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Baptism

Jesus before leaving the earth as His last commandment which we call that as great Commission, recorded in Matthew 28:18-20,

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. (NKJV)

- 1) Go
- 2) Make Disciples
- 3) Baptise them in the Name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit
- 4) Teach them everything and make them obey

The above order is very important! Those who are willing to obey only need to be baptized.

While Jesus was ministering on the earth we find that children were brought into His presence and He blessed them laying His hands on them. Mark 10:13-16. But whenever there was repentant person came to Him, either He Himself or His disciples baptized them. John 4:1-2

The first Gospel preached on the Day of Pentecost, by Peter in the book of Acts 2, He clearly mentioned to the people that they need to repent and be baptized.

Acts 2:38 & 41,

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

41. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

On the day of Pentecost, when many were convicted of their sin, Peter told them to "repent and be baptized." The record goes on to say that "those who received his word were baptized " (Acts 2:38,41).

So if you study the book of Acts of the Apostles, its very clearly stated that in every instance that the people who were repented and baptized.

What is the meaning of Baptism?

Meaning of the word Baptize 'Immerse' is the English word that "precisely" makes known to us the same meaning as BAPTIZEIN did "to those who first heard and read the Gospel in Greek."

In all the available Greek literature, both secular and religious, found no example in which the word baptizein had any other meaning.

Baptizein was a daily household word. Whenever the idea of total submergence was to be expressed, whether literally or metaphorically, baptizein was the word used.

As you read the Bible, mentally translating the word baptize to the word immerse will greatly help your understanding. Not every time the word baptize or baptism is used in the Bible refers to water baptism.

Romans 6:1-7 clearly explains the meaning of baptism.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. (NKJV)

Our old man was crucified with Christ and that in baptism we are buried with Christ into death. The old man is the mind that we had in our unconverted days that wanted to sin. That has been crucified with Christ.

Water baptism is about death -- your death. ("Death" is the end of something.) Water baptism is your public declaration of your death. It is a public confession of faith: I have died to my old life and my old ways.

By being baptized in water you are saying that you have died to sin and the world's ways. Water baptism is a public burial of the old life. By asking for burial, you declare that you believe something has died. There is no need for a burial without a death. Burial is not absolutely required, but is recommended as the best course of action. So, generally, those who receive Jesus Christ should normally be baptized in water.

In the book of Acts, water baptism always seemed to be done without delay. Although burial can take place at any time, the best time is immediately after death has been confirmed.

We don't have to understand this first, before we live in the reality of it. We can just believe what God says. If God's Word says that our old man was crucified with Christ, then we believe it, just as surely as we believe God's Word when it says that Christ Himself was crucified on Calvary's hill. Both these truths are accepted by faith.

I want to make it clear here again that the old man and the flesh are not the same. The flesh is the Self-life within us, that opposes the will of God. We all have to carry this with us until our dying day. We could compare the flesh to a gang of robbers seeking to enter our house. The old man is like an unfaithful servant inside our house who constantly opened the door for the robbers to enter. It is the unfaithful servant who has now been killed. The robbers however are hale and hearty! But now we have a new servant, the new man, who seeks to keep the door shut, against these robbers.

In baptism, we testify to the death and burial of the old man (the desire to sin), and to being raised up with Christ so that we might henceforth "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

The flood in Noah's day is a type of baptism too, Peter writes in his epistle,

who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited [ff] in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (NKJV) 1 Peter 3:20,21

The whole world was destroyed by God through that flood. Noah went through it in the ark and came out of it into a brand new world. The old world and everything in it were all buried under the flood. This is what we testify to in baptism as well - that our old relationship with the world (and that includes worldly fashions and worldly friends etc.,) has all now been cut off and that we are now coming out of the water into a brand new world.

The Mode of Baptism

Now come to the important question: HOW should we be baptized?

The word 'baptism' is not an English word. The New Testament was originally written in Greek; and the word 'baptism' is derived from the Greek word 'bapto', which means 'to cover wholly with a fluid' or 'to immerse'. And this is exactly what baptism meant to the early apostles - an immersion in water. Sprinkling water on someone's head is certainly not baptism.

Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, which recorded in Acts 8:38-39,

So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. (NKJV)

Jesus Baptism was held in the River Jordan,

Mark 1:9-10, It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. (NKJV)

In the New Testament, baptism was always done by immersion. Since baptism is a burial, it is obvious that only immersion can typify that accurately. For, after all, we don't bury people by sprinkling sand on their heads, but by putting them under the ground completely!

Jesus as well John the Baptist were baptizing the people only by immersion, John 3:22-23,

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized

Baptism in the Three-fold Name

Jesus commanded us to baptize "in the Name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit " (Matthew 28:20). The Name is singular because God is One. But Jesus revealed that although God is One, He exists in Three Persons, Who are distinct from each other.

It wasn't the Father who died for our sins, nor was it the Holy Spirit. It was the Son. When Jesus ascended up to heaven, He sat on the right hand of the Father, not the right hand of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the One He sent to His disciples to be their Helper was the Holy Spirit, not the Father. All this may sound elementary. But it is essential that we don't confuse the three Persons in the Godhead and their unique ministries in our redemption.

The Obedience of Faith

Baptism should be the first step of obedience in the life of a disciple, leading on to a lifetime of obedience - and this obedience must be the obedience of faith and not the obedience of reason.

If Jesus had leaned upon His own reason, He would never have gone to John the Baptist for baptism. For His reason would have given Him many arguments against being baptized - especially since He had never sinned. John himself could not understand why Jesus needed to be baptized. But Jesus laid aside the arguments of reason and simply obeyed the voice of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:15).

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding," says the Word in Proverbs 3:5.

Reason is the Number One enemy of faith - because human reason cannot grasp spiritual truths.

When we get baptized, the last part of our body to go under the water is the upper part of our head. That is symbolic! The authority of our reason is the part of us that is most difficult to put to death! The children of Adam live by what their reason tells them. In baptism, we testify that we have died to that way of life (of leaning on our own reason) and now live by faith in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4; Rom. 1:17).

Baptism is slighted by some Christians as a trivial matter. Naaman initially despised Elisha's command to go and dip himself seven times in the River Jordan to be healed of his leprosy. But it was when he obeyed that simple command that he was healed (2 Kings 5:10-14). It is in little things that God tests our obedience.

Is it necessary to be baptized to be saved?

In Luke 23:39-43, we have the record of one of the criminals crucified with Jesus acknowledging Him as Lord.

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."(NKJV)

Jesus told the criminal he would be with Him in Paradise, even though he was not baptized in water.

Also, in Acts 10:44-48, Cornelius' household became believers, received the Holy Spirit, and began speaking in tongues, before being baptized in water. According to Jesus (John 7:38-39, Mark 16:17), receiving the Holy Spirit happens only to those who are believers, and therefore saved.

So, we must conclude that these believers were born again, and ready for Heaven, before they were baptized in water.

TITUS 3:5 (NKJV) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

We are not saved by works of righteousness that we do. Many think, wrongly, of water baptism as a work that must be done to be right with God.

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (NKJV) 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

If water baptism was necessary for salvation, then salvation would partly be by works, and not by grace.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:17 (NKJV) *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.*

The apostle Paul, who received the Gospel direct from the risen Lord Jesus, said he was not sent to baptize. If water baptism was necessary for salvation, that would not make any sense.

MARK 16:16 (NKJV) *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

What about Mark 16:16?

Obviously, if water baptism was required for salvation, that requirement would be made clear throughout the New Testament -- and it is not. Mark 16:16 could mean, "believes to the point of publicly confessing, by the act of water immersion." Or, it could mean, "believes and is placed in Christ."

We should also note that the passage in question does not say, "He who believes and was baptized will be saved." Only a present tense baptism guarantees a person's salvation. That is to say: those who are IN CHRIST now, are saved.

Salvation cannot be dependent on physical surroundings -- such as water being present for baptism -- there are too many situations where water baptism would be impossible.

Those who make this error do so because the word baptize was not translated and understood. Therefore, they think every mention in Scripture of the word baptize refers to water -- which is not true.

Baptism in water is not necessary for salvation, but is beneficial for the believer. Water baptism provides a good foundation, if understood correctly.

Benefits of Baptism.

In this fallen world we have so many problems in our life and we have huge challenge every day. To live a life which is pleasing in Gods sight you need to have gifts of the Holy Spirit.

1. Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit

*Acts 2:38-39, Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**"³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." (NKJV)*

2. Develop a Public Faith

Acts 1:8, says you shall receive power ot be witness when you receive the Holy Spirit.

Water baptism is a public confession of one's faith in Christ. Matthew 10:32-33, Jesus says that He will confess that you belong to God before HIM on that day.

3. Increase your connection to the body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts.¹³ n the same way, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink. (GNT)

God hasn't designed us to live out our faith alone. He wants new believers to get connected to the family of God. Water baptism introduces a person's story to the church and makes them a familiar face. Thus, water baptism includes the Biblical component of 'fellowship' as well

Galatians 3:27, You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. (GNT)

Summary

The main points to remember about water baptism are:

- * It does not make you a Christian or right with God. It is only a symbolic act with no power to save you.
- * It is a testimony of what has already happened inwardly in the believer -- the death of their old life.
- * It is complete immersion into water.
- * It is best done publicly.
- * It should be done only by someone old enough to understand what they are doing.
- * It should be done only by those who have received the Lord Jesus Christ and are committed to Him.

Should you be baptized in water? Yes, if you understand clearly what you are doing, and sincerely mean what baptism signifies.

Otherwise, you should not be baptized in water, because it will do you no good whatsoever. Water baptism could even harm you by giving you false hope.

Obedience to God must never be delayed. If your old man has indeed died, then he must be buried straight-away. It's a crime not to bury a man who is dead!

"Why do you delay then? Arise and be baptized " Acts 22:16.