

BAPTISM

the doctrine and practice

Revival Ministries Australia

REVIVAL MINISTRIES AUSTRALIA

an apostolic ministry to the nations

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INTRODUCTION

As we have travelled the nations in apostolic ministry, seeking to fulfill the Great Commission that Jesus gave us in **Matthew 28:18-20**, we have witnessed a revival of water baptism.

Historically the public church moved from Biblical baptism [by immersion] to the sprinkling of infants. This unfortunate practice was enshrined in the Reformation with Luther continuing with infant baptism, and the Presbyterians, following Calvin. Later on, the Wesleyans conformed to Anglican ‘infant baptism’ and others continued the practice of infant baptism to this day. All these strongly defended their unbiblical practice, persecuting those who practiced baptism by immersion.

Throughout church history there were underground church groups in Europe who abided in the Biblical practice, refusing to baptise infants and offering re-baptism to adults who came to personal faith in Jesus Christ; these were known as ‘Anabaptists’. Some of these brethren were put to death for their practice of baptism.

The Christian denomination, known as Baptist, stemmed from these Anabaptist groups and finally baptism by immersion became the official practice of Baptist churches and later the emergent Church of Christ, and then the Pentecostals.

If we study the Scriptures, we find no reference to infant baptism. We find that immersion in water was the required response to repentance and faith. Jesus Himself said *“he who believes and is baptised will be saved”* **Mark 16:16**.

It is our intention in this booklet to give a broadly based view of the practice of baptism and the meaning of baptism in the New Testament.

Chapter One

THE REALITY OF BAPTISM

Walking in newness of Life

Baptism is not a ceremony, symbol, sign, ritual or Christian religious duty. Baptism, when done by faith, is a real experience that gives you power to walk in a new life!

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

“Baptism” in the Greek language of the New Testament literally means *to make fully wet, to immerse, to submerge, to overwhelm, to dip*. In the New Testament we are *sprinkled* with the blood of Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 1:2**) but we are *immersed and submerged* in water through faith in Jesus Christ.

JESUS COMMANDED BAPTISM

After Jesus rose from the dead He commanded the apostles, **“Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them...”** **Matthew 28:19.**

An important part of making disciples is baptism! It was not a suggestion, but a command of Jesus, the One who has all authority (**Matt.28:18**).

FAITH IS THE KEY

Jesus is also recorded commanding baptism in Mark’s gospel, **“He who believes and is baptised will be saved”** **Mark 16:16a.** The order is faith first, then baptism. Faith is what makes baptism a powerful reality.

BAPTISM IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF SALVATION

“He who believes and is baptised will be saved. He who does not believe will be condemned” **Mark 16:16.**

These are the words of Jesus. If we want to experience the fullness of salvation we must be baptised.

A PICTURE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

The apostle Paul said that the crossing of the Red Sea was the baptism experience of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt, **“all passed through the sea, all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea”** **1 Corinthians 10:1-2.**

The blood of a lamb: While in Egypt, the children of Israel were told to sacrifice a lamb. They would be saved from death by having the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses (**Exodus 12:1-13**). They **believed in the blood of the lamb** and were saved from death!

We also are to have **faith in the blood of the Lamb of God** to redeem us (**1Pet.1:18-19**) – *“we have been justified by His blood!”*
Romans 5:9

The water: In order then to enter fully into the new life God had for His people, the Israelites had to go through some water! It was powerful! It was miraculous! It was not a ceremony! All their enemies, the armies of Egypt who wanted them in bondage, were drowned in the sea! (**Exodus 14**).

It was by **believing in the blood** and then **going through the water** that the Israelites were saved, *“So the LORD [Yahweh] saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians”* Exodus 14:30.

We **believe in the blood of Jesus** and are **baptised in water**. This is our passage into freedom from the bondage to the world – **we are saved by faith and baptism!**

BAPTISM IS THE RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

When the people were cut to the heart by Peter preaching Jesus on the day of Pentecost, they said, *“What shall we do?”* (**Acts 2:37**). Peter responded that they were to, *“repent and let every one of you be baptised in the name of the Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins...”* **Acts 2:38**. Peter was clear. The response was not a formula prayer or a show of hands but *repent and be baptised*. Baptism is the first step of obedient faith as a disciple of Jesus.

[see also **Acts 8:12, 35-38; 10:47-48; 16:14-15; 18:8** for numerous examples of baptism being the faith filled response to receiving the gospel]

BAPTISM: DEATH, BURIAL & RESURRECTION – POWER TO WALK IN A NEW LIFE!

Baptism is an immersion 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”* **Romans 6:3-4**.

This does not say baptism is a sign or symbol. It is glorious! It is the entry way to *walk in newness of life!* We believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus and then we enter the experience of His death and resurrection through being immersed!

Through baptism we come to *“know this, that our old man [our sinful old self] was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin”* Romans 6:6.

We believe Jesus died for our sins and then through baptism we realise that **He not only died for us, but we also died with and in Him!** Once baptised we can truly say: *“it is no longer I that lives, but Christ lives in me”* Galatians 2:20.

BAPTISM IS INTO A PERSON

Under the Old Covenant the apostle Paul said that the people of God were, *“all baptised into Moses”* 1 Cor.10:2a. The Israelites were immersed into Moses, a person. This meant Moses became their leader, teacher, covering and father. God covered and instructed them in Moses!

BAPTISM IS INTO CHRIST

In the New Covenant our baptism is also into a Person, *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus...”* Romans 6:3a.

“For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ” Galatians 3:27

Our baptism, as believers in Jesus Christ, is an immersion into Christ Himself. We are now in Him. We are His disciples. He is our leader, teacher, covering and father. God covers and clothes us in Christ. Our identity is in Him!

BAPTISM IS INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

We are not to be baptised to become members of any particular church, organisation or denomination!

“For by One Spirit we were all baptised into One Body” 1 Corinthians 12:13a.

Baptism is a spiritual experience – *by One Spirit we were all baptised!* And it is *into One Body!* We become members of the Body of Christ through baptism into Christ!

Baptism is a reality! Baptism is powerful!
Baptism is necessary to experience the power
to walk in newness of life today!

Remember:

- **baptism literally means immersion:** to baptise is to immerse or plunge, that is, to cover in fluid
- **baptism is one of the foundations** listed in **Heb.6:1-2**, which follows **repentance & faith** to bring us into full salvation.
- **Jesus gave the command to baptise:** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* **Matt.28:19**
“He who believes and is baptised will be saved” **Mark 16:16**

The Example of Jesus:

Jesus was baptised to fulfil all righteousness: *“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness”* **Matt.3:15**

When Jesus came out of the water the Holy Spirit came upon Him: *“Jesus came up immediately out of the water; the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him”* **Matt.3:16-17.**

Peter preached baptism on the Day of Pentecost: *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins”* **Acts 2:38**

- Baptism brings remission [cutting off/sending away] of sins
- Baptism follows believing in the shed blood of Jesus that cleanses us from sin.
- We are saved through repentance and faith, coming to the new birth, and entering the Kingdom (**John 3:5-6**)
- We are baptised to become a member of His body.

WHAT HAPPENS AT BAPTISM?

We identify with Jesus, Romans 6:3-5:

- in His death - *“Do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?”*
- in His burial – *“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death ...”*
- in His resurrection – *“... 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”*

We are baptised into Christ, Galatians 3:27:

“For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on [been clothed with] Christ”

Through baptism we enter into the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:20-22:

v.20b *“In the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water”.*

v.21a *“There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism, not the removal of the filth of the flesh”.* Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse us from the sins of the flesh.

v.21b *“but the answer of a good conscience toward God”.* Once we are saved, that is, justified, God then puts in our hearts the desire and the need for baptism.

Both Peter in this passage and Paul in **Romans 6:4-5**, show us that baptism is linked to the reality of resurrection: *“through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God”* (1 Pet.3:21). Through baptism we are rightly related to the throne of God through Jesus Christ, *“angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him”* (1 Pet.3:22).

Baptism gives us victory over the ‘old man’ of sin [the sinful nature] *“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”* Rom.6:6

If we have ‘died’ to our old man of sin we can walk in new life with Him *“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”* Rom.6:7-8.

“Consider yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” Rom.6:11.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you ...” Rom.6:14.

Sin no longer has dominion, power or authority, over us!

Who can be baptised?

- *“Those who gladly received His word were baptised”* Acts 2:41
- *“When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised”* Acts 8:12
- *“If you believe with all your heart you may”* Acts 8:37
- *“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptised who have received the Holy Spirit just as we”* Acts10:47
- Paul said, speaking to disciples in Ephesus regarding John the Baptist, *“That they should believe on Him who would come after him, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus”* Acts.19:4-5

When do we baptise?

- **The same day:** the 3000 who received the word on the Day of Pentecost were baptised ‘that day’ (Acts2:41)
- **Immediately:** *“He commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptised him”* Acts 8:38
- **The same hour:** the Philippian jailer and all his family were baptised the same hour (Acts16:33)

In what name do we baptise?

Jesus commissioned baptism *“into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* Matt.28:19. He was speaking to the apostles at the time.

Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, Peter standing with the eleven, commanded baptism *“into the name of Jesus Christ [Messiah]”*

Acts 2:38. All references to water baptism in the book of Acts teach us that the NAME in which we baptise is the NAME of JESUS [Yahweh Saves] and that this name is the manifestation and revelation of the Godhead.

The revelation that Peter brought on the Day of Pentecost was *“Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ”* Acts 2:36

FOUNDATIONAL STEPS – Hebrews 6:1-2

There are six foundational steps listed in **Hebrew 6:1-2**. The third step is the Doctrine of Baptisms [this doctrine is discussed in the next chapter]. To begin the Christian life, we are to come to repentance; to put our faith in God [believe]; then be baptised and receive the Holy Spirit.

- **Step 1) Repentance** – understand that *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* Rom.3:23
- **Step 2) Faith toward God** – believing that *“the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”* 1Jn.1:7b
- **Step 3) Baptism** – obey the command to *‘be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins’* Acts 2:38
Jesus said *“He who believes and is baptised will be saved”* Mark 16:16
- **Step 4) Laying on of Hands** – expect to *“receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* Acts 2:38

Peter preached baptism on the Day of Pentecost, and those who were cut to the heart asked *“What shall we do?”* Peter replied, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.”* Acts 2:38. The result was *“those who gladly received his word were baptised”*. Foundations were being laid in the lives of these new believers.

Again, in **Acts 8:12** we see that those who heard the word that Philip preached, believed and were baptised. *“When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised.”*

Have you died to your old life of sin by being baptised?

Chapter Two

DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

The Scripture speaks of a number of baptisms:

- Baptisms in water – the baptism of John, Jesus’ baptism and believer’s baptism (**Acts 19:3; Luke 3:21; Acts 2:41**)
- Baptism in or with the Holy Spirit (**Mark 1:8**)
- Baptism with fire (**Matthew 3:11b**)
- Baptism into the Body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:13**)
- Baptism of suffering (**Matthew 20:22-23**)

The doctrine of baptisms referred to in **Hebrews 6:2** has specifically to do with water baptisms, that is, washing in water.

Baptism literally means immersion; to baptize is to immerse.

JOHN’S BAPTISM

John’s baptism was a call to the people of his day to change their way of life in preparation for Messiah. It was a **baptism of repentance**; it was a sign baptism showing the people’s willingness to receive the Messiah.

The practice of baptism was not new when John the Baptist came, but it was new for Jews to be baptized as a sign of repentance. They had presumed that only Gentiles needed to repent and believe in the true God.

John came, saying: ***“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”***
Matthew 3:2.

Once John had baptized Jesus, John’s ministry began to decrease and Jesus’ ministry began to increase (**John 4:1-2**). John had introduced the Messiah to Israel.

JESUS’ BAPTISM

Jesus did not need to repent. He was a sinless man.

Why was He baptized? Jesus said: ***“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”*** **Matthew 3:15.**

Jesus was baptised according to the will of God and to fulfil the law of God: this was to fulfill the law that required a priest to go through a ceremonial washing at the age of thirty (**Exodus 29:4**).

What happened when Jesus came up out of the water? Immediately following His baptism Jesus was anointed sovereignly by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:16-17

- *“Jesus came up immediately out of the water;*
- *the heavens were opened to Him*
- *and He saw the Spirit of God descending*
- *like a dove and alighting on Him.”*

“And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.’” God acknowledged Jesus to be His Son. Jesus was now manifest as God in the flesh. From the time of His baptism, Jesus walked as God in the earth.

We are to obey the Lord’s command to be baptized by faith, and as a result of our baptism we will walk with Christ in us, in the earth.

THE COMMAND TO BAPTISE

Jesus Himself gives the command to baptize after He has risen from the dead. He instructed His disciples: *“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”* Matthew 28:19

Jesus makes it clear that this baptism follows:

- **Repentance** - *“Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations”* Luke 24:47.
- **Believing**, that is, faith - *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved”* Mark 16:15-16.

Genuine repentance (change) comes before saving faith. The one who is baptized must be a repentant (changed) and believing person first. An infant is not able to repent or believe.

THE PRACTICE OF BAPTISM IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

(1) The Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:14-41

- Peter preached (v.14-36).
- The people were convicted *‘What shall we do?’* (v.37).
- Peter replied *‘Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized’* (v.38).
- The people obeyed and 3000 souls were added to the church that day (v.41).

Note:

- Baptism was on that day
- Baptism was the entry into the church – the body of Christ
- Baptism was in the name of Jesus Christ.

(2) In Samaria – Acts 8:5-17

- Philip preached (v.5)
- The people who believed were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (v.12,16)
- The apostles came and laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit (v.17)

(3) The man from Ethiopia – Acts 8:35-38

- The Ethiopian was reading the word of God (v.30-33)
- Philip preached Jesus to him (v.35)
- He believed in Jesus and wanted baptism (v.36)
- He was baptized on the basis of his confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (v.37-38)

(4) Saul in Damascus – Acts 9:5-18

- Saul received a revelation of Jesus Christ (v.5-6)
- Ananias baptized Saul (v.18)

(5) Gentiles are baptised - Acts 10:34-48

- Peter preached (v.34-43)
- The Holy Spirit fell upon those who heard the word (v.44)
- Those gathered spoke with tongues and magnified God (v.46)
- Peter baptized them in the name of the Lord (v.47-48)

(6) Re-baptism in Ephesus – Acts 19:1-7

- Paul met some disciples in Ephesus (v.1)
- These disciples had already been baptized with John's baptism, i.e. a baptism of repentance (v.3)
- Paul preached about believing in Christ Jesus (v.4)
- They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (v.5), in water.
- They then received the gift of the Holy Spirit (v.6), through the laying on of hands.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM or BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

The command to baptize was given:

- by Jesus (**Mk.16:16, Matt.28:19**)
- after His death, burial and resurrection (**Mk.16:14, Matt.28:18**)
- after His ascension and exaltation, the apostles and disciples practised baptism (**Acts 2:38,41**)
- in the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 2:38**); they understood the revealed name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Christian baptism comes after repentance and is on the basis of repentance. It comes after a person has been born again by faith in Jesus Christ.

Repentance + Faith → Baptism

It is the blood of Jesus Christ that makes Christian baptism real

All previous baptisms and ceremonial washings were symbolic, including John's baptism. They could not wash away a person's sin. Without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sin (**Heb.9:22**).

Christian baptism signifies the washing away of sin because the person being baptized has already been forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Identifying with Christ through baptism

Paul is speaking to believers and reminding them what happened at their baptism.

A review of Romans 6:1-12

- :3 we are baptized into the death of Christ Jesus
- :4 we are buried with Him
- :4 we are raised to new life with Him
- :5 we are united with Him in His death and His resurrection
- :6 our old man was crucified with Him – sin is done away with
- :7 we are free from sin
- :8 we died with Christ: we live with Christ
- :9 Jesus Christ has conquered death
- :10 He died to sin once for all: He lives to God
- :11 we also reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive in Christ
Jesus our Lord.

Jesus said, “*He who believes and is baptised will be saved*”
Mark 16:16

Chapter Three

A BIBLICAL STUDY OF BAPTISM

REPENT AND BE BAPTISED

Have you noticed that in evangelical Christian circles, the way we bring people to Christ is very different to the clear pattern in the Scripture? Have you ever heard an evangelist, having preached the Word of God, to then command the hearers who have been convicted, *“Repent and let everyone of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,”* Acts 2:38?

Jesus Himself said in Mark 16:15-16a *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised will be saved.”* Again in Matt.28:18-20, Jesus authorised the apostles to make disciples by firstly baptising the new believers and then teaching them.

Notice that you teach after you have baptised!

Many churches insist on teaching new Christian classes before they baptise and they make attendance at that class a prerequisite for baptism. This is clearly in contradiction to Jesus’ command. Every occurrence of baptism in the book of Acts immediately follows faith. **The Biblical pattern is to baptise first and to teach second.**

**This is because no amount of teaching
can do what baptism does by the operative power of God
in a new believer’s life.**

RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The clear Scriptural practice is for those who believe in the Lord to be baptised. People are saved by *“believing and being baptised”* (Mk.16:16). On the day of Pentecost, it was the men who were convicted by the preaching of the word that Peter commanded to repent and be baptised. He told them if they did this, **they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** Some churches follow the Scriptural pattern as far as baptising new believers, but have no expectation that the new believers will receive the promised Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit is an experience

Throughout the book of Acts, baptism followed immediately after people believed in the Lord, and there was always the expectation that the person being baptised would **receive the Holy Spirit in a clearly recognisable way**. For example, in **Acts 8:12**, men and women believed the preaching of Philip and were baptised. However, they did not receive the Holy Spirit, so when the apostles Peter and John came down from Jerusalem, *“they laid their hands on the new believers and they received the Holy Spirit”* v17. Simon, the sorcerer, saw the power being imparted through the laying on of hands – **something happens when a person receives the Holy Spirit of God**. Jesus said, *“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you”* Acts 1:8.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit?

There are too many baptised believers in the church today who have not received the ‘power’ of the Holy Spirit. This is not a theological issue nor a doctrinal proposition but a reality which you have or have not experienced.

Paul asked the disciples at Ephesus, *“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you first believed?”* Acts 19:2. They answered, *“We have not even heard of the Holy Spirit,”* v.2. Paul then asked about their baptism, because **Paul expected that a baptised believer would have received the Holy Spirit at baptism**. It was these disciples that Paul re-baptised after he had preached Jesus to them and they believed in Jesus.

Many people have received a church baptism based on their membership of the church, but have never *“believed on the Lord Jesus Christ”* Acts 16:31, to be saved. Therefore, their baptism lacked power – they did not receive the Holy Spirit.

THE COMMAND TO BAPTISE

The command to baptise was given by Jesus after He rose from the dead, specifically in **Matthew 28:19** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Mark says, in **Mark 16:16a** *“He who believes and is baptised will be saved.”*

Peter obeys the command

The book of **Acts** shows us the obedience of the apostles to baptise, once people had come to faith in Jesus Christ. **Acts 2:38** and **41** record the first baptism. Those who were convicted by Peter's preaching asked what they should do. Peter commanded them to **repent**, to **be baptised**; he then told them they would **receive the Holy Spirit**.

He said four important things about baptism:

1. ***“Repent”***
2. ***“be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ”***
3. be baptised ***“for the remission of your sins”***
4. the baptised believer would **receive the Holy Spirit**.

PETER SAID BE BAPTISED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Peter is the same apostle who was with the eleven when Jesus gave them the command of **Matt.28:19**. Herein lies a mystery! The majority of the church today and throughout history has used the words of **Matt.28:19** in baptism, whereas **Peter clearly said to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ**. This tradition came from the Roman Catholic Church; it did not come from the Scriptures or from the early apostles.

Was Peter being disobedient? Or **did Peter have a revelation as to the revealed name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?** Clearly all agree that **the name of the Son is Jesus**, (**Matt.1:21**).

What is the name of the Father?

Father of itself is not a personal name, but rather describes the place or function of a person in relationship. Jesus revealed God to us as 'father'. In the four gospels, God is referred to over 150 times as 'Father'!

Jesus is the name of the Son

Likewise, 'Son' is not a name, but the name of the Son is Jesus. The angel told Joseph that Mary ***“will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins”*** **Matt.1:21**.

In **Ex.3:14** God revealed His name to Moses as ***“I AM”*** and that name is written in the English Bible mostly as ***“LORD”***, but sometimes as ***Jehovah*** or ***Yahweh***. The Hebrew names **Jehovah** and **Yahweh** are attempts to translate or express the revealed name of God which is written **YHWH**. The name of God is the basis of the name of Jesus in the Hebrew.

Jesus identified Himself as the “*I AM*” in **John 8:58** [and in many other places; example **John 18:5-6; Mark 14:62-24; Luke 22:70-71**]. The revelation of ‘who Jesus is’, is being restored to the church in our day. For a long time, people have been confused about who God is and the church in general has lost the revelation that Jesus is God.

The Holy Spirit has many descriptive titles

Nowhere in Scripture is there a revealed name for the Holy Spirit. Christ does mean ‘*anointed one*’, and can be a reference to the empowering of the Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus to enable Him to function in ministry and fulfil His Messiahship (**Acts 10:38**). Jesus is the Christ; the Holy Spirit is not the Christ. Therefore, Christ is not a name for the Holy Spirit, nor even a direct reference to Him, as Christ refers to the long-awaited and prophesied Messiah who would be the King.

The revealed name of the Father is in the name YAHWEH, not LORD as written in many English Bibles. According to Strong’s Concordance, the name YAHWEH means *the Eternal One* or *the Self Existent One*. This revealed name of God was given to the Son: Jesus is *Yeshua* in Hebrew and *Yeshua* means *Yahweh/Yehovah saves*. God is the Lord – Adonai in Hebrew, and **God has made Jesus, the Son, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36)**.

The name of Jesus is the name above every name!

The fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ (Col.2:9). This means that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are fully expressed in Jesus the Messiah. **Phil.2:11** “*That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” **The name of Jesus is the name given Him by God which is above every name, v.9**. That is why Peter baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul had the same revelation, baptising the new believers in **Acts 19:5** “*in the name of the Lord Jesus*”.

FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR SINS

Peter said to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, “*for the remission of your sins*” **Acts 2:38**. Remission literally means ‘*a sending away*’; it means ‘*a cancelling out*’. Peter said that through baptism sins would be remitted. This understanding is explained more fully by Paul in **Romans 6** where Paul says, “*we were baptised into Christ Jesus, into His*

death,” (v.3). “We were buried with Him through baptism into death” (v.4), and we are raised in the likeness of His resurrection (v.5). “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” (v.6). This is how our sins are remitted in baptism. Through baptism we go through a death, burial and resurrection in Christ Jesus and in the process the old man of sin is crucified. “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” (v.7-8).

This dying with Christ happens spiritually according to the Word of God in baptism: **truly our sins are remitted.**

BELIEVERS BAPTISM

Christian baptism is different to any other baptism. It is different to John’s baptism and so in **Acts 19** Paul **rebaptised** the disciples who came to faith in Jesus, as they had previously received John’s baptism.

How is Christian baptism different to John’s baptism?

John’s baptism was immersion in water but **it was a sign baptism only**. The people were baptised as an outward acknowledgment of their inner preparedness to change and receive the Messiah. Christian baptism is more than an outward experience of immersion in water. The Scriptures clearly teach that **baptism is a spiritual experience with Christ in death, burial and resurrection**. The key to Christian baptism is the cross and the resurrection. Because Jesus died and rose again baptism is literally a dying with Christ, being buried with Him [the old man is buried] and rising in newness of life through the power of His resurrection (**Rom.6:3-10**).

Christian baptism is for believers only, that is, those who have been cleansed of their sin by the blood of Jesus Christ through faith in Him, having heard the gospel. Christian baptism is baptism into Christ, into His resurrection and therefore church baptisms may need to be re-evaluated in the light of **Acts 19**.

Answer these questions:

- **Were you baptised into Christ?**
- **Were you baptised into a particular church?**
- **Were you baptised on the basis of repentance and faith?**
- **Did you receive the Holy Spirit at your baptism?**

THE PATTERN OF JESUS' BAPTISM

The baptism of Jesus Christ is unique and specific to Him. He was not submitting to **John's baptism of repentance** [Jesus had no sin to repent of, and John's baptism was preparing the people to receive Him]; rather He was offering Himself to ***“fulfil all righteousness”* Matt.3:15**.

This righteousness was the righteousness according to the law of Moses whereby the candidate for the high priesthood needed to be washed by a priest [in tradition this would have been the previous high priest, but God appointed John to baptise His Son]. The candidate was then anointed and **God Himself anointed Jesus Christ to be the eternal High Priest**.

However, **there is a clear pattern in the baptism of Jesus Christ** that we follow and expect fulfilment in our lives.

- 1. Jesus was baptised in obedience to His Father;** we are baptised in obedience to Jesus' command. When Jesus came up from the waters of baptism.
- 2. He received the Holy Spirit;** we are promised the Holy Spirit when we submit to baptism, having repented and believing in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit comes to people in a variety of ways, such as: speaking in a new tongue, seeing a vision, receiving an impartation of His power.
- 3. The Father God spoke** audibly concerning Jesus, showing approval, identifying Him to be the Son of God. We can expect prophetic utterance at our baptism, affirming and confirming us in this new salvation. To this end we always try to have witnesses present, including those gifted in prophecy, who pray over the new believers as they come out of the waters of baptism.

The pattern in summary:

- be water baptised in obedience to Jesus' command;
- expect to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit – He will give you a clear sign that you have received Him;
- expect a word from the Lord over your life to encourage and affirm you.

FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OF BAPTISM

1. Clothed with Christ

Gal.3:27-29 *“For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on [been clothed with] Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”* We are baptised into Christ; we are clothed with Christ; we are now in Christ, no longer separate to Him.

In Christ, the barriers of race, economic status and gender are removed and we are one in Him. Through baptism we become heirs according to the promise given to Abraham because we are now in Christ who is Abraham’s seed, (v.16).

2. Baptism does not equal circumcision

Col.2:11-12 *“In Him you also were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”*

Some wrongly teach that Christian baptism for New Testament believers is as circumcision for the people of God under the Old Covenant. On this basis they try to argue for, and practice, infant baptism. The circumcision spoken of in these verses is not a natural circumcision but it is a *“putting off the body of the sins of the flesh”*; this happens through Christian baptism and can only happen to a person who has repented and believed.

Infants cannot receive baptism because they are unable to repent and believe. Infants are to be dedicated to the Lord through prayer. The christening of babies through the sprinkling of water is not equal to baptism. When churches teach that infant sprinkling is a real baptism, they rob new believers by denying them the very necessary foundation of Christian baptism.

3. Baptism saves us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

1 Pet.3:20b-22 *“In the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism [not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God], through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.”*

Peter’s teaching reinforces Paul’s teaching in **Romans 6**. Paul has taught us that we are raised to *‘newness of life’* (v.4), that we are *‘united with Christ in His resurrection’* (v.5). Peter shows that through baptism we enter into the resurrection of Jesus Christ in a saving way even as Noah and his family entered into the ark to be saved *“through water”* **1Pet.3:20**.

Further Peter is teaching us that through baptism into Christ we are raised with Him to *“the right hand of God”*, above angels, authorities and powers. This confirms Paul’s teaching in **Ephesians** that we have been *“raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* **Eph.2:6**.

In **Ephesians 1:20-23**, Paul shows us that Christ has been raised *“far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named”*; that Christ is head of the Church and therefore as His body we are raised with Him. It is through baptism that we are raised and seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

4. Baptism: the key to victory

Baptism gives us the key to overcoming the devil. At baptism our ‘old man’, that is, the ‘old creation man’, the one who naturally lived in the devil’s realm, is buried with Christ and we are raised a ‘new creation person’, a ‘new man’ in Christ (**Romans 6:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17**). Therefore, the things that troubled us in the ‘old creation man’ no longer have any hold over us.

The devil likes to remind us of the weaknesses and the sins of that 'old creation man', but all that was buried in baptism. There is a cutting off from the 'old man' at baptism so we are no longer subject to those former things. When the enemy comes to accuse us, we can say *'No, devil, I am no longer that person; that person died in baptism, I am now a new creation in Christ Jesus'*.

Just as we go back to the cross when we sin after we are saved and claim the cleansing of the blood of Jesus to wash away our sin, we can go back to our baptism when the devil tries to make us guilty or ashamed of things we have done, and remind him that we have been cut off from that 'old man' and he no longer has anything he can accuse us of.

THE PRACTICES OF BAPTISM

WHO BAPTISES?

Jesus commanded the **apostles** to baptise in **Matt.28:19**; He was speaking to the eleven apostles. In **Mark 16:15-16** Jesus was also speaking to the eleven but He did not make baptism their exclusive task.

In **Acts 8** Philip who was an **ordained deacon**, but functioning in Samaria as an **evangelist**, automatically baptised the new believers. However, in that instance, Philip did not have the authority to release the Holy Spirit to the new believers, but there were mighty signs and wonders in healing and deliverance.

In **Acts 9**, Ananias, a **disciple**, baptised Saul [later Paul] and laid his hands on him so Saul could be healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. He also spoke a prophetic word to Saul from the Lord.

In the Scriptures, apostles, an ordained deacon, an evangelist and a disciple all baptised. In many churches only the ‘ordained minister’ is authorised to baptise and baptisms done outside of that church authority are regarded as illegitimate. This is partly because an emphasis is placed upon baptising people into the church denomination [or institution] rather than into Christ.

We are not proposing that anyone should baptise. Normal practice is that the ordained elder with help from disciples does the baptisms of new believers coming under his oversight. However, it is Scriptural for ordained deacons and disciples to baptise, when it is appropriate.

WHO IS BAPTISED?

- **Acts 2:41** “*Those who gladly received His word were baptised.*”
- **Acts 8:12** “*When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptised.*”
- **Acts 8:37** “*Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart you may.’*”
- **Acts 9:17-18** Saul, **having met the Lord Jesus** on the road, after Ananias had ministered to him, arose and was baptised.

- Acts 10:47 *“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptised who have received the Holy Spirit just as we.”* V 48a *“And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord.”*
- Acts 16:14b-15a *“The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul and when she ... was baptised.”*
- Acts 16:31-33 *“They said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved ... they spoke the word of the Lord to him ... immediately he was baptised.”*

What about children?

The key question to be asked is: how old is the child when he/she can be saved? Or if that is not a certain gauge, what about when a child has received the Holy Spirit with the release of tongues? Can such a child be denied baptism? Why do some want to deny full salvation to children who desire it?

WHEN DO WE BAPTISE?

The same day

Acts 2:41 The three thousand who received the word were baptised ‘that day’.

Immediately

Acts 8:38 *“He commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and he baptised him.”*

Acts 10:44-48 Peter commanded the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius to be baptised as soon as he saw that they had received the Holy Spirit.

Three days later

Acts 9:9-18 Saul was for three days without sight after his awesome encounter with the Lord Jesus and as soon as Ananias came to him and healed him, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and was baptised.

The same hour

Acts 16:33 The Philippian jailer and all his family were baptised the same hour.

HOW TO PROCEED

Because tradition dies slowly and ministers are nervous about the name to be used in baptism [some groups who baptise in the name of Jesus have been accused of being anti-trinitarian] a suggested way forward to help all come into a fuller revelation of the name of the Lord as follows:

- At the baptism service teach briefly on baptism from the Scriptures.
- It is always good to read of Jesus' baptism and build an expectation that the baptismal candidate will receive the Holy Spirit. This expectation of the Holy Spirit is further confirmed by Peter in **Acts 2:38**.
- Make reference to the clear command of the Lord in **Matt. 28:19** and reference to the clear examples of baptism into the Name in the book of Acts. [The two clearest references are: **Acts 2:38**, **Acts 19:5**].
- If there are many for baptism, the minister teaches and explains and speaks of baptism into Christ. When it comes to the individual immersion, one only needs to say "*I baptise you into the name of Jesus Christ*", having already explained that in the name of Jesus all the authority and glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are revealed.

Every baptism is unique. There is no set service. A single new believer can be baptized, or a number of brethren together who are desiring baptism, even a family group if all have believed in Jesus.

A general guide to follow:

1) Share some Scriptures concerning baptism

The command

Jesus' baptism

The practise in **Acts**

The key doctrine from **Romans**

2) Baptise into the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus, or Lord Jesus Christ, giving glory and honour to the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism is into the Name of Jesus, who is Christ the anointed One.

- 3) **Expect the Holy Spirit to come and be manifest in each life, “*you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*”** Take time (even with larger numbers) to impart the Holy Spirit after each person comes out of the water.
- 4) **Have witnesses (gifted brethren) to lay hands on each one as they come out of the water.** The Holy Spirit may release a prophetic word to the person at this time.

IT IS TIME FOR CHANGE

The word of God is clear: **baptise new believers immediately they clearly receive Jesus.** It is normal Biblical practice to baptise **on the same day that the new converts have turned to Christ.** Baptism is the first real step of faith once a person has believed in Jesus. Because church practice has moved away from obedience to the scriptural pattern, baptism is not properly taught or properly ministered. As a result, the foundations of the faith are not properly laid and many Christians are continually weak and struggling because they do not have strong foundations.

**REPENT AND BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST
BE BAPTISED AND RECEIVE
THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**