

cleansing of the conscience that enables it to give a good response to God. And Christ's resurrection demonstrates and gives assurance that our sins have been fully expiated, and that God has accepted Christ's atonement as full payment for our sins! Water baptism therefore signifies a cleansing of the conscience from the guilty of sin.

- (e) Hebrews 10:22 -- "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Here an internal cleansing of the conscience is coupled with an external cleansing of the body. If "the body having been washed with pure water" refers to the ordinance of baptism (what else could it refer to?), and if there is any connection between water baptism and internal cleansing of the conscience (1 Peter 3:21 certainly teaches that there is such a connection), then the ordinance of baptism signifies cleansing from the guilt of sin.

- (4) Baptism signifies entrance into the Body of Christ, the Church

I Corinthians 12:12-13 -- "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

The Spirit of God, by uniting us to Christ through faith, has also united us to all the members of Christ's Body, the Church. Thus the ordinance of baptism signifies the spiritual reality of entrance into the Church through union with Christ.

- (5) Baptism signifies identification, through profession, as a disciple of Christ, and with the visible church.

- (a) Matthew 28:18-20 -- " And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' "

Implied in the making of disciples (followers of Christ) is the credible profession of persons confessing Christ as Savior and Lord, on the basis of which profession the ordinance of baptism is administered.

- (b) Acts 2:37-38, 41 -- "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit . . . .' So