

Water Baptism

All You Need To Know



A Booklet by
Charles Philip Mawungwa

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Introduction

Mathew 15:9 KJV

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

The above statement from our Lord Jesus Christ is my key verse as we seek a scriptural answer to most of the major questions regarding water baptism. There is so much division in the body of Christ because of doctrines related to water baptism. What's unfortunate is that most of these divisions are based on commandments and rules which were created by well meaning and passionate men, but not of God.

Let's take time to see how the scriptures address the issue of water baptism. What is its importance in the salvation of a person? Does it matter if you say, In the Name of Jesus or In the name of The Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Does God care if you dip once, three times, seven times, head first or backwards? And has God really set an age restriction for baptism?

Enough of human philosophy, opinions and man-made rules, Let's Talk Scriptures.

1. What is the definition of Baptism?

The word Baptize, is translated from the Greek word Baptizo which according to the Thayer Dictionary definition means:

“ To dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge, to wash..”

And in the Strong's dictionary it is defined as, “to make whelmed (that is, fully wet).

So the idea here, is that baptism referred to the act of completely submerging, or immersing something in water, and leave it fully wet or completely washed.

This is the dictionary meaning of the word, but let us look at scriptural examples of baptism so we can understand it. We have several examples of people baptising other people in the bible, and in all those instances they use water.

a) Jesus

Mathew 3:13,16

*13Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John...
16As soon as Jesus was **baptized**, he went up out of the **water**. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him*

b) Ethiopian Eunuch

ACTS 8:36, 38

*36. Now as they went down the road, they came to some **water**. And the eunuch said, “See, here is **water**. What hinders me from being **baptized**?”
38. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the **water**, and he **baptized** him.*

The word baptize itself implies water. It is like the word flood. The word flood by itself implies water. Though you can use it as an idiom to say, ‘a flood of emotion,’ “flooded with blessing” but if used by itself for example to say, “There is a flood coming” or, “there are floods in Zimbabwe.” It will be implying floods of water.

The same with baptism. A person can say, I will baptize you with fire, or baptize you with pain, but by itself, it implies water.

2. Should People Be Baptized?

The simple answer is Yes.

The reason why we should be baptized is because Jesus commanded it. Here are the scriptures.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV)

*19 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, 20 **teaching 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.*

Jesus tells the apostles that they should baptize all the believers and teach them to observe all the commandments that he had given them.

Mark 16:15-16 (NKJV)

15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

In here, Jesus provides a link between baptism and salvation. He says that a person who believes and is baptized shall be saved. It's that simple.

3. In whose name should you baptize?

In Mathew 28, Jesus Christ instructed the apostles to baptize everyone in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, when you go through the baptisms in the book of Acts, we see the apostles instructing people to be baptized in the name of Jesus.

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.*

As a result some people will not consider your baptism valid, if you say the words "In the name of The Father, Son and Holy Spirit" instead of saying, "In the name of Jesus."

This kind of thinking is in great error.

HOW TO USE THE NAME OF JESUS

Doing something in the name of Jesus, does not require you to actual say the words, "In the name of Jesus."

Consider this scripture:

Colossians 3:17 (NKJV)

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,

This scripture is saying that everything we do should be done in Jesus name, and everything we say should be said in Jesus name. Does that mean when you walk, you say, "I walk in the name of Jesus" when you sit down, you say, "I sit in the name of Jesus" and whenever you speak you say, "In the name of Jesus, pass me the salt?" No. That is not it.

When scripture commands us to do something in the name of Jesus, it simply means as a representative of Jesus. When you do something in someone's name, it means you have done it on their behalf, by their authority as their representative.

Let's look at Colossians 3:17 in another version.

Colossians 3:17 (NLT)

17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:17 (ERV)

17 Everything you say and everything you do should be done for Jesus your Lord.

Here is a good example of doing something in the name of Jesus.

PAUL AND THE SONS OF SCEVA

In acts 14 we see the apostle Paul healing a crippled man without saying the words, "In the name of Jesus"

Acts 14:9-10 New King James Version (NKJV)

9 This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

Notice that Paul does not say the words, "In the name of Jesus" but we know and understand that this healing was performed in Jesus name. Afterwards, the people try to worship Paul and Barnabas because of this miracle, and they in turn tell the people that it was God who had performed the miracle. Paul was standing as a representative of Christ, he performed the miracle on behalf of Christ, such that the glory for the healing was not his but Christ's.

We have an instance, of the sons of SCEVA who actually say the words, "in the name of Jesus" but the demon refuses to go, because they were not doing it on behalf of Christ, as representatives of Christ and therefore they were not doing it in the name of Christ.

Acts 19:13-18 New King James Version (NKJV)

13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

So doing something in the name of Jesus, is not about the words said, but it's about doing it as a representative and on behalf of Christ.

DAVID AND HIS SERVANTS

In order to understand further what it means to do something in someone's name, we can look at the example of David and his servants. When David wanted help from Nabal, he sent his servants to speak in his name.

1 Samuel 25:5-6 New King James Version (NKJV)

5 David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. 6 And thus you shall say to him who lives in prosperity: 'Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have!'

What this means is that the ten young men were going to speak on behalf of and as representatives of David. They carried the authority of David. It would be as though David himself had gone to Nabal.

JESUS AND HIS FATHER'S NAME

All the miracles that Jesus performed were performed in his Father's name.

John 10:25 Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

25 Jesus answered, "I told you already, but you did not believe. I do miracles in my Father's name. These miracles show who I am

We have no record of Jesus every saying, "In the name of the Father" when he was performing miracles. So when Jesus says, "I do miracles in my father's name," he simply means he is doing them by his Father's authority, on behalf of his Father and as a representative of His father.

BAPTISING IN THE NAME OF JESUS

So when the apostles commanded people to be Baptized in the name of Jesus, or in the name of The Lord, it wasn't about the words to be spoken in the water, they were instructing people to be baptized by the authority of, on behalf of and as representatives of Jesus.

So when Jesus is saying, baptize people in the name of the Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit, he is actually instructing us to baptize as representatives and on behalf of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

It is not about whether or not you say the actual words or not. So if you say, In the name of Jesus, that is well, if you say in the name of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, you have done well. There is no commandment from the Lord, instructing us to say anything, or not say anything.

As long as you baptize someone as an act of obedience to Christ, you have done it in Jesus name.

People who will reject your baptism based on whether you said, In The Name of Jesus, or In the name of The father, Son and Holy Spirit, are judging you based on ignorance of the word and based on the precepts of man and not of God.

This leads us to the Next Question;

4. Is Water Baptism of John or of Christ?

The Jews had their own ritual baptisms. Some pagan religions also have their own baptisms where someone is required to go into water to be initiated into the occult. John came with a baptism of repentance. This baptism was for people who lived before The Christ had been revealed. They were baptized so that when the Christ is revealed, they can be ready to believe in him.

Acts 19:4 New King James Version (NKJV)

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

After Jesus was revealed to the Jews, they now had to follow Christ, and John's ministry of water baptism began to decline until John himself was imprisoned.

However, After Jesus had been revealed, he then also instituted another water baptism which was separate to that of John. To the extend that Jesus baptized more people in water than John. The disciples of John were quite confused by this.

John 3:22-26

22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. 24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

If John's water baptism prepared people for Jesus, what did Jesus water baptism prepare people for? The Jews had understood John's water baptism, but they just could not understand Jesus water baptism. What is it's purpose?

Let's read more on this.

John 4(NKJV)

4 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

Do you see that? The disciples of Jesus were baptising people on behalf of and as representatives of Jesus such that when they baptized it was considered that Jesus himself had baptized. This is what it means to be baptising in Jesus name.

The disciples of John were baptising on behalf of and as representatives of John, by his authority and his commission, such that those who were baptized by them were considered to have been baptized by John. This is what it means to be baptising in John's name.

So there were now two water baptisms happening at the same time. One in John's name and another in Jesus name. It's not about what was said in the water, but who you were representing when baptising.

I believe that this is why it was necessary for the apostles to say, baptize in the name of Jesus, so that it's clear that the person would not be baptized on behalf of John's water baptism but on behalf of Jesus.

This bring us back to this question.

5. What was The Purpose of Jesus Water Baptism?

We know that John's baptism prepared the Jews for the ministry of the coming one, who was Jesus. So what did Jesus water baptism prepare the believers for?

In John 3, we saw the disciples of John going to their Rabbi, John and asking why Jesus was now baptising people. Some of these disciples of John went on to many different countries, continuing with John's ministry and baptising people on behalf of John. When Paul later meets these believers, he found that they had something missing in their faith, The Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1-6 New King James Version (NKJV)

19 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?"

So they said, "Into John's baptism."

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

So when Paul encountered these disciples of John, who were baptized into John's baptism. He first baptized them again on behalf of Jesus and then they received the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

So while the baptism of John prepared people for the ministry of Jesus on earth, the Baptism of Jesus prepares people for the ministry of The Holy Spirit in their bodies through the remission of sin. We will get to that later.

Peter reveals the purpose of being Baptized in the name of, on behalf of or as a representative of Christ.

Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

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.

So the purpose of Jesus water baptism, was a baptism for the remission of sins, so that the work of the Holy Spirit can be effected in your life.

After Paul meets Jesus. From that point on he was already seeing visions, but Jesus instructed him to go to Damascus where he would be told what to do. In Damascus, the Lord then send a man named Ananias to tell Paul to be Baptized and wash away his sins.

Acts 22:13-17 New International Version (NIV)

13 He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

14 "Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

15 You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

We shall come back to this issue.

6. Do you have to baptized in water first before you can receive the Holy Spirit?

The simple answer is No.

Once a person has believed in Jesus, the Holy Spirit can come upon them regardless of whether they have been baptized in water or not. We see this at the conversion of Cornelius.

ACTS 10: 44:48

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

So it is possible to receive the Holy Spirit first before you are baptized in water. But we see here the apostle Peter commands that those who had received the Holy Spirit should receive the water baptism of Christ. Why?

Even as we saw earlier, that Paul was already seeing visions and hearing God from the moment he met Christ, yet Jesus commands him to go to Ananias where he was to be baptized in water.

7.What is the Work of Baptism in The Life of a Believer?

Jesus says that if you believe and are baptized you will be saved. What does baptism do? Baptism is designed to deal primarily with the body. Not the soul and not the spirit, but the body. Scripture tells us that our flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom.

1 Corinthians 15:50 New King James Version (NKJV)

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

When you are born again, it is not your body that is born again, it is your spirit.

John 3:6-7 New International Version (NIV)

6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

At the coming of Christ, we shall all receive new spiritual bodies. (**1 Corinthians 15:42-48.**) However, till then, whilst we are still in this body which is not yet saved, what shall we do? This is where water baptism comes in.

Water Baptism deals with the body. When you get baptized, your body is sanctified. Your body is considered to have died and resurrected by faith, thus granting you the ability to live as a new creation whilst in this body.

7.i Baptism unites us with the death and resurrection of Christ?

Romans 6:1-4 (NKJV)

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 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.

*5 For if we have been **united together in the likeness of His death**, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

*6 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**. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.*

What the apostle Paul is saying is that when we enter that water and come out during baptism, we become united with Christ in his death and resurrection. Our bodies are now considered to have died with Christ, and resurrected by faith, thus allowing us to walk in a new life. Baptism allows us to walk as born again believers with victory over sin.

Verse 6 says, *"that we should no longer be slaves of sin"*

A lot of people who skip water baptism, or do not do it properly, will struggle with dealing with sin in the flesh. Inside they will love Christ and desire to live Holy, but will find themselves struggling to escape from sin in the flesh because their flesh not been killed by faith through baptism.

7.ii Water Baptism is the Answer of a Good Conscience

1 Peter 3:20-21 (NIV)

20 ...God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,

*21 and **this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also**—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*

As we have read in romans that when we are baptized we become united in the death and resurrection of Christ allowing us to have dominion over sin in the flesh. Now Peter expresses that this Baptism is our pledge towards a clear conscience. The KJV says, it is the answer of a clear conscience.

The conscience is that part of you that tells you that this is wrong or right. When we indulge in a lot of bad things, our consciences become dead, and those things no longer feel bad. Our souls are cleansed by the blood of Jesus from all the evil work that we did.

Hebrews 9:14 New International Version (NIV)

14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Hebrews 10:22 New King James Version (NKJV)

22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

But the apostle Peter is saying that water baptism is our pledge towards that clear conscience. When we unite with Christ in his death and resurrection, our bodies receive access to a new conscience that comes through the blood and Spirit of Christ.

7.ii Water Baptism Perfects Your Faith?

Faith in itself does not come from works, it comes as a gift from God. But once you have received this faith, it is perfected through works of obedience.

James 2:22 (NIV)

²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

So our actions perfect or complete our faith. In John 9:7, Jesus heals a blind man by putting mud on his eyes and instructing him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The blind man obeyed and found his way to the pool and after washing his face, he began to see.

What saved him was not the pool of Siloam, but the word of Christ that he obeyed. If someone had met him along the way and said to him, 'water can not heal you, don't bother going to the water' and convinced the blind man not to wash himself, he would not have been healed. If the blind man had gone to any other pool, he would not have been healed. The moment Jesus said, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam, that word went ahead of him to heal him at the pool. His faith would be seen in his obedience.

In the same vein, Jesus says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Your faith in Jesus death and resurrection is made complete when you obey his instruction.

8.What If You Die Before You Get a Chance To Be Baptized?

True obedience starts in the heart and then is made manifest on the outside. So for those who die before they get a chance to be baptized, God knows their hearts and whether or not, they were willing to obey him.

Hebrews 4:12 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart

Jeremiah 17:10 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰ "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."

1 Samuel 16:7 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

So for cases where people die before baptism, God weighs each heart, looks at their intents and rewards them accordingly.

9.What are The Old Testament Shadows of Baptism?

We can learn about the power of baptism through examples that are given in the Old Testament. 1 Peter 3:22 tells us that the flood of Noah was a prefiguring of Baptism. Paul also shows that when Israel passed across the Red Sea, they were actually going through a shadow of baptism.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Israel as a nation was representative of God's son. Israel left Egypt the day that they applied the blood on their doorsteps by faith. This shows how when we believe in the death of Christ we are immediately saved from death. We are justified and considered not guilty. However, even though they had left Egypt, which is a prefigure of the world system, pharaoh could still send his army to attack Israel.

However, the moment they crossed the Red Sea, Pharaoh's army was destroyed in the sea and he could not touch them any more. When we believe in Christ, our spirits are saved, but our bodies are still flesh and blood. Satan can still send his armies to attack us in the flesh, though our spirits are saved. Just as pharaoh's army could not cross the Red Sea to pursue Israel, when we get baptized, our flesh and blood is officially dedicated to God, and sanctified such that Satan's spirits no longer have free access to live in your flesh. They can only come if you yourself bring them.

This is why during water baptism, demons will leave, the sick will become healed, and many get delivered from ailments of the flesh. Your body is being dedicated to Christ in the water and evil spirits can not continue to live in that body.

During the Flood of Noah the earth was baptized in water and it shall be baptized in Fire at the end of the world, and then we get a new heaven and a new earth. Just like we are baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit and we become a new creation. The Hebrew word for ground/land/earth is Adamah (gen 4:11, gen 6:1,7), where we get the name Adam which means man.

So by looking at the earth and its baptisms we can learn about the importance of our own baptisms. When the flood baptized the whole earth, all the violent men that had multiplied on the surface the earth, were destroyed allowing the earth to have new life growing on it.

10. Do You Have The Three Testimonies Of God?

1 Thessalonians 5:23 New King James Version (NKJV)

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Body Soul and Spirit need to be sanctified and preserved until the coming of Christ, and so God has given three testimony to do that work in the life of a believer.

1 John 5:7-10 New International Version (NIV)

7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

9 We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.

*10 **Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony.** Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.*

Every person who believes in the Son of God will have the testimony of the water, the testimony of the Blood and The testimony of the Spirit in them.

The reason why there are three testimonies is because salvation is threefold. We have already seen how water deals with salvation of the body, you can also see the the blood saves the soul and the Holy Spirit saves your spirit.

Leviticus 17:11 New King James Version (NKJV)

11... for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'

Romans 8:16 New King James Version (NKJV)

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

11. How Many Times Should We Dip?

The bible is actually silent when it comes to the actual act of dipping a person in water. All we know is that Baptism means complete immersion and that water is used, but there is no instruction of whether we should dip once, twice, three times or seven times.

Where the bible is silent, let us learn to be silent and not add our own commandments. If Jesus thought that the number of times one is dipped was important for our salvation, he would have said so.

You can not be charged with sin for breaking a law that you have never been given.

Romans 5:13 New International Version (NIV)

13 ...but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law.

John 15:22 New International Version (NIV)

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin...

If someone tells you that dipping once, or twice or thrice is a sin. That is their own law. No matter how good their reason sounds, it's not a law of God but of that person. Some say, you dip once because Jesus died once, some say three times because it's in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, others say, three times because he was dead for three days, another may say seven is the number of perfection.

1 Corinthians 4:6 New International Version (NIV)

6 Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other.

All in all, Jesus did not specify, which shows that he did not care. All the things that were important for our salvation were written and given to us. Those things that were left out, were left out because we don't need them.

John 20:30-31 New King James Version (NKJV)

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Don't concern yourself with things that were not written. They do not add or subtract anything to your salvation. What is important is that when you are baptising you do it in faith and in Christ.

12. What is The Minimum For Baptism?

Generally people have always baptized people the way they themselves were baptized. Many great men of God in church history baptized infants until a recent rise of believers who said, people must be baptized at an age in which they can consent to baptism, because faith of the individual is a prerequisite of baptism. We shall look into that. So there are many churches today which will not baptize a child until they are 12 years old.

What does scripture say?

First and foremost, there is no scripture that says people should be baptized at age 12. It comes from Jewish traditions, but it's not in the bible. In fact, the bible does not mention any age when it comes to baptism. So any person who places an age restriction, they are placing their own commandment, and not that of Christ.

When we understand that baptism deals with the body and not the spirit, we can understand why God does not bother with age.

We are not the first people to be saved. Christianity has been there for 2000 years and the bible gives us a good template for how the church should operate, even in the area of Baptism.

13. What Scriptures Can Support Baptism of Infants?

Considering that we have already seen that there is no scripture that actually places an age restriction.

13.1) BAPTISM OF WHOLE HOUSEHOLDS

Through out the book of acts, we see people being baptized by the apostles, but when a person would believe, they and their entire households would be baptized.

The Jailer's Family

Acts 16:33 (ISV)

At that hour of the night, he took them and washed their wounds. Then he and his entire family were baptized immediately.

The Jailer and his ENTIRE family were baptized. His entire family. His entire family would mean, his wife, and all his children. None of his children were left out.

Lydia's Household

Acts 16:14-15 New International Version (NIV)

14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

*15 When **she and the members of her household were baptized**, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

The term household refers to the people who lived in her home, and that's typically, her spouse, her children and her servants and their children. It would be unlikely that there were no children at all in her household.

Let's look at another example:

Stephanas Household

1 Corinthians 1:16 (NKJV)

*16 Yes, I also **baptized the household of Stephanas**. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.*

13.2) APPROVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

At the beginning of their ministry, the believing Jews did not believe that gentiles should be baptized. However, when God sent Peter to preach to the gentile Cornelius, something happened. The Lord Jesus baptized Cornelius and his household with the Holy Spirit. Peter then remembered, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was performed by Jesus himself.

So If Jesus could baptize the gentiles with his spirit, then who was he to stop them from being baptized by water. Seeing that the baptism of the spirit is even greater than that of water.

Let's Read.

Acts 11:15-17 New International Version (NIV)

*15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.
16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'*

17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

ACTS 10:47

Then Peter said, 47 "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

This same lesson that Peter was given by the Lord, is the one which we must use also. If they can receive the Holy Spirit, then they can be baptized. Indeed, as Per says, to refuse water baptism on those who have received the spirit, is to stand in God's way.

If the Holy Spirt has approved them, then don't deny them water baptism.

Now consider that John Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. His mother and father were both righteous people, and God filled him with the Spirit since he was a foetus.

LUKE 1:15 (ISV)

*for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.***

John the baptist was in the old covenant. If someone in the old covenant could be filled with the Holy Spirit as an infant, how much more in the new covenant. And as the apostle Peter says, If God can put his spirit on an infant, who are we to deny them water.

13.3) JESUS WANTS YOUR CHILDREN

Scripture teaches us that, when you are a believer, your children are born holy and sanctified because of your faith as the mother or father.

1 Corinthians 7:14 New International Version (NIV)

14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

So because your children are made holy by your faith, do not hinder them from coming to Christ.

Mark 10:13-16 New King James Version (NKJV)

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them.

14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Jesus wants your children. People in the kingdom of darkness, will dedicate and handover children even before they are born. Why are we hindering our own children from coming into the body of Christ. The bible says, Jesus was displeased with those who hindered the children.

At this time, Jesus can not physically lay his hands on our children. Baptism is the way we were given to be united with Christ in the likeness of his death and resurrection. Baptism is the way that their bodies are dedicated to Christ.

13.4) BAPTISM CORRESPONDS TO CIRCUMCISION

Colossians 2:11-12 New International Version (NIV)

11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ,

12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Circumcision was a law given to Abraham as a seal of his faith (Rom 4:9-13). Under this law, the men would cut off a piece of their flesh. You could not be considered a child of Abraham unless you were circumcised. Now Paul is showing that the circumcision of the old covenant, corresponds to baptism in the New Testament. Except in the New Testament, the whole power of your flesh is cut away as you unite with Christ in his death and resurrection.

Just as circumcision was given as a seal of Abraham's faith, so baptism is given as a seal of our faith.

Genesis 17:23

On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him.

Just as Abraham was instructed to circumcise his whole household based on his own faith, in the book of Acts we see whole households being baptized based on the faith of the parents. God's covenant is not just for you, it is for you and your children.

Acts 2:39 New International Version (NIV)

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

14. Is faith a prerequisite for Baptism?

Faith is a prerequisite for Salvation, but not necessarily for baptism. If you are an adult who has repented and come to Christ, you must first believe before you can be baptized. But once you have been baptized, your children are sanctified through you. They are baptized and then they can confess their own faith when they are ready to.

If they never confess faith in Jesus, even if they were baptized, they won't be saved. Let us look at a scripture that is often misunderstood.

Mark 16:16 (NKJV)

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

The scripture here is not laying out an order of things but merely listing things that are required. Faith and Baptism. The original greek text is written in the aorist tense, which means He that has believed, at any point in their life, and has been baptized at any point in their lives. That's why the NKJV here does not say, He that believes and gets baptized, but rather, he that believes and IS baptized.

Let me quote the same scripture in other version so it can be clearer

NASB

"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

BEREAN LITERAL BIBLE

The one having believed and having been baptized will be saved, but the one having disbelieved will be condemned.

AMPLIFIED BIBLE

16 He who has believed [in Me] and has been baptized will be saved [from the penalty of God's wrath and judgment]; but he who has not believed will be condemned.

So if you believe, and have been baptized you will be saved. It doesn't matter when you were baptized.

15. Did Paul Reject Baptism?

Here is another scripture that some have twisted and used it to reject the commandments of our Lord. Paul speaks to the Corinthians and tells them that he was glad he had baptized none of them except a few households because God had not sent him to Baptize.

1 Corinthians 1:14-17 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. ¹⁶ Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

Some have used this scripture to claim that Paul did not do water baptism. Well, when you read from the book of acts you will see that Paul baptized all the people that believed. Even after escaping from prison, he baptized the jailor and his whole family that very night, at the risk of being caught by the soldiers.

However, Paul did not move alone. He would move with people like Silas, Timothy, Barnabas, Luke and Titus. Everyone in the body of Christ has their own duty. Some have duty to evangelize, some are sent to teach, others to prophesy and others to do services such as baptism.

And so while Paul concentrated on preaching the gospel, when people believed, he would instruct those with him to baptize the believers. In fact, after Paul had preached in Corinth, he had everyone baptized.

Acts 18:8 New International Version (NIV)

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.

So all the believers in Corinth were baptized, but Paul as an apostle did not have to personally baptize people. He would instruct others to do it. Paul only personally baptized people when he did not have others to help him.

We see an example of this with Cornelius and his household. Peter as the apostle preached the gospel, and when they believed, he did not personally baptize them, he instructed others to do it.

ACTS 10:48

⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

IN CONCLUSION

I end where I began. Let us lay aside commandments of men, and focus on the word of God. Amen.