

# Baptisms -- The Exciting Meaning of Immersion

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Summary: A helpful message for anyone contemplating baptism or wishing to review and recommit before Passover. Baptism is so much more than a ritual we go through. Why do we immerse people? How many types of baptisms are there? Also: “baptism of fire” and how that differs from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, overview of repentance, counting the cost, the Jewish *mikvahs*, who should baptize, and into what name are we baptized and much more.

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Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ. This is Philip Shields, your brother with today’s exciting topic – baptism, or actually it is plural in Heb. 6:1-2, *baptisms*, because several types of baptisms are mentioned in scripture. As is my custom, I hope even if you’ve studied baptism before, you’ll pick up some exciting insights in today’s teaching.

I may use the word “immersion” many times, instead of baptism, because that is what baptism means. And when we think of being immersed into something or someone, that opens up all kinds of exciting insights. When an Israelite woman accepted the invitation of a man to be his bride, as Rebekah did to Isaac, when the betrothal ceremony was finished she went to a *mikvah* - a pool of ritual washing that had running water pumped through it – and was immersed. This pictured her decision to no longer just live for herself but to now be immersed in a new life with her new husband. She took on his name, made it her goal to be one with him and to begin the journey of the rest of their lives together. What were formerly 2 lives would now be one. And they would enter into a lifelong covenant, a new covenant, with one another.

This is similar to what happens to us when we accept the invitation to be the bride of Messiah. We confessed our ways that were not in line with His ways (repenting of our sins), we turned our lives around to go in his way (fruits of repentance), professed Him as our Lord and Master, believe in Him and then we were immersed in water. Immersion shows the death of our old self, and then we were raised up in newness of life in Him (Rom. 6:2-5). We weren’t just left under the water. No, part of immersion is that we come back up out of the water, symbolizing being resurrected with Christ in His new life with us and for us. We’ll read that shortly in Romans 6. Their immersions were in rivers and mikvahs with running water to symbolize life and newness.

Already, are we seeing how special, how profound, this concept of immersion – baptism – is?

Hebrews 6:1-3 mention the foundational doctrines, and they are listed in the order one would normally do them. First, repentance from dead works coupled with faith towards God, then immersions (baptisms), then laying on of hands, and so on. The list of foundational doctrines is not my topic today, except to say baptisms is stated there in the plural – “the doctrine of baptisms”, plural. We are not only immersed in water, but we are also immersed in the Holy Spirit which immerses us into the life and body of Messiah our Savior (1 Cor. 12:13). More details on this later. Right now I’m giving just the high view, the overview.

The Bible also speaks of there being just one baptism or immersion (Ephesians 4:5). So how can that be? We'll cover all this and so much more today. We'll primarily focus on water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then in the transcript I'll list scriptures and more data on other baptisms, for the record. However, I always recommend you hear the audio, but as you listen, that you follow along with the notes.

*This message should also be very helpful to anyone who:*

- wants to be baptized and accept Jesus Christ – or Yeshua the Messiah – as your Savior
- anyone who wants a good review before the Passover of what we each committed to at our immersion years ago. I've found this very helpful for me as well, just in preparing it.

Baptism is about being buried, immersed, going into something. The Greek word for the verb "baptize" is *baptizo*, and it means "to immerse". We simply transliterated a Greek word and made it an English word, but we miss the meaning. I could just as well say "immersion" instead of "baptism", and will periodically in this sermon. That also shows why the notion of sprinkling a baby at birth is not at all what baptism is all about. Be turning please to Acts 2:37-39.

### **Is baptism all that important?**

*Why should we even bother with this topic? Because scripture indicates that immersion is required for salvation.* Plus, if Yeshua Himself was baptized, that might be a good hint that we should someday be immersed too! How important is baptism? When Peter spoke on Pentecost day, his message pricked the hearts of his listeners and they asked him what they should do. Let's read it:

#### **Acts 2:37-39**

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

38 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. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

There's a lot there. Repentance has to precede baptism. Baptism is in the name of Jesus Christ, or Yeshua the Messiah – and it pictures remission of sins. Without our sins being remitted, we're doomed, for the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ our Lord. Baptism of the Holy Spirit puts us into Christ our Lord. So is baptism important? *Baptism depicts what we've done and said in our hearts already and is part of the process of salvation.*

#### **Mark 16:14-17**

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. 15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 **He who believes and is baptized will be saved**; but he who does not believe will be condemned".

So in Acts 2:38 Peter says to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. In Mark 16, our King tells us to preach in all the world, and those who believe and are baptized will be saved. There's one

more in 1 Peter 3:21-22, which we'll read shortly. I think it's getting pretty clear that baptism is vital for salvation.

But a teaser here: is water baptism the baptism that saves us? Really? I have a personal view on this that may surprise some of you. Later...

Turn now to 1 Peter 3:21. Notice that Peter does not put the emphasis on the water baptism or washing away of dirt — but focuses on the spiritual side, the new life, the resurrection in Christ. We die with Him in baptism, but we are also resurrected with Him and in Him as we come up out of the water. We are crucified with Christ, but we no longer live, but the lives we live is now the life Christ (Galatians 2:20). I gave a series on Galatians 2:20 a while back.

### **1 Peter 3:21-22**

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*, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

We see that water baptism is more than a ritual, more than a picture, more than a ceremony. Baptism publicly shows everyone that you are renouncing the old way of life, you want to bury it – and – it doesn't end there – that you want to participate in the new life Elohim has for you in our Savior. You've given baptism a lot of thought as you come to baptism, and as a mature person you've decided you want to throw your lot in with Yeshua's death and crucifixion – but also want to have *His* life renew you. You want to participate in His *resurrection*, *in fact*, as we shall see.

Paul said he counted all things as loss for Christ in Philippians 3. We are told that when we follow Yeshua, we must be willing to give up homes, lands, parents, siblings, children -- whatever may be required as God tests our resolve (Matthew 19:29) – and then He promises 100-fold in return. In baptism, we publicly confess we are giving up everything we have, everything we are – for Him. He in turn gives us everything He is, everything He has. We become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16-17). What a swap! What a deal.

### **Romans 8:16-17**

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — *heirs of God* and *joint heirs with Christ*, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

How excited would you be to find out you are the heir of Warren Buffet or Bill Gates? Did we yawn as we read “heirs of God”? Let's be aware of what this is telling us. Baptism starts us on the process of being an heir of God!

We give Him all our sins, and He gives us His forgiveness and His clean life (2 Cor. 5:20). What a swap. We give up our personal things on earth if required, and He shares the universe with us. Revelation 21:7 says “*whoever overcomes shall inherit all things*”. What a swap. Baptism is about this and more. Did you realize that? When you and I were called to baptism, we were being called to *being immersed into a relationship that will culminate in you being part of the very Bride of Christ*, to marry the very son of God. As in all good marriages, we become one with Him and in Him. And it all starts with repentance, then baptism and then the laying on of hands.

Water immersion/baptism also includes a public statement that you have repented of your sins and have accepted Yeshua, or Jesus, as your personal Saviour and King. *You're agreeing to be immersed in Messiah.* I think many children of God have either forgotten, or never learned, this vital truth since their baptism.

**Romans 6:1-6**

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 (immersed) 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.

So baptism is about burial *and* resurrection. So often the 2<sup>nd</sup> half (resurrection) is left out. Without the resurrection – we're just dead and buried, good for nothing useful. But, there can be no resurrection without a prior death. So immersion, or baptism, shows you recognize you need a fresh start, and accept Yahweh's offer to make you a new creation in Christ.

In baptism, you are starting a profoundly intimate and personal relationship with our Maker, not an organization. We'll see how in baptism, ***we are participating in one of the major miracles God will ever perform in your life – and you're smack dab in the middle of it all! You are the miracle.***

We've already covered a lot very quickly – and there's much more. We'll *also* get into:

- we'll get somewhat into repentance pre- baptism
- we'll cover "counting the cost" pre-baptism
- Who is authorized to baptize?
- Who should do the laying on of hands for the receiving of the Holy Spirit?
- What should you do to prepare for baptism? Is a long preparation required?
- We know Yeshua the Messiah – or Jesus Christ – was baptized. Why would *He* be baptized?
- Yeshua Himself was not baptized until around age 30. What age should YOU be if you seek baptism? Should toddlers, children or even teenagers be baptized – or not? If not, why not? If so, why so?

**I remember my own baptism in 1971**, after some counseling with the pastor, and discussion about repentance. I had been convicted by several sermons and then even more so, several conversations I had overheard of senior men. Their words pricked my heart, just as the people in Acts 2. I once more repented that very night, asked God to help me, wash me, cleanse me – and please let me be part of His family. I felt a strong calling. I had actually felt a calling from my childhood, but had wavered sometimes. So after counseling, it was determined I would be baptized. As I stood in the water tank, the minister asked me if I had repented of my sins. I said, "Yes sir, I have repented". Then he asked me if I had accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. Again, I nodded and said "Yes sir." He then made the statement of baptism and I was baptized.

Let me say again, this was not just picturing a burial of the old self, but coming up *out of* that watery grave into a new life in Christ. Please get this: *water baptism is not about joining a church group or denomination, although many pastors make it sound that way.* It is not about becoming religious per

se. I've just about "had it" with religion and churchianity myself. Even Satan can quote scripture. Even the pagans in Athens were religious (Acts 17:22).

### **Becoming part of His Body of believers**

Baptism is about starting a personal intimate relationship with your Maker and Savior. *That personal relationship is not solitary, however. We are called to be a part of a – hopefully harmonious BODY of believers (Romans 12:4-5).*

I've spoken at length on this in recent messages. The body of Christ is fractured and divided right now. We are not scattered due to persecution. *No, we scattered ourselves into competing organizations of men to our shame.* That's going to change somehow. Those with eyes to see and those with the heart of God are already reaching out across church lines frequently. And as I covered in 2 recent sermons, we will also be actively searching for lost sheep who have given up on God, on prayer, on study and on their future. Yeshua said we are either gathering or scattering (Luke 11:23). There's no in between. In baptism, you are committing to be part of His Body, the church, the spiritual organism of those who have God's spirit wherever they are.

We'll be actively reconnecting people with one another. We'll not be content to just pray for unity or pray for the lost sheep. No, it's much more than "be warm, be filled, you're in my thoughts and prayers". That's pabulum. It's deeper. We must find them, go to them, reconnect them, and inspire them to want to reconnect with their Shepherd.

As you come to baptism, you will try to understand the concept of becoming a part of God's children and of His family. You'll become a part of the Body of Christ. You will also become a part of the other members of the family. Romans 12:5 says we are members of one another.

We are also called to do good works (Matthew 5:16; Eph 2:10). We are called to be a light in a darkened world – and not just go off someplace by ourselves. This all takes time but its all part of counting the cost and understanding what you're getting into.

### **Repentance must precede Water Baptism**

Repentance is easily a whole sermon or two by itself. So please understand, I'm just going to have time to cover the high view, the overview here today.

Remember the sequence: after we are called by God, we enter into the one door into the Tabernacle area. The first thing we see is the altar of sacrifice, where innocent animals were slain and blood was spilled to symbolize that we had to accept the blood of the Lamb of God in our behalf to cover and pay for our sins. The wages of sin is death. We were doomed to die, but Yahweh offered His Son in our stead – all of which we'll be picturing at Passover.

Before baptism there must be genuine repentance. But understand this too: we also grow in our understanding of what repentance is as we grow in the Spirit. God is merciful not to let us see ourselves in all its awful horror all at once, I think. But on the other hand, I will tell you now – in years ahead you may wonder if you ever properly repented as you contrast how much deeper you will understand repentance 20 years from now than you do today. A lot of that should be expected, as we will grow even in this vital area.

**There is true repentance and there is false repentance.** True repentance evidences itself in visible changes, real fruit. False repentance is temporary. However, let me caution again: neither does it mean that if you ever slip again that you did not repent the first time. Most of us have weaknesses that may take years to fully overcome. Some of us slipped back into sin from time to time. Some teach the notion that repentance means to turn around so hard that it leaves all of us concluding we must have never repented, for we all still sin, unless you're dishonest with yourself. A sin is a sin is a sin. Abraham lied about Sarah being his wife twice, for example. Yeshua spoke of a time when a brother might come to you seven times in a day and seven times say "I repent". We are to forgive him even though some like to teach that if you ever do the same thing again, you didn't repent.

#### **Luke 17:3-4**

Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Tell Yeshua you don't think someone who sins again has repented. Is that true of you? True, the woman caught in adultery was told "go, sin no more" (John 8:11) but what if she would have committed adultery again a month later? Would she not have been forgiven that next time? So be honest with yourself: whatever your weaknesses are, most of us do slip up and slip back into the old problems. Paul said the same thing in Romans 7 – "that which I hate, I do". So we still sometimes sin the same sins: lax sabbath keeping, shading the truth, losing patience, losing our temper, coveting... oh, there's a big one. Our tongues – how many of us have perfectly kept that little devil from sinning? If we perfectly control our tongues, we're perfect (James 3:1-2). Do we not slip into gossip, for example, from time to time? That has to stop, of course, but we slip up.

When we first start making changes, it's often the easier changes – such as no longer keeping the pagan holidays of Christmas and Easter, we stop eating pork and lobster, we start keeping sabbath and the holydays. Those are good starts. We say we repented and here's proof. But the real changes are inside of us, in our hearts. The real changes, the harder changes, are ridding ourselves of vanity, lust, greed, envy and becoming the new person Christ is making available to each of us. In those things we often fail, often stumble and we must be growing so one by one we are defeating temptations to revert back to instances of giving in to pride, lust, greed and envy. I preach to myself.

So yes, I absolutely teach that repentance means to confess, *ask forgiveness and then prove you are sorry by turning around and going the other way.* But neither do I subscribe to the harsh judgmental condemnations some make, when they hear of a brother or sister's tragic sin, and say "he/she must not be converted. They must have never repented." Even long after his sins with Uriah and Bathsheba, David was still able to pray "take not thy Spirit from me" (Ps. 51:10-11). David was what we would call a converted man, filled with God's spirit. Even after His anointing from above, he made many grievous sins. Yes, Yahweh's prophets had His Holy Spirit (see 1 Pet. 1:10-11).

**What is repentance:** *repentance obviously has to also include contrition, feeling sorry* you did the wrong things. The publican in the temple could not even look up to heaven, but beat upon his breast, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13). So don't listen to those who say repentance has no emotion in it, no contrition. That's nonsense. Psalm 51 is full of contrition and emotion. In fact, godly sorrow has to precede godly repentance.

### **2 Corinthians 7:9-10**

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but *that your sorrow led to repentance*. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 ***For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation***, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

But there is more than just sorrow. And sorrow by itself is not repentance. I'll agree with that. But don't ever say that true repentance does not include sorrow! It must include sorrow. That sorrow leads to changing.

***Repentance results in turning to go the other way.*** When Pharisees came to John's baptisms, he warned them to "produce fruits worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). We'll read that passage in more detail later.

**If you're coming to baptism, learn all you can about repentance.** Read the description of a repentant person – or group – in **2 Cor. 7:8-12** is another good passage, describing the difference between godly sorrow that evokes a change, and the world's sorrow that basically is sorry it was caught, and no real change. Sorrow is involved in it. Study **Luke 18:9-14**, the publican and the other who went to the temple to pray. I'd also get out a concordance and read every passage you can with the words "repent" or "repentance" in it. I'd also study David's prayer of **Psalms 51** in careful detail. This is not a sermon on repentance, and I must move on, but I must say godly repentance is

One who is truly repentant is now experiencing brokenness, humility, sorrow, plus all the things listed in 2 Cor. 7:8-12 – a zeal to get things right, a right kind of passion for God and they're also able to forgive themselves and move on with joy, as David describes in Psalm 51.

We repent of:

- acts of commission – things we did but shouldn't have done (1 John 3:4).
- We repent of things we could have done for others, but didn't (James 4:17 "Therefore to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin".)
- And one more: we repent of *being* a sinner, like the publican in Luke 18:13. Check out the new sermon coming to the website titled "Repenting of what we are". This is the toughest of all to recognize and repent of. I'm still working on this one too.

Part of repentance is a confession that you now belong to Him. He is the Lord of your life, like the ancient lord of the manor, but more so. More on this later.

### **Counting the Cost**

***Part of that repentance is to count the cost of what you are about to commit to.*** I'm surprised how many brethren tell me they were never counseled to "count the cost" prior to baptism, as explained in Luke 14.

### **Luke 14:25-33**

25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate [Hebraic thought meant "love less by comparison"] his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be

My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it — 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Before your baptism, be sure you have decided that Yahweh is #1 in your life. You are committing to put Yahweh and His Son ahead of your own life, ahead of your children, ahead of our Dad and Mom, your wife or husband—and without this, “he cannot be my disciple” (v. 26). We all will be tested on these commitments off and on during our life in Messiah.

Verse 27 – we must be willing to bear our own cross, and follow Him. Bearing our own cross means there will be times we must be patient. God will not always heal us immediately. We won't have non-stop positively answered prayers instantly and every time. There's no cross-bearing that way! There will be times we will be disappointed with Yahweh who could have done something – but from our perspective, didn't. But in all of this, we are committing to trust, to obey, to wait patiently, and to endure to the very end.

In the future we may be heavily persecuted. We may be objects of derision and scorn. Yeshua said the whole world will hate us before this is all over with, because we're standing for truth, for light, for obedience, for righteousness – and that won't go over very well at all.

### **Luke 6:22-23**

Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.

23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

This topic of “Counting the cost” can easily be a full-length sermon by itself. Assignment: do your own study on what baptism means to you or on how far you're really willing to go to stay faithful to Messiah.

So, you repent, count the cost – and find a faithful minister to baptize you as I was baptized in 1971. As I stood there dripping wet, the minister then bowed his head again, laid his hands on my head, and asked God to give me His Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands.

I was 18 years old. I felt washed, felt renewed, felt happy, felt emotional, and felt forgiven. Blessed (Happy) is he whose sins are forgiven. I felt that.

### **After baptism...sometimes doubts come later**

Some time later, however, I began to second guess my repentance, baptism and conversion. I think many do. Why? Because – guess what? We are still flesh and blood. We still have the human nature



in us. Too many times, even though we now have God's spirit, we still give in to the flesh. Sometimes that comes as a big surprise if the pastor didn't explain this well beforehand.

Even after baptism, 1 John 2:17 shows we will sometimes still give in to lusts of the flesh – like over eating, over drinking, lusting after that gal over there exposing too much flesh, or losing our temper, not being a Christian light of God's way. The pride of life is still there – and we can still envy, can still do one-upmanship, we can still magnify the self. Sometimes it's the lust of the eyes. We covet what we can't or shouldn't have.

The Holy Spirit gives us some of divine nature without taking out the nature we already have. Hence the war in our inner selves. But if we feed the new nature in us and fight the old nature, we too can escape the old ways.

### **2 Peter 1:2-4**

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We have to *let* His mind be in us (Romans 12:1-2). We have to put on the new nature. We have to put on the armor of God. We have to fight, not as a shadow boxer, but for real. All while we also accept *His life for us*.

***So we learn that even though we now have God's spirit in us, we still have human nature as well, and these 2 natures are constantly at war.*** The nature which will win, will be the one we feed the most, the one we listen to the most. Finally, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection, the corruptible part of ourselves is changed to spirit, incorruptible, not able to sin at that point for we shall be as He is (1 John 3:1-2).

### **Galatians 5:16-17**

'I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.'

I only speak about this war that goes on because so many get discouraged after being baptized. Don't be. It's all part of the process of growing up. ***When scripture speaks of "perfection" and "being perfect", the Greek means "be mature, grow up"***. I personally don't think we will ever be "perfect" in the *English* sense of the word – meaning without flaw, without any mar, no defects – until we are changed. It says in Ephesians 5:25-27 that Messiah gave Himself for His bride that He might present her to himself as a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, but holy and glorious. A lot of that has to do with the series I gave on having faith in His righteousness. Please hear those sermons.

We also have to accept His life for us in faith. We are saved by grace through faith, for good works (Ephesians 2:8-10). Good works do not save us. Faith and grace save us. But we must live with good works. That's what pure religion is all about. That's what James 1:26-27 says: bridle your tongue, or your religion is worthless. He then defines pure religion as doing good things like caring for orphans and widows and keeping yourself unspotted from the world.

Let's get back now to some of the nitty-gritty details of baptism. I don't want to assume that all my listeners agree that "baptize" means to "immerse", so let's spend a few minutes on that.

### **BAPTISM Is Immersion, not sprinkling**

The Greek for "baptize" means "to immerse". It comes from the Greek verb *baptizo*, or *baptisma* or *baptismos*, as nouns. Vines Expository Dictionary clearly explains it means to be immersed. It also explains that you become the property of the One in whose name you are being baptized!

#### **John 3:23**

Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, *because there was much water there*. And they came and were baptized [Greek means "immersed"].

When Yeshua was baptized, he "came *out* of the water" – Mark 1:9-10.

The very picture of baptism would be lost, if we would not be immersed, or buried in water. How can sprinkling bury you? (Romans 6:1-4). We are "buried with him" and we are raised in faith in Him. Faith has a lot to do with baptism.

#### **Colossians 2:12-13**

*"buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses..."*

Baptism is preceded by repentance, as we read that Peter taught in Acts 2:38, and then a public confession that you are a repentant sinner and then professing a belief in our Messiah.

#### **Cite Matthew 3:4-6**

Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him 6 and were baptized (immersed) by him *in the Jordan, confessing their sins*.

#### **Romans 10:9-10**

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

What we'll read next, in Acts 8 – please be turning there – has a lot to teach us. It shows us how fast or how soon a person can be baptized and it shows faith in Christ, and it shows immersion:

#### **Acts 8:36-39**

Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

37 Then Philip said, *"If you believe with all your heart, you may."*

And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch **went down into the water, and he baptized [immersed] him.**

Your faith is in God's ability to save you – not your own ability to save yourself. We save ourselves by accepting God's life for us and showing faith in Him. Even the verse commonly overworked, "work out your own salvation" goes on to say *how...* which typically is *not* quoted or read by those who think they *can* create their own New Creation – and I guess, get the credit for it. No, the Creator of MY new creation is not me. I get no credit for it. Remember, "that no man can boast" – read it in 1 Cor. 1:29-31. There is but ONE creator. Let's read that whole passage about working out your own salvation and get the theology right!

### **Philippians 2:12-13**

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; **13 *for it is God who works in you both to will and to do*** for His good pleasure.

Everything in scripture is about "GOD our righteousness". It's the armor of God that protects us. He supplies it, we have to put it on and wear it. It is HIS righteousness that will save us so no flesh can boast (1 Cor. 1:29-31). I explain all this in FAR more detail in the righteousness series. So there's a lot of faith in Him when we discuss baptism.

### **HOW OLD should a person be before BAPTISM?**

- Surely since it pictures repentance, resurrection in Christ, and commitment – there needs to be maturity to comprehend what you're doing and committing to.
- Acts 8:12 – "men and women"
- Whole households were baptized – but not clear ages of youngest Acts 10
- Infants are not mentioned; not commanded, not exempted – so not clearly stated.
- Yeshua Himself is our example – and He was 30 when He was baptized.
- Bottom line: this is such a major commitment, the person should be old enough and mature enough to grasp the seriousness of this undertaking. I'd be reluctant to baptize anyone younger than 17 or 18 myself.

### **WHO should do the baptizing?**

It doesn't seem to me that the one who immerses you has to be someone important. Paul did not personally baptize many (1 Cor. 1:14-16). Neither did Yeshua (John 4:1-3). He let his disciples do that. They weren't even "converted" yet, nor had they received the Spirit yet. Ananias, the one who baptized Paul (Acts 8:10-19), was listed only as a disciple in Acts 10. I see no problem with a father assisting a pastor in the baptism of his adult children.

Laying on of hands is another matter. That should be an ordained minister who has himself received the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8 is clear. The church sent out Peter and John to follow up on Philip's baptisms.

**How soon should a person be baptized after they repent and accept the Master as their Savior?**

- Acts 2 – 3,000 in one day after one sermon
- Acts 16:15, 33 – and all family baptized, that day, all at once.
- Ethiopian eunuch – immediately (Acts 8)
- Cornelius and his household – immediately (Acts 10)
- Jailer and his family – immediately

### **PREBAPTISM COUNSELING**

- No such thing is ever mentioned. It's just a declaration of repentance and expression of belief in Yeshua, as your Savior.
- Every instance of baptism is shown to happen immediately upon confession of sins or repentance - Acts 8...
- Having said that, probably a good idea to understand what you're doing and what baptism pictures.

### **In Whose Name are we to be Baptized?**

Every scripture in the New Testament, except one, speaks of being baptized in the name of Yeshua, or Jesus the Lord. I personally today would baptize in the name of Yeshua, the name He was called by His mom as He walked the earth. That's the Hebrew name He was known by. The Greek is Iesous – and somehow that got transliterated into Jesus. But in the Hebrew, there is no real “J” sound, and they never would have called him Jesus. Having said that, I don't think it's a problem to say “Jesus”, but I just prefer Yeshua, the name His mom called him.

But it's clear we are baptized into Yeshua, into Jesus the Lord. There is one verse that says “into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” – Matthew 28:19. Many feel that has been an edited text to try to teach trinity. If that was the correct “formula” at baptism, why would we have all these verses which would show disobedience to that formula? All these verses I'm about to read – and there are even many more – all speak of being baptized into Yeshua's name, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**Acts 2:38** “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.”

**Acts 8:12** But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

**Acts 8:14-17** “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

**Acts 19:5** When they heard this, they were *baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*.

**Galatians 3:27** For as many of you as were *baptized into Christ* have put on Christ.

**Acts 2:38** 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.

**Acts 10:48** And he commanded them to *be baptized in the name of the Lord*. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

**Romans 6:3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Of course, through the Holy Spirit, we are baptized into one body – 1 Cor. 12:13. Whose? The body of Christ. So we are baptized in His name, and into His body.

If Matthew 28:19 is the correct formulation, then every single one of those scriptures I've just read would be in error. \* So personally, like more and more pastors, when I baptize now, I baptize people into the Messiah, in the name of Yeshua the Messiah – or if you prefer, I baptize them into Yeshua, of and by His authority.

### **Now let's study the various types of immersions:**

#### **Noah's Flood**

##### **1 Peter 3:20-22 ...we'll break into the thought**

20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited 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, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

First reference to baptism: Noah's flood. They went in the water above and around and below them – and came out of it. Again, burial and resurrection. So who were baptized? The sinners or the 8 in the ark? The 8 in the ark. This reference also focuses on the *spiritual* picture of immersion, not the water cleansing part so much. When we are baptized we are brought back to life from certain death.

#### **Red Sea**

##### **1 Corinthians 10:1-2**

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were *baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*,

1<sup>st</sup> – God calls us out of Egypt; Frees us from sin's hold (Passover, repentance), then baptized in Red Sea – and come up on the other side, out of Egypt.... THEN, given the Law

**Mikvahs of Judaism** – could be, maybe, a precursor of Christian immersion.

Possible connection to mitzvahs – ritual baths (before going up to the Temple)

TABERNACLE symbolism – repent (altar), baptized (laver and washings), receive HS (menorah)

**Baptism/immersion also pictures our willingness to go through, be immersed in, anything God has called us to.**

**Matthews 20:22-23**

22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. *Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*" They said to Him, "We are able." 23 So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

**Matthew 3:7-12 lists several all in one passage.**

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance**, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** 12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

That passage we just read speaks of at least 3 baptisms: water baptism, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and Baptism of Fire.

**Water Baptism, such as the immersion of John unto repentance; Just water baptism alone**

The "baptism of John" is referred to in Matthew 2:25; Acts 18:25; Acts 19:3

**Luke 3:3**

3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching *a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins...*

**Luke 7:29-30**

"And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

**Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Acts 1:4-5

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly **baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now."

Acts 19:1-7

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

So they said, "Into John's baptism."

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7 Now the men [no infants or children mentioned] were about twelve in all.

Mark 1:7-8

And he (John) preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8 I indeed baptized you with water, but **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.**"

1 Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

### **Baptism of Fire**

There's a very good explanation of this in a sermon by an elder I often listen to – Ben Faulkner – and his website is [www.cotsg.org](http://www.cotsg.org). Look for the sermon on Doctrine of Baptisms. He spends considerable time on the baptism of fire in his sermon, well done, and I don't have the time to focus on it.

I will just say this: I agree with Ben Faulkner and many others who believe the baptism of fire is a time we will be totally immersed in fire. It's talking about the lake of fire, the 2<sup>nd</sup> death. We repent – or remain condemned. When you see the context of John's words, it's about being burned up, and John is more than upset. It's not a good baptism for any of us. It is not referring to being zealous or "on fire for the Lord" – but burnt up as a punishment. Let's just read it again in Matthew 3.

#### **Matthew 3:7-12**

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance**, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** 12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Now, earlier I had asked if baptism is required for salvation. If you remember, right at the beginning of this message we covered Peter's Acts 2:38 statement telling the audience to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. In Mark 16:15 Yeshua said to preach, and those who believe would be baptized and be saved. We saw that Yeshua Himself was baptized. And we've also seen there is water baptism after repentance, and there is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

If baptism saves us, *which* baptism saves us? \*\* Are you sure? \*\*

Certainly we must repent and be water baptized picturing what we did in our hearts. So repentance and the water baptism that depicts it must be important. But isn't it receiving God's nature, God's mind, God's LIFE, God's resurrection what saves us? We are forgiven by his death, but we SAVED by His life (Romans 5:10).

Here's my thought on it: Water baptism is a *picture* of washing away our sins (Acts 22:16), but the even *more* important baptism is the one that happens *after* the water baptism: the laying of hands – where we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. *I personally believe that is the baptism technically that actually saves us. Certainly water baptism is important too, but ultimately we are saved by His life (Romans 5:10). It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which gives us the spirit of Christ, making us His own (Romans 8:9).*

\*\*

I'm out of time. If any of you are coming to repentance and immersion, God bless you. Don't delay. Let me know. I'd like to welcome you as a new sister and brother in Christ. Actually, Ananias called Saul (Paul) "brother Saul" even before his baptism (Acts 9:17).

Even my own daughters, when they were baptized, I rejoiced in being able to give each of them a big hug and say, "Welcome to the family – my new sisters." You see, though they will always be my daughters physically, in the spiritual sense we are all now children of Abba and I loved reminding them of that.

We have a high calling. Immersion is such a huge and important step not to be taken lightly – but once you repent, accept our Master as your savior and king, and wish to be immersed in His way – don't delay. It won't be long now before all God's children will come together as one and celebrate the marriage to the Son of God, the king of kings, Yeshua the Messiah.

Until next time, this is your brother in Christ, Philip Shields.