

No. 28      BAPTISM: "Follow His Steps Closely"—After Baptism

[PLEASE NOTE: This talk includes interviews. Please follow instructions in assignment letter]

JESUS CHRIST IS OUR MODEL (4 min.)

We tend to become like those we admire most

Not only do we admire Jesus but we also firmly believe that by means of the sacrifice of his human life, he has become God's "Chief Agent of life" and salvation [Read Acts 4:12] (Ac 3:15)

The apostle Paul exhorts us to "*look intently* at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus" (Heb 12:2)

Looking *intently* at Jesus calls for following his example, making him our model to follow in life [Read 1 Peter 2:21]

Jesus' role as our model includes his baptism, which represented his decision to do God's will always (Heb 10:7; w12 4/1 16)

You candidates for baptism have made the decision to follow Jesus and to dedicate yourselves to Jehovah, and it is my pleasure to extend to all of you a warm welcome!

MEDITATE ON THE SCRIPTURES, AND SEEK JEHOVAH'S APPROVAL (5 min.)

From his youth on, Jesus showed keen interest in the Scriptures and meditated on them (Lu 2:42, 47; 4:16)

Although the Scriptures say little about Jesus' youth, they give us a clear picture of his life after his baptism

Immediately on Jesus' coming up from the water, "the heavens were opened up" to him, which seems to indicate that memory of his prehuman existence returned to him (Mt 3:16)

After Jesus was baptized, he must have been greatly encouraged to hear the voice he knew so well declare: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved" (Mt 3:17)

You candidates have imitated Jesus by studying and meditating on God's Word, allowing it to draw you to Jehovah (Ps 73:28)

As you know, you will not actually hear the voice of Jehovah approving your baptism, but you do have Scriptural assurance that you are doing the right thing and that Jehovah is pleased with your decision (Ps 147:11; Mt 28:19, 20; Jas 4:8a)

You will continue to grow spiritually by reading and meditating on God's Word and Bible-based publications, relying on Jehovah in prayer, and associating with your dear brothers and sisters (2Co 13:5a; 2Th 1:3)

SEEKING FIRST GOD'S KINGDOM FOLLOWS BAPTISM (5 min.)

Before his baptism, Jesus was known as "the carpenter," and it appears that he led what would be considered a normal way of life, working daily at his trade (Mr 6:3)

It was *after* his baptism that he entered full-time service to Jehovah and became known as "Teacher," proclaiming "the Kingdom of the heavens" (Joh 13:13; Mt 4:17)

Before your baptism, you may have been known by the secular work you perform, but after your baptism, it will be your privilege to be known principally as a preacher and teacher of the good news of God's Kingdom, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses (Isa 43:10-12; 1Ti 2:7)

Your dedication and baptism mark a turning point in your life of service to Jehovah

Prayerfully examine your personal circumstances to see wherein you may be able to adjust your daily routine or simplify your life in order to pursue the full-time ministry, as Jesus did (Ps 37:25; Mt 6:33)

FACE TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS SUCCESSFULLY BY IMITATING JESUS (5 min.)

Jesus was not exempt from pressures and temptations; it was right after his baptism that the spirit led him into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil (Mt 4:1)

What a remarkable example Jesus set for us by relying on God's Word to resist the Devil's temptations! (Mt 4:3-11)

Your baptism is a public declaration that you have taken sides with Jehovah on the issue of universal sovereignty, and you can be sure that the Devil will attack you too (1Pe 5:8)

Demonstrate the same kind of confidence in Jehovah and in his Word that Jesus displayed, knowing that Jehovah will never allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear (1Co 10:13; w08 3/15 13 par. 7)

You can have complete assurance that Jehovah will help you to resist Satan and his agents as long as you maintain your determination to adhere to God's righteous standards (Eph 6:10-13; 1Pe 5:9, 10)

INTERVIEW: (5 min.)

[Arrange for three interviews: One with a retired brother, another with a middle-aged married couple, and a third with a mature youth. (1) The retired brother should express how he felt that he was accomplishing little in the ministry and that his zeal was wavering. However, by meditating on the Scriptures and being more diligent in his personal study and participation at meetings, he feels that his love for Jehovah and his zeal for the ministry have increased and so has his happiness. (2) The married couple should highlight how they have imitated Jesus by simplifying their life in order to share in the full-time service. They should explain what they did to achieve their goal. (3) The mature youth should relate how he or she courageously took a firm stand for Scriptural principles, such as by resisting negative peer pressure, or otherwise thwarted the Devil's efforts to make one of Jehovah's servants abandon the truth. The speaker should prepare a few appropriate questions for each interview and keep the interviews natural and relaxed]

IMITATE JESUS' ATTITUDE DURING BAPTISM (2 min.)

Jesus was praying when he was baptized (Lu 3:21)

It is not a Scriptural requirement that you pray during your baptism, but a prayerful attitude is certainly appropriate

Baptism candidates as well as observers will want to maintain appropriate dignity during this solemn yet joyful occasion, all to the honor of Jehovah

PUBLIC DECLARATION OF YOUR PERSONAL DEDICATION (3 min.)

[Invite candidates to stand]

Please answer the following two questions in a *loud* voice:

(1) On the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, have you repented of your sins and dedicated yourself to Jehovah to do his will? (Your answer, please)

(2) Do you understand that your dedication and baptism identify you as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in association with God's spirit-directed organization? (Your answer, please)

Your clear, affirmative answers to these questions indicate that you are qualified for baptism as ordained ministers of Jehovah God

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[Prayer by speaker, after which he invites the audience to stand and join the candidates in singing the song indicated on the printed program. Session chairman will take speaker's place on the platform during the song]

TO BE COVERED IN 29 MINUTES

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