

# DOCTRINE MATTERS: ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

## Message 24: **Baptism**

*"Nothing is more plainly taught in the New Testament than that it is the duty of every believer in Christ to be baptized"*

- Spurgeon

### **What does baptism mean?**

- The English word for "baptism" is a transliteration of a Greek word.
- The word can be applied to all sorts of situations, but always has the idea of being overwhelmed. For example: you can be immersed in your work, or overwhelmed by it. A sip of wine could be considered a sprinkle, so what would it mean to be baptized in wine mean? Did Elijah sprinkle the alter or baptize it?
- The Greek word βαπτίζω (baptizo, Strong's 907) is used 77 times in 63 verses in the New Testament (according to my search on BlueLetterBible.org)

### **There are different uses of the word in scripture.**

Before looking at what we refer to as "believer's baptism" let's consider other uses of the word. And note the word doesn't refer to a serene event...

The epic, dangerous exodus shared by the Israelites as they fled from Egypt is referred to as a baptism into Moses. Note this isn't wasn't a water baptism:

#### **1Corinthians 10:1-5 (ESV)**

*<sup>1</sup> For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup> and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

John said Jesus will bring a different baptism. Note Jesus' baptism referred to here isn't with water:

#### **Luke 3:16 (ESV)**

*<sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

Jesus' referred to His ministry and suffering as a baptism. Again, not referring to water:

#### **Mark 10:35-41 (ESV)**

*<sup>35</sup> And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." <sup>36</sup> And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" <sup>37</sup> And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." <sup>38</sup> Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. **Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?**" <sup>39</sup> And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "**The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized,**" <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." <sup>41</sup> And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.*

The Septuagint (which means “70” and is referred to by the Roman numeral LXX) is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Consider the Hebrew words they translated as “baptize”:

From Hebrew to English	From Hebrew to Greek to English
<p><b>Isaiah 21:4 (ESV)</b>  <sup>4</sup> My heart staggers; horror has appalled me; the twilight I longed for has been turned for me into trembling.</p>	<p>ἡ καρδία μου πλανᾶται, καὶ ἡ ἀνομία με <b>βαπτίζει</b>, ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐφέστηκεν εἰς φόβον.  My heart wanders, and transgression <b>overwhelms</b> me; my soul is occupied with fear.</p>
<p><b>Daniel 4:33 (ESV)</b>  <sup>33</sup> Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.</p>	<p>αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ὁ λόγος συνετελέσθη ἐπὶ Ναβουχοδονόσορ, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐξεδιώχθη καὶ χόρτον ὡς βοῦς ἤσθιε, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δρόσου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ <b>ἐβάφη</b>, ἕως οἷ αἱ τρίχες αὐτοῦ ὡς λεόντων ἐμεγαλύνθησαν καὶ οἱ ὄνυχες αὐτοῦ ὡς ὀρνέων.  In the same hour the word was fulfilled upon Nabuchodonosor: and he was driven forth from men, and he ate grass as an ox, and his body was <b>bathed</b> with the dew of heaven, until his hairs were grown like lions' <i>hairs</i>, and his nails as birds' <i>claws</i>.</p>

Baptism of John:

Was a baptism for repentance:

**Matthew 3:11-12 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> *"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."*

Was for sin:

**Matthew 3:4-6 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> *Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and **they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.***

Was apparently very, very serious and not to be taken lightly. Continuing Matthew 3:

**Matthew 3:7-10 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

Was central to his job has the forerunner of Christ:

### **Mark 1:1-8 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup> As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "**Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way,** <sup>3</sup> the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" <sup>4</sup> **John appeared, baptizing** in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Was a key event in Jesus' ministry:

### **Mark 1:9-11 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

### **What is "our" baptism?**

The word "baptize" is not a mild word! It isn't found among the more serene passages of scripture. Looking back, it always has 4 elements:

1. A subject being baptized
2. A medium in which the subject is baptized
3. An agent doing the baptizing
4. An effect, purpose and very serious implications for the subject being baptized

Does this sound different?:

*"Nothing is more plainly taught in the New Testament than that it is the duty of every believer in Christ to be baptized"*

- Spurgeon

The bottom line,

### **Galatians 3:23-29 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> **For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.** <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

BAPTISM IS TO BE DONE IN A PARTICULAR WAY.

**Acts 8:34-36 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup> And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "**See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?**"

BAPTISM IDENTIFIES US OPENLY WITH CHRIST (VS. 3, 5)

**Romans 6:3-4 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

BAPTISM SHOWS THE IMPACT OF OUR SALVATION EXPERIENCE

Note that after the amazing event of the Holy Spirit's falling, to show the significance of what had happened to those who had been saved, Peter exclaimed they should be baptized!

**Acts 10:44-47 (ESV)**

<sup>44</sup> While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup> And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. <sup>46</sup> For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, <sup>47</sup> "**Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?**"

**Acts 16:30-34 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup> And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup> **And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.** <sup>34</sup> Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

WE ARE NOT SAVED BY BAPTISM, BUT BY FAITH THROUGH THE GOSPEL

- Referring to Acts 10 above, the Holy Spirit had already fallen.
- In the following very complicated passage, which we won't delve into, note how the Holy Spirit's activity is separate from baptism:

**Acts 19:1-7 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." <sup>3</sup> And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." <sup>4</sup> And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." <sup>5</sup> On hearing this, **they were baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> And **when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came** on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. <sup>7</sup> There were about twelve men in all.

- Paul shows the priority and value of baptism. Note where the power lies- the gospel! And notice how baptism was already being distorted, rather than being united, the Corinthians were being divided by it!

### **1Corinthians 1:10-17 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup> **For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.**

Finally, remember how there are always 4 elements in baptism, the subject, the medium, the agent and the purpose?

### **Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."