

## Water Baptism in Jesus' name is essential unto salvation

The subject of "Water Baptism" has long been called a great issue, and no doubt has been made such by many church leaders of the past and present. In our study of it, let us first consider its importance, or the necessity of being baptized.

Water baptism is an ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ. If it is not important in the plan of God, why did Jesus command it in Matthew 28:19? And why did Peter follow up by saying "every one of you," in Acts 2:38 and by commanding them to be baptized in Acts 10:48? There are two things that we should remember: First - Whatever Christ definitely established or ordained cannot be unimportant whether we understand its importance or not. Second - Christ and the Apostles showed the importance of this ordinance by observing it, Jesus walked seventy miles to be baptized though He was without sin, saying, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". Read Matthew 3:3-16.

One may say that water does not contain any virtue, but remember that it is included in God's Plan of Salvation. Peter explains it by saying, "...baptism doth also now save us (not by putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." I Peter 3:21. In Luke 7:30 we find that the Pharisees and Lawyers "rejected the counsel of God against themselves being not baptized."

What then is the mode of baptism? Baptism is by immersion according to the Scriptures. "And Jesus when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." Matthew 3:16. "...And they went down both into the water, both Phillip and the eunuch, and he baptized him." Acts 8:38. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death..." Romans 6:4. "Buried with him in baptism..." Colossians 2:12. A burial is not placing a corpse on top of the ground and sprinkling a little soil on it, but it is placing it in the ground.

From the World Book Encyclopedia, Volume One, Page 651 we quote, "At first all baptism was complete immersion." And in the Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume Two, Page 263, we find, "In the early centuries, all were baptized by immersion in streams, pools, and baptisteries." Immersion was not convenient after the Roman Catholic Church instituted infant baptism; the mode was changed to sprinkling. (See Britanica Encyclopedia, Eleventh Edition, Volume Three. Pages 265-266.)

Baptism is a type of Jesus' burial. Coming forth from the watery grave of baptism is typical of His resurrection. What then is the formula to be used in baptizing?

Jesus gave the command in Matthew 28:19. "Baptizing in the name" (singular) of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He did not command them to use that as a formula, but commanded them to baptize in the name. Name here is used in the singular and is the object of the commission. It is not the titles, "Father," "Son," and "Holy Ghost," which show relationship. Why did He command to be baptized in the name? "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. This Name is above every name under heaven. "Wherefore 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 things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. " Philippians 2:9-11. This name is above every " name not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Ephesians 1:21.

The angel of the Lord, in speaking to Joseph, said, "And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins". Matthew 1:21. And in John 5:43 we find, "I am come in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name "(the antichrist)" him ye will receive." John 14:26 says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name will teach you all things." Here we see another baptism instituted, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. According to John 3:5, a man must be born of the water and of the spirit. As Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, Jesus told him the only way to be born. Nicodemus did not understand as many of our leaders don't understand in this day and time, the plan of Salvation.

16:15-17 "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;" this had not

happened, but in the book of Acts 2:4, we see the scripture in the book of Mark being fulfilled. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

So we see two very important things that work together. The baptism in Jesus' Name removes sins, and the Holy Ghost sealing a man until redemption. Both are of the utmost importance, yet one necessitates the other. It is stated in the verses found in Luke 24:45-47 that Jesus opened the disciples' understanding. It was necessary that their understanding be opened, and many today need this same operation that they may understand the scriptures. Then said Jesus unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." The disciples had their understanding opened so that they could grasp the vast importance of the facts concerning the death of Christ. Then in verse 47, we find the commission given in the words of the apostles telling what Jesus said "And repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Jews and Gentiles), "beginning at Jerusalem."

Peter was among those to whom Jesus had spoken and whose understanding had also been opened. After having listened to these instructions, he, a few days later on the day of Pentecost, inspired by the Holy Ghost, began to teach and preach and continued until hearts were pierced and the hearers, feeling condemned, said unto Peter and the other Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter did not hesitate but boldly gave the prescription, "REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST," Acts 2:38. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41).

Some say that the reason Peter commanded them to be baptized thus was that they were Jews and that baptism was to make them acknowledge Jesus Christ. Let us go to the house of Cornelius with Peter eight years later. Cornelius and his household were Gentiles, and here again we find Peter commanding them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord. Acts 10:47-48. If Peter was wrong on the day of Pentecost, he surely had ample time to be corrected before he went to the house of Cornelius.

Was Peter wrong on the day of Pentecost? Let us notice that the time when they were pricked in their hearts "they said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, what shall we do?" Matthew was there when Peter standing up with the eleven and telling them to be baptized in Jesus' Name, yet we do not find Matthew correcting him. Matthew surely would have spoken up if Peter had disobeyed the Lord.

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria" (these people were not Jews, but Samaritans), "and preached Christ unto them." "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." How? "In the Name of the Lord Jesus." Read Acts 8:8-16.

Some may ask what was wrong with John's baptism. John's baptism was right for the dispensation to which it belonged, but the dispensation had changed and the Church age had begun. Let us see what happened to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, when he went to Ephesus twenty-one years after Pentecost. There he found some of John's disciples and "he said unto them, Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts 19:1-5. We do not believe that Paul changed the formula or mode of baptism when he baptized Lydia and her household. Acts 16:14-15. We have the account of the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:30, where he came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." How can we doubt that Paul baptized these using the same mode and formula that he had used before, that is, by immersion in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was not with the apostles when Jesus gave his final instructions to them in Matthew 28:19 and in Mark 16:16, yet we find Paul baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. From whom did he receive this revelation? Let us note that Paul's Gospel is not a tradition from the other apostles, but it is a revelation. "For I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither

received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ." Galatians 1:11-12. Paul was chosen to bear Jesus' Name to the Gentiles, and he wrote fourteen Epistles to the church. To this Apostle, God revealed the mystery of the church "Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Ephesians 3:5. Paul claimed to have divine authority: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord". I Corinthians 14:37. Why did Paul write, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Colossians 3:17. We cannot afford to overlook this command to the church. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Ephesians 3:14-15. We must read the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of Paul to learn what the apostles taught and practiced after the Holy Ghost came.

"We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." Ephesians 2:20. The apostles not only preached baptism in Jesus' Name, but they practiced it. Nowhere can we find that they baptized using the words "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We find them baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ, they fulfilled the command of the Lord in Matthew 28:19.

Paul said, "But though we, or angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8-9. Let this be a solemn warning. Some say that they will accept the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19, but not those of Peter in Acts 2:38? Was that Peter speaking on the day of Pentecost or was it the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (1 Peter 1:12). Remember Paul said, "We are built on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." And Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. Here we are exhorted to heed the words of the holy prophets and the commandment of the apostles, and the Apostle Peter commanded baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ. In Mark 7:7, Jesus said, "Laying aside the commandment of God ye hold the tradition of man." History tells us that it was not until the year 325 A.D. that both method and formula of baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ was changed.

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophet." Acts 15:14-15. Jesus Christ is the head of the body which is the Church. (Colosians 1:18). Then why should we not baptize in his name? There is no other name for His church. "And they see his face and his name shall be in their foreheads." Revelation 22:4.

Let us therefore search the scriptures with an open heart remembering that Jesus said, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4.

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