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## Water Baptism

By Garland M. Robinson

WATER BAPTISM is a COMMAND of God! To the household of Cornelius we read, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he COMMANDED THEM TO BE BAPTIZED in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47-48). Rest assured that no one can be saved when they do not comply with God's commands! In John 15:14 Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you."

Immersion in water culminates EVERY example of conversion in the New Testament (See Examples of Conversion chart at the top of next page). It is the crowning act that carries one from being a "sinner" to a "saint". You NEVER read of one being saved BEFORE they were baptized. You NEVER read of one being told to PRAY before they were baptized. Baptism is directly linked with "remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), "believing" (Acts 8:12), "rejoicing" (Acts 8:38-39), "sins washed away" (Acts 22:16), "remission of sins" (Acts 10:43, 47), an "open heart" "faithfulness" (Acts 16:14-15), "rejoicing" (Acts 16:30-34), and "hearing and believing" (Acts 18:8).

Just before Jesus ascended back into heaven, he told his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven and then baptize those who wanted to be saved! "Go . . . 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 . . ." (Matthew 28:18-20). "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" (Mark 16:15-16).

### BAPTISM IS AN IMMERSION

There are three separate actions performed today in the religious world by those who profess to baptize in compliance to the New Testament. There are

religious bodies that "sprinkle" water on the recipient of baptism, some "pour" water on their subject, while still other "immerse" the one desiring baptism. In some churches one even has their choice! Does the Bible give any clue as to the action/mode of baptism? Is it permissible to practice any one of the three?

The Greek word for "baptize" is "baptizo". It is found 80 times in the Greek New Testament and is translated: "baptize," "wash," "baptist," and "baptized."

What is the meaning of this word? Note these statements from Greek Lexicons and scholars:

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: "to dip, to immerge, submerge."

Liddell and Scott: "To dip, dip under."

Greenfield: "Immerse, immerge, submerge, sink."

Berry: "to bathe oneself, to immerse, to submerge."

Cremer: "To immerse, to submerge."

Stephanus: "To dip or immerge." The word means "immerse," "to submerge," "to cover over," and NEVER anything else!

Not only does the word "baptizo" describe the action/mode of baptism - the Bible gives examples of its action: John the Baptist (John 3:23) and Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:36-39). These two examples completely describe how it was done in the New Testament.

"And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was MUCH WATER there: and they came, and were baptized" (John 3:23).

"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. And when they were COME UP OUT OF THE WATER, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:36-39).

According to these divine examples, baptism requires "much water," "going down into water" and "coming up out of water." Sprinkling and pouring do not meet any of these requirements. Immersion, however, meets all of them!

### BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

"All Spiritual blessings" are IN Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN Christ, (Ephesians 1:3).

There is "no condemnation" IN Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

We are a "new creature" IN Christ. "Therefore if any man be IN Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

"The saved" are IN Christ. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10).

Since "ALL spiritual blessings are IN Christ," there is "NO condemnation IN Christ," we are "new creatures IN Christ," and the "saved are IN Christ," the logical question for anyone to ask is: "HOW do I get INTO Christ?"

The Bible does not leave us to question as to HOW one gets INTO Christ. God makes it so plain that even a child can understand! It's so simple the "wise of this world" stumble over it. It confounds those who look for something greater (I Corinthians 1:18-21)!

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**THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM**

There is no subject of the New Testament any more clear and distinct than the purpose of water baptism. There should be no confusion over this vital subject. Yet, there are many statements made by the various denominations: "It is the outward sign of an inward grace," "One should be baptized because they are saved," "Baptism is to make one a member of our church," "You do not need to be baptized."

Why be baptized? What does the Bible teach concerning it?

1. A person is baptized in order to **OBEY THE LORD**. It is a command of God (*Acts 10:48*). It is not an optional part of the gospel. Jesus said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (*John 6:46*)? When the apostles went into all the world, they did exactly as they were commanded (*Acts 2:38, 22:16*).

2. A person is baptized to **BE UNITED WITH CHRIST**. *Acts 4:12* says, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." To enjoy the blessings that are found **IN** Christ (*Ephesians 1:3*), one must be united with him. The only way to be united with him is to be baptized into him (*Romans 6:3-4*).

3. A person is baptized in order to **BECOME A CHILD OF GOD**. Great privileges are provided to those who are "sons of God" (*Ephesians 1:3*). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (*Galatians 3:26-27*).

4. A person is baptized in order to **BE BORN AGAIN**. Jesus told Nicodemus one had to be "born again" to enter the kingdom of heaven (*John 3:3*). This new birth is explained in verse 5 as being born "of water and the spirit." The new birth is further explained in *Romans 6:3-6* when one is baptized and raised to "walk a newness of life." The "old" is buried and the "new is raised."

5. A person is baptized in order to **BECOME A NEW CREATURE**. Baptism puts one into Christ (*Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27*) and if "any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (*II Corinthians 5:17*). In baptism, we are "buried with him in baptism, where also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (*Colossians 2:12*).

6. A person is baptized in order to **BE SAVED FROM THIER SINS**. "Repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins" (*Acts 2:38*). "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins" (*Acts 22:16*). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (*Mark 16:16, I Peter 3:21*).

7. A person is baptized in order to **BE CLEANSED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD**. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (*Hebrews 9:22*). HOW does Christ's blood take away our sins? It washes them away. "Washed . . . from our sins in his own blood" (*Revelation 1:5*). "These . . . have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (*Revelation 7:14*). WHEN does it wash them away? When one baptized! "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins" (*Acts 22:16*).

**BAPTISM STANDS BETWEEN**

Baptism stands between the sinner and being saved from sins. Note these many scriptures which vividly point this out:

Sinner - Baptism - Salvation . . . . . Mark 16:16  
Sinner - Baptism - Remission of Sins . . . . . Acts 2:38  
Sinner - Baptism - The New Life . . . . . Rom. 6:4  
Sinner - Baptism - Sin Destroyed . . . . . Rom 6:6  
Sinner - Baptism - Washing . . . . . Acts 22:16  
Sinner - Baptism - Calling . . . . . Acts 22:16  
Sinner - Baptism - Kingdom . . . . . John 3:5  
Sinner - Baptism - Cleansing . . . . . Eph. 5:26  
Sinner - Baptism - Dead To Sin . . . . . Rom. 6:7-12  
Sinner - Baptism - Free From Sin . . . . . Rom. 6:18  
Sinner - Baptism - Salvation . . . . . I Peter 3:21  
Sinner - Baptism - Forgiveness . . . . . Col. 2:11-12  
Sinner - Baptism - Christ's Blood . . . . . Rom. 6:3  
Sinner - Baptism - A Child Of God . . . . . Gal. 3:26-27  
Sinner - Baptism - Death of Christ . . . . . Rom. 6:3  
Sinner - Baptism - New Creature . . . . . Rom. 6:5  
Sinner - Baptism - New Creature . . . . . II Cor. 5:17  
Sinner - Baptism - Good Conscience . . . . . I Peter 3:21  
Sinner - Baptism - Putting On Christ . . . . . Gal. 3:26-27  
Sinner - Baptism - Raised With Christ . . . . . Eph. 2:6  
Sinner - Baptism - Putting Off Sins . . . . . Col. 2:11-12  
Sinner - Baptism - Sanctification . . . . . Eph. 2:6  
Sinner - Baptism - Body of Christ . . . . . I Cor. 12:13  
Sinner - Baptism - Wearing Name of Christ . . . . . I Cor 1:13

**CONCLUSION**

The first public act of Christ was his baptism (*Matthew 3:13-17*). The last thing he ever said on earth was to tell his disciples to go into all the world and baptize penitent believers (*Matthew 28:18-20*). How then can anyone belittle the importance of water baptism? It is the turning point from the old man of sin to the new life of Christ. Why do you wait dear sinner, "arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord" (*Acts 22:16*).

**WATER BAPTISM**

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Water Baptism is the act by which one gets INTO Christ. Never do you read in any place where one accepts, believes, repents or confesses INTO Christ. Each of these steps are UNTO, going toward being a child of God. But its only by the act of water baptism that one "passes from death to life" - from the "old to the new" life in Christ (*Romans 6:3-4*).

HOW does one get INTO Christ? Let the Bible answer. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized INTO Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (*Romans 6:3*)? A sinner gets INTO Christ by being baptized into him! Remember, that's where salvation is (*II Timothy 2:10*)!

WHEN does one get INTO Christ? If baptism is HOW one gets INTO Christ, WHEN does one get into Christ is the next question. Again, let the Bible answer. "For as many of you as have been baptized INTO Christ have put on Christ" (*Galatians 3:27*). When does one "put on Christ? WHEN they are baptized!

You will read in vain to try and find any other way by which one gets INTO Christ than water baptism. Jesus forever settled the question in *Mark 16:16*, "He that BELIEVETH and is BAPTIZED shall be SAVED." Have a child read this verse and then ask this question: "What did Jesus say you have to do to be saved?" The honest heart of a child cannot but answer exactly as this verse says! One needs help to misunderstand what Jesus commanded. Has your heart become so calloused that it refuses to believe and obey what your eyes read?

# Denominational Baptism

By Max Miller

Denominational churches have a loose and varied interpretation of the Biblical doctrine of baptism. They generally acknowledge that baptism is a Biblical subject, that it was taught by Holy Spirit inspired men of the first century, and that New Testament Christians were baptized. Almost all denominational churches teach that baptism is important to the Christian, that, in some way, it identifies the believer with Christ and salvation. However, denominationalism is not in agreement as to what actually constitutes the act of baptism; neither does it agree as to the action or purpose of baptism. Denominationalism does not agree as to who is the proper candidate for baptism, therefore baptizing believers and unbelievers alike; baptizing the living as well as baptizing for the dead. Surely there must be a clearer concept of Biblical baptism than that which is held by denominational churches and its membership.

Frequently we learn of people in a denominational church who began a more serious study of the word of God. They soon become aware of the fact that they are not living in accord with the truth revealed in the Bible. They come to realize that they are members of a church that is not once mentioned in the Bible; that "the church of their choice" is a manmade, man-oriented organization that is strange and foreign to Biblical teachings. They realize that their church is guided by man-made creeds and disciplines. They come to learn of the one church and the one faith, and they also come to learn of the one baptism (Eph. 4:4-6). Many then reject their former baptism, or rather that which they thought was baptism, and are immersed into Christ for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38). Let us consider some of their misconceptions, especially as it relates to baptism.

## BAPTISM, A NON-ESSENTIAL COMMAND

The denominationalist declares that baptism is not essential to one's salvation. Some agree that baptism is a Biblical command, for how could they deny that Jesus ordered his disciples to baptize believers; that Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47-48). Essentially, the argument is: Baptism is a command of Christ, but it is not essential that one obey the Lord's command of baptism in order to be saved. We here have people saved by the Lord who do not obey his command. This con-

tion falls when the denominationalist accepts the inspired penman's words of Hebrews 5:9, ". . . he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." He saves only those who obey him. But, denominationalism has him to be the Savior of those who do not obey him! Commands are to be obeyed. Baptism is a command. Therefore, baptism is a command that is to be obeyed in order to be saved.

## BAPTISM FOLLOWS SALVATION

Many have made such a statement as, "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins." This is a claim that God has forgiven and saved them. Later they are baptized. Some have "Prayed through" and were saved; some others have had some sort of a religious experience and were saved from their sins - so the story goes. These all claim to be saved and later they are baptized. If such statements and claims were true, then their baptism could not be "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Apparently, Peter was wrong when he declared, "*Baptism doth also now save. . .*" (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism is to "*wash away thy sins. . .*" (Acts 22:16). But if sins have already been forgiven then one was saved before his sins were washed away! In setting aside Peter's words, one was saved before he was saved! Absurd.

The Bible is right. The Bible being right then the denominationalist must be wrong for we have here a clear contradiction. Forgiveness of sins does not precede baptism, but for the penitent believer who confesses his faith in Christ, forgiveness is at the point of baptism. He obtains God's forgiveness in that act of obedience. It is in the act of baptism that sins are remitted (Acts 2:38), sins are washed away (Acts 22:16), and from baptism one is raised to "*walk in newness of life*" (Rom. 6:3-4).

## JOINING A CHURCH

Most denominational churches teach that one is to be saved and then he should join the church of his choice (and they want him to choose their church). We have heard the testimony of those who "have had an experience of grace" coming forth in a church service seeking membership therein. If their testimony is approved, and it usually is (as if men could sit in judgment on such matters), then the candidate is baptized into the fellowship of that church. This is the way they join the church. The denominationalists deny that being a member of the church is essential to salvation, they also deny that baptism has anything to do with one's salvation. Hence, their baptism is a non-essential act to get into a non-essential religious organization.

The New Testament does not record a single instance of any one joining the church. Neither does it even mention a single denominational church. However, we do learn that those who were baptized for the remission of sins were added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). In the act of baptism they were baptized into the one body which is the church of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13), thus becoming a member of it.

## SPRINKLING AND POURING

Some denominations pour or sprinkle water on a person and so designate the act baptism. An English dictionary defines the word **baptism**: "*to dip or immerse in water or to pour or sprinkle as a religious rite.*" English dictionaries give the meaning and usage of words as they are used by English speaking people. The word **baptism** is not an English word but an untranslated word from the Greek New Testament. The Greek **baptidzo** is anglicized **baptize**. The word is a verb, thus showing an action. The action of baptism is that of immersion, a dipping. Such is the definition from a Greek Lexicon, a book that gives the usage and meaning of words used in the New Testament.

Peter identifies the object of the verb as **water**. Baptism is the act, an act of immersion, or burial. The element in which one is immersed or buried is water. "*Can any forbid water, that these should not be baptized*" (Acts 10:47). "*Eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. . .*" (1 Peter 3:20-21). The like figure of salvation is baptism in water. New Testament baptism is not pouring or sprinkling but an immersion or burial, "*we are buried with him by baptism*" - in baptism (Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12).

Some ask the question, "Should I be baptized again?" One can be baptized only once in a strict Scriptural sense. One may be immersed again and again, but such is not baptism. If one has repented of sins, holding Christ as the object of faith, even confessing him as the Son of God, and is then baptized (immersed, buried, dipped) in water for the remission of sins - he has been baptized with the one baptism (Eph. 4:5). This is pleasing to God.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT SHOWS SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

Baptism remits sins (Acts 2:38).  
Baptism puts one into Christ (Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27).

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**.....SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM**

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Baptism is symbolic of one's death to sin, one's burial with Christ, one's being raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-5; John 3:1-7).

Baptism saves the believing penitent sinner (1 Pet. 3:21).

Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21).

Baptism puts one into the body of Christ, the body that is his church, the body or church which he has promised to save ( 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:21-22; 5:23).



Make more friends. Almost anyone will make a better friend than enemy.

You make more friends by becoming interested in other people than by trying to interest people in you.

If I wanted to punish someone I would teach him to hate another.  
- Hannah Moore.

What you can do, or dream you can - begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.

No talent, no self denial, no brains, no character are required to set up in the grumbling business.

The world is full of willing people: some willing to work, the rest willing to let them.

Too many professing Christians never get religion on their hands and feet.

Service is the rent we owe mankind for the space we occupy on the earth.

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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