

Chapter 5

Unto What Were You Baptized?

(A Tract on Baptism By Bishop Harry L. Herman)

This question is as old as the church and so important that our whole Salvation and eternal life depends on a right answer. Even though we may class ourselves as a believer, the right answer becomes all the more important, less we have believed in vain. The Apostle Paul found some disciples in Ephesus and began to question them: ***“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.”*** (Acts 19:1-3)

Most of the Christian religious beliefs profess, in varying degrees, the necessity of baptism, but most are not able to agree as to how or the purpose of baptism. Let us examine a few reasons in an effort to find our ‘Unto what were you baptized’, and see if that baptism agrees with our guidebook, the Bible.

To many their baptism was to identify them with a certain church or religious organization, making themselves subject to a set of rules or form of doctrine formulated and established by their church fathers. Their basic purpose: Membership in church of their choice.

Another group is baptized to identify themselves with the religious beliefs of mother, father, or some other loved one. They have no real conviction of their own, but trust that what was good enough for mother or father is good enough for them. They feel justified and very satisfied to please men, but little thought as to what God might require. Their basic purpose: To continue in the footsteps of mother or father.

Others have described baptism as: ‘An outward show of an inward work’, or a sign to other people that now they belong to Christ, an accepted child, to live a Christian life. Their purpose: To prove to others their faith and belief in Jesus Christ and because of their faith something took place to make them live a better life.

Some are baptized simply to be called a Christian, being unconcerned about what method was used, supposing any 'Christian Baptism' will suffice. Their purpose: To be called a Christian and to remove the shame of being called a non-believer.

Others were baptized as a baby, small child or even an adult as an entrance into the church so that they might be saved and escape Hell fire. Many in all honesty, desire to serve the Lord, to be truly identified with Christ, to be saved from death and be ready for the rapture when Jesus comes after His bride. They do not know for sure which way to go or what baptism to be baptized with but are doing the best they can and are walking in all the light that has come across their pathway. Since they do not know the way themselves, they are dependent upon someone to guide them and if their guides be wrong then they will be led wrong. It was to such a group that Paul addressed himself. They wanted to do right, they were walking in all the light they had, but still something was lacking: Their baptism had become outdated because the one John witnessed for had not come, and also, they had not received the Holy Ghost.

Before we go on, re-evaluate your baptism. Do any of the above-mentioned purposes apply to you? Are you lacking the Holy Ghost as did those Ephesian believers?

Now let us examine our Bible and find out the purpose of baptism, unto what are we baptized, the necessity, and method and its administration.

When the Apostle Paul asked the Ephesian disciples regarding their baptism, they answered, ***“Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the NAME IF THE LORD JESUS.”*** (Acts 19:3-5) For them to believe on Christ required them to do His word and to take on themselves **His Name** in baptism. Simply to be called a 'believer' does not, within itself, identify one with Christ, but a true believer is one who will continue in the teaching and doctrine of Jesus Christ, they are a doer of His word and they keep all of His commandments. ***“Jesus said unto those Jews which believed on Him If ye continue in my word, THEN are ye***

my disciples indeed". (John 8:31 ; Matthew 7:24,25 : James 1:22-25). Again Jesus said ***"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say"?*** (Luke 6:46) To believe on Jesus Christ, as the scriptures declare, is the first step toward baptism. ***"He that cometh to God must first believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."*** (Hebrews 11:6 ; Mark 16:16)

Peter gives us the exact formula and purpose for our baptism in Acts 2:38, ***"Then Peter said unto them, REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"***. This reply was made in response to the cry 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' (vs 37), or in other words, 'How can we be saved?' Let us examine Peter's answer.

First the command is REPENT. To be baptized without repentance would be likened to a person trying to wash themselves while yet handling the things that made them dirty. Repentance is the changing or turning away, in your heart and mind, from the practice of all sin and ungodliness. It is not simply just being sorry and shedding a few tears and then returning to the same sinful practices. True repentance will make one sorrowful indeed, but will along with the sorrow produce a hatred, an abhorrence, a despising, and a complete ashamedness of all manner and practice of sin and evil works, which God hates. There must be within, a sincere desire to completely change or turn away from these things and ask God, 'Lord, if you will forgive and deliver me from the power of sin and cleanse me completely, I will never return to these sinful practices again.' This alone is not salvation, and sad to say many stop here, but a preparation to be baptized. (Ezekiel 18:20, 21, 30, 31 ; Isaiah 1:16 ; Acts 3:19) Judging from the above, how could a baby a few days old or a very young child repent when they have no knowledge in such matters?

Peter also tells us baptism is an answer of a good conscience toward God. (I Peter 3:20-21) The only way we can have a good conscience is to be void of any offense before God, that is to be clean, washed and have forsaken all practice of sin and evil from before Him, pure and spotless. The only way this can be accomplished is to be washed and have the stain of sin removed so that we might walk in newness of life, honest and free before Him unto all well pleasing. (Isaiah 1:18 ; Romans 6:1-7 ; Galatians 3:27 ; Colossians 1:10 ; 2:14) To have a good conscience is to be in a condition that God can judge us for any sin in our life because they have been remitted and are not held to our account any more. (Ezekiel 18:21-22)

The next instruction of Peter is to be baptized in the **NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS**. It is in the water of baptism that the blood of Christ, which was shed for us, washes and completely removes or cleanses us of ALL sin, *“And the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.”* (I John 1:7 ; 5:6-8) Therefore the primary purpose of baptism is to wash away sin and make the believer clean. Our baptism must not only be accompanied with repentance, but also with faith, believing that our sins are remitted. That our sins are remitted or removed once and for all is proved by these words: *‘And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more’*. (Hebrews 10:17 ; Psalm 3:11-12)

Please note this one very important point; such water baptism is only valid or effective when the proper authority or name is used. That name is JESUS CHRIST, for HE alone is able to save or remit our sins. This was His purpose in coming, to give His life and shed His blood, blotting out our sins and transgressions, thus making us free. There is Salvation in no other name but Jesus. (Acts 4:7-12 ; John 8:32-36)

Let us consider the following scriptures concerning Biblical baptism. Philip preached Jesus Christ in Samaria and they received his teaching and were baptized but had not as yet received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:12-17) In verse 16 it tells us; *“For as yet He [the Holy Ghost] was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the NAME OF JESUS.”*

Again in Acts chapter 10, Peter went to Caesarea to the house of one Cornelius to declare unto him and his household the word of God. After having believed Peter’s speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word. *“For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 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” [JESUS CHRIST]*. (Acts 10:46-48)

At Ephesus with Paul teaching those believing disciples who *‘When they heard this, were baptized in the NAME OF THE LORD JESUS’*. (Acts 19:5)

Finally, the Apostle Paul in relating his conversion, spoke of Ananias as he came to him, ***“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the NAME OF THE LORD”***. (Acts 22:16) In Acts 9:17 we learn the NAME OF THE LORD to be JESUS.

If you will notice the above scriptures there is one thing in common; all those who were baptized were so baptized in the NAME OF JESUS. (Acts 2:38 ; 8:16 ; 10:48 ; 19:5 ; 22:16) Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses every word of God shall be established. (Matthew 18:16) in these writings we have four witnesses: Peter, Philip, Paul, and Ananias each one saying the same thing to three groups of people, the Jew, the Samaritan, and the Gentile; and that is, baptism MUST be in the NAME OF JESUS.

You may ask then, what did Jesus mean when He said to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This is found in Matthew 28:19, ***“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”***. Jesus did not say use the TITLES, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but rather the NAME of the one to whom these titles apply. In verse 18, Jesus said, ***“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”***. The word ‘power’ here means authority and it is in Him (Jesus) that the authority rests to baptize. To do what Jesus taught we must first know the right name to use. What is the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Let the scriptures answer.

John 5:43 states, “I [Jesus] am come in my Father’s name, and ye received me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will received.” Luke 1:31-32 says, ***“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in the womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. HE shall be great and be called the Son of the Highest”***. Also see Matthew 1:21. John 14:26 says, ***“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name [Jesus], he shall teach all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you”***.

As these scriptures testify, the name of the Holy Ghost is Jesus. So to carry out the command of Jesus, as to our baptism, it must be in the NAME OF JESUS. Luke records the same words of Jesus in parallel way thus: ***“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His NAME among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”***. (Luke 24:47) This is not a different saying of Jesus, but the same words, amplified and explained to the betterment of our understanding.

As a capstone, the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:17 sums up all matter like this: ***“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, giving thanks to God and the Father by HIM”***. This includes baptism also.

Read and consider what is written and may the Lord give the understanding for it is the foundation of your Salvation. There is but ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, and ONE BAPTISM. (Ephesians 4:5) Baptism is not left up to our idea or interpretation seeing there is but ONE, therefore that ONE must be according to the scriptures – in JESUS NAME.

Another point to consider: How should my baptism be carried out, in water by immersion, sprinkling or how? Again, we turn to the scriptures for the answer.

Jesus went into the water with John the Baptist when he was baptized, and Jesus is our example. (Matthew 3:13-16) Verse 16 states: ***“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway OUT of the water”***. The Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, ***“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? - - - And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they BOTH WENT DOWN INTO THE WATER, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him”***. (Acts 8:36, 38) ***“Therefore we are BURIED with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”***. (Romans 6:4) For one to be buried everyone will agree, I am sure, is to be put under the ground in the grave. Since we are buried with Him, the waters of baptism become our grave, then will you, dear reader, thing it unreasonable to be put under or immersed in our grave, the water? See Colossians 2:12
The very word ‘baptize’ signifies or means a burial, to be put under, immersed. The above scriptures and many more attest to the truth that our baptism must be in the NAME OF JESUS, IN WATER, BY IMMERSION.

Finally, the promise that goes with our proper baptism is: ***“Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost”***. The Holy Ghost will make itself known because it will speak with other tongues as the spirit gives utterance. (Acts 2:2-4 ; 14:18 ; Isaiah 28:11 ; Acts 10:45-46 ; Acts 19:6) This is the

complete New Birth that Jesus requires us to have when He said, “You must be born again born of water and spirit.” (John 3:3-5)

“As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”. (Galatians 3:27) Baptism in itself is not the end, but rather a beginning. It does cleanse and make us a fit temple for the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, to dwell in. When we have believed the truth and have repented and are buried or baptized in His Name and filled with His Spirit, then we have put on Christ. We do as He did, walk as HE walked, think and speak as HE did. We not only have His Spirit, but His mind as well, that in all things we might be like Him. To put on Christ, we obligate ourselves to do all His commandments that we might obtain everlasting life. To be baptized in water in His name without receiving the Holy Ghost still leaves us short of complete Salvation; there must be water AND spirit to be called one of His. (Romans 8:9)

Responsibilities to use the Name:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | II Timothy 2:19 | Everyone who names the Name of Christ, is to depart from evil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Galatians 3:27 | When you are baptized into Christ, you have put on Christ. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 1:12 | Power to become the sons of God – Believe on HIS NAME. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Acts 4:30 | Do signs and wonders by thy NAME – JESUS. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Exodus 3:13-14 | Moses asked what is thy Name? Say, I AM sent you. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 8:58 | Jesus said, before Abraham was I AM. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Judges 13:18 | Why ask my name seeing its secret (hidden). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Isaiah 9:6 | His Name called Wonderful, Everlasting Father, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Matthew 12:21 | In His Name shall the Gentiles trust. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Matthew 1:21 | The Name revealed – Call His Name JESUS (Luke 1:31). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Matthew 1:23 | Call His Name EMMANUEL – God with us (Isaiah 7:14). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 5:23, 28 | Honor “Son” even (same as) the Father. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 2:23 | He that has the Son has the Father also. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 10:30 | I and my Father are ONE. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | II Corinthians 5:19 | God in Christ reconciling world to Himself. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I Timothy 3:16 | God was manifested in the world. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 14:7-10 | He that has seen me has seen the Father. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 12:44-45 | See ME see HIM that sent me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Philippians 2:9-11 | Jesus given Name above every Name. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Proverbs 18:10 | Name of Lord a strong tower (a safe place). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 14:13-14 John 15:16 John 16:23-26 | When you ask in MY NAME it shall be done for you. |

Principles of the Doctrine

Unto What Were You Baptized?