

When I Was Baptized

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Introduction: I will never forget the day of my birth!

- A. A common theme of the new birth is rejoicing! (**Acts 8:39**)
 - 1. Why the rejoicing at the point of baptism? It was the time of a new birth, a new life! (**Jn 3:5; Rom 6:4**)
 - 2. This was not just some ceremony; it was a true change in everything that I was and changed everything that would follow in my life.
- B. What does your baptism mean to you?
 - 1. May we be challenged you to look back and remember. I hope that memory will be one of joy and not regret over what “might have been.”
 - 2. What follows the new birth? That is what Jesus was also concerned with. (**Mt 28:18-20**)

I. My baptism was a product of a faith that trusted Jesus

- A. Even though I was raised “going to church” I still needed to learn to trust God.
 - 1. What I am describing is true for every person that reaches the age of accountability.
 - 2. Without having trust in God I had no answers for the guilt of sin. (**Rom 7:8-9**)
 - 3. I did not understand why Jesus died and relied on the “good old boy” approach to the final judgment. When facing death I knew this to be empty.
 - 4. Because I did not trust God, I stopped attending services. At services my guilt could be aroused and I did not want to face that.
 - 5. I will never forget one “witnessing” to me one autumn day.
- B. I decided on the summer after I graduated from High school to read the bible for myself.
 - 1. Fortunately the schedule I used started me in Psalms and Acts and Romans.
 - 2. It was in this reading that I developed my faith in God.
 - 3. I wanted to have the kind of assurance that Paul had. (**Rom 8:18, 33-37**)
- C. I walked in the door of the denomination that I was raised and responded to the invitation one August Sunday morning.
 - 1. That night I was baptized according to the teachings of that church.
 - 2. I went on my way rejoicing that night. I was excited to know there was so much more to learn. My guilt was past and I could be honest with the God that I now trusted. This was a first step and a very incomplete one.

II. My baptism was tested by the word of God

- A. God’s providence allowed me to move away from home to go to college.
 - 1. At college I was challenged in my belief in the scripture.
 - 2. The professor at Samford University that attacked the inspiration of the Bible in a required Bible course did not shake me.
 - 3. Having learned to trust God, I patiently studied through the questions raised. (**Acts 17:11**)

B. When I transferred to the University of Alabama I attended the University church of Christ and was challenged about the plan of salvation!

(Mk 16:15-16; 1 Pt 3:20-21)

1. The notes I took that night I went home and shared them with my roommate.
2. It was at this point I could see that there would be relationships that would be tested by what conclusion I drew from scripture. **(Jn 9:20-22, 32-34)**
3. I concluded that baptism was the final step into Christ. I also assumed that my earlier baptism was fine!
4. The next Wednesday Night Ron Gholston raised questions about my earlier baptism. **(Acts 19:1-5)**
5. There were several things that my earlier response lacked. **(Rom 10:9-10)**
6. The next Sunday night I responded to the invitation and was baptized into Christ!

III. My baptism brought me into a new family and into new relationships

A. I knew that I needed to stand with those who accurately taught the gospel.

(Gal 1:6-10)

1. At the same time I did not want to come across as arrogant and condemning.
2. I was immediately taught how to share the teaching of the gospel.
3. I saw most of my family immediately *shut their ears to me*. One did not and my brother later obeyed the gospel. **(Rom 6:17-18)**

B. My father immediately challenged me.

1. He did not approve of both me and my brother standing by faith.
2. He personally challenged me on instrumental music.
3. Over time he changed his attitude towards us. What made the difference? Over time he saw a genuine faith in his sons. **(Titus 2:9-10)**

C. While remaining close to my immediate family, I began to form a new family!

1. I identified with local churches as I moved. **(Acts 9:26-28)**
2. It was in the devotionals and other associations that my new friends were made. I did not plan to lose and gain friends.
3. I came to appreciate Peter's exchange with the Lord. **(Mk 10:26-30)**

IV. My baptism taught me to examine doctrines and the churches that hold them

A. Over time my faith caused me to leave the University church.

1. Simply by raising questions about differences among brethren raised the same kind of emotion responses that I saw in my family. **(Jn 7:47-52)**
2. This was a most difficult decision that I had to make.

B. Today this church has taken the opposite view on baptism.

V. My baptism was never forgotten

A. I am remembering the God who forgave me. **(2 Pt 1:9-10)**

B. That same faith continues to trust in the "working of God!" **(Col 2:11-13)**

Conclusion: What do you remember?