

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

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PART 1: THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE

ORIGIN OF WATER BAPTISM

There is no place in the Old Testament which instructed the Israelites to practice water baptism by immersion. According to Roman and Jewish historical records, there was a resurgence among the Jews who wanted a closer relationship with God two hundred years before Christ. A group emerged from this movement that became known as the Essenes. They were known for their piety and preaching repentance marked with water baptism.

Nehemiah was the last ruler appointed by God from the group of Jews which returned from Babylon (473-403 BC). Judah and Jerusalem would be ruled by the Seleucid's until the Romans defeated them in 63 BC. The Maccabean revolt started during this time period from 167-134 BC.

The Essenes rejected violence and wanted no part of political power. They withdrew from society and lived in scattered communes; most of them located in the desert of the Dead Sea area. The Essene movement emerged in the second century before Christ, and even though they were not violent, they were targeted and killed by the Romans after the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

The Essenes set up the doctrine of water baptism for the repentance of sins. It was a ritual cleansing that involved immersing the person being baptized under water. Some historical scholars believe that John the Baptist had at some point been involved with the Essenes and he adopted water baptism and incorporated it into his own ministry.

Matthew recorded the meeting that took place between Jesus and John the Baptist at the beginning of the God-man's ministry. Jesus traveled to the place at the Jordan River where John was baptizing and asked to be baptized. His cousin refused and told Jesus that it was he, not the Son of God, who needed to be baptized. Nevertheless, John complied with Jesus' request, and God the Father and God the Holy Spirit declared their approval as God the Son submitted to the ordinance of baptism.

"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.” (Matthew 3:13-17)

WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism is the next step for the person that has been born again (i.e. saved, received Jesus as their Lord and Savior, received salvation). This is nothing new if one grew up in a Christian family, but for someone unfamiliar with the act, it may seem a little strange.

There are certain things like the five fundamentals (i.e. the deity of Christ, virgin birth, blood atonement, bodily resurrection, and the inerrancy of the scriptures) that are non-negotiable when it comes to the Christian faith.

Water baptism was an ordinance instituted by Jesus that has nothing to do with salvation. It is an act of obedience to declare that you are now part of the Kingdom of God, boldly sharing this information with the world, and even the angels.

*“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)*

The Great Commission is the only passage in the Bible where Jesus mentions water baptism. It was a command and He expects us to follow His instructions.

BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE

You are not being baptized into a denomination or a church, but into Christ. This was the norm in the early church.

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized...” (Acts 2:41a)

“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.” (Acts 8:12)

There are no references to water baptism in the Old Testament. It was John the Baptist that introduced water baptism to the Jewish people.

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all

Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Matthew 3:1-6)

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye 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 should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” (Acts 19:1-4)

Water baptism within the early church was known as “baptism of repentance” because it represented turning from sin in a public manner.

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” (Mark 1:4)

John the Baptist was known for baptizing people in the Jordan River, hence the title that was added to his name. Jesus was baptized by John at the onset of His ministry.

“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.” (Mark 1:9)

The God-man was baptized even though He was not a sinner, but humbled Himself to provide an example to follow.

“And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:10-11)

AN OUTWARD SIGN

Water baptism is not just a symbol of Christianity; rather it represents the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, allowing Christians to identify with the redemption work our Savior.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection...”
(Romans 6:3-5)

Jesus wants everyone that is born again to be baptized. A horse pulls the cart, but it does not push it. Likewise, one cannot be baptized without being born again, that would be like putting the cart in front of the horse.

EARLY CHURCH EXAMPLES

Water baptism serves as an outward expression of your personal commitment to Christ. The early church was willing to publicly identify with the God-man's death and resurrection.

John the Baptist baptized anyone who was willing to repent.

"And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark 1:5)

On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 new believers were baptized.

"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)

The Samaritans that believed were baptized.

"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." (Acts 8:12)

The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." (Acts 8:36-38)

Paul was baptized after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus.

"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." (Acts 9:18)

Cornelius and other Gentiles were baptized.

"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47)

Lydia and her household were baptized.

“And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.” (Acts 16:15)

The Philippian jailer and his household were baptized.

“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.” (Acts 16:33)

Many Corinthians were baptized.

“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8)

The Ephesian disciples were baptized.

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 19:5)

What do all these different accounts have in common? Water baptism is for those who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. It was the first thing believers did in the early church after confessing their sins and making Jesus Lord in their life. It is a way to express what God has done in your life in the presence of other believers and provides evidence of saving faith.

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:21-26)

ACT OF OBEDIENCE

Water baptism is an act of faith and obedience to the command of Jesus; it was one of the final instructions to the New Testament church.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 28:19)

Do you love Jesus? That might seem like an odd question, but the God-man associated love with obedience. We demonstrate our love not just with words, but also with action. Hence, to love Jesus, means that we also obey Him and follow through with the ordinances He instituted.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

Remember, it’s not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?