

Baptism

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 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 28:16-20)

At the end of Christ's time here on earth, right before He was taken back to heaven, He told his disciples to go out into the world and bring new followers into His way. He instructs them to teach them to keep all His laws and to baptize them in His name. But what does baptizing someone in His name really mean?

What does it mean to be baptized?

The word baptism from the Strongs Interlinear means: to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only (in the New Testament) of ceremonial ablution, especially (technically) of the ordinance of Christian baptism:--Baptist, baptize, wash. This, in simple terms, means to make new by washing your sins away to become a new person in God's way.

"But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:20-24)

Baptism is the sign of us cleaning out the sins in our life to put on the new body of Christ in righteousness and holiness.

"In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead." (Colossians 2:11-12)

A lot of the things we do in our faith and daily relationship with our Father are signs of our love for Him and our membership in the body of God. This sign of baptism is showing our putting off of sin and moving into the grace of God who will raise us again in the end time because we have shown our faithfulness to him.

What does it do for you in the long run?

"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.' "And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:1-12)

One of the best examples in the bible of baptism at its best is the story John the Baptist. John was sent out before the Lord to prepare the way for His coming. One of the ways that he was to prepare was to bring people to God's truth by baptizing them to wash away the sins of their old self and put on the righteous of the Lord. Matthew goes on in the verse to tell us about one who is to come (Christ) who will not only baptize us with water as a sign of forgiveness of our sins but also with the holy spirit and fire as to make us worthy to be a part of his eternal kingdom.

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those

members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-26)

Corinthians talks about the body of Christ as a membership and not just a single person walking in Him. He tells us to be brought into the body of Christ by being baptized into it and having your sins washed away. Once in the body, all the members will be one and get to enjoy all the benefits that come with having a large group of believers such as taking care of the poor and sick and being there for those who are in need. But also with these benefits comes the responsibility for all the members of the group to support each other and not allow anyone to fall short and bring down the rest of the group.

Who can be baptized?

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 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. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.” (Acts 2:37-41)

God ultimately wants all people to be brought into his kingdom. For this to happen all those people must believe in Him. While this was His will, not all of us have been faithful in this calling. Because of this unfaithfulness God has created signs to show who His chosen people are, with one of them being the baptism into the faith of our Lord. In the above verse, Peter tells men to repent of their sins before they can be baptized into the faith of Christ and receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When to be baptized?

“And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into

John's baptism". Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus". When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." (Acts 19:1-6)

Most people, when they are baptized, do not know what they are now getting into but just do it because they have come of age or think they are just coming into the church. It is not enough to just be baptized but you must first have an understanding of what you believe in and who it is that will be your God. In the above verse, Paul has found out that the people of Ephesus have been baptized by John to repent of their sins but they were not shown who the Holy Spirit was that they would now be a part of. For this to be corrected, Paul shows them about the Holy Spirit and what is required of them. He then baptized them again into the faith once they had a full understanding.

Conclusion

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 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. 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. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him." (Romans 6:1-9)

The ultimate gift from God was the gift of His Son coming to the earth to die for our sins. Because of this gift that God has given us, we are now able to repent of our sins and change so we can enter into the kingdom of our Lord. For us to be worthy of this, we must be baptized into the faith in Him and put off our old self of sin and live with Him in righteousness. So learn of God and the blessings He has to offer and become baptized as a sign between you and Him to show Him you are worthy of His wonderful gift of eternal life.