WATER BAPTISM

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Is water baptism an important part of the Gospels? The first event recorded by all four Gospels is the ministry of John the Baptist. The second event is that he baptized Jesus. The third is the feeding of the 5,000, at least two years later. The fourth is the Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday, a year after Jesus fed the 5,000.

John 4:1&2 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John – although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

The Meaning of Baptism – Not a Part of Salvation

I Corinthians 15:1&2 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

I Corinthians 15:3&4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

I Corinthians 1:17a For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel

Ephesians 2:8&9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

The Meaning of Baptism – Make Disciples, Baptize Them

Matthew 28:19a Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them…

Luke 6:40((ESV) A disciple is not above his teacher but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Ephesians 4:11&12 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

“Fully trained” and “equip” translate different forms of the same Greek word. A fully trained disciple is not one who knows what his teacher knows but one who has been trained and equipped so that he is like his teacher.

Matthew 28:20a “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Discipling someone is not teaching knowledge but teaching someone to “obey everything” Jesus commanded us.

Who Should We Baptize

John the Baptist made disciples and baptized them. John 4:1

Through His disciples, Jesus made disciples and baptized them. John 4:1&2

Jesus commanded us to make disciples and baptize them. Matthew 28:19&20

John the Baptist refused baptism to those with no evidence of conversion in their lives. Matthew 3:7-10; Luke 3:7-9

“Make disciples” in Matthew 28:19 is *“matheteuo.”* The Greek word for disciple is

*“mathetes.”* “Teach” would be *“didasko,”* a totally different word.

Although there are three passages that mention the baptism of a “household,” in two of them it is very clear that “household” refers to those who had believed.

I Corinthians 1:16a (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas;

I Corinthians 16:16&17 You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord’s people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it.

Acts 16:30-32 He brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

Acts 16:33&34 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole household.

There are other passages where the Greek word usually translated “household” is used and in most of them it is clear that infants are not included. John 4:53; Acts 10:2

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

What Is the Person Being Baptized Communicating?

They are communicating that they have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and that they are committed to being a disciple, to learning and obeying all that Jesus commanded us.

I have been told that in many Muslim countries that when a Muslim says he has converted to Christianity, other Muslims will try to convince him that he is making a grave mistake. But if he says he has converted and has been baptized, usually they will try to kill him.

The Method of Baptism

Meaning of the Word

Leviticus 4:6 “He is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary.” “Dip” is *“bapto”* from which *“baptizo,”* the word translated baptism, is derived. “Sprinkle” is *“rantizo,”* a totally different word. The Septuagint consistently translates the Hebrew word for dip as *“bapto”* and the Hebrew word for sprinkle as *“rantizo.”*

Instances of Baptisms

Matthew 3:16a As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.

Acts 8:38b&39a Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water.

Jewish Proselyte Baptism

“The person to be baptized, having cut his hair and nails, undressed completely, made fresh profession of his faith… and then immersed completely, so that every part of the body was touched by the water.” “The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,” by Alfred Edersheim, Book 2, page 745

The Didache, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

“Baptize…in running water. But if you do not have running water, then baptize in other water. And if you cannot in cold water, use warm. But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Things to Remember

Baptism is a major issue in the New Testament.

It is not part of how a person is saved.

It is the New Testament way of indicating a commitment to learn and obey all that Jesus commanded us, to not just be saved but to be a disciple.

The stated mission of the Wellsville Bible Church is to evangelize through discipleship. By this we mean our goal is to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ and then disciple them so that they in turn will lead other people to faith in Jesus Christ.

From the words used and how it was used by the Jews in the time of Christ and how it was understood by the early church, baptism should be by immersion.