

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

— 1 Corinthians 12:13 —

What About Baptism

Baptism of Repentance

Mark 1:1-4 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

John the Baptist preached the “baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” It is not the same baptism that he performed in the river Jordan. John’s baptism could not bring about remission of sins; the baptism of Jesus could.

To “baptize” is to wash completely or cleanse. It is a metaphor for the true cleansing of the soul. In the book of Mark, John the Baptist demonstrates that there is a difference between his baptism and the baptism of Jesus.

Mark 1:7-8 ..., There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

The two key words in this passage are “with” and “but,” *with* denoting “by what method” and *but* showing “exception”. Consider it written this way, “I indeed have baptized you using water, however, he shall baptize you using the Holy Ghost.”

Water Baptism is a Symbol

This will probably offend many, but baptism of water was only a symbol pointing to the real baptism. The rituals of the temple were symbolic of the real sacrifice that Jesus would later make. We do not continue to practice ritual sacrifice to remind us that Jesus died for our sins. Why should we continue to practice water baptism when we have received the Holy Spirit? (Read Hebrews 8- 10)

Hebrews 9:8-14 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the

eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Christianity is based entirely on faith. There is no ritual requirement prerequisite to being Christian. It is not wrong to perform or receive water baptism. It is wrong, however, to say that it is conditional to salvation. Consider the thief crucified with Jesus in Luke 23:39- 43,

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The thief did not have a chance for baptism, still Jesus promised him that he would be in paradise.

If you personally feel that you should receive baptism with water, then by all means do so. It would be wrong not to, for conscience sake. (Read Romans 14)

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17,

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

If Paul had felt that water baptism was very important, he would not have ceased to practice it. Water baptism was a transitional figure between the old covenant and the new covenant. John was sent by God to perform water baptism while preaching the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which had not yet been given. Jesus said,

John 7:38-39 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow, rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified).

When the Holy Ghost was given, the need for a symbol was finished.

Hebrews 8:10-13 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

Baptism of Fire

The truth is we must be baptized to be saved, but it is with the Holy Spirit that we must be baptized.

There is another baptism mentioned in the Bible, the baptism of fire found in Matthew 3:11-12 and Luke. It says,

Luke 3:16-17 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Mark 9:49 For every one shall be salted with fire,...

We will be baptized with fire; it is inevitable. This is not figurative or spiritual symbolism, it is literal. There is an account in Daniel which also serves as a precursor and example of the baptism of fire.

During a time when the kingdom of Judah was overthrown by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the people of Judah were taken captive.

Daniel 1:6-7 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

These young Jewish captives refused to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. For their obstinence, three of them were thrown alive into a “burning fiery furnace.”

Daniel 3:20-25 And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Verse 27 and 28 says, “the fire had no power over these men because they trusted their God.” In Revelation 21:8, we see another kind of fiery furnace.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

For we who trust in God, Revelation 20:6 says,

Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

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