1:5, 6).

Who hasn't done something that has caused harm? Who hasn't done something that weighs heavily on the conscience? Tragically, the wrong that has been done cannot be undone. And the Bible is clear that the consequence of wrongdoing is as severe as it gets: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23); "the soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). There is nothing we can do to change this outcome. No matter how hard we try or how much we scrub, we can never free or cleanse ourselves from the stain of our sins.

But Jesus Christ can!

He, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), became "sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). He "who knew no sin" and "who committed no sin"

(1 Peter 2:22) sacrificed Himself on the cross of Calvary, substituting His blood for ours. And, in so doing, He "canceled the certificate of debt ... against us" (Colossians 2:14 NASB), the debt of our own blood that we owe for our sins. This means that we no longer have to die but are able instead to live a new life eternally with Christ.

Yet, Christ's sacrifice is but one part of His precious gift to us. He furthermore offers us the ability to "turn from ... sin" (Ezekiel 33:14). If we so desire, He "will put [His] law in [our] minds, and write it on [our] hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33). We will "abide in [Him], and [His] words [will] abide in [us]" (John 15:7). Our characters will become like Christ's, and "we



shall ... bear the image of the heavenly Man" (1 Corinthians 15:49). We will live that new life that Christ provided for and manifested in us.

After all, what good would it be if Christ paid His life for our sins, yet we then continued to be slaves to sin? That wouldn't make sense. The apostle Paul reasoned, "Shall we



continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:1, 2).

This is what Christ has done for us: He has paid our debt and ensured that we never go back into debt. But notice this—and this is crucial: Christ *gifted* this to you and me. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). And as with any gift, we can choose to accept it—or toss it aside. God always has and always will give us free will.

If the cross and the new covenant to change our hearts are Christ's responses to our sin, what is our free-will response to Christ?

Our Response to Christ

What happens when you understand what Christ has done for you and what your sins have done to Him? It changes you, doesn't it? You experience gratitude, humility, and an intense interest in the One who saved you. *Who is this Jesus who gave so much for me? Why would He do all that for someone like me?*

Once you begin to read the Bible, the book that gives you the answers to these questions, you begin to realize that simply mailing Jesus a "thank you" note doesn't suffice. You realize that Jesus, the Son of God, died for you because He loves you, and He wants to make you clean. He wants you to have a new beginning. When you want that for yourself, when you want Christ to do that in you, that's when you make the decision to be baptized.

A baptism is similar to a wedding ceremony. Once two people who have been dating decide that they want to commit the rest of their lives to each other, they'll get married. The wedding ceremony is their official and public declaration of commitment to one another. It is the start of their covenant.

Likewise, when a person decides to get baptized, he is making the decision to commit his life to Christ. In baptism, he is officially declaring that he has begun a covenant with Jesus and that he believes that Jesus can "create in [him] a clean heart" (Psalm 51:10). The wedding day is the start

of the bride and groom's new life together; the day of a person's baptism is the start of that person's life with Christ.

Some people point to the account of the thief on the cross to support the idea that baptism isn't necessary to become a Christian. But the only reason the thief wasn't baptized was because he literally couldn't come down from the cross to get to a river. God is just and fair; He doesn't expect us to do what we are unable to do. The problem is not God; the problem is us. So why wouldn't you want to make your commitment to Christ official? Why wouldn't you want to commemorate the most important decision of your life? It would be like a criminal who has been pardoned in court but refuses to have his handcuffs removed.

Preparing for the Plunge

Let's now delve into the time leading up to baptism. What we're really talking about here is coming to the place where we love Jesus: "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Being baptized for any reason other than


love for Christ is an injury to His cause. Getting baptized because your girlfriend won't marry you otherwise is the same as getting married just for her bank account. It's an ulterior motive; and it's a sham—a counterfeit act of love.

What happens when you start to truly love Jesus? You begin to develop a hatred for sin. You are horrified at the pain your sins cause the One you love, the suffering your sins brought Him on the cross. It causes you deep sorrow; you are loath to sin anymore. This is true repentance, and it leads to baptism: "I ... baptize you with water unto

repentance," said John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11).

Notice the order: First comes repentance, then baptism. Some mistakenly think that it's the other way around, that getting baptized gives one special powers to overcome sin. That is a myth. The baptismal pool is not a holy grail; it's water—regular H₂O—not a guarantee of salvation. What if a guy said to his girlfriend, "If we just got married, I think I could stop dating those other women"? Or what if a girl said to her boyfriend, "If we just got married, then I'd love you"? Who would accept those proposals? Real love must come first.





The first time I was baptized, I was a brand-new Christian living in the mountains. One day, some enthusiastic young Baptists came hiking by my cave. After a brief visit, they found out I was a baby Christian who had not been baptized. With a few choice Bible texts, they persuaded me that I should be baptized right away. So we hopped into a nearby pool of icy water. I admit that for a little while, I felt born again. I was so excited, actually, that I bought beer to celebrate the occasion with my old friends—and I wound up in jail for a night.

Clearly, I had not been taught about what it means to be a Christian. I didn't understand the meaning of baptism. Sometime later, however, once I had gained a firm grasp of who Christ was, I wanted to be baptized again. The pastor, however, wouldn't allow me to make that commitment until I had repented of my sins—including my smoking habit. "Baptism represents a new birth, and Jesus doesn't want His baby smoking," he told me.

That makes sense, doesn't it? Indeed, that's the whole point! Repentance means turning away from your old life of sin. Baptism crowns the achievement of repentance that you've had in Christ; it doesn't cause it. It is by God alone that we are able to do what is right. It was by the grace of God that I threw my cigarettes away and quit smoking—and I never went back. Two weeks later, I was rebaptized.

Now, I do need to clarify that once you're baptized, it doesn't mean that you'll never sin again. Furthermore, the Bible is *not* saying that you shouldn't get baptized until you feel that you're perfect. Does a baby learning to walk never stumble and fall? Do newlyweds never have another argument? A person goes into baptism with a measure of faith, "for if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have" (2 Corinthians 8:12). Baptism is not the solution to your sin problem; it is the declaration that you



know who the solution *is*—Jesus! Baptism does not give you deliverance; Christ does.

Tell Me the Story of Jesus

How do you decide to get married? You fall in love with someone who falls in love with you. How do you fall in love? You start getting to know the character of the other person, spending more time together, learning his or her likes and dislikes—and vice versa.

You get to love Jesus much the same way. How do we get to know Him? Read the book that tells you about Him: the Bible. Learn what He believes, what He taught while on this earth. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, . . . for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). This was commissioned by Christ just before He ascended to heaven; Jesus' last words should be our first priority:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19, 20).

A person is first taught and is then baptized as a result of what he has learned. What you're being taught is the blueprint of this new life with Christ.

Now, this doesn't mean that a person needs to know every little thing in the Bible before he can be baptized. Does a person know every little thing about his or her future spouse

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Volunteer Spotlight

by Tammey Steenson,
Bible School Director

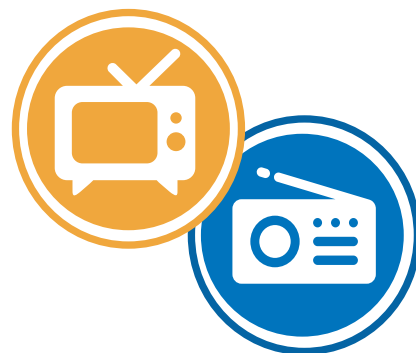
With a bright, shiny smile and joy in her voice, Joanne Carlson stepped into the Amazing Facts Bible School ready to serve as a volunteer. Enthusiasm and dedication exuded from her whole being! After completing her first day with us, Joanne was determined to recruit others to volunteer their time to help in the Lord's work. By the end of her first few weeks with us, she'd already handed in five volunteer applications to our human resources team. But Joanne was not about to stop there. She asked about work that she could do from home, and each Monday, we began to send her off with Study Guides to fill with inserts. She also removes staples from resources before they are mailed to inmates across the USA. With help from her friends, everything she takes away, she brings back the next week—every item prepared to win souls for Jesus. Joanne not only does her work joyfully, but she is also bringing others into the joy of the Lord. We are amazed at how she looks forward each week to her long drive to Granite Bay to spend time assisting us. How great is our God, for He knows that we rely greatly on all our volunteers to keep the lessons moving from Bible School to students around the world. Joanne, like each volunteer at the Bible School, is a blessing from God—and we are thankful!



“I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.”

Psalm 9:1

TELEVISION AND RADIO Broadcast Schedule



Amazing Facts with Doug Batchelor (Times marked in black)
Sabbath School Study Hour (Times marked in blue)

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	4:00 AM PT 10:30 AM PT 12:00 PM PT 10:30 PM PT	12:00 AM PT 6:00 AM PT 3:00 PM PT 6:00 PM PT	3:00 AM PT 11:00 AM PT 12:00 PM PT 11:00 PM PT	12:00 AM PT 8:00 AM PT 4:00 PM PT 8:00 PM PT	4:00 AM PT 2:00 PM PT 5:30 PM PT	2:00 AM PT 5:30 AM PT 7:00 AM PT 2:00 PM PT 5:00 PM PT 7:00 PM PT	2:00 AM PT 5:00 AM PT 9:30 AM PT 10:00 AM PT 4:00 PM PT 9:30 PM PT
				6:00 PM ET			
	10:00 AM PT 7:00 PM PT				6:00 AM PT 12:00 PM PT	6:00 AM PT 12:30 PM PT	6:00 AM PT
		6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	
	5:00 PM ET						
	8:00 AM (All Time Zones)						
		9:30 AM CT		9:00 AM CT		9:00 PM CT	5:00 AM CT
					10:00 PM PT		
	1:00 PM ET						
			10:00 PM CT	9:00 PM CT	1:30 PM CT 7:00 PM CT	5:00 AM CT	12:00 PM CT

WEB

Watch Bible programming you can trust at AFTV.org. Streaming online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, on your computer, iPhone, iPad, and more! You can even watch on ROKU!



RADIO

BIBLE ANSWERS LIVE

Airs weekly on Sunday at 7:00 PM PT. A live call-in radio program during which you can ask Pastor Doug any Bible question and get a biblical answer in return. Call 1-800-GOD-SAYS during program hours to participate. You can also watch live on AFTV!

Amazing Facts News to Note

Billboard Evangelism

A small but passionate group in Ohio is promoting our website bibleprophecytruth.com on well-traveled interstate billboards. After much prayer, they were impressed to go big, claiming God's promise in Isaiah 55:11. The result is a dynamic display featuring Revelation 22:20 set against a radiant, sunlit sky. Emblazoned above and below are the Amazing Facts logo and website.

Beginning this summer, the 14-foot-by-48-foot billboard will be up for an entire year along various major highways and other roads, starting eastbound on Interstate 71. More than 303,000 commuters per week are projected to set eyes on it. "Our focus," writes group member Heidi, "was to get ... the most people possible [to] go to the Amazing Facts website and find the many beautiful truths that we hold so dear." Interested in billboard evangelism in your area? We offer several free billboard designs at amazingfacts.org/billboards.



Sample Designs

Public Evangelism Team Update

While pandemic restrictions have been eased, it's still a struggle for our evangelists to schedule seminars. Please pray that God opens the doors to live evangelism quickly, that seekers may discover the last-day message through the power of prophecy seminars. Visit prophecyseminars.com for more information and for updated schedules. We hope to include our evangelist page in the next issue!

China Ministry

Through your loving support, Amazing Facts' global outreach continues to make a staggering impact on people in China. In the first quarter of 2021, we received nearly 2.4 million page views across our Chinese-language websites—and 73 percent of our visitors were new.

Nearly 15,000 enrolled in our Bible School, and our team responded to 3,749 Bible questions through social media. Mr. Yu writes, "I went to your website and watched almost all of Pastor Doug's sermons. I had never heard anyone explain the Scriptures in such detail before. It was very enlightening! I realized that I had to leave Babylon." Also, a friendly pastor in China has reported that at least three Christian home groups have started keeping the Sabbath after discovering our resources online. Amen!



AFCOE Wins Souls in Africa

AFCOE Africa is privileged to have a part in fulfilling God's command to equip Bible workers. Due to COVID lockdowns, only 20 individuals were able to complete the Bible and outreach training in early 2021—but low numbers were made up for by an unconquerable passion for the gospel. During outreach, students conducted 230 Bible lessons, changing countless lives for eternity. Prossie, a student from Uganda, says, "When I met my friends who had been through AFCOE Africa, they acted differently. They had a sense of urgency about soul-winning. I decided to come for myself, and the Lord has woken me up." Prossie is putting her newfound faith into action by preaching our prophetic truths and equipping newly baptized church members.



BIBLE ANSWERS

WITH DOUG BATCHELOR



Q Is it biblically valid to have a private baptism without a pastor present?

A “Brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:3). The men who baptized in Bible times had been commissioned by God and were given authority—the prophets, the apostles, John the Baptist, and Philip the evangelist and deacon, for example. The Bible seems to establish this as a precedent.

When the apostles set up the office of deacon, they chose men who were “of good reputation” and “full of the Holy Spirit.” These men were then “set before the apostles,” who prayed and laid hands on them (v. 6). When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–39), we don’t know if he was still a deacon or if he had been promoted, but we do know that there is no Bible record of laypeople baptizing one another.

Let me tell you why I think that is. If all my church members believed they could baptize whomever they felt led to baptize, without any kind of clearing process, some would eventually bring people into the church who had not been carefully taught. Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all things* that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19, 20, my emphasis).

I’m not saying that God will not honor a private baptism when no pastor is present. There have been Christians in communist countries who accepted Jesus and then baptized each other. But they were operating under extreme circumstances. Insofar as possible, baptism, like a marriage, should be a public declaration of our covenant to follow Christ administered by an authorized person. If you have Bible-teaching churches in your community that teach and practice baptism, why wouldn’t you want to participate in a public baptism sanctioned by the authority Christ invested in His church?


Tune in to ***Bible Answers Live***, Amazing Facts’ live, nationwide call-in radio program, and listen to Pastor Doug give biblical, straightforward answers to difficult Bible questions. To get times and stations in your area or to listen to answers online, visit amazingfacts.org.

Q Does the Bible teach that we should baptize our dead relatives?

A “Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?” (1 Corinthians 15:29). This passage, written by the apostle Paul, might make it sound as if a person can be vicariously baptized on behalf of their dead relatives and, thereby, secure salvation for them.

Before looking at the text, let me first be clear that the Bible plainly teaches that salvation is an individual, free-will decision. Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). The apostle Peter told the crowd, “Let *every one of you* be baptized” (Acts 2:38, my emphasis). King David wrote, “None of them can by any means redeem his brother” (Psalm 49:7). You cannot be saved by proxy. Furthermore, once a person dies, their status of salvation is permanently fixed (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

So what does this verse actually mean? The best answer seems to be a case of bad punctuation. Keep in mind, the original Greek had no punctuation, so translators needed to supply that based on what they believed the verse was saying.

The context of the chapter is Paul’s response to the Corinthians’ doubt of the resurrection. Now, let’s look at the verse again with better punctuation: “Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized? For the dead, if the dead do not rise at all, why then are they baptized? For the dead?” Paul is asking, “If you don’t believe the dead will be resurrected, then why bother being baptized? Are you doing it for the dead?” He’s being rhetorical, not encouraging people to be baptized for dead loved ones. 

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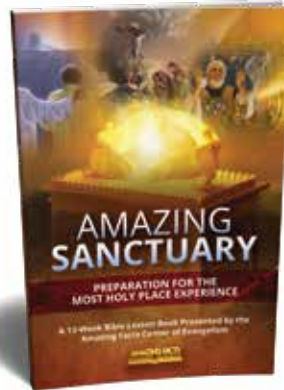


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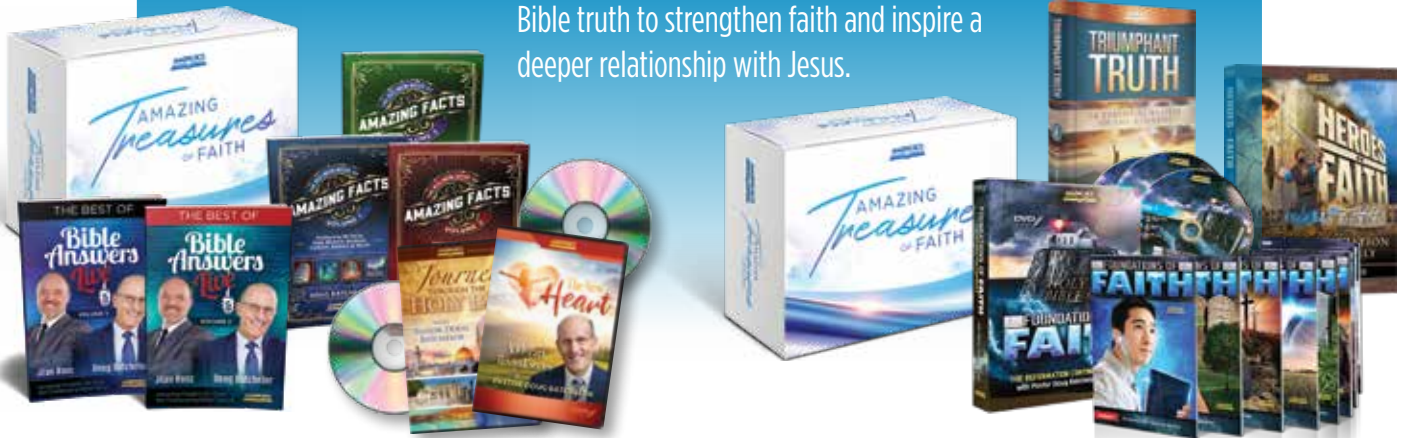


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(Continued from page 9.)

before the wedding? No, but a person knows the important things, the fundamental things, the things that make up the character of that future spouse.

And it's not as though the learning stops after the wedding. In fact, it is during the marriage—that is, *after* the wedding—when a husband and wife *really* get to know one another. So, being ready for baptism has nothing to do with the *amount* of knowledge you have; you're not being graded on an exam. You're ready for baptism when you believe in the One about whom you've been learning, "if you believe with all your heart . . . that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

On the other hand, not knowing anything is a concern. You've heard of those weddings that happen right after a couple has met. Those marriages usually end as quickly as they begin. And I want to stress the "knowing." A person should be aware of who they are committing to and be capable of making the commitment.

In light of this, is it appropriate to baptize a baby? A baby has not yet developed the maturity to choose or even acknowledge such a commitment. We would be horrified if a woman were dressed and dragged to the altar against her will. Why not the same reaction with a baby being baptized?

What the Bible recounts concerning infants is not baptism but dedication. In infant dedication, it is the parents—not the baby—who make a commitment to the Lord. They are promising to do their utmost to raise their child as a Christian. When Jesus was a baby, He was dedicated by His parents at the temple in Jerusalem "according to the law of the Lord" (Luke 2:39). Infant baptism, though it might be common in some churches, is not sanctioned by God.

The Bible is an open book; we are to go into our commitment with Christ with both eyes open. After all, *what* you know matters. If you've been taught misconceptions about Jesus, then you don't really know what He's like. If you were to get baptized based on those teachings, then you'd be committing yourself to something of which you were not

aware—just like a baby. You might have noticed that's what happened to me the first time I was baptized.

But is rebaptism biblical? Yes! Paul rebaptized 12 men in Ephesus because they hadn't learned all the basics of Christ's teachings since their first baptism (Acts 19:1–5). It is not the number of times but the full disclosure of the covenant with Christ that matters.

Drowning the Old Man

We now come to the actual service of baptism. Just as Christ's response is broken into two complementary parts, so is baptism: 1) A death of the old person, and 2) the birth of the new person. Let's talk first about the death of the old person in their way of life.

Part of Christ's gift to us was His death.

Correspondingly, baptism symbolizes the death of our old sinful self. Paul writes, "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3). What does that mean? Through Christ, our old sinful self drowns.

"Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of

sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (v. 6). It means that all the sin you hated doing but couldn't help but do died with Christ's death.

That's why there is a specific way in which we are to be baptized. The Bible describes it like so: "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water"

(Matthew 3:16). And again, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is depicted as "coming up from the water" (1:10). When Philip the evangelist baptized the Ethiopian treasurer, they "went down into the water, and . . . came up out of the water" (Acts 8:38, 39). The method symbolizes our death: Being lowered beneath the water represents the burial of your old life, just as a body is buried under the ground after a person dies.

Indeed, "to baptize" comes from the Greek word *baptizō*, which is defined as to "dip under," to "submerge." In ancient Greek literature, the word was used to explain the process of dyeing cloth by dunking it—baptizing it—into



vats of color. Why do you think John the Baptist baptized people in rivers? Scripture tells us it was “because there was much water there” (John 3:23). There had to be “much water” if John was to completely cover full grown men and women under the water’s surface.

So, if Jesus was baptized by immersion and His disciples baptized others in the same manner, then why do different churches baptize in so many different ways? Some churches pour water over the person; some churches sprinkle it; some use oil, wine, or even rose petals instead of water. Some don’t use anything at all; they just recite a few words.

The Bible makes plain that there is “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5). That’s it—just like there is only one Christ. That means that only one of these methods is the one that God designed for us; the rest are counterfeits. Wouldn’t that cloth look a lot different if it were sprinkled with dye rather than dunked? “In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). A church may have been baptizing people in a certain way for thousands of years, but if it’s not the way decreed in the Bible, then it’s a “tradition of men” (Mark 7:8), not the righteousness of God, being followed. And who are you choosing to follow when you decide to be baptized? “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Don’t you agree?

Blood and Water

This might seem counterproductive, talking about water and death after we started off with how much water means to life. But let me ask you this: Is death always a bad thing? If what is dying is something evil, something harmful to you, something that prevents you from gaining eternal life, then wouldn’t that death be a good thing?

That same water that drowns your old life is also the symbol that cleanses you anew. The disciple Ananias told Paul, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins” (22:16). Are not the people of God those who have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the

Lamb”? (Revelation 7:14). Notice that both the blood and the water are used to cleanse; Jesus provides the blood; you decide if you want to use it.

When Paul wrote about the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, he described their crossing of the Red Sea like so: “All our fathers ... passed through the sea, all



were baptized into Moses ... in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:1, 2). The children of Israel had just carried out the first Passover, smearing the lamb’s blood upon their doorposts, a representation of Christ’s blood as the agent of salvation (Exodus 12:5–7, 13). Then, they crossed through the Red Sea, “baptized” by those waters of blood (14:21, 22).

These two acts are symbolized by two objects in the courtyard of the earthly sanctuary: The altar of sacrifice points to Christ’s blood spilt at His sacrifice; the laver points



to our cleansing through baptism—the blood and the water together. At Christ’s death, when “one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, ... immediately blood and water came out” (John 19:34).

Look at the beautiful symbolism God provides through a baby growing in the womb. There are two main elements used by the body to both protect and nourish the baby before birth: water and blood. The baby develops in a pouch of water; and a special organ, the placenta, is created during pregnancy to purify the mother’s blood before transferring it to the baby. Basically, the water and the blood keep the bad stuff out and let the good stuff in. Working in their proper order, they are necessary for the baby to be born. And it’s the same with the birth of your new spiritual life with Christ: The blood of the Lamb and the watery grave are needed in order to be born again.

Born Again

Christ was not left in the tomb, and neither are we: “Buried with [Christ] in baptism, ... you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” (Colossians 2:12). Just as Christ was resurrected, so are we brought up out of the water, “born again” (John 3:3).

Jesus made clear to Nicodemus, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (v. 5). Who is this Spirit? The Holy Spirit, the other part of Jesus’ gift to us: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit is how Christ lives out His life within us: “We ... are ... transformed into ... [Christ’s] image from glory to glory ... by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18), “for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

Did you know that in the original Hebrew, “spirit” and “breath” are equated? Job 33:4 declares, “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” Again, when He created the first man, Adam, “the LORD God ... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Genesis 2:7).

When you take that first breath after coming up out of the water, it’s like a newborn taking its first breath. It’s the start of your new life in Christ—powered by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, every day of your new life is a symbolic baptism, in which you intentionally bury your old habits and surrender to Christ’s plan. In other words, “[you] die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31). “Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily” (Luke 9:23) to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

You cannot live the Christian life without the Spirit of Christ. What does it mean to live a new life? Well, obviously, you can’t do the old stuff that you used to do. Otherwise, you’d just be living your old life again. So, the old stuff needs to stop happening: “No one puts new wine into old wineskins. ... But new wine must be put into new wineskins” (Mark 2:22).

Baptized in Fire

In Scripture, the Holy Spirit is also symbolized by fire. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to Christ’s disciples as “divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them” (Acts 2:3). Luke’s account goes on to explain: “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (v. 4). We learn from John the Baptist that it is Jesus who “will baptize [us] with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11). Indeed, at Jesus’ own water baptism, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, came upon Him (v. 16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32), fulfilling this prophecy: “Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (v. 33).

The children of Israel were baptized not only in the Red Sea; Paul states that they also “all were baptized into Moses in the cloud” (1 Corinthians 10:2). What was this cloud? It was the Holy Spirit:

And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people (Exodus 13:21, 22).





Just as the cloud and fire led the Israelites throughout their journey to the Promised Land, so does the Holy Spirit lead us in our new life with Christ. Just as the Israelites depended on the cloud and fire, so are we to depend upon the Lord at every move (Numbers 9:15–23). Just as the cloud and fire never once abandoned the Israelites, so do we have the assurance that God is consistently leading us in our new life.



Not only do individuals undergo a water and fire baptism, but the entire world will as well. The earth has once been buried and made new by the Flood (Genesis 6:17); it will be destroyed and recreated at the end of the age by a “lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15), wherein “both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). Thus it happened that “the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water” (v. 6), and

that this same world is “reserved for fire until the day of judgment” (v. 7). After that, God will “create new heavens and a new earth” (Isaiah 65:17), “for the first heaven and the first earth [will have] passed away” (Revelation 21:1).

Is it not fire that purifies? Is it not the furnace that refines, burning away all impurities until only the pure gold


remains? (Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:3). The Holy Spirit refines you into “the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24).

A New Beginning

Jesus is calling to all who will hear, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (John 7:37). Baptism is your recognition of Christ as that “fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (4:14). Each of us has been offered drafts of “living water” (v. 10), which rescue us from our burial beneath the weight of sin:

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

Baptism isn’t the end of the road. The Bible says that there is “the *path* of life” (Psalm 16:11, my emphasis). That means there is a starting point and an ending point. You haven’t reached the pearly gates once you’ve discovered that Christ died on the cross for your salvation. You’ve simply reached the starting line.

Jesus is asking to wash away your sins. Baptism is your answer that you want Him to. Would you like to be born again? “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). 



1 <https://www.businessinsider.com/longest-survival-records-water-food-sleep-breathing-2016-5>

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OF FAITH

LEGACY CIRCLE



During World War II, desiring to serve his country but unwilling to take human life, Desmond Doss joined the military as a conscientious objector. He was a faithful Sabbath-keeper who trusted in God's Word, which often led to harassment by his fellow soldiers and even his commanders.



Eventually, Doss became a medic, refusing to ever carry a weapon. Then, in May 1945, while Doss' battalion was attempting to take a heavily defended escarpment, 75 U.S. soldiers were gravely wounded. Without cover and under intense enemy fire, Doss singlehandedly saved every one of those men. He put his life in God's hands and emerged from that battle miraculously uninjured, touching the hearts of his fellow soldiers for life.

For his deeds that day, as well as many other selfless acts of faith, Corporal Doss received the Medal of Honor.

Today, you also can be a hero of faith by saving souls wounded by Satan's spiritual attacks. In fact, one member of our **Heroes of Faith Legacy Circle** is doing just that. Through her trust, Manjeet has dedicated her house to God's work. She met with the Amazing Facts estate and gift planning department to make a significant gift to the ministry through her estate plan. "The Lord has blessed me and led me to the house I live in," she says. "It is His, and when I die, it's going back to Him."

When asked why she chose Amazing Facts, Manjeet shares, "While you're still alive, make the decision to leave things in the hands of those you trust. I have no doubts that Amazing Facts will do exactly what I have requested. I have peace of mind that when I'm gone, they will ensure that my legacy will live on through the evangelistic work of the ministry."

When you put your trust in God, like Doss and Manjeet did, He will use your efforts to bring a bountiful harvest into His kingdom. Doss saved 75 lives in a single day, but how many more have been led to Jesus over the years through his testimony? Your gift, while perhaps having little to no financial impact on you today, will likewise be multiplied by God for the salvation of countless souls. Your labor of a lifetime ensures that the evangelistic standard will continue to be borne aloft in the final days of this spiritual war.

Become a hero of faith when you remember Amazing Facts International in your will or trust. To find out how you can join the Heroes of Faith Legacy Circle, call our estate and gift planning team at 800-436-2695 or email us at mylegacy@amazingfacts.org.



HEALTH BITE

SHELLING OUT the facts about NUTS

BY LAURIE LYON

Did you know that during the 18th and 19th centuries, chestnuts and pecans were used as currency in some rural parts of the United States? There were even circumstances in which people in Appalachia paid their property taxes with nuts.

If you're a nut lover, that may not seem too surprising. Throughout history, nuts and seeds have been valuable food sources. Often prized for their exquisite taste and treasured for their health benefits, they're neat little packets of energy and nutrition that are easy to transport and store. They're even mentioned in the Old Testament.

For instance, in Genesis 43, Jacob had his sons take pistachio nuts and almonds as a gift for Joseph in Egypt. And in 2 Samuel 17, we read about a donation of food presented to David that included "parched seeds" (v. 28).

Sadly, most people today don't include enough (if any) nuts and seeds in their diet. Due to extensive research, we now understand that the proper use of nuts and seeds can enhance our health in a variety of ways. Large, long-term studies have demonstrated that regularly consuming them tends to help people live longer, healthier lives.¹

Omega-3 fatty acids, found in abundance in some nuts and seeds (notably walnuts, chia seeds, and flax seeds), also lower the risk of heart disease and stroke and may even help suppress some autoimmune


disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and lupus.² Of all nuts, walnuts score highest in omega-3s, racking up some 2,500 mg in a one-ounce serving.

Indeed, of commonly available nuts, walnuts hold champion status. Some of the components of walnuts can reduce inflammation in the body and defend against the harmful free radicals and oxidation that can wreak havoc on our cells. Walnuts can even give our brains a boost! Studies suggest that eating walnuts as part of a healthy diet can improve cognitive function as we age and may even help reduce the risk—or slow the progression—of Alzheimer's disease and other brain disorders.³

Amazingly, nuts and seeds even have the potential to help with weight loss. When consumed in small quantities, their rich nutrients can help to satisfy cravings, diverting us from less-healthy munching.⁴

Despite their potential advantages, it's important to eat nuts and seeds in moderation.

With their delicious flavors and satisfying crunch, it's easy to get carried away! Nuts and seeds in their raw form are healthiest. If you eat them roasted, choose an unsalted, dry-roasted type without additional oils for best results; loading up on salty, greasy, cooked nuts can counteract any benefit.

What a gift God gave us in the nuts and seeds that were part of the original diet. Wonderful-tasting and loaded with protein, healthy fats, antioxidants, and other nutrients to optimize our well-being, they're something we can enjoy and be thankful for every day. 



¹<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/11/eating-nuts-reduces-risk-of-death/>

²<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4030645/>

³<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7071526/>

⁴<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/08/170816181259.htm>

Getaway- TURNED- Witnessing Trip

by Shenalyn Page

It was supposed to be just a simple girls' getaway, but God had much bigger plans.

The trip was Jeanina's idea. She was struggling with the isolation of new motherhood, a new hometown, and the pandemic. So she contacted her friends Stephanie and Kayla. "I knew they would be up for an adventure," shares Jeanina, a school counselor in Florida.

Stephanie, a full-time mom of two in West Virginia, and Kayla, a school counselor from Tennessee, agreed to pray about the idea. They started a group chat and began working on plans for a road trip from Portland to San Francisco. "God totally opened the doors," Jeanina says, smiling. "Every time we nailed down another detail, we were like, 'This is really happening!'"

An Unexpected Idea

One day, they were discussing making plans for the Sabbath. "I wish we could go to Granite Bay and meet Pastor Doug," Stephanie said. Amazing Facts had been a big part of her reconversion as a young adult, and it has continued to bless her family since. Kayla also appreciated the work of Amazing Facts. Jeanina's husband had even attended AFCE, and Pastor Doug's sermons had filled a spiritual gap during the pandemic when their local church had been closed.

Fun-loving and creative, Jeanina said spontaneously, "Let's make a cardboard cutout of Pastor Doug and take him with us!"

The others loved her spur-of-the-moment idea. Stephanie contacted friends who worked with Amazing Facts to get a head-to-toe, high-resolution photograph of Pastor Doug. Then she ordered a high-quality, full-size cutout and had it sent to their first hotel.

Traveling with Pastor Doug

"From the moment we assembled the Pastor Doug cutout and carried it out of our hotel room, God gave us amazing interactions," says Stephanie. "Everyone wanted to know who he was and why we were doing what we were doing. From hotel staff to hikers along our paths, we



stopped and talked with countless people about Amazing Facts and how Pastor Doug's signature phrase is, Would you like to hear an amazing fact? And we would follow that up with some amazing fact of the place we were in and tie it into a biblical conversation."

Their first adventure with Pastor Doug's cutout was on Sabbath at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. Stephanie carried it all the way up the mountain. "He got dropped a couple of times, but overall, he handled the trip really well," Kayla says, laughing.

"It was such a special Sabbath blessing," Stephanie adds. "We had long conversations with seemingly everyone we passed. And all we did was smile and say 'hi.' Others were always the ones to start the conversations. We never thought we'd have so many opportunities to share, so we didn't take literature with us. But we could tell people were making a point to remember Pastor Doug's name so they could look him up later."

Prayer for divine appointments became increasingly important as the group traveled. "We had morning and evening devotions together, and we prayed throughout the day for God to lead us to people and that we would inspire others to seek Him."



Pastor Doug's cutout journeyed with the ladies along the Pacific Coast, through the Redwoods and San Francisco, and finally flew home with Stephanie. "Even on the airplane, people were asking me what I had in that long, thin box," she shares. "God was working! Who asks people what they have in their luggage?"


"We'll definitely be using Pastor Doug again," Stephanie adds. "My son is really brave about talking to people." Eight-year-old Ashton watched the *Revelation Now* series during the pandemic. "He loved how Pastor Doug talked to people on the street about their religious beliefs."

Easy Witnessing

All three ladies came away from the trip with a new appreciation of how simple it can be to share their faith. "I realized that something as random and simple as a cardboard cutout can open up spiritual conversations," explains Jeanina, "and that we need to be intentional about what we're saying. People would give us 10 to 20 minutes of their time. That's really unusual today."

"Doing evangelism is not within my comfort zone at all," says Kayla. "But it was really neat to see how open people are. It gave me some encouragement that maybe doing evangelism is not as scary as I thought it was."

"This was supposed to be just a fun girls' trip, but I walked away feeling like I have grown spiritually," says Stephanie. "God just snuck in there and made it about Him instead of us."

What creative ideas has God given you about how to share your faith? We'd love to hear about them. If you need more ideas or simple sharing tools, please visit the Amazing Facts online store at afbookstore.com! 



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