

BECOMING WHO YOU ARE

The Biblical Truth of Immersion

Thesis: The Biblical truth of baptism communicates the necessity for the human heart and life to be immersed in God's love. Baptism, which literally means immersion, symbolizes identification with God's self-sacrificing love manifested in the death of Christ, and with the triumph of God's love over sin and death in the Savior's resurrection. The person who chooses to be baptized is saying, "I accept the death of Christ as my own death to the old life of sin and self-centeredness, and I accept the resurrection of Christ as my own resurrection to the new life of other-centered love He has achieved for me. I hereby choose to be immersed in the powerful reality/truth of God's love as my new motive for living." Therefore, we are baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In Scripture, every name has a meaning that indicates the character of the one bearing the name. When the Bible speaks of the "name" of God it has direct reference to the character of God. To be baptized into the "name" of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is to be consciously and freely inducted into the character and life of the triune God, which is their love. Therefore, baptism has to do with the crucial matter of identity—dying to who I am in and of myself and rising to who I am in Christ. As a child of Adam I am a fallen, self-centered, guilty sinner destined for death. This is my identity in myself by natural birth. But in the person of Jesus Christ God has created an entirely new humanity, a completely new way to be human, in which it is my privilege to find an entirely new life in God's love.

Matthew 28:19-20—19Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing (immersing) them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching 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.

John 1:12-14—12As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Romans 6:1-15—Notice that baptism indicates our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

A CASE OF SWITCHED IDENTITIES

Galatians 2:20—I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21—Notice that the plan of salvation makes us new creatures.

Romans 4:17—God...calls those things which do not exist as though they did.

Proverbs 10:12—Love covers all sins.

Isaiah 42:1, 3, 6-7, 16, 18-20—1Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles... 3A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth... 16 I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for

NOTE: In Adam and Eve the human race was corrupted at its source. Psychological, behavioral, emotional, spiritual and biological derangement passed from them to their children, the sin problem deepening and compounding with each passing generation. Psychologically, our mental perception of God was distorted in Adam and Eve. Behaviorally, we have persisted in their rebellion against God to escape the arbitrary rule we have imagined Him to impose upon us. Emotionally, we became heavy laden with guilt and shame for our deviant behavior, mistaking our shame for God's heart toward us. All of this was redeemed, literally reversed, in Christ, the second Adam.

NOTE: A "disciple" is a pupil, one who gives his mind and heart to learn and understand. In the clear context of Jesus' teachings, one who is His disciple is led by Jesus to learn the truth about God's character.

NOTE: We become children of God in the born-again sense when we "believe in His name," in the character of Christ, in whom we have "beheld...the glory...of the Father, full of grace and truth." We became spiritually dead to God and alive to sin (Romans 6) by believing Satan's lie about God (Genesis 3). We are reborn into God's family as we reverse the effects of the fall by believing the truth about God revealed in Christ.

NOTE: Baptism represents our complete identification with the death and resurrection of Christ. It indicates 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." It means we have seen the beauty of God's self-sacrificing love in Christ and have decided to immerse our lives in that love and turn from our sins.

them, and not forsake them... 18Hear, you deaf; and look, you blind, that you may see. 19Who is blind but My Servant, Or deaf as My Messenger whom I send? Who is blind as He who is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S Servant? 20Seeing many things, but You do not observe; opening the ears, but He does not hear.

Isaiah 11:2-3—2The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. 3His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears.

THE IMPERATIVE OF BAPTISM

John 3:1-19—Notice Jesus introduced water baptism to Nicodemus as a symbol of new birth. So vital is the new birth that one cannot see or enter the kingdom of God without it. Why? Because the new birth, symbolized by water baptism, means that one has seen and believed in the love of God revealed in the life and death of Jesus. Having believed in His love, one is born again into a new life free from the condemnation of a guilty conscience.

Acts 2:41, 47—41Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them... 47And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

ACTS 22:16— And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BAPTISM

Acts 2:38— 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.”

Matthew 3:16-17—16When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

John 14:16-17, 21, 26—Notice the various things the Holy Spirit does for us.

John 15:26—When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

John 16:14—He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

Romans 8:26-27, NIV—Notice that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us.

Acts 1:8—You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me.

Ephesians 4:4-6, 11-13—Notice that there is one body and one baptism.

“Behold Your God”—Isaiah 40:9