

The Importance of Baptism by Immersion

by Zac Poonen

This sermon addresses the confusion surrounding baptism, emphasizing the original Greek meaning of 'baptism' as immersion and how traditions have led to misconceptions. It highlights the significance of baptism as a testimony of death and resurrection with Christ, contrasting immersion with sprinkling. The importance of understanding baptism in relation to salvation, repentance, and faith is discussed, emphasizing the biblical call to repent, believe, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Matthew 3:13, Acts 8:36, Romans 6:3, Galatians 2:20, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:37

Topics: "Understanding Baptism", "Repentance and Faith"

Description

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Transcript

There's a lot of confusion in baptism, relating to baptism and Christendom today. The vast majority of Christians and the Roman Catholics and many Protestant churches like Methodists and Anglicans and all, they sprinkle children and call it baptism. Now the word baptism is not an English word.

It's a Greek word, bapto, which means immersion. If you put your hand in a bucket, that's called immersing, and in Greek it means bapto, baptized. So in its original meaning, it only meant immersion.

But the reason why the word was not translated was because the translators of the King James Version in 1611 were told by King James not to translate anything that would disturb church traditions. And so they were scared of losing their heads. And so they wanted, how could we translate this word immersion when none of the churches were immersing people in the Anglican church? They were sprinkling babies.

But they were God-fearing people. They could not honestly translate it as sprinkling. So what they did was they invented a word, which nobody knew what it meant, baptism.

That's how that word came in, in 1611. And so when people got the first King James Version and they read the word baptism, which is not in the English language, they wondered what did it mean? And they

assumed, oh, that must be what these priests do for the children in the baptistry, in that little tub, that little basin rather, where they sprinkle water on the head. And it has come down to centuries how the devil has fooled people and deceived people.

There are many passages in scripture that indicate that, why did, what baptism was, for example, why did John the Baptist baptize people in the River Jordan? That's another mistake I've seen with some Anabaptist people. If you read about the Anabaptists in the 15th century, they would take people into the river and not immerse them. They'd pour water on their head.

You see many pictures of that, of the baptism of even Jesus, of John the Baptist pouring water on the head. So why in the world do you go into a river to pour back water on the head? It's amazing how this wrong teaching of baptism has spread throughout Christendom. Jesus was immersed completely and lifted up by John the Baptist.

And there are places in scripture like in John chapter four where it says that Jesus was baptizing, I mean the disciples were baptizing. So it was very common in those days, they were immersing people. And we read about in Acts chapter eight about an Ethiopian eunuch whom Philip baptized.

And when we read about him in Acts chapter eight, Philip not only preached forgiveness of sins. Now when you're talking to an unconverted person, what do you tell them? Repentance, forgiveness of sins, Jesus died for you, stop. But not Philip.

We read in Acts chapter eight and verse 34 onwards that Philip preached the full gospel to him. So he had to repent, he had to believe. And we know that Philip also preached baptism because it says in verse 36, as they went along, the eunuch said, hey, here's some water, here's a lake, why don't you baptize me? And they ordered the chariot to stop.

And it says in Acts 38, Philip and the eunuch went down into the water. They don't need to go and get their clothes wet if they're just pouring some water on their head. And down into the water and he immersed him.

It's amazing how the devil has fooled people through the years. And the other thing is, what is the meaning of baptism? In Romans chapter six, it says that baptism is a testimony. It says in Romans six and verse four, we are buried with Christ through baptism into his death.

That like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of God, the father, we too might walk in units of life. So baptism is a picture of death and resurrection. When Jesus was immersed by John the Baptist in the river Jordan, he was submitting to death by other people.

And when he was raised up, it was a testimony that the father would raise him up from the dead. Now, we are told in the Bible that we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. We are crucified with Christ, Galatians 2.20, and we are raised up with him.

So we testify to that in baptism that I have died with Christ and I'm buried with Christ and God has raised me up from the dead spiritually. You can never testify to that by sprinkling water on somebody's head. It's very meaningful.

And it's amazing how the devil has completely covered it up. It's a testimony to our putting the flesh to death, burying our old life and living a new life, all of which is removed by just sprinkling some water on the

head. So we must be bold in testifying in this way to say, I am finished with my old life.

By God's help, I'm going to live a new life. It's God who raises me up. A long time ago, I wanted to write a book on, the title would be, What the Bible Teaches About Infant Baptism with Four Blank Pages.

That's it. That's what the Bible teaches about infant baptism. But I'm amazed how millions of Christians don't understand that because they do not read the Bible.

They do not respect the Bible. So we're thankful that in our church, there's no such deception. Is baptism important? Is it a way of salvation? No, salvation is by repentance and faith.

No doubt about it. Baptism is not essential for salvation. If a man is converted on his death bed, he doesn't have to be baptized.

If he dies right there, he often accepts Christ to go into God's kingdom. Baptism is not essential. But if you have the opportunity, of course, you should be baptized.

People always try to find some excuse. I remember one man who said he had accepted the Lord, but he was sprinkled on his head and accepted only his child baptism, which was done when he was an unconverted person. That's the other thing.

How can you sprinkle water on a child's head? Is it a child of God? No, he doesn't become a child of God until he's accepted Christ. So whatever we do in our unconverted days from the time we are born again, we can't say, now Lord, blot out all my past, accept my infant baptism. Please keep that.

That's what a lot of people are saying, who accept infant baptism. Now, the reason I mentioned that is because lots and lots of people who call themselves Christians, even many who are born again, have not understood the importance of baptism. As I was saying, one man who didn't want to take baptism said, you know the dying thief? He said he didn't take baptism and he went to paradise.

So the preacher told him, you're not a dying thief, you're a living thief. A living thief should take baptism. He's converted.

So Mark 16, Jesus said in verse 16, he who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved. The words of Jesus, let me repeat it. He who has believed, Mark 16, 16, and has been baptized shall be saved.

But he who does not believe will be condemned. Did Jesus emphasize baptism? Sure. On the day of Pentecost, the first gospel message, when people say to Peter, what shall we do? Today, preachers will say, well, just repent of your sins.

Sometimes they don't even mention repentance. They say, accept Christ. But what did Peter say? They said, Acts 2, 37, the first gospel message.

Oh, Peter, what shall I do? Peter says, repent, Acts 2, 38, and be baptized. And then you will receive the forgiveness of sins and you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. That's really the full gospel.

You'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as well. So we praise God that for every person who decided to obey God in this area, in the midst of a Christendom that compromises in this area. But at the same time, dear sister, if you're getting baptized today, please understand what it means.

You're testifying, you're dying and you're dying with Christ and you want to bury your old life. You're going to come up from the water and say, Lord, I'm going to come up out of the water as a new person. And I want you to help me to live as a new person.

God bless you.

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