



What's Wrong with This Picture?

Blocked area is an excerpt taken from a Baptist track entitled 'Baptism – Is It For Me?'


How Should I Be Baptized?



death



burial



resurrection

Baptism by immersion pictures our position with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. Romans 6:3-5

- Baptism is with water.**
"John answered them saying, I baptize with water." John 1:26
- Baptism is by immersion (under the water).**
"Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan." Mark 1:9
"And straightway coming **up out of** the water." Mark 1:10
"They both **went down into** the water." Acts 8:38

CONCLUSION: Only baptism by immersion pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

The following points are given to prove that baptism w/water was never perceived by the baptizer, the baptized or presented in scripture to have ever portrayed the death, burial & resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, as insisted upon by many immersionists.

1. John the Baptist preached the kingdom at hand and the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mt 3:2, 11; Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3); not the finished work of Christ.
2. The significance of the element of water in John's baptism, as well as Christ's and His disciples, was purification (Jn 3:25); exact significance as the OT divers' washings.
3. No baptismal mode is implied in either Jesus' or the eunuch's baptisms. The exact wording regarding Jesus' baptism of John is 'with' water 'in' Jordan and the passage in Acts 8 simply states, 'they both went down into the water' and 'when they were come up out of the water' (Ac 8:38-39). Just as Philip was caught away by the Spirit, after exiting the water, so the Spirit descended upon Jesus after 'straightway coming up out of the water'. Jesus was on the bank when descended upon by the Spirit, not standing in the water as many immersionists would imply in the phrase, 'coming up out of the water'.
4. An argument is often made that the 'much water', mentioned in Jn 3:23, was to accommodate depth for immersion. However, the 'much water' was needed to accommodate the 'multitudes' (Lk 3:7), not immersion. After Israel's national baptism

unto Moses (1Co 10:1-2), first thing on Israel's agenda was their sanctification which was accomplished in the washing of their clothes (Ex 19:10, 14). As with all the various OT divers' washings, there needed to be much water to accommodate all the Jews; not a particular mode.

5. In the pre-cross ministry of Christ's disciples, during which they baptized w/water (Jn 3:22; 4:1-2), the elements of Christ's death, burial & resurrection were actually hid from them (Lk 18:31-34; Mk 16:9-14; Jn 20:9), while yet preaching a gospel (Lk 9:1-6; 20:1)!
6. In the post-cross ministry of the 12 apostles, even though the elements of Christ's death, burial & resurrection were now made clear by the Lord (Lk 24:44-46), they were still commissioned to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Lk 24:47; Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38).
7. The preaching of the cross, for salvation, was the focus of Paul's preaching (1Co 1:17-18, 23-24), manifesting the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery ordained of God before the foundation of the world. If the princes of this world would have understood the accomplishments of the cross, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory (1Co 2:1-8). Christ's death, burial & resurrection were the components of Paul's gospel (1Co 15:1-4), the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but revealed in both the prophets and the scriptures (Rom 16:25-26). Paul received his gospel directly from the risen Lord, not from the 12 Apostles (Gal 1:11-12), nor commissioned to baptize as were the Apostles (Cp. 1Co 1:17 w/Mk 16:15-16). Peter preached Christ raised to sit upon the throne of David (Ac 2:30).
8. The baptism subject of Romans 6:3-5 is not baptism with water, such as is administered by man, but presented to the Romans as the counterpart of Israel's national baptism 'unto' Moses (1Co 10:1-2). Just as Israel (w/a mixed multitude; Ex 12:38) was baptized/consecrated 'unto' Moses, by the LORD (EX 14:21-22), so both Jew and Gentile were now being baptized/consecrated 'in' Christ by the Spirit (Rom 11; 1Cor 12:12-13; Gal 3:26-29). This baptism is also the operation of God (Col 2:9-13), not a baptism ministered by man, as this baptism literally identifies us in Christ's finished work...His death, burial and resurrection.

The root cause of the diversity of interpretations on this subject, in spite of Paul's call for unity ('one baptism' Eph 4:5), is simply failure to 'rightly divide the word of truth' (2Tim 2:15):

- Not distinguishing between God's justification of the circumcision 'by faith' and the justification of the uncircumcision 'through faith' (Rom 3:30).
- Not distinguishing between prophecy and mystery (Cp Lk 1:67-74 w/Rom 16:25-26).
- Not distinguishing between covenant theology and the dispensation of the grace of God (Cp. Ac 3:25-26; Rom 9:1-5 w/Eph 3:1-10).
- Not distinguishing between the various baptisms (Mt 3:11; 1Co 10:1-2; 1Co 12:13).
- Not distinguishing between the Kingdom gospel and Paul's gospel (Cp. Mt 3:2; Ac 2:38 w/1Co 1:17; Gal 1:11-12).
- Not distinguishing between the 12 Apostle's ministry and Paul's ministry (Gal 2:7-8).

Denominations are built upon issues where distinctions and/or no distinctions were made in failure to rightly divide these areas. Regarding the issue of baptism w/water, those denominations that have a tendency to baptize infants and practice forms of OT divers' washings for baptism, lean towards a 'by faith' (works base) salvation and covenant theology.

Generally speaking, baptistic denominations, that insist on immersion, can be broken down into one of two camps. One camp, such as the Church of Christ, leans towards a 'by faith' (works base) justification, insisting on baptism w/water for salvation; there's no discernment between the kingdom offer to Israel, from that of the grace offer to the Gentile, via Paul. The other camp, such as the Baptist, have more of a tendency to preach a 'through faith' (faith base) salvation, but fail in knowing how and when this 'through faith' salvation came about; thus, interpreting baptism w/water as something other than original purpose. Obviously, a representative, from each of these or similar denominations, would give their personal doctrinal position of this generalization.

Immersionists have a serious problem in not only proving immersion, but also in tracing their baptism roots to John the Baptist, whose baptismal roots is OT, in preaching a kingdom gospel where emphases wasn't on the finished work of Christ via His death, burial and resurrection.

John and Peter stood before an empty tomb... "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." **John 20:9** Bible-sense tells you that one cannot preach that which he doesn't know!

The answer, to all the confusion and division found within the denominational system over the issue of baptism w/water, is found in Paul's constitution for the church today:

Eph 4:3-6 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is*
one body,
and one Spirit,
even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
One Lord,
one faith,
one baptism,

One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.