

CHAPTER 4

WATER BAPTISM

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When we talk about baptism, it is important to allow the last word to be the Word of God, and not some religious opinion (Mark 7:8-9 and 13).

So what does the word 'baptise' symbolise? The word 'baptise' comes from a Greek word, *baptisma*, meaning 'the combined processes of immersion, submersion and emergence.' The Greek verb *baptizo* means 'to actively cause something or somebody to be fully submersed in water.' So water baptism is by _____ under the surface of water.

In Matt. 28:19, the verse should read, "Go and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

WHY DO WE NEED TO BE BAPTISED?

Mark 16:16 tells us, "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." These are strong words, but strong because we are _____ to be baptised:

- A. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15).
- B. The Apostles also commanded it (Acts 2:37-39, 10:44-48).
- C. Jesus was the example (Matt. 3:13-17).
- D. Obedience is the fruit of our service to Jesus and the Word (James 2:17).

Water baptism is not optional. Refusing water baptism is disobedience to God.

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION FOR US TO BE BAPTISED?

- A. Acts 2:38 says, “_____ and be baptised.”
- B. Acts 8:12 and Mark 16:16 advise us to _____ with understanding as this act is not for babies.
- C. When Jesus died, He was buried, but He did not stay buried. He rose again. When we are baptised, the Bible tells us that we are buried, but then arise like Jesus to a new life, leaving the past behind. So baptism _____ us with Jesus (Rom. 6:3-5). In Col. 2:12 and 3:1, we bury the old nature. In baptism, we crucify the old man and the new man arises to a _____ life.
- D. In the new life, we _____ sin (Rom. 6:11-18). Baptism _____ sin away (Acts 22:16). It is not the water that does it, but obedience to God allows the Holy Spirit to come into a clean life. 1 Cor. 10:2 speaks about Moses, saying that, “They (the Israelites) were all baptised...in the cloud and in the sea.” Similarly, after they had passed through the Red Sea, it closed behind them, symbolising that the old life in Egypt was behind them and a new life lay ahead in the Promised Land. The same promise stands today for us in water baptism.
- E. Water baptism also deals with our sinful hearts (Col. 2:11-12).

In the Old Testament, God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham. Those partaking in this covenant were required to undergo natural circumcision of the flesh as a sign of their commitment to God’s promise. In the New Testament, God has taken this natural ritual and replaced it with a spiritual requirement for all those who now belong to Christ (Gal. 3:29). In water baptism, we receive the spiritual experience of heart circumcision represented in the Old Testament by circumcision of the flesh. This natural ritual consisted of four elements that are all symbolic of something that now takes place in the circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2:29).

- A. In water baptism, we _____ the old sinful nature – we cut away flesh.
- B. In water baptism, it is a _____ to self – it is symbolic of the shedding of blood.
- C. In water baptism, it is a _____, a new life, a resurrected one (1 Pet. 3:20).
- D. In water baptism, we have a _____, the name of Jesus, the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Jesus commanded that baptism was to be administered in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19-20). Later, after Jesus' ascension and exaltation (Acts 2:33-36), the disciples came to see that the name of the Son was that of the Lord Jesus Christ. When they baptised, they baptised in this manner (Acts 2:36-41, 8:12-16 and 35-38, 10:48).

How many times have we heard the saying, "I wish I could be baptised again as it was such a great experience?" Why? It is only water after all. The reason we say it, is because we have obeyed the Lord and so He blesses us.

If a man or a woman refuses baptism, then we have the right to question his or her walk with the Lord because the Bible does the same (1 Pet. 4:17). Judgement begins with the family of God.

If every believer was obedient to water baptism, it would open up a floodgate of blessing in the House of the Lord.