

# Immersion, Partial Immersion or Sprinkling?

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It is frequently taught in today's Christian churches that the practice of baptism serves as a public declaration of one's faith. This is based on the premise that Jesus Christ was baptized publicly by John in order to introduce himself as Messiah. No such correlation is made in scripture and the reason for Christ's baptism will be discussed later in this document. As a result of this false premise, many churches assert that either partial immersion or the mere sprinkling of water upon one's head is sufficient to fulfill the requirement of baptism.

Jesus Christ himself said to John the Baptizer that the reason he should be baptized is to do what is right (righteous) in the eyes of his God and Father.

But John was preventing him saying, "I have need to be baptized by you, and you come toward me?"<sup>15</sup> But Jesus answering, said to him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all *that is right*. Then he allowed him (Mt. 3:14-15; RNT).

The Bible states that as sin entered the physical world through the unlawful actions of Adam and Eve, so too death entered as a consequence of sin and spread to every human being.

Through this, indeed as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death also into all men, death came through upon all who sinned (Rom. 5:12; RNT).

For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made

alive (1Cor. 15:21-22; NASB, *used throughout unless noted*).

This places all human beings under the law as we are a fallen race, subject to the judgment of God.

Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God (Rom. 3:19; *emphasis added*)

The Bible definition of sin is found in 1John 3:4.

All who commit sin also commit lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

The only human being who never broke the law or commandments of God and therefore never committed a single sin was Jesus Christ.

He made him (Christ) who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Cor. 5:21, cf. 1Pe. 3:18; *emphasis add*).

...in him (Christ) there is no sin (1Jn. 3:5; *emphasis add*).

However, Jesus Christ was willing to be born a human being, and as such he too was born under the law and therefore subject to death as are all people (see study: Who did the early church think Jesus Christ was prior to his birth as a man?)

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But since Christ humbled himself by becoming obedient even to the point of death (Phil. 2:8), obeyed his Father perfectly and overcame temptation and sin (Heb. 4:15), he qualified to

take upon himself all the sins of the human and fallen angelic host who are likewise under the death penalty for sin.

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, <sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Gal. 4:4-5).



...IT IS APPOINTED FOR MEN TO DIE ONCE  
AND AFTER THIS, JUDGEMENT.  
Hebrews 9:27

Jesus Christ was a mortal human being born under the law and therefore subject to death. As a result it was necessary that he become baptized and receive His Father's spirit before he was to die even though he was himself without sin (Mt. 3:16). Thus, he was declared by the Father as the Son of God and granted everlasting life by the resurrection from the dead.

... (Jesus) who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 1:4; *Ed. notes in parenthesis*).

Likewise all people who are called of God and seek to live in accordance with His will, must repent, become baptized and have hands laid upon them in order to receive God's Holy Spirit as a pledge or guarantee of everlasting life for those who continue to live a new life of obedience to every word of God (Mt. 4:4; 7:21-23; 19:17; Rom. 6:4).

(God the Father) who also sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit (2Cor. 1:22; *Ed. Note in parenthesis*).

Consequently, one must be of an age and maturity to understand the seriousness of sin

and the need for repentance and baptism, and that God requires a willingness to sacrifice all things in faithfulness to Him. Thus, the practice of baptizing infants is not scriptural and does not allow the individual to decide for him or herself if they wish to make such a covenant with Almighty God.

As discussed earlier, sin entered the human race through disobedience to God's law—the consequence of which is death.

For the wages of sin is death, (Rom. 6:23a).

Therefore, all people must die,

...it is appointed for men to die once and after this, judgment (Heb. 9:27).

However, those who repent of sin, and continue to live a new life of obedience to God's word, will inherit everlasting life at Christ's return to rule this planet (1Cor. 15:35-56). This is only possible because of Christ's sacrifice on behalf of every repentant sinner.

For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit (1Pe. 3:18).

Therefore, God's people do not come under the judgment of the law, which is everlasting death (Rom. 6:23), but are guaranteed everlasting life, even though their physical body perishes (see 1Thes. 4:16-17).

Amen, amen, I say to you, that he who hears my word and trusts in the one having sent me, has life everlasting, and does not come into judgment, but has gone across, out of death and into life (Jn. 5:24; RNT).

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years (Rev. 20:6).

Jesus Christ took upon himself the punishment of death for sin in place of those who repent and follow God. This was symbolized by his baptism and fulfilled later at his death and burial.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1Cor. 5:3; cf. Isa. 53:5-12).

It is in water baptism that the death of a repentant servant of God is symbolized.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (Rom. 6:3).

Baptism therefore symbolizes our former sinful life being put to death and buried, so that we may begin living a new life in Christ.

Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life <sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with *him* in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of his resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over him (Rom. 6:4-9).

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come (2Cor. 5:15).

Our **old self** is the person we used to be before repentance when we walked in rebellion against God's law and commandments, and therefore subject to the death penalty. Consequently, this old self must die with Christ in baptism in order that the body of sin might be done away with. In this way we become a *new creature*, and if we persevere and overcome until the end, we are no longer subject to the second death (Mt. 10:22; 24:13; Mk. 13:13; Rev. 2:11; 20:4-6).

Our new life in Christ and our future resurrection at his second coming are symbolized by our coming up out of the waters of baptism. Baptism must include being completely immersed under water in order to fulfill the symbolism of our death and burial with Christ, along with our new life in Christ and resurrection at his return. The practice of partial immersion, or merely sprinkling water upon the head, does not convey the purpose or meaning of baptism and this practice is contrary to scripture.

The English word *baptize* comes from *907* Gk. *baptízō*, to fully submerge in water; verb from *911* Gk. *báptō*, to fully immerse (submerge). It is a one-time immersion under water following repentance, symbolizing one's death and resurrection in Christ for purification from sin through faith.

Christ indicates that water baptism is required in order to enter the kingdom.

**Amen, amen, I say to you, except one is born from water and spirit, one is not able to enter into the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5; RNT).**

It is through baptism that all people become part of the body (congregation) of Christ, which is not a man-made organization or church corporation.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (1Cor. 12:13).

Thus, it is in Christ's name that all must be baptized. The apostle Peter made this clear.

Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Ac. 2:38).



AND JESUS APPROACHED AND SPOKE  
TO THEM, SAYING, "ALL AUTHORITY  
WAS GIVEN TO ME IN HEAVEN AND  
ON EARTH".

Matthew 28:18; RNT

Jesus Christ had given the command to baptize in his name as part of his commission to the body. The correct rendering of this text excludes the Trinitarian baptismal formula which is non-scriptural. The most accurate New Testament Greek manuscripts such as compiled by the Nestle Aland Greek New Testament, 27<sup>th</sup> edition, and translated by the Reconciled New Testament Study Bible demonstrate the correct rendering,

therefore, as you walk, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them **into my name,** <sup>20</sup> teaching them to keep everything, as much as I commanded you; and behold, I am with you all the days, until the full completion of this age (Mt. 28:19-20; RNT; *emphasis added*).

This is further verified in verse 18 where Jesus Christ tells his disciples that he has been given all authority from his God and Father.

And Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying, "All authority was given to me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18; RNT).

These accounts serve as a standard of proof that the correct practice of baptism must be in Christ's name and involve full immersion just as he himself rose up out of the water.

And having been baptized, he arose straightaway from the water (Mt. 3:16a; RNT).

Therefore, to undertake baptism following repentance in any way other than what is instructed by scripture is invalid.

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