

BAPTISM

I. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Mk.1:4-8 - John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey. And he was preaching, saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to bend down and untie the straps of His sandals. I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

ONE BAPTISM

INUNDATED

Eph.4:4-6 - There is one body and one Spirit, just as you also were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Any time today's scripture is discussed people soon get into a debate about what baptism Paul is speaking of. Some say water baptism, others say the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and still others will argue that this is the baptism of fire. I see this passage more and more as speaking as an immersion into God. After all is said and done, we were created to live in and of God. I see water baptism that was introduced on a mass scale by John the Baptist as a prophetic act by John. I can see him in his camel skins, leather girdle, and uncut hair and beard calling out to Israel for repentance. He said he baptizes in water for repentance but the one coming after him would baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire. John's act of baptism is a prophetic act picturing the heavenly ministry of Jesus as the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. Maybe John was immersing people into water as a picture of our need to be immersed into God. Today many Christians continue the practice of baptism by immersion. This is leaving behind our world of self and entering in to the world of the Lord. Here is how the Kittle word book describes this.

"John is preparing the people for God's imminent coming. His baptism is an initiatory rite for the gathering of the messianic community....Cleansing, connected with repentance, is the main point, with a suggestion of purification for the coming aeon. The contrast with the baptism of the Spirit and fire shows that there is at least some influence of the idea of life-giving inundation..."

I love this phrase, "life giving inundation". This is a strange, almost conflicted use of inundation. Inundation normally has the idea of destruction, such as the inundating waters of Katrina. In this sense we are inundated or overwhelmed with the life giving waters of the Lord. John foresaw a day when multitudes would be saturated with the person called the Holy Spirit. So yes, I believe in one baptism; that would be an immersion into God Himself. So let's each of us wade out into the waters and be inundated with God.

II. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Acts 2:37-39 - Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what are we to do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

III. ENTERING INTO THE DEATH OF CHRIST THROUGH BURIAL

Rom.6:3 - Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

IV. BEING RAISED UP WITH CHRIST

Rom.6:4-7 - Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for the one who has died is freed from sin.

V. CONSIDER YOURSELF DEAD TO SIN AND ALIVE TO GOD

Rom.6:11 - So you too, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

VI. BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF JESUS

Matt.28:18-20 - All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 2:38 - Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When I was a new Christian I lived in the San Joaquin Valley near Fresno, California. There were many different types of Christian groups as well as cults that were fairly strong and carried influence in that region. One Of the Christian groups was the Apostolic or Oneness churches. These were Pentecostal groups that had split from the other Pentecostal churches not many years after the Azusa Street Revival. They believe in what they call oneness and were very strict in the formula for baptism. I stress the word formula for a reason. They believe that you have to say the phrase "in the Name of Jesus" while baptizing for it to be valid. Their dogmatism caused me to search and find out what I believed was the truth about baptism. I don't think there is a formula,

so to speak, but a glimpse into the beauty of baptism seen in today's verses. Jesus said to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Peter said to baptize in the Name of Jesus. Could it be they were both saying the same thing? I believe they are. Here is what I believe is the meaning of using the Name of Jesus.

1. WHEN YOU SPEAK OF SOMEONE'S NAME YOU ARE SPEAKING OF THEIR REPUTATION OR GLORY - WE ARE BAPTIZED FOR THE GLORY OF HIS NAME.

So when you are baptized it's not the formula of exactly what is spoken by the person baptizing you, the key is that your baptism and testimony brings glory to His Name. You are being baptized for His glory, for the sake and glory of His Name.

2. NAME IS ALSO CONNECTED TO AUTHORITY - WE ARE COMMISSIONED WITH THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JESUS TO BAPTIZE IN HIS NAME (AUTHORITY).

This is another aspect of what it means to operate in the Name of Jesus. It means you baptize not in your authority or name but in the authority and Name of Jesus.

So let's glorify His Name as we go into our world, make disciples, and baptize them in His Name.