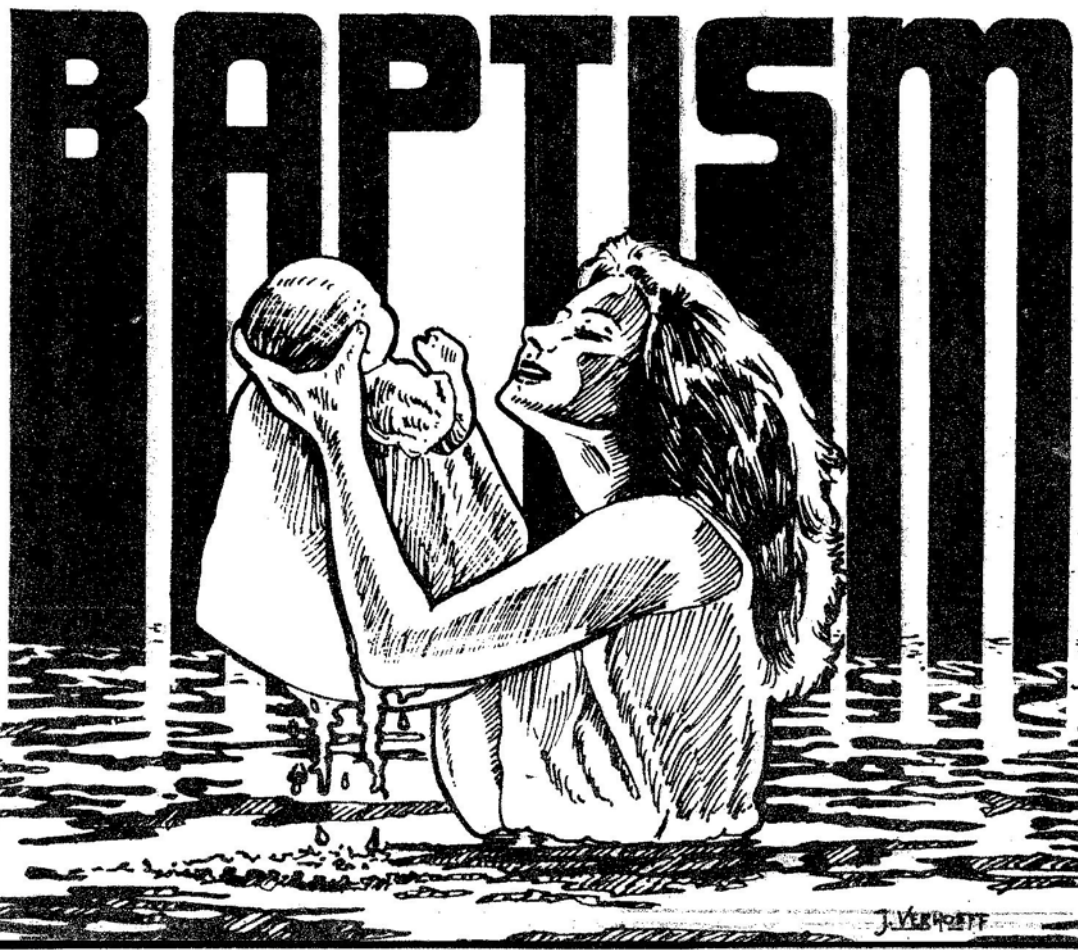


A STUDY
ON
CHRISTIAN



A STUDY
ON
CHRISTIAN

BAPTISM

While it is true that much more could be said on this subject, this study does address points often overlooked or neglected by other studies.

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INTRODUCTION

How does a man achieve right standing before God and His Law? How does a sinful man approach a righteous God? Do we do so by means of graven images of our own making, which act as mediators? Or by means of the One mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus? In Christ we have God manifesting Himself to mankind, in graven images we have sinful man attempting to manifest a righteous God. Jesus came to manifest the Father to us. He is the true mediator. When people refuse Jesus Christ as their only mediator (the purpose of a mediator is to make man acceptable to God, so that we can approach Him without fear) they usually turn to substitutes, often physical objects by which they attempt to understand the abstract concept of God. Jesus said that He came to reveal the Father to us, so those who reject that revelation, must create another god in their own image.

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness pictured the lawful approach to God in its symbolism. As one entered the court of the Tabernacle, the first thing that he was confronted with was the brazen altar of sacrifice. The blood applied to our hearts gives us justification. The next step was the laver of water, where the priests washed themselves with running water. Finally, inside the veil was the fiery presence of God. Those are basically the three steps in the lawful approach to God. The washing of the laver, their baptism, represents the being washed and cleansed by the water of The Word. The Living Water that is poured upon us from on high.

Stephen E. Jones

SPRINKLING

We read in Exodus 24:8, that Moses: *"took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words."*

This in effect made them citizens of God's Kingdom. This was a type of the blood of Christ, which justifies us and makes us citizens of the Kingdom of God as well. Hebrews 12:24 tells us: *"And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling,"*

Note that Jesus' blood must be sprinkled on our hearts in fulfilment of the type of justification that Moses gave to the people, in the sprinkling of blood upon the people when they ratified the law in Exodus 24. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:2 that the Israelites scattered throughout Asia Minor were: *"elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."*

We know of course, from 1st John that *"the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin."*

So now let's look at the ceremonial washings of the Old Testament and the spiritual principles behind them. In Numbers 19, God gives us an entire chapter dealing with the law of purification, the law of sanctification, or cleansing, when a person became ceremonially unclean.

The example is given especially of one who touches a dead body becoming unclean for 7 days. The prescription for coming in contact with our greatest enemy, which is death, is that he is to be sprinkled with water that had been mixed with the ashes of a scarified heifer. In fact, water was also sprinkled upon his tent, and all the furniture and vessels in the tent. We read in Leviticus 14, how lepers were to be cleansed. Leprosy is the biblical symbol of sin, because of its reputation of being incurable. The lepers were to be sprinkled seven times with water, and then they were to be pronounced clean, for God would heal them. In Ezekiel 36:25 God

foretells the day when Israel would turn and repent. God says: *"I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you."*

We have a good example of this law of ceremonial cleansing in 2 Kings 5. This is the story of Naaman who was the captain of the host of the king of Syria. Now this man happened to be a leper. He was also a true believer in the God of Israel, probably through the witness of his wife's little servant girl, who just happened to be an Israelite. Anyway, she convinced Naaman to go to the prophet in Israel for healing. Verse 10 tells us: *"And Elisha sent a messenger (#4397 a deputy, a messenger, an angel) unto him saying: Go and wash in Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee and thou shalt be clean."*

Naaman was no doubt ignorant of the ceremonial laws of cleansing, because he expected Elisha to perform some magic or lay his hands upon the leprosy, and cast it out. But instead, Elisha went by 'the Book' of the law and told him to wash 7 times, as we read in Lev.14.

Now verse 14 says: *"then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan according to the saying of the man of God. And his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child and he was clean."*

Now the question is: Did Naaman dip himself in Jordan or did he wash himself in it as the law prescribed? Well, either way, it isn't all that important, I don't believe. The point is, he had faith and he obeyed and he was cleansed. But it might be profitable to study this in more detail so that we know exactly what did take place.

In verse 10 Elisha told Naaman to wash himself. That word translated 'wash' is the Hebrew word 'rachats' (#7364 to lave [the whole or a part of a thing] bathe, wash). This word is used many times in reference to washing one's feet or hands. We know that they used to wash their feet and hands by pouring water, running water, on them. It should be mentioned here that the word 'running' when connected with 'water' is the same word used for 'living' as used in Genesis of "living creatures". So the water they used, running water, was

actually 'living' water. Water which is in motion becomes oxygenated and will support marine life. Water in a pool or container is stagnant because it is not in motion, and becomes dead, not able to support marine life.

God's Word is 'living water' and Christ is the 'living' Word. This is demonstrated in at least two places in 2 Kings 3:11, we read that Elisha "*poured water upon the hands of Elijah.*" In other words, Elisha was the one who had the duty of cleansing Elijah's hands ceremonially. And in the New Testament, when Simon the Pharisee criticised Jesus for allowing the woman to wash His feet with her tears, Jesus rebuked Simon by saying "*Thou gavest me no water upon my feet.*" Now the KJV reads 'for my feet' but the original Greek reads 'upon my feet.' So it seems to be clear that Elisha told Naaman to wash the leprosy spots on his body with water from the Jordan.

You see, this Jordan river was flowing and so it was running water. It was living water, according to the law. This washing would have been either by sprinkling or pouring. Naaman went then, and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times. The word 'dipped' comes from the Hebrew word 'tabal' which is a different word. Young's Concordance says that it means 'to moisten' or 'be-sprinkle'.

This word is used in other places, such as Genesis 37:31, where Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph's coat in the blood. Now they certainly would not have drained all the blood off into a bucket and then immersed the coat in it. If they had brought a completely red-stained coat to Jacob, he would have suspected something. It is much more probable that they sprinkled the coat with blood, or poured blood upon it, or smeared it with blood, so that it would look like a wild animal had killed him. This is also borne out by the Septuagint translation of the verse, where they use a Greek word meaning to soil, stain or smear with blood. Of course, the word 'tabal' is too general to say positively so I really don't know if Naaman washed himself seven times in accordance with the law or not. However, this word 'tabal' was translated into the Greek word 'baptizo' which is the word from which we get our English word 'baptism.'

So we know that at the time of Christ, the Greek-

speaking Israelite, considered this incident to be a baptism. So what we are really talking about here is the kind of baptism prescribed in the law.

So we have the justification, where the people were sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, the laver where they washed their bodies, and then the oil of anointing which was administered by pouring or sprinkling. All three were by sprinkling in the Old Testament. Now we have seen from the story of Naaman that his washing in the Jordan, seven times according to the Law in Leviticus 14, which deals with the cleansing of leprosy, is called a 'baptism' by the Septuagint Version of the Judean scholars. This translation was the standard by which the people spoke of Hebrew concepts in Greek language. In other words, we can properly say that the Law prescribed that lepers be baptised seven times with water, and then they would be healed. And this baptism was administered by sprinkling or pouring. The reason was simply that they were to use living water rather than stagnant or dead water (as in a pool, bath or tank). It symbolized life, not death.

Let's look at some New Testament examples. In Luke 11:37-38, we read that a pharisee, who had invited Jesus to dine with him, wondered that he had not first washed before dinner. Now the word 'washed' is from the Greek word 'Baptizo' (Strong's #907) which literally means 'baptised'. Now obviously the man did not expect Jesus to go to the lake and immerse himself before every meal. No, it was simply a manner of ritual, that they washed their hands before eating. How? well, by having someone pour water over their hands, as was the custom back in those days.

In Mark 7, we read beginning with verse 1, *"Then came together unto him, the pharisees and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, unwashed, hands, they found fault. For the pharisees and all the Judeans, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash (#907 'baptizo') they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to*

*hold, as the washing*of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels and of tables"* or literally couches. So we see, not only did tradition require that people baptize their hands with water, before eating, but also after they came home from the market place. Furthermore, Mark tells us they baptized cups, pots, brazen vessels and even their long couches, on which they used to recline when they visited. Now I don't find it feasible that they immersed all of their household furniture before every meal, any more than going out and immersing themselves in the lake, or other running water before every meal. There simply was not enough water in Palestine back then for people to do so even if it was convenient.
(* #909 baptismos)

In fact, in the city of Jerusalem, there happened to be a real water shortage until Pontius Pilate built a pipeline to pipe water in from Bethlehem. But the point is, that these ceremonial sprinklings and pourings were called 'baptisms' in the New Testament as well as in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. Further verification can be found in Josephus (Antiq.III, 6, 2). Its last sentence in section2, speaks of the laver where the priests could wash their hands and sprinkle their feet.

Turn to Hebrews 9. This is perhaps the most important passage in the New Testament dealing with the relationship between the Old Testament and the New. The author has been talking about the Old Testament types and how they are fulfilled in the New Testament. Beginning in verse 8 we read: *"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 diverse washings (#909 baptismos) [diverse baptisms], and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."*

Now note that the author of Hebrews specifically calls these Old Testament washings 'baptisms', such as the washing at the laver, and the sprinkling or pouring

of water upon lepers seven times, and so on. These were symbolic of the sanctification of the flesh, or the body. Verse 11: *"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 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?"*

Now notice that he confirms that blood was sprinkled on the people for purification. That was the method. He verifies this a few verses later in verse 19: *For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people."*

Note that this was done with blood and water. Note also that it says **all the people!** From the greatest to the least, all of them. Not just those who had professed their faith. Verse 20 saying: *"This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood;"*

Yes, some things were purged, the other things such as water and hyssop and so on. But the blood was the first and foremost purifier. It was the first and most important step in approaching God.

So here in Hebrews 9 we read first of diverse baptisms, and then later on it is explained to us that these baptisms were administered by means of sprinkling. This was in accord with numbers 19 where the Law prescribes that one who is unclean for any reason was to have the water of separation sprinkled upon him to purify him or sanctify him. This whole chapter deals with this

great law of sprinkling, or this law of sanctification. They were to take a red heifer, burn it up and mix the ashes with the water, and that was called the water of separation. Those who come in contact with the dead were to have this living water of separation sprinkled upon them. Because we are all defiled with sin, we have all come in contact with death, and must have this water of separation sprinkled upon us for our sanctification. No, not in the manner that they did back then, for the death of Christ made a change in the law, in this part of the law. You recall that when Christ died, and when the soldier pierced His side, blood and water poured out from that wound. He was that type. And He fulfilled that type. Josephus writes of this law of sprinkling in Antiquities book 4, ch 4, sec 6, and the Greek word that he uses is the word for baptising. So it was common at that time to think of the Old Testament law of sprinkling as baptism.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now the next obvious question that you will have is: How does this affect the New Testament mode of baptism? How were the people of the New Testament baptised? Well, let's look at the examples that are given to us. First of all, let's look at Jesus' baptism. Turn to Matthew 3:13, *"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptised of him. But John forbad him saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him: Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Now the question was asked years ago: Why did Jesus have to be baptised? But a satisfactory answer was never given. Now, with the connection established between God's Law and baptism a better understanding can be reached. Remember that this incident took place

before the death of Christ, and before the scene at Pentecost. It was still technically the time of the Old Testament, before these types had been fulfilled by Christ. The answer to this question, why did Jesus have to be baptised, I believe is found in a couple of places. One is Numbers 8:5-7, *"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And Thus shalt thou do unto them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them,"* and so on.

The first thing that was required in God's Law to be a priest in Israel was to be baptised with water. Here we find also that the mode is clearly sprinkling. When the priests entered their priestly capacity or their priestly duties, they were ceremoniously sprinkled with water, among other things. This was also true of the High Priest, as we shall see. Now Jesus became our High Priest. So in order for Him to be so by the prescription of the Law, He had to go to John and be baptised. How? Well, if He did so according to the Law, it had to have been by **sprinkling**. And afterwards, it says, He came up out of the water. Now this should read that He came 'from' the water, not 'out of' the water. The Greek word is 'apo' which is translated 'from' 372 times in the New Testament. This baptism is also recorded in Mark 1:10 where he says that Jesus went straightway from the water. He uses the word 'ek' instead of 'apo'. Now 'ek' is translated 'from' 186 times in the New Testament. These two Greek prepositions might possibly also mean 'out of' but it does not have to mean that. The only way we can tell exactly what it does mean is to look at the context, and the context I believe in this case is obviously the Law of God which prescribes the mode of sprinkling. This is further verified by the fact that immediately after Jesus' baptism with water, God baptised Him with His Spirit in the form of a dove, which descended upon His head; He was not immersed in oil, or He was not immersed by this dove.

Read Leviticus 8, which is the chapter where Aaron the high priest was consecrated to the office of High Priest. You will read in verse 6, *"And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water."* That was step one. Then in verse 12, it says, *"And he poured*

of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him." This was the ceremony of the consecration of the High Priest. First the water and then the oil. First the baptism with water, then the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is the oil. This is precisely how Jesus was baptised by John. It was all in accordance with the Law of God, in Jesus' consecration to the High Priesthood over the Israel people.

It should be noted that John The Baptist stated in Matthew 3:11, that after him would come one mightier than he, who would baptise with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. That this in fact happened is recorded in Acts 2:3,

"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..." As with Christ and the Spirit in the form of a dove descending upon His head, so also with the disciples at Pentecost where the cloven tongues of fire sat on them. They were not immersed in fire, they were 'anointed' with fire.

Now the next question, and perhaps we should have treated this one first, is how did John baptize the people at the Jordan River? Did he immerse people or did he sprinkle the people? Well, we read Matthew 3:6 of these people coming for baptism, that they were *"baptized by him in Jordan confessing their sins."* The phrase 'in Jordan' actually comes from 3 Greek words, 'eis ton Jordana', which simply means 'in the Jordan' or 'at the Jordan'. I believe it should have been rendered 'at the Jordan'. The word 'eis' in the Greek is a very general word. It has here been translated 'in'. It has been rendered by the word 'in' 131 times in the New Testament, so it is a good translation of the word. It has also been rendered 'into' 571 times. However, it has also been rendered 'against', 'among', 'at', 'for', 'that', 'on', 'to', 'toward', 'onto', and 'upon', many many times. I believe that in this case it should have been rendered 'at'. Now let me tell you why, other than because the Law prescribed going to the water and then using it to sprinkle the people.

I 1st Kings 2:8, we are told that Shimei went down to meet David at Jordan. At Jordan. The Greek Septua-

gint translation of this passage reads 'eis ton Jordanes'. This is word for word the same phrase used in the New Testament of John's baptism being 'in the Jordan'. Now are we going to insist that David met Shimei in the middle of the river? No! Rather they met in the vicinity of the Jordan River. They met 'by' or 'at' the river, not IN it. Another example is found in 2 Kings 2:6 where we read: "*and Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan.*" The Septuagint reading of this is again 'eis ton Jordanes' showing that the Greek phrase meant: to the vicinity of Jordan, rather than in the middle of the Jordan River. And finally, 2 Kings 2:6 we read about Elisha and the sons of the prophets who needed to build bigger quarters so they could live without being so crowded. So they went down to chop down some trees to build their log cabins, I suppose. Verse 4 says: "*And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.*" Again, the Septuagint translation of this phrase in Greek reads "when they came 'eis ton Jordanes' they cut down wood." Are we to insist that Elisha cut down trees while standing in the middle of the Jordan River? Well, that would be rather uncomfortable, even if there were some trees growing in the middle of the Jordan River. So, obviously not!

So we see then that it is very possible to conclude that when people came to John for baptism, he baptized them 'at the Jordan', rather than 'in the Jordan.' Of course, it is quite possible that for convenience, he might have stood at the edge of the river bank, or even got their feet wet. I don't know. But the point is that their baptism does not have to be by immersion in the river. And since it does not have to be by immersion in the river, I conclude that they must have been baptized by the Lawful method as prescribed in Leviticus and Numbers, which was by sprinkling or by pouring with living water.

Turn back to Matthew 3 again. In verse 11 John tells the people "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:*" That term 'with water' is 'en hudatos', which some might say should read 'in water' because the

the word 'en' also means 'in' just like 'eis' can also mean 'in' as we saw earlier. So the question is, did John baptize 'in' water, or 'with' water? Well, I can show you that this type of phrase is used to describe anointing with oil as well. We have many examples of the phrase 'en elaion' which means 'with oil'. Anointed 'en elaion'. Now if we were to take that phrase and translate it 'in oil', then we would have to conclude that the priests were not really anointed with oil but immersed in oil. For example: Psalm 23:5, David says of God: *Thou anointest my head with oil.* The Septuagint translation in Greek reads: "Thou anointest my head 'en elaion'. Does that mean that he stuck his whole head into a bucket of oil? Of course not! It says he was anointed with oil. You will find the same phraseology used of oil in the Greek Old Testament in 2 Samuel 1:21 Psalm 89:20, Psalm 92:10, and Ezekiel 16:9. This shows very conclusively that the Greek phrase 'en elaion' does not teach immersion, so neither should 'en hudatos', with water, teach immersion. Only if men were immersed in oil can we likewise conclude that men were also immersed in water.

So when John says he baptized 'en hudatos', we understand as did the King James translators that he meant baptize 'with' water, not 'in' water. Turn to John 3:23. This is quite important. We read: *And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.* The phrase 'much water' is sometimes a stumbling block to people, they say, See, this means there was sufficient water there so he could immerse the people. Well, the Greek phrase is 'polus hudatos', and it should have been rendered 'many waters' or 'many springs'. In fact there are many places in Revelation where 'polus hudatos' is literally translated 'many waters.' The name Aenon is a Chaldee word signifying a place of springs. Dr. Robinson who visited the spot says of it: *"The place is about six miles north east of Jerusalem. Many springs burst forth from the rocky crevices at various intervals for some miles."* So you see John was baptizing there because there were many springs there bursting forth from the rocky crevices. They were certainly not deep enough to immerse people, but there was plenty of water to sprinkle them

according to the Law of cleansing. These are not rivers, these are just little springs coming out of the rocks. John would never have gone there if he had to immerse people in water. There simply was not the water available.

STOP AND THINK

As you know the oil was symbolic of God's Word, that is why John said that although he baptized with water, One was coming who would baptize people with the Holy Ghost. And again the word 'with' comes from the Greek word 'en'. Baptize with the Holy Ghost. The Scriptures tell us that God would pour His spirit upon all flesh, just as He would pour water upon him who is thirsty. We never read that God would immerse us in water, or in oil, or in blood. It always speaks of sprinkling the blood on the people, sprinkling clean water upon you, and anointing your head with oil.

Now in Acts 2 we have recorded for us the day of Pentecost, in which three thousand people were baptized in one day in Jerusalem. So this is obviously a good example for us to follow. This followed the scene where the apostles were baptized by the spirit, by tongues of fire coming down and resting on their heads, just like an anointing of oil. Now stop and think. How could it have been possible for this many people to have been immersed in water, all in one day? Think about it! That would have kept them pretty busy to say the least. But where could all these people have gone for this baptism if it had been by immersion? About the only place would have been the pool of Siloam by Jerusalem, which was the city's main water supply. Now do you think that the pharisees and the priests would have allowed the pollution of the city's water supply by these defiled Christians? Do you think they would have sat around and watched this pollution all day long while these three thousand people were being immersed there? Water was a very precious commodity in the old city of Jerusalem. I am sure that all three thousand and twelve of them would have spent the next year in jail.

But the problem is easily solved if they were sprinkled with water rather than immersed.

Now I hope that I have been able to get the point across that baptism is the laver experience in the Law, it is not the brazen altar experience. Christ became our sacrifice (for more on this point listen to tape #7003 Christ's Blood For The Kingdom, showing that Jesus died not only for individuals, but for the whole Kingdom). In other words, baptism is symbolic of the Law of God which we are to follow because we are (Israelites) Christians not in order to become Christians. I also wanted to show the symbolism in this second step in our approach to God to give you a deeper meaning in this. Now I do not believe that one must be sprinkled or have water poured on him in order to be baptized. It is not the mode that counts. God looks upon the hearts. Many have been immersed I imagine, and I don't feel it is necessary to be re-baptized. Baptism is a vow to obey the Law of God, and teach our children to do likewise. As long as I believe that God's Law is the standard of righteousness that I must strive to attain in obedience to God, I believe that my baptism is honoured by God. If we cast away the Law, we make void the Law, then our baptism is also cast away and made void in the sight of God. God looks at the heart, not at the outward ritual. As long as I have died with Christ and been buried with Him in baptism, then I'm on the right track, I believe. You see, the Law kills. It convicts of sin. When I agree with the Law of God, then I am indeed worthy of death and then by faith I die with Christ, to rise in newness of life, I have fulfilled the Law of baptism. I have applied the water to my hands and feet.

Incidentally, I used to think that the term 'buried with Him' in baptism meant being immersed in water like when we bury people under the ground nowadays. I never thought that I was applying Western Culture to Bible symbolism. They didn't bury people back then like they do today. The Romans cremated people above ground and then scattered their ashes around. The Indians in America put the dead on a high platform, while the Hebrews put people on a table in a sepulchre above ground. So there are many different modes of burial, but we have no right really to make our Western mode the basis of Bible symbolism. Rather, baptism

symbolises the Law applied to ourselves, when we agree with the Law that we are sinners and worthy of death. If that is our heart attitude then we have truly been baptized, no matter what outward mode was chosen. In this case we have entered into a state of 'circumcision of the heart', which was prophesied to replace the circumcision of the flesh (Deut 30:6, Jer.4:4).

CITIZENSHIP

That same water is also the water of life, the Living Word. It is Jesus Himself who not only died but then was raised again victorious over death, thus we are also to rise with Him and walk in newness of life. In other words, act as though you have already received your spiritual incorruptible body ahead of time. Walk in the spirit, now! I believe that the day is coming when Jesus comes to rule in His Kingdom here on the earth. That only those who desire to have Christ rule over them and who agree to learn and obey His Laws will be allowed to enter the Kingdom of God. In other words, this will be a Christian nation made up of people who have had their hearts sprinkled with the blood of the New Covenant (circumcision of the heart). I also believe the citizenship ceremony for immigrants will be the Christian baptism, which is to symbolize their willingness to obey the Law once they are made citizens. I believe it will be administered by means of sprinkling water upon them. The rulership of the Kingdom, of course, is reserved for those who have received the anointing of oil and they shall inherit the first resurrection. They shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years. They shall sit at His table, and have the high calling.

We know and understand that immigrants, coming into a country, after some time has elapsed, can then become citizens with the full rights pertaining thereto. In some cases, it will be individuals who wish to become citizens, in other cases, it will be married couples, or entire families -- households - who will go through the ceremony to be 'naturalized.'

Should it be only adult individuals who are granted the ceremony to become citizens, or should households, including infants, also be permitted?

Webster's 1828 Dictionary has this to say regarding the subject Baptism: "*The application of water to a person, as a sacrament or religious ceremony, by which he is initiated into the visible church of Christ. This is usually performed by sprinkling or immersion.*" He further states under the heading Baptist: "*As a contraction of 'ANABAPTIST', one who denies the doctrine of infant baptism, and maintains that baptism ought to be administered only to adults by immersing the body in water.*" Under the heading Baptize he states: "*To administer the sacrament of baptism to; to christen. By some denominations of christians, baptism is performed by plunging, or immersing the whole body in water, and this is done to none but adults. More generally the ceremony is performed by sprinkling water on the face of a person, whether an infant or an adult, and in the case of an infant, by giving him a name, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which is called 'christening'.*"

The Illustrated Bible Dictionary has this to say under the heading of Infant Baptism: "*Was infant baptism practised within the 1st century Christianity? There are no direct references to Infant Baptism in the New Testament, but the possibility of there being children within the households baptized in Acts 16:15 and 33; 18:8; and 1 Cor 1:16 cannot be finally excluded. That infants of believers are a part of the household of faith readily be maintained on the basis of 1 Cor 7:14, not to mention Mark 10:13-16. On the other hand, in Gal 3 Paul specifically argues that membership of Christ does not derive from physical descent [the 'gentilized' publishers of did not know of their Israelite origins, HR] or depend on a ritual act (circumcision), but comes through faith and it is dependent on nothing other than faith and on the gift of the Spirit received through faith. (perhaps a study of Pastor Emry's message on "By Whose Decision Are You Saved?" tape #7725 would prove useful! In short, the more baptism is seen as the expression of the baptisand's faith, the less easy it is to hold to infant baptism. Whereas the more baptism is seen as the expression of divine grace, the easier it is to argue for infant baptism. Either way, Christians*

should beware of overvaluing baptism in the way that the Judaizers overvalued circumcision."

If it is proper to administer baptism to infants (either together with the parents at the same time, or on their own, if the parents were previously baptized), then the import of baptism must be the same for infants as for adults. It can not have different meanings for each. We have seen how baptism can be considered the 'naturalization' ceremony for citizenship in God's Kingdom. It is beyond dispute that the covenant God made with Abraham included the infant offspring.

So under the old blood covenant of circumcision all male infants being born into the nation of Israel, as God's people, were circumcised on the eighth day. Except for the time under Joshua, just prior to entering into the promised (Kingdom) land, when all males from 40 years old and under had to be circumcised (Josh. 5). So all males in a household would have been circumcised from 40 years old down to 8 days. In the same way, New Testament households were baptized, as the blood of physical circumcision had been made obsolete by the blood of Christ. In both cases the circumcision of the heart was a condition that one was supposed to develop or grow into by being educated into the precepts of the Law of God.

Always the people of Israel were instructed to pass what they knew about God and the miracles he had performed, and the teaching of His Law, onto their children. As God had said: *"For I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."* (Genesis 18:19)... to bless him and make him a blessing (see also Deut 6:7; 4:9-10). The apostle Peter confirms this in the New Testament with these words: *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off (down the road, future generations), even as many as the LORD our [Israel's] God shall call."*

The calling or choosing is God's doing, it's His decision not man's (Jn 6:44, 15:16). Therefore Moses prophesied that circumcision was something that God

would do to the hearts.

Peter's words reiterate the promise given by God in Genesis 17:7 *"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed (posterity) after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed (posterity) after thee."*

Nothing could advertise more conspicuously and conclusively that this principle of God's gracious government, by which children along with their parents are the possessors of God's covenant promise, is fully operative in the New Testament as well as the Old, than this simple fact that on the occasion of Pentecost Peter took up the refrain of the Old Covenant and said: *"The promise is to you and to your children."*

This shows that God intended that the seed (posterity/children/infants) be included in His Covenant. Christ also confirmed this when mothers brought their infants to Him, and the disciples tried to prevent them. Jesus said to them: *"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."* (3 witnesses: Mat 19:14, Mk 10:14, Lk 18:16).

Hence, when the household is baptized as a mark of citizenship, the 'seed' or offspring are also included. Any offspring born after the ceremony would have a ceremony of their own after birth, much as one today registers the birth. It is the seal to us of His marvellous goodness that He is not only a God to His people (Israel) but also to their seed after them.

According to Halley's Bible Handbook, circumcision was instituted as a mark of God's nation. So that even back then, parents would have shown by the fact that they brought their child for circumcision that they (the parents) accepted the promises and responsibilities that God had laid on His Israel people. This being the outward visible act. The circumcision of the heart of the individual, would have to come later, after they had been instructed and come to years of understanding.

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS

The word 'house' in Acts 18:8, and 'household' in

Acts 16:15 and 1 Corinthians 1:16 comes from the same Greek word (oikos #3624) meaning a dwelling [more or less extensive, literal or figurative]; by implication a family [more or less related, literal or figuratively]. So reading Acts 18:8, "*And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue (an assemblage of persons), believed on the LORD with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.*"

Acts 16:15, "*And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye...etc.*"

1 Cor. 1:16, "*And I baptized also the household of Stephanus: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.*"

So from these passages it appears that when the head of the 'house'/'household' believed, all the members of his family were baptized.

It is remarkable that so few instances of Christian baptism were recorded in the New Testament, twelve in fact: Acts 2:41; 8:12; 13, 38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 1 Cor 1:14, 16. It is quite illuminating that at least three of these instances refer to household baptism. So it would seem that household baptisms were quite a frequent occurrence in apostolic times. It seems impossible to believe that in none of these households were there any infants. The infants in a household belonged to that household and as such would be baptized. Abraham had been instructed that every child born in the house, was to be circumcised (Gen 17:12). In Acts 10, the story of Cornelius, it is to be noted that in verse 47 it is stated "*that these (plural)*" showing that it is likely that this also was a 'household' baptism. The same holds true of the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:33 which states: "*he and all his*" obviously meaning his 'household'. It is also interesting to note that after Paul and Silas had spoken to all his house, the jailor washed their stripes and in almost the same breath they were baptized. Perhaps sprinkled from an extra bowl of clean water, not used to wash their stripes?

Paul also points out that all of the Israel forefathers were baptized: "*Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers*"

were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;"

We all know that when Israel left Egypt they took everything with them. So the children and infants would have been included above. I think it interesting to note that while it says Israel was baptized [they went through on dry ground], Pharaoh and his army were the ones who were immersed!

Some may object that baptism presupposes a credible and intelligent profession of faith, and that infants cannot do so. However, who is to assure us that when households were baptized, everyone receiving baptism was required to make an intelligent and credible profession of faith? It would in fact appear from the instances referred to, that only the head of the household made such a profession, and that as the head of the house, he took the responsibility for his house. This is something that seems lost in modern feminist indoctrinated society, and government controlled individuals, rather than strong biblically based self-governing (patriarchal) families.

To say that there is no guarantee that the infants, once baptized will continue in "The Way", is not a relevant argument, as there must be very many indeed, who having made their profession of faith and been baptized as adults, also did not continue in "The Way"!

To say that infants have no say in the matter is also irrelevant, as circumcision was done to infants who had no choice, suggesting that baptism may be done the same way.

So long as people recognize that no fleshly action can justify us from sin, and that these things only represent and teach us of heart attitudes, there should be no problem.

Have you AND your children been baptized?

The information contained herein comes in the main from a transcription of tape #7923 by Stephen E Jones with added comments taken from the book CHRISTIAN BAPTISM by John Murray, compiled and published by:

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