



Empowering People to Change the World

## **The Significance of Baptism**

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## The Significance of Baptism

Our models for the significance of baptism in the Bible are John the Baptizer, Jesus, and the early church.

John led out with baptisms in the wilderness, yet he also pointed to a greater baptism that would come through the Messiah Jesus.

### Mark 1:4-5

**John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.**

#### 1. A Baptism into Repentance

- John came preaching a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sin
- Repentance comes from the Greek word *metanoia*, meaning to “turn around; to do a 180.
- Confession of Sin means to agree with God that you have sinned. So, confession comes first, agreeing with God that the life we’ve lived and the sins we have committed are wrong. Then, it’s turning from our sinful ways to God’s ways. Choosing to become a disciple of Jesus.

John recognized that he was a forerunner, preparing the way for something better, something more complete to be found in the coming Messiah.

### Vs. 6

**Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. <sup>8</sup> I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”**

- Matthew adds more color to what Mark says, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” I believe this is an intimation of what He will do with the church.
- Jesus is telescoping a new significance of the Holy Spirit, which had not yet been released, that will come in the “church age.”

## **Vs. 9**

**It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.<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.”**

## **2. A Baptism into the Spirit**

### **Jesus modelled the significance of Baptism:**

- by opening up His public ministry, not with signs and wonders, not by casting out demons, not even with preaching the Kingdom, but rather with getting baptized.
- It was the first demonstration of His kingdom ministry
- Jesus was baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit at the same time
- The anointing of the Holy Spirit at His baptism initiated a whole new ministry of the Spirit that was greater than John’s
- For the believer, when we give, confess our sins, repent of our sins, and believe in Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts
- This can happen in believing, like at Easter Sunday, or in some cases, it happens during baptism as one publicly makes his/her faith known to the church
- For Jesus, the baptism of the Spirit happened simultaneously with His baptism in water

- Jesus concluded His kingdom ministry through commissioning us to make disciples of the kingdom through the act and power of baptism
- Jesus also spoke of a baptism in the Holy Spirit that was also distinct from water baptism when he said,

**“...for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:5)**

- Now this is very interesting in that the disciples had already received the Holy Spirit, for Jesus had breathed on them earlier and said, “receive the Holy Spirit.”
- But Jesus here is speaking of filling with power

Ex. I remember baptizing a young man who was saved out of a cult group. When he came up out of the water, he was immediately filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and radically set free from an addiction in his life.

### **3. A Baptism into Discipleship**

- Jesus not only opened His public ministry with baptism. Jesus not only filled His disciples with His Spirit, but he also concluded His ministry by commanding us to make disciples through baptism

**“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)**

- So, Jesus opens His Kingdom ministry with baptism and closes out His earthly ministry, instructing all of us that the first step in discipleship is getting baptized. That’s what we’re doing today

- We are identifying with the Jesus Way. Through baptism, we identify with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- Jesus is giving His very last command to the coming church. This is Step One in becoming a disciple of Jesus. Jesus is not concerned about converts but disciples.
  - Jesus shows no interest in numbers per se. He's not necessarily counting who raised their hands on Easter Sunday across the city
  - But what Jesus told us to do is not convert people but build disciples
  - Baptism is Step One in becoming a committed Jesus disciple

In the book of Acts, the origins of the early church, we observe the continuance of baptism as the first step in obedient discipleship.

Peter, in his first evangelistic sermon at Pentecost, says,

**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.”**

**Peter is mixing the message of John the Baptist with what Christ has said about the baptism of the Holy Spirit**

- For Peter and the early church, baptism was the first step in becoming a disciple of Jesus
- Baptism is considered the first step in discipleship. My definition;

**Water Baptism is the First Step in Being a Disciple of Jesus. It is a Public Act of Obedience and Faith Signifying a Believer's Private Identification with Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection.**

- Just think how much time it took to baptize over 3 thousand people on that first Pentecost? The rest of Acts and the Epistles speak of the importance of this public identification with Christ

### **Why Get Baptized? The Gospel is Embedded in the Act of Baptism**

- The whole act of baptism is the Gospel reenacted every time someone gets baptized.
- It is going under the water into the death of the old man, the old life, the old Adam
- Adam in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3 rebelled against God, and his spiritual bloodstream was poisoned by rebellion. Sin is like Cancer. You may look good on the outside, but your blood is bad, and you're dying.

### **Our Spiritual Blood is Contaminated with Sin**

Ex. I recently went into a doctor's office to get blood work done. They pulled out some of my blood and then looked at it. They could identify many things about my physical health by looking at my blood.

- Your blood cells tell how healthy or unhealthy you are.
- Our spiritual mitochondria (cells) have been contaminated by the sin of rebellion, pride, lust, and fear. Like cancer, if not dealt with, sin grows and takes over our whole life.

Ex. Recently, a man came up to me and told me how polluted his life had become. He shared so many problems in his life since childhood. My heart went out to him, and I told him that his spiritual blood was polluted by sin. He knew exactly what I was talking about, and thus began a wonderful discovery for him as he repented of his sinful ways and gave his heart to Jesus. You can do that too!

- Sin is a bitter root that keeps on growing in our hearts—it cannot be managed, only eradicated.
- Sin is missing the mark; it's imperfection. It's our rebellion against God, either proactively or passively. We've all sinned and missed God's perfection
- Because of Eden, because of Adam and Eve, we were born with spiritual cancer, the genes of death coursing through your spiritual bloodstream.
- Our blood was contaminated. Just like cancer, if we don't deal with our contaminated blood, we will die

## Turn in your Bibles to Romans 6

### Vs. 3

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

**Baptism is about identifying with the death of Christ. Jesus understood that only His death could eradicate our death. We are slowly dying through sin, but He took our place and died for us.**

So what does baptism do? It is, first of all, identifying with our sinfulness. It is about the death that comes through sin. Sin separates us and kills us on the inside.

**Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death.” Wages mean the payment, and our payment is death—spiritual separation from a loving God**

- Why are so many people brokenhearted? The Wages of Sin
- Why are so many people addicted to porn? The Wages of Sin
- Why are so many people addicted to alcohol? The Wages of Sin
- Why are so many people considering suicide? The Wages of Sin

**Because of the cancer of sin growing in our spiritual cells, we die. Our heart and soul die. The WAGES of sin are death.**

### **We Need a Spiritual Blood Transfusion**

- Not a dialysis. Dialysis is when your own blood is cleaned out. Your spiritual blood can never be cleaned out. You can't clean up your life!
- **You can never be good enough. You can never earn God's favor enough to be saved. Sin, the spiritual cancer we all carry, can only be forgiven through the Blood of Jesus**

### **Romans 5:8**

**“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”**

### **We Need a Spiritual Blood Transfusion**

#### **Jesus has Pure Blood**

- Jesus' blood is not contaminated.
- Jesus was never tainted by sin. He lived a perfect life.
- He was not born of a man. He was born of God.
- Buddha and Mohammed were men. Their blood was contaminated. They can't cleanse your blood.

You can't just live a good life and be a good person. Being a good person doesn't forgive sin.

- We need a blood transfusion! It can't come from someone else—a human being who also has contaminated blood. You know what I mean, they always ask you about your blood when you go to give

blood. A person with AIDS or Cancer can't give blood to another person.

- Mohammed can't save us. Buddha can't save us. The Dalai Lama can't save us. Trying to live a good life can't save us. You can't save yourself!
- You have to have PURE UNCONTAMINATED BLOOD. It can only come from Jesus. We are all sinners. People can't save people! You can't get pure blood for the forgiveness of sins through another person

**Baptism is Publicly saying, "I am dying to sin."**

**Your old identity is "I am a sinner; I can't change; I will always be enslaved to sin." "I am dead in my sin."**

**Now we have a new identity...**

**Vs. 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.**

**Wow! That's the gospel message: we go under the water dead to sin, like Jesus being buried in the tomb. But then we come back up alive to Christ. We are resurrected to new life.**

**Old Identity: I am Dead in Sin**  
**New Identity: I am Dead to Sin**

**Your Old Identity is that you are dead inside; you are left to your own power to change. You are alone.**

**Your New Identity: I am Buried with Christ. I am not alone.**

**Baptism is Publicly saying, "I am being buried with Christ," going under the water.**

- Baptism is about Identity
  - You are Dead to the Old Man, the Spiritual Cancer in your blood has received a Blood Transfusion with the pure holy blood of Jesus!
  - Your old heart is dead and gone. That's not you anymore
  - You are buried with Christ through death, and now you are resurrected to new life. Look at this
- It is all about intimacy and Identity with Christ. You are IN Christ. You are being buried with Christ—a new identity with Christ. Christ is not a religion anymore, but a relationship with your Savior, friend, and Lord
- You are born again, given a new heart and a new spirit. Ezekiel says it best...

**“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26)**

- We are being “placed into” Christ—Adam infected our nature, but now we have been grafted into Christ, the second Adam
- Just like we were placed into Adam as sinners, we are now placed into the newness of the second Adam, and you now have a new life!
- You are turning your back on the old life. A new identity: not you but Christ

**Vs. 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, 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. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

### **The New Identity: I am Resurrected with Christ**

**Baptism is Publicly saying, “I am Raised up with Christ!”**

**You go down to the old man, old heart, old spirit, and you are being raised up a NEW MAN/WOMAN.**

- You now identify with the resurrection of Christ in your life. You have a new life in Christ
- He is talking about being “placed into” Christ—Adam infected our nature, but now we have been grafted into Christ, the second Adam
- We can rise from the dead in our life, in our marriage, in our relationships, in our singleness, in our addictions
- God can supernaturally produce the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace...
- Our History does not define our Legacy
- We have a story up to now. It may not be a pretty story. But God can rewrite your story through the resurrection of Christ
- The power of Satan in our past is not greater than the power of God in our future!

**"And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you." (Romans 8:11)**

- The Holy Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead, can enter your life and bring new life

## **Believe in Christ and Get Baptized**

**God takes our old, sinful hearts and replaces them with new hearts through our faith in Him.**

**And just as Jesus rose from the grave, you also can have new life through His resurrection.**

**"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die." (John 11:25-26)**

**Eternal life is not after we die, but it begins now, today. Believe in Jesus. Believe in His resurrection, and you shall be set free to new life!**

- Jesus came to die the death we could not die, to give us the life we've always longed for!
- "Say yes to Jesus! Say yes, I believe in you, Jesus. I want you to give me a new heart today."

**"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."**