

What's a Rebirthday?

We celebrate the day a person is "born again," and call them "rebirthdays" rather than regular birthdays. Here's what that's all about...

Every human being is partly physical and partly spiritual. You already know about regular birthdays that celebrate the day we take our first breath in the light of day (or delivery room lights).

Jesus was a Jewish man, and his teaching and environment were entirely focused on the Jewish people. One night a Jewish leader (Nicodemus) came secretly to visit Jesus and learn from him (See John 3). At the time, the Jews were under Roman rule, and looking forward to a "Messiah," or one who they thought would kick the Romans out of Israel and restore their greatness from days of old.

Jesus was the Messiah, but he wasn't introducing a physical kingdom like they expected, but a spiritual kingdom. He tried to explain to Nic that to enter this kingdom one must be "born again." When Nic didn't understand, Jesus explained that one must be "born of water and Spirit."

In those days it was common for all Jews to take religious baths to make them symbolically & literally clean ... called "*Mikvahs*." They would go down into the water (either a pool called a *Mikvah*, an ocean or a river), and when they came up they were considered clean.



Modern Mikvah

The Hebrew term *Mikvah* is like the Greek word: *Baptizo* (our word "baptize"). So what John the Baptist had been doing in the Jordan River was a common thing for the Jews ... he was baptizing people by dunking them in the water to wash away their sins.



Ancient Mikvah

When Jesus told Nic that one must be born of water & Spirit, what he meant was that we must all be dunked in water (baptized, *mikvah*), and receive the Holy Spirit. This is also what Peter told the first disciples after his great sermon in Acts 2. When they asked what they must do (to be forgiven for killing Jesus), Peter said, "repent and be baptized, every one of you ... for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2.38).

(By the way, "repent" just means to basically apologize and change – it's like saying "I'm sorry, and I'll never do it again.")

As we become interested in Jesus and then eventually decide we want to completely submit to him and ask him to be our Lord (Boss, Master); we want our sins to be washed away, to receive the Holy Spirit and to be part of God's kingdom. That is the true meaning of baptism, and it's what it means to be 'born again,' according to the bible.

Paul revealed this truth in his letter to the church of Christ in Rome. Paul writes that when we're dunked in that water, it's like we're being buried with Christ – and then raised to walk a NEW life:

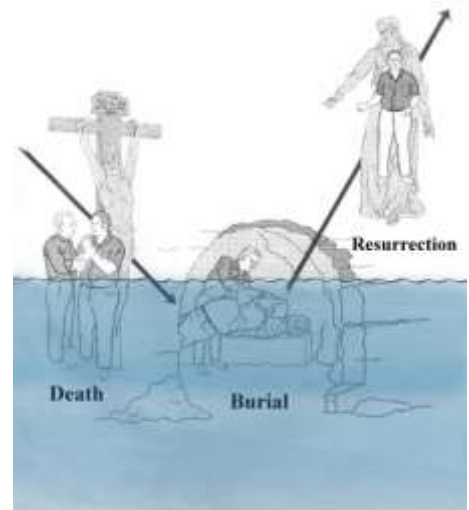
Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into
Christ Jesus
were baptized into his death?

We were buried with him through baptism into death so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a **new life!**

If we've been united with him like this in his death – we'll certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that **our old self was crucified with him** so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we'll no longer be slaves to sin.

If we died with Christ, we believe that we'll also live with him.

Romans 6:3-8



So the day of one's baptism is the day one is saved. It's the moment we have our sins washed away, God's Holy Spirit moves into us, and we are now born as new spiritual "babies" in the kingdom. That's the beginning of our eternal life!

Many people celebrate the day they were born into the world, and it's great. But we believe the day you're born into God's kingdom is even better! And we believe we will celebrate many millions of those rebirthdays in eternity. It was the happiest day of my life. Like the old spiritual: "Oh, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away!"

We also celebrate rebirthdays as a way of proclaiming that we once were "lost," but now because of Jesus, we are saved. We used to be selfish and go our own way. But now it's all different because of God. We hope others will see our celebrations and understand how important it is to recognize our own flaws, and also the healing power of God's love – His grace.

Jesus said we should:

1. Go
2. Make disciples
3. Baptize them
4. teach them to observe all Jesus commanded.

(Matthew 28.19-20)

If you aren't a disciple, you should consider becoming one. If you're a fully committed disciple, or ready to become one – you should immediately seek to be baptized and have your sins washed away in baptism. Not only will you be forgiven, but you'll receive the Holy Spirit inside you. He is able to help you grow, pray, and resist temptations ... and so living without Him is much harder!