

BAPTISMS

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This ministry has been one of the most divisive factors in the church from the beginning because of a misunderstanding of what it is meant to represent. A “religious spirit” always distorts what God means to be a blessing because this spirit is worldly wisdom and is therefore from the mind of the evil one. (James 3:15)

Baptism is “overwhelming”, “immersion” so some denominations insist that the new believer must be immersed in water. Some denominations say that it is symbolic so it does not matter how much water is used. Some say that because the Philippian gaoler’s household were all baptised in water, children can also be baptised because the parents believe, while others say that because baptism in water is for repentance, (Acts 19:4) only adult believers can be baptised. The insistence of each of these on their own decided practice divides the body of Christ.

This is not a recent thing. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 Paul is addressing this matter. He describes the church in Corinth as worldly and immature. (1 Corinthians 3:1) They were quarrelling about whom they followed, because of who baptised them.

John Baptist said that Jesus’ baptism was Holy Spirit and fire, (Matthew 3:11) but many churches do not practise this at all, and some even deny that it is necessary.

Paul writes about Israel being baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, yet the water did not touch them at all. (1 Corinthians 10:2)

It is good to understand what the symbolism really means, apart from the traditions of the church, down through the centuries.

My understanding is that Christian “baptism” is the overwhelming by the Anointed One and His anointing – a complete submission, over and over again, to His Holy Spirit. The churches can practise whatever symbolism they want, but why not receive the reality?

Combined Churches Mission Group practise baptism in this way, with a prayer of submission, and God is pleased with us. Paul warns from Israel’s history – they (Israel) all ate the same spiritual food, and drank the same spiritual drink but God was not pleased with them because their lives were not being transformed by their practices. We need to know God’s ways and do them.