

Baptism In Water

By A. S. Copley

“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.”

Act.10:47-48

“As the eunuch tried to read,
Philip taught him of his need;
And baptized him in the stream, long ago;
As the outward seal and sign
Of an inward work Divine,
That was wrought thru that old fountain, long ago.”

PREFACE

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest**: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: *Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.*

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"We who died to sin, how shall we still live in it? Or are ye ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, into His death were baptized? We were buried therefore with Him thru the baptism into the death, that as Christ was raised up out from among dead ones thru the glory of the Father, so also we in newness of life should walk." [Rom.6:2-5 Greek]

Baptism in water has its place among the doctrines of the New Testament. Jesus required it at the hands of the Apostles (see Mat.28:19 and Mar.16:16). In the Acts of the Apostles, we find baptism in water recorded frequently. In Peter's first Spirit-filled sermon, Israel was exhorted to "*repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ*" [Act.2:38].

Many volumes have been written to prove and disprove the mode, or modes of baptism, and many hot debates have been held by carnal believers for the same purpose. But the mode becomes easily evident to every honest heart when once he understands the meaning and purpose of baptism. Hence, we need not discuss that theme.

That Romans 6:2-5, our text Scripture, refers to water is unanswerably certain. It cannot refer to the baptism in the Spirit, because that was not a baptism into death, nor a burial into death. It was a baptism into oneness of those who were already dead and buried and risen again. Furthermore, there was only "*one baptism*" in the Spirit [Eph.4:5]. That occurred at Pentecost, where all who believe were sovereignly baptized into one body [1Co.12:12-13]. You cannot find another Spirit-baptism in the New Testament. Neither does water baptism symbolize, nor refer to the baptism in the Spirit. This too will become plain as we proceed with our study.

JOHN'S BAPTISM

"John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus." [Act.19:4]

Jesus requested John to baptize Him in water, though John felt that he was the one who should be baptized of Jesus not with the Spirit, for he was "filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb;" but with water, because he knew that he had a sinful nature and Jesus had not.

BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Mat.3:13-17]

Now if Jesus was “*holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners*” [Heb.7:26], why must He be baptized in water? He needed not to repent. He had no sins to be forgiven; yet He said, “*Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness*” [Mat.3:15]. The 1st Adam, the head of the human race, egregiously failed. Jesus, the 2nd, or last Adam [1Co.15:45-47] was destined to be victorious. But His victory was not to be for Himself alone. He should succeed where the 1st Adam failed. To do this, He must identify Himself with the human race in its fallen condition; yes, He must take the headship of the human race. The 2nd Adam must die for the human race and thus pay the penalty incurred by their sins. He must take the whole human family into death and burial with Him, and bring up a new creation with Him like Himself. By 30 years of holy living, absolutely obeying the will of God, He had fully proved His worthiness and ability to fill this place.

Therefore, in symbol, by baptism into Jordan, Jesus took His place as Head of a sinful human race. By His baptism, He said, “I am the first transgressor; therefore I must die to make forgiveness possible; I must pay that penalty for man’s sin.” “*He was numbered with the transgressors and He bare the sin of many*” [Isa.53:12]. Hence, when He came up from the watery grave, in approbation of Him, God sent the Holy Spirit upon Him, saying, “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*” His arising out of the water was the coming forth, in symbol, of the new creation.

- His anointing with the Spirit was the pattern and pledge of our anointing.
- His prophetic ministry, which immediately followed, was the inauguration of the reign of grace and was in the spirit and power of the new creation.
- He lived and labored in the Spirit.
- He taught and preached and healed under the direction and by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

John’s baptism pointed forward only. To be content with it was to say that Jesus had not yet come. No formula for his baptism was expressed. Since it referred only to fulfilling “*all righteousness*” in the Master’s case, and was “*unto repentance*” in the case of believers, it was not necessary to baptize in any particular name.

THE APOSTLES’ BAPTISM

“Having been buried with Him in the baptism, in which also ye were raised with Him through the faith of the working of God, who raised Him out from among the dead ones” [Col.2:12 Greek]

This verse, together with our text verses [Rom.6:2-5], make the nature and purpose of water baptism plain. Let us simply believe the written Word without reasoning about it, without cutting out some of it, or adding anything to it. Then we shall understand and be blessed, and the heart of Jesus shall rejoice.

In Romans 6, which delineates the foundation for our complete victory over all sin, our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ are symbolized by baptism.

By the act of going down into the water, we say that Christ died for us and that we died with Him and that He was buried and we were buried with Him. We thereby say,

- “Our old man was crucified with Christ and buried with Him in Joseph’s tomb.”
- “Old things have passed away.”

By baptism, we say that we died with Christ to the world and to sin and to The Law: To the world from which we are forever separated, to sin whose power is forever broken, and to The Law from whose dominion we are forever free. Hallelujah! Yes, to believe this fills one with hallelujahs. We say thereby, that “henceforth know we no man after the flesh” (the old creation).

Then, by our coming forth from the watery grave, we declare that “Christ is risen,” that “*God raised Him from the dead,*” and “*hath raised us up together with Him*” [Eph.2:6]. We thereby proclaim that “we are a new creation,” a heavenly people, a spiritual race, a “special treasure.” We announce thereby that we are alive in Christ forevermore, to “walk in newness of life,” not by the strength of this new life, but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

By our personal baptism in water, we outwardly, publicly, and boldly declare to men and demons that God is true in all He says about the old creation and all He says about the new creation. Baptism on our side is a solemn sign, and on God’s side it is a sacred seal, that we are no more of this world, but that we belong wholly and forever “to Him who has loved us and washed us in His own precious blood,” and “*made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father*” [Rev.1:5-6 RV]. As the Lord took care of His dead Son, guiding and guarding Him and finally taking Him to Himself, so does He vouchsafe to do with all His dear sons. Hence, Peter triumphantly declares, that we “*are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*” [1Pe.1:5]. Then having been baptized in water, the Holy Spirit says that “*ye obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you*” [Rom.6:17]. Our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ are the doctrine itself, the vital teaching; but water baptism is the form of doctrine, the outward, visible form of what we inwardly believe and receive.

Now we can see the distinction between the 2 baptisms:

- John’s baptism looked forward.
- The apostles’ baptism looks backward.

To know only the first is to say that the Messiah has not yet come. This is why brother Paul baptized those 12 at Ephesus again. Either they had not heard that the Christ had come, or they had not believe it. They declared that they had not so much as heard that the Holy Spirit was given. In those days, the reception of Jesus as Savior, baptism in water, and the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit were so closely related and in such rapid succession that the enjoyment of one implied the enjoyment of the other. When one

believed on Jesus he was immediately baptized, and then he received the Holy Spirit.

IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

Is baptism in water essential to salvation; or, can one be saved if he is not baptized in water?

Answer: Jesus Himself, not water, is the Savior. Salvation is by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house”* [Act.16:31]. *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”* and *“shall not come into condemnation (judgment) but is passed from death into life”* [Joh.3:36, 5:24].

*“The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is the word of **FAITH** which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* [Rom.10:8-10]

*“For by grace are ye saved through **FAITH**.”* [Eph.2:8]

Now, if baptism were essential unto salvation, then Jesus would not in Himself be a sufficient Savior and faith would not be a sufficient condition, or connecting link between us and the Savior. Baptism would be works. We would be adding our own self-effort to be saved. But the Word declares, *“Not of works lest any man should boast”* [Eph.2:9], that is, boast of his good works. Nay, my Friend, baptism is only an outward sign (expression) of our faith in the all-sufficient Savior.

The Holy Spirit states that in Noah’s ark, 8 souls were saved through water, which also as an antitype *“doth now save you, even baptism (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the consultation of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* [1Pe.3:20-21 Greek]. Consider this for a moment. In the early chapters of Acts, the resurrection of Jesus is emphasized by being constantly mentioned. And, Paul writes that *“he was raised for our justification”* [Rom.4:25]. Peter is stating here that as those 8 in the ark were figuratively raised from the dead by water, Christ really being their Savior as symbolized by the ark, so water baptism, the antitype (ANTITUPON Greek) of Noah’s flood, figuratively raised us up from the dead through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; hence figuratively saved us. He says that baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the outward sign of the inward salvation. It is the inquiry and answer of a good conscience, the expression of the faith of one already saved—faith in Jesus, as raised from the dead with Him.

The relative importance of baptism in water is further indicated by our beloved Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:17: *“Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.”* He does not mean that he baptized no one; for he mentions at least 3 in that assembly whom he baptized. The above quotations from Romans and Colossians conclusively show that he baptized in other places also. But baptism is not the chief thing. The Gospel of God’s grace, which was brought to us through the death and resurrection of God’s dear Son, was the apostle’s

great theme. Baptism in water received due attention as a symbol only, but not as a means of salvation.

UNWISE EMPHASIS

The first chapter of 1 Corinthians deserves close study.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (anointed), that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." [1Co.1:10]

"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" [1Co.1:13]

Note that *"by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Anointed),"* he pleads with them that they *"all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* He earnestly asks, *"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"* Behold the forewarnings of the dear Holy Spirit! Even then undue stress put upon water baptism caused divisions, and that was an earnest of many sad days for Christendom.

Now, the Spirit seeks to have us see and maintain the oneness of Christ. *"The (one) Name"* means this very thing. Hence, those who were baptized in Jesus' Name *"obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine,"* not a certain form of words [Rom.6:17]. Baptism is into the *"name of Jesus,"* that is, into the nature—the Divine Human Nature, not into a form or words.

Observe this wondrous 3-fold Name: **"LORD JESUS ANOINTED,"** which corresponds beautifully with Jesus' own words, *"Father, Son and Holy Spirit"* in Matthew 28:19. This phrase, or 3-fold Name (title), is constantly employed by Paul. The 1st Name indicates His Deity, the 2nd His humanity, and the 3rd His endowment with power. Hence, it was the Divine Human Nature expressed by the Names given Him that should be honored. Men may easily emphasize certain phrases, or words, but in spirit dishonor the Name. God looks on the heart. How few people in the past have understood the meaning of water baptism. How few have noted the phraseology of the baptizer. But the true heart beholds the face of the one Savior.

Why is such prominence given to the name of Jesus? Because He is **GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.**

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." [2Co.5:19]

"God was in Christ (Deity in humanity) reconciling the world unto himself." This was the only way in which God could redeem and save a fallen human race.

1. A Man fulfilled The Law and met the penalty that sin had incurred.
2. A Man rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

3. A Man now sits at the right hand of God.
4. A Man who said, “*All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth*” [Mat.28:18].
5. A Man is coming again from heaven [Act.1:11].
6. “*By a Man whom He hath ordained,*” God will judge the world in righteousness [Act.17:31].
7. A Man, “*the Anointed of the Lord,*” shall reign; for it is written, “*I have set (anointed) my King upon Zion the hill of my holiness*” [Psa.2:6].

Because of the 7-fold condescension of this Man,

“God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” [Phi.2:9-11]

The chief reason for baptizing in Jesus’ name is that **HE** is the Head of His Body, The Church.

*“For in Him (this wonderful Man) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and in Him ye are made full, who is the **HEAD** of all principality and power.” [Col.2:9-10 RV]*

“And He is the Head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence; for it was the pleasure of all the fullness to dwell in Him” [Col.1:18-19 RV].

Therefore, to be baptized into the Name of Jesus means to be baptized into Christ Himself, into oneness with Him in His death and burial and resurrection—in symbol, the old creation going down with Him and the new creation coming up with Him.

This is not to be held as a cold theory, dogmatically set forth in certain set phrases; but a precious, living, loving doctrine that honors the Holy Spirit and glorifies the triune God...the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*“He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit [1Co.6:17]”; and the people that are joined to the Lord are one people—**ONE LORD, ONE BODY.***

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