

# Water Baptism



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**May 22, 2011**

1. **Sanctioned by Christ's submission to it.**

- a. **Matthew 3:13-15 (AMP)** <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> But John protested strenuously, having in mind to prevent Him, saying, It is I who have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me? <sup>15</sup> But Jesus replied to him, Permit it just now; for this is the fitting way for [both of] us to fulfill all righteousness [that is, to perform completely whatever is right]. Then he permitted Him.
- b. **Luke 3:21 (AMP)** Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized, and [while He was still] praying, the [visible] heaven was opened

2. **Adopted by Christ.**

- a. **John 3:22 (AMP)** After this, Jesus and His disciples went into the land (the countryside) of Judea, where He remained with them, and baptized.
- b. **John 4:1-2 (AMP)** <sup>1</sup> NOW WHEN the Lord knew (learned, became aware) that the Pharisees had been told that Jesus was winning and baptizing more disciples than John— <sup>2</sup> Though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples

3. **Appointed an ordinance of the Christian church and is to be administered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.**

- a. **Matthew 28:19-20 (AMP)** <sup>19</sup> Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close *and* consummation of the age. *Amen (so let it be).*
- b. **Mark 16:15-16 (AMP)** <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach *and* publish openly the good news (the Gospel) to every creature [of the whole human race]. <sup>16</sup> He who believes [who adheres to and trusts in and relies on the Gospel and Him Whom it sets forth] and is baptized will be saved [from the penalty of eternal death]; but he who does not believe [who does not adhere to and trust in and rely on the Gospel and Him Whom it sets forth] will be condemned.

4. **Water, the outward and visible sign in.**

- a. **Acts 8:34-38 (AMP)** <sup>34</sup> And the eunuch said to Philip, I beg of you, tell me about whom does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else? <sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this portion of Scripture he announced to him the glad tidings (Gospel) of Jesus *and* about Him. <sup>36</sup> And as they continued along on the way, they came to some water, and the eunuch exclaimed, See, [here is] water! What is to hinder my being baptized? <sup>37</sup> *And Philip said, If you believe with all your heart [if you have a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah and accept Him as the Author of your salvation in the kingdom of God, giving Him your obedience, then] you may. And he replied, I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* <sup>38</sup> And he ordered that the chariot be stopped; and both Philip and the eunuch went

down into the water, and [Philip] baptized him.

b. **Acts 10:44-48 (AMP)** <sup>44</sup> While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to the message. <sup>45</sup> And the believers from among the circumcised [the Jews] who came with Peter were surprised *and* amazed, because the free gift of the Holy Spirit had been bestowed *and* poured out largely even on the Gentiles. <sup>46</sup> For they heard them talking in [unknown] tongues (languages) and extolling *and* magnifying God. Then Peter asked, <sup>47</sup> Can anyone forbid *or* refuse water for baptizing these people, seeing that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? <sup>48</sup> And he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (the Messiah). Then they begged him to stay on there for some days.

5. **Remission of sins, signified by.**

- a. **Acts 2:38 (AMP)** And Peter answered them, Repent (change your views and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it) and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of *and* release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- b. **Acts 22:16 (AMP)** And now, why do you delay? Rise and be baptized, and by calling upon His name, wash away your sins.

6. **Unity of the Church effected by.**

- a. **1 Corinthians 12:13 (AMP)** For by [means of the personal agency of] one [Holy] Spirit we were all, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, baptized [and by baptism united together] into one body, and all made to drink of one [Holy] Spirit.
- b. **Galatians 3:27-28 (AMP)** <sup>27</sup> For as many [of you] as were baptized into Christ [into a spiritual union and communion with Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah] have put on (clothed yourselves with) Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is [now no distinction] neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

7. **Confession of sin necessary to.**

- a. **Matthew 3:5-6 (AMP)** <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the country round about the Jordan went out to him; <sup>6</sup> And they were baptized in the Jordan by him, confessing their sins.

8. **Faith necessary to.**

- a. **Acts 8:37 (AMP)** *And Philip said, If you believe with all your heart [if you have a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah and accept Him as the Author of your salvation in the kingdom of God, giving Him your obedience, then] you may. And he replied, I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*
- b. **Acts 18:8 (AMP)** But Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed [that Jesus is the Messiah and acknowledged Him with joyful trust as Savior and Lord], together with his entire household; and many of the Corinthians who listened [to Paul also] believed and were baptized.

## 9. There is but one.

- a. **Ephesians 4:4-5 (AMP)** <sup>4</sup> [There is] one body and one Spirit—just as there is also one hope [that belongs] to the calling you received— <sup>5</sup> [There is] one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

## 10. Administered to

### a. Individuals.

- i. **Acts 8:38 (AMP)** And he ordered that the chariot be stopped; and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and [Philip] baptized him.
- ii. **Acts 9:18 (AMP)** And instantly something like scales fell from [Saul's] eyes, and he recovered his sight. Then he arose and was baptized,

### b. Households.

- i. **Acts 16:14-15 (AMP)** <sup>14</sup> One of those who listened to us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in fabrics dyed in purple. She was [already] a worshiper of God, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And when she was baptized along with her household, she earnestly entreated us, saying, If in your opinion I am one really convinced [that Jesus is the Messiah and the Author of salvation] *and* that I will be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay. And she induced us [to do it].
- ii. **1 Corinthians 1:16 (AMP)** [Yes] I did baptize the household of Stephanas also. More than these, I do not remember that I baptized anyone.

### c. Only to professing believers.

- i. **Acts 2:38 (AMP)** And Peter answered them, Repent (change your views and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it) and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of *and* release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- ii. **Matthew 3:6 (AMP)** And they were baptized in the Jordan by him, confessing their sins.
- iii. **Mark 16:16 (AMP)** He who believes [who adheres to and trusts in and relies on the Gospel and Him Whom it sets forth] and is baptized will be saved [from the penalty of eternal death]; but he who does not believe [who does not adhere to and trust in and rely on the Gospel and Him Whom it sets forth] will be condemned.
- iv. **Acts 8:12 (AMP)** But when they believed the good news (the Gospel) about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) as Philip preached it, they were baptized, both men and women.
- v. **Acts 8:37 (AMP)** *And Philip said, If you believe with all your heart [if you have a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah and accept Him as the Author of*

*your salvation in the kingdom of God, giving Him your obedience, then] you may. And he replied, I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

**Acts 10:47-48 (AMP)** <sup>47</sup> Can anyone forbid *or* refuse water for baptizing these people, seeing that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? <sup>48</sup> And he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (the Messiah). Then they begged him to stay on there for some days.

## 11. Administered by immersing the whole body of the person in water.

- a. **Matthew 3:16 (AMP)** And when Jesus was baptized, He went up at once out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he [John] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him.

**Acts 8:38 (AMP)** And he ordered that the chariot be stopped; and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and [Philip] baptized him.

## 12. Emblematic of the influences of the Holy Spirit. <sup>1</sup>

- a. **Matthew 3:11 (AMP)** I indeed baptize you n (with) water because of repentance [that is, because of your changing your minds for the better, heartily amending your ways, with abhorrence of your past sins]. But He Who is coming after me is mightier than I, Whose sandals I am not worthy *or* fit to take off *or* carry; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
- b. **Titus 3:4-7 (AMP)** <sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Savior to man [as man] appeared, <sup>5</sup> He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but because of His own pity *and* mercy, by [the] cleansing [bath] of the new birth (regeneration) and renewing of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> Which He poured out [so] richly upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. <sup>7</sup> [And He did it in order] that we might be justified by His grace (by His favor, wholly undeserved), [that we might be acknowledged and counted as conformed to the divine will in purpose, thought, and action], and that we might become heirs of eternal life according to [our] hope.

## Conclusion story:

My favorite illustration comes from my own pastoral experience. It took place on Sunday morning at Bible Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland. The Sunday morning service was just ready to begin when in came a man who had never attended our church before. He looked around with awe and amazement at the great number of people packed into the large auditorium.

He came slowly down the aisle looking from side to side and seated himself on the second row from the front. As I preached he listened with the keenest of interest.

When the invitation time came, I said, "Now how many of you are not saved, but you would like to be, and you want us to pray for you? Will you raise your hand?" He shot up his hand and waved it back and forth persistently until he was sure that I had seen it. When I asked those who would claim Christ to come forward, he literally bounced out and darted to the altar.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Torrey, R. (1995, c1897). *The new topical text book : A scriptural text book for the use of ministers, teachers, and all Christian workers*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos research Systems, Inc.

He stood stiff and erect: I asked, “Sir, do you believe that Christ died to save sinners?” “Yes, Sir, I want to do just that,” he said rejoicing, with a beam of triumph about him.

When he came into the baptistry, I dropped him into the water and out again to walk in the newness of life. He came up out of the water clapping his hands and shouting, “Hot dog, hot dog, hot dog.”

Our people roared with laughter. I quickly asked them for silence as I explained that this poor man had not been around the church and didn’t know about “Amen, Praise the Lord, and Hallelujah”; his word was “Hot dog,” and he was praising the Lord with the only vocabulary he knew. —Tom Wallace<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers*. Garland TX: Bible Communications.

## Appendix:

### **From Harper's Bible Dictionary:**

Baptism in the New Testament begins with John's baptism, which was a prophetic call to repentance and forgiveness of sins (*Mark 1:4* [<sup>4</sup> *John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*<sup>3</sup>]) When Jesus is baptised, however, it is understood quite differently: it is *not* for sin (*Matt. 3:13-15* see #1 above); rather it is a theophany (i.e. a self-revealing of God) in which Jesus is identified as 'Beloved Son' and commissioned as the herald of God's kingdom (*Mark 1:10-11*<sup>[10]</sup> *And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.*<sup>11</sup> *Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*<sup>6</sup>]; see *Isa. 42:1-9*). Christian baptism of converts retained the sense of rites of purification (*1 Peter 3:21*<sup>[21]</sup> *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,*<sup>5</sup>]) as well as adoption as God's children. Paul speaks of God pouring his Holy Spirit into converts' hearts, enabling them to say 'Abba, Father' (*Gal. 4:6* [<sup>6</sup> *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"*<sup>5</sup>]; *Rom. 8:15-17* [<sup>15</sup> *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*<sup>16</sup> *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*<sup>17</sup> *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.*<sup>6</sup>]). This baptism was in some sense to Christianity what circumcision was to Judaism. *John 3:3-5* [<sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*<sup>4</sup> *Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*<sup>5</sup> *Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*<sup>6</sup> *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*<sup>7</sup> *Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*<sup>8</sup> *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*<sup>6</sup>]), in fact, makes baptism—not circumcision—the formal entrance rite into the covenant community (see *Col. 2:11-12* [<sup>11</sup> *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,*<sup>12</sup> *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.*<sup>6</sup>])).

The interpretation of Christian baptism was fluid in the first century. At Corinth it was compared to Israel's exodus through the sea and its eating of the manna in the desert (*1 Cor. 10:1-4* [<sup>1</sup> *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,*<sup>2</sup> *all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,*<sup>3</sup> *all ate the same spiritual food,*<sup>4</sup> *and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.*<sup>4</sup>]). In other places it was compared with Noah's escape from God's wrath on sinners (*1 Pet. 3:21* listed above). It was also compared with Jesus' death and resurrection; Christians symbolically die to their sins and former lives, a death they share with Christ, and are buried with him; as they rise from baptism in purity, they share the new life brought by Jesus' resurrection (*Rom. 6:1-4* [<sup>1</sup> *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may*

<sup>3</sup>*The New King James Version. 1982 (Mk 1:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.*

<sup>4</sup>*The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Co 10:1-4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.*

abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> ]). ... <sup>5</sup>

### **From the Tyndale Bible Dictionary**

**The Baptism of John** John preached a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Lk 3:3). The origins of his rite are difficult to trace. Some have claimed that his baptism modeled that practiced by those at Qumran; others have urged that his baptism modeled that practiced by Jews when initiating proselytes to Judaism. The members of the Qumran community viewed themselves as the covenant community of the last days and so dwelt in the desert, living an ascetic life and immersing themselves daily in acts of ceremonial cleansing. At the same time they taught that internal repentance must accompany the external act (1 QS 2:3). Its sacramental nature is seen in the fact that only a full member of the community could practice it, and then only after two probationary years (1 QS 5:6). Converts from pagan religions were admitted to Judaism only after fulfilling certain obligations, which included the study of the Torah, circumcision, and a ritual bath to wash away the impurities of the Gentile background.

John’s baptism both parallels and differs with these forms of baptism. The genesis of his baptism may be found in the prophetic acted-out parable, which not only symbolized God’s message but also intended to bring it about. John’s practice had several theological ramifications: (1) It was intimately connected with radical repentance, not only of the Gentile but astoundingly (to his contemporaries) also of the Jew. (2) It was eschatological at the core, preparing for the Messiah, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Mt 3:11), and therefore looked to the final separation between God’s people and the wicked at the eschaton (i.e., “the End,” cf. Mt 3:12). (3) It symbolized moral purification and so prepared the people for the coming kingdom (Mt 3:2; Lk 3:7–14). In spite of the obvious connection between John’s ceremony and the early church, we cannot posit absolute dependence. In fact, it disappeared from Jesus’ ministry. At first, Jesus allowed his disciples to continue the rite (Jn 3:22), but later he seemingly discontinued the practice (Jn 4:1–3), probably for the following reasons: (1) John’s message was functional, while Jesus’ was personal/ontological. (2) John’s was forward-looking, expecting the coming kingdom, while Jesus’ was backward-looking, celebrating that event. (3) John’s was an interim practice, while Jesus’ was sacramental. Jesus’ ministry fulfilled John’s, so he severed himself from the latter’s *modus operandi*.

**The Baptism of Jesus** This event has its genesis in a complex interplay of motives, divine and human, within the messianic consciousness of Jesus (see Mk 1:9–11 and parallels). For John it was Jesus’ stamp of approval upon his message and ministry. Jesus was in continuity with John’s kingdom proclamation. For Jesus, it was also an anointing that signified the inauguration of his messianic ministry. As seen in God’s “heavenly voice” of Mark 1:11 and parallels, this has two aspects: (1) The voice alludes to Psalm 2:7, establishing Jesus’ unique sonship. (2) It alludes to Isaiah 42:1, establishing him as the messianic “servant of Yahweh.” (This is discussed at greater length in the article below.)

**Jesus’ Resurrection Command to Baptize** Here we find the true basis of the church’s practice (Mt 28:19). As already stated, the disciples stopped employing it, so it is here that we see the institution reconstituted as an ordinance based on the death and resurrection of Christ. It was no longer a forward-looking phenomenon but had now become a realized activity centering on the gospel message, certified by the risen Christ who is exalted to universal lordship. It also is an essential aspect of the discipling activity, as seen in the use of the participle “baptizing” after the main verb “make disciples.” Finally we might note that the act signifies the entrance of the believer “into” union with (literally “into the name of”) the triune Godhead.

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<sup>5</sup>Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary*. Includes index. (1st ed.) (92). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

**Baptism in the Early Church** Acts 2:38 shows that baptism was a sacral institution from the very beginning. This takes it back to the earliest days of the church. In the primitive church it was an important part of the salvation process (Acts 2:38, “repent and be baptized”) and was accomplished via confession and prayer “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). Probably there was a question-and-answer period in which the believer confessed his faith and dedicated himself to Christ. The result was reception into and identification with the messianic community of the new covenant, signifying both forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18) and the reception of the Holy Spirit (Lk 3:16; Acts 2:38, 41; 9:17; 10:47–48; 11:16–17; 19:5–7). See Baptism of Fire; Baptism of Jesus; Baptism of the Spirit.

**Jordan River** Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River.

**The Theology of Baptism in Paul’s and Peter’s Epistles** Paul’s basic statement is found in Galatians 3:27, “baptized into Christ.” The rite of baptism is christological at the heart, signifying union with Christ. This is clarified further by Romans 6:3–8, which equates baptism with dying and rising (cf. Col 2:12–13). At the same time baptism is related to the Spirit; 1 Corinthians 12:13 connects “baptism by the one Spirit” with being “given that same Spirit.” Many see baptism as the outward confirmation of the inward “seal” by the Spirit (2 Cor 1:21–22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). This leads us to the eschatological dimension of baptism. In its relation to the present work of Christ and the Spirit, it externalizes the outpouring of salvation in the age of fulfillment, because it is the initiatory rite signifying the believer’s entrance into the blessings of the new age (Ti 3:5).

There is also a definite link between baptism and the OT covenants. The major connection is with the Abrahamic, especially with the circumcision that characterized it. Paul in Colossians 2:11–12 combines Jewish circumcision with Christian baptism as pictures of the redemptive work of Christ. The debate today centers on the degree of continuity between them—does baptism perform the same function in the New Covenant, i.e., forensic and imputative? Whatever the theological ramifications, Paul at least cannot be made to say this. Rather, he borrows here the Judeo-Christian imagery of the “circumcision of the heart” (Dt 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; Rom 2:28–29; Phil 3:3). Christians experience the fulfillment of that which circumcision merely prefigured, a spiritual, totally efficacious reality.

Baptism is also related to the Noahic covenant in 1 Peter 3:19–21. There Noah’s deliverance through the waters is considered a picture of the effects of baptism. The debate centers on the meaning of “baptism now saves you.” The answer is connected with the thrust of the ensuing clarification, “an appeal to God for a clear conscience” (Revised Standard version, literally “of a good conscience”). While the developed dialogue between the sacramental and baptist views is considered below, we will simply comment here that the interpretation “appeal *by* a good conscience” best fits the emphatic position of this phrase and the picture in this verse of a pledging convert. Baptism is the seal of the salvation covenant, which itself has been accomplished beforehand by the act of Christ and the faith decision of the individual.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (144). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.