



BAPTISM: DIVING INTO THE MURKY WATER

Much has been discussed over the Internet as to whether or not baptism as a Jehovah's Witness is a contract with the Watchtower organization. I personally believe that while it is clearly not a written contract, it is most definitely a verbal oath, much like the oath that the United States President takes. Jehovah's Witnesses must pass a verbal test (see below for test questions). Of course, the inductee's pat answers are drilled into them so that even a youngster can "pass." Clearly, once taken, breaking this oath results in severe "punishment" (shunning by other Jehovah's Witnesses, including your own family).

In the "This Good News of the Kingdom" book printed by the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society in 1954 baptism "symbolizes that the one being baptized has become **dead to his old course of life**. He has voluntarily given up doing his own will...to do God's will."

I was baptized at 10 years old because my mother told me that if I didn't do it then, I would **have** to do it *all by myself* later and the thought of standing *alone* before thousands of people at an assembly in a bathing suit later—during puberty—produced pangs of anxiety. So I took the plunge with the rest of my family to avoid what seemed like my unavoidable fate. The fact is, I was way too young to "become dead to (my) old course of life." For goodness sakes—I was 10 years old! How much of a life could I have had up until that fateful day?

I thought deeply about baptism years later--*after* I was baptized. For instance, how many Jehovah's Witnesses would allow their 10-year-old child to stop serving Jehovah and do whatever they wanted—even for one day? If questioned, they would undoubtedly argue that their youngster isn't *mature enough* to make a crucial decision like *that*. Flip the coin: Then how can their child be mature enough at 10 to make a decision to be a day-in and day-out devotee to the Watchtower organization *for eternity*? Children in the U.S. aren't allowed to vote, get tattoos, get married, watch R-rated movies, or even stay home alone because society realizes they are *children*. Children shouldn't be expected to make adult decisions!

Even Jehovah's Witnesses will tell you that Jesus wasn't baptized until he was thirty years old—an *adult*. So why do Jehovah's Witnesses advocate the baptism of *children*? Also, if baptism "symbolizes that the one being baptized has become dead to his old course of life," what "old course of life" was Jesus abandoning when he was baptized? He came to Earth as a **perfect being**, without sin. Hadn't he been doing everything right from Day One? He obviously didn't need to show he had "given up doing his own will in order to do God's will." He didn't even have an old will to give up!

My point is this: If I'd never been coerced into baptism as a child, I'd have never been baptized. And had I never been baptized, I'd have never lost my mother, sister and brother when I left the Watchtower organization in 1981. It was *my baptism* that justified the decision by Jehovah's Witnesses to steal my family from me, not any horrible "sin" on my part.

I highly recommend that the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society in New York add the following undisclosed fine print in bold letters to their murky baptism "test":

Question: Do you realize that once baptized you can *never* leave the organization known as Jehovah's Witnesses without losing contact with family—for the rest of your life? And if by chance you are lucky enough to have your family speak to you, they will be considered spiritually weak by other members. In addition, do you realize that speaking to *you* could be grounds for us to excommunicate and shun *them*?"



I wonder, has anyone ever failed the Watchtower baptismal questions? I doubt it. And who is mortal man to judge whether someone has a politically correct spiritual relationship or not? Here's why some others accepted baptism:

- I was baptized when I was 10 years old. My grandmother and 18-year-old sister had recently become Jehovah's Witnesses. I remember them sitting on my bed one evening, telling me that unless I was baptized I would die when Armageddon came, and so wouldn't live in the "new world" with them. I did not understand the commitment. I just didn't want to *die* at Armageddon. – Anonymous
- I was baptized at age 11 in 1970 when groups of people were asked questions in the book (I can't remember the name.) There were twenty something people in the group, and I answered probably four or five questions. Now they single you out and several elders take a crack at you, perhaps over several days, where you get asked *all* the questions. I did know and was aware of what I was doing. I just didn't know the ramifications in the long run.* The two questions asked just before I was baptized were much different than the questions (asked) today where you're dedicating your life to an organization. I knew I was dedicating my life to do his will. In time the organization changed the two questions, and I really didn't notice until 1990 at a convention. - Brian

* When I was baptized, the two questions were: (1) Have you recognized yourself before Jehovah God as a sinner who needs salvation, and have you acknowledged to him that this salvation proceeds from him, the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ? (2) On the basis of this faith in God and in his provision for salvation, have you dedicated yourself unreservedly to God to do his will henceforth as he reveals it to you through Jesus Christ and through the Bible under the enlightening power of the holy spirit?

In 1985 the questions were changed to the following: 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? 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?