

## 1 Peter 3:18-22

### Baptism Prepares Us for Jesus' Coming

#### 1 Peter 3:21

This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Is it four or five? What exactly am I asking you? That's the number of baths and showers Ian, Lincoln, and Nolan took in one day this past summer. Their parents recently built a new home, and with new construction comes new and exciting things to play with ... particularly MUD. Lots and lots of mud! Sprinkle in some of God's rain, and they had themselves a muddy mess. Add a pinch of three boys drawn to dirt and grime and, voila! The three little brothers were covered from head to toe ... in mud.

The first time the parents cleaned them up was amusing. But by the third and fourth times in the SAME day, for multiple days? Um, not so much. There was mud on new white walls, lost clothing because of mud, plugged bathtub drains ... mud made for a real disaster.

On a bigger scale, the human race in Noah's day really "muddied" things up with their lack of trust and love for God. We are no different today. We can shower and put on our best clothes, but beneath the dress pants and shirt lies a heart caked with the mud of our sin. Left to ourselves, we deserved to sink into the pit of despair. But enter our Savior Jesus who in his willingness said "As you wish" to God and laid down his life for us. He lowered himself into the muddy pit to rescue us! And now the water of baptism is not only simple water that washes away dirt, it assures us that ALL our sins are washed away. Not a single muddy streak remains!

Coming this Christmas is someone who will make us clean and keep our consciences clear. So look to the manger, look to the skies, and take heart. Jesus is coming to earth so he can one day take us to be with him in heaven. Be assured that you, as a baptized child of God, are already showered and ready to go!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for Younger Children**

- Because we are muddy inside, what water did God use to wash us?
- Ask your parents to share the story of your baptism day.

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Have your parents help you find your baptism certificate. Then read it out loud and discuss what it says.
- What were the most important words spoken at your baptism? (*Hint: every WELS Family Devotion begins with them!*)

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Growing up can be hard. If you struggle being comfortable with who you are, how does your baptism give you identity?
- If baptism is an important part of our identity, name someone you know and care about who may not yet be baptized. Discuss what you might say in order share with them God's wonderful promise of washing!

### **Closing Prayer:**

Thank you, heavenly Father, for the Christmas gift of my baptism. In it, you washed away all my sins and said I am your child. Help me improve my obedience to live my life for you. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 299:1 – All Who Believe and Are Baptized**

All who believe and are baptized  
Shall see the Lord's salvation;  
Baptized into the death of Christ,  
They are a new creation.  
Through Christ's redemption they shall stand  
Among the glorious, heav'nly band  
Of ev'ry tribe and nation.