

Gospel Baptisms



ENDEAVORING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT, JUST AS YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM; ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN YOU ALL.

Gospel Baptisms Part One

Early one morning as I was eating my breakfast as I was reading my bible and I came upon a problem that plagues the modern church denominations. This problem is with biblical baptism which seems to bring God's children into confusion and division both of which are not from the Lord. I decided to take a Gospel look into the scriptures that use the word "baptize, baptized, and baptism," and see what the scriptures speak. Let us join together and ask the Lord to give us understanding as we read His proven word of truth.

What follows is an in-depth look into this New Testament ritual. Are you personally ready to look at every scripture and the original Greek meaning of this word that is causing much dispute and division in Christendom?

Let us begin with a word from the scriptures from an inmate who is in chains of bondage for preaching the Good News of Christ. His name, "Apostle Paul" and the book is Ephesians:

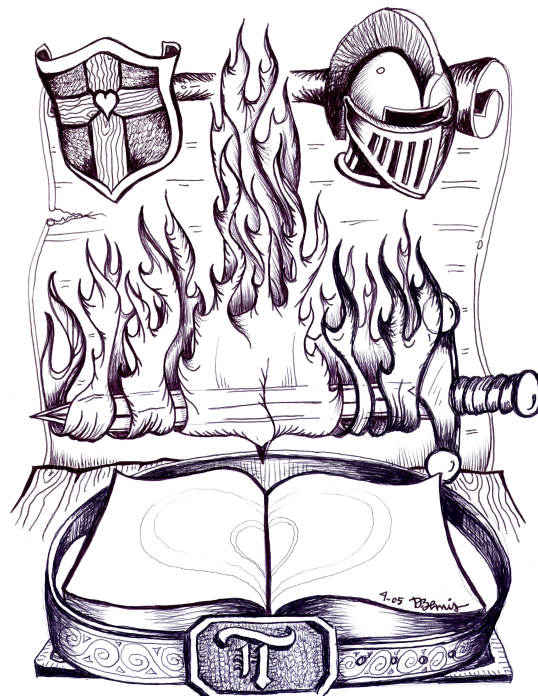
*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, **one baptism**; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*
Ephesians 4:1-6)

The revered Apostle is imploring to us to stay in unity through the idea of oneness. He wants the church to stay together and as brothers and sisters in

Christ working together to build and edify God's kingdom. God's kingdom is built in truth and the truth is this, we are to be one flock with one pastor and that pastor is to be Jesus alone. Let us lay aside denominational issues and what we have been taught and let God's Holy anointed word speak and give understanding to our hearts. Let the word of God become our standard for understanding baptism.

In the book of Revelation Saint John tells us to be hot of cold but because we are lukewarm the Lord will vomit us out of His mouth. (Revelation 3:16) I do not want to go down the wrong road nor miss what the Lord wants to do in any believer's life.

Division and fighting among believers is hurting God's Kingdom business. And God's ultimate Kingdom business is souls. Hence the goal of this project is to bring unity to the body of Christ through understanding of one baptism.



Let us endeavor to be one in unity through a prayer of unity spoken from my heart to your heart. Are you ready?

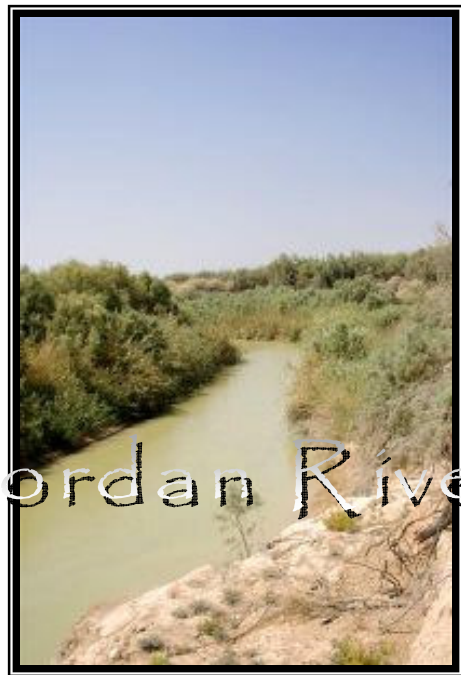
“Father of all truth open the eyes of our understanding to gain spiritual understand about the different kinds of baptisms spoken about in the Bible. Help the reader and me to see Your heartbeat in this spiritual event in which much division has happened in Your flock over the years. Even though Jesus says that there is one flock and one Shepard (John 10) it is amazing to me that so much division has occurred in an event that Jesus participated in. Yes open our eyes to understand Your thoughts on this subject. Settle this question in our heart once and for all as we intently look into Your inspired word. Amen and amen.”

I find the baptism words uttered or written in the book of Matthew 14 times. Since Baptism is a word only found in the New Testament then let us look at its origin in the Greek language, βάπτισμα (Baptismo). The word implies or means, according to the Easton's Bible Dictionary 1897; (1) to dip a thing into an element or liquid, and (2) to put an element or liquid over or on it.

With the Greek word defined then let us start looking into scripture and let us start in the book of Matthew:

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.’” Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan,

confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto 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. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”



Jordan River

But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:1-17

One might ask why the Jews were wanting John to baptize them? Was baptism done among the Jews before Jesus? Look what I found as I studied Jewish roots to Baptism.

"Q: I have always taught baptism was identification with Jesus' death, burial & resurrection, but at the same time I also could never figure out why the Jews were not surprised when John the Baptist came preaching a "baptism of repentance". What I mean is, the Jews acted like water baptism was something they were very familiar with & had no qualms submitting to it. Something tells me they were very familiar with water baptism prior to John's ministry but I don't know what?

"A: You are right that water baptism has a history with the Jews. It comes from the practice of ritual cleansing from the kinds of impurities mentioned in Leviticus 15. In Jesus' day, this had been formalized into the practice of ritual immersion in a "mikvah" bath. (Dipping into a liquid)

This practice is mentioned in Mark 7:4. The "cleansing" of themselves and of cups

and other objects here in the Greek is literally "baptize," that is, immerse in a mikvah bath. When they came home from the market, they would immerse themselves in a mikvah bath to cleanse themselves from any possible impurity they may have picked up in the market.

The practice of immersion continues today among the Jews. But where today you might have only one mikvah bath for a whole neighborhood, in the Jerusalem of Jesus' day, archaeologists have found as many as 2 or 3 in the basement of each house. (These were especially large homes, possibly belonging to priestly families.) You could say that ritual immersion was all the rage in the time of Jesus!

But in addition to this day-to-day type of cleansing, ritual baths were also used as part of the process of conversion of a Gentile to Judaism. Three steps were required: 1) Circumcision (for men), 2) A ritual bath, and 3) The offering of a sacrifice in the Temple. In this use, the ritual bath was seen to cleanse from the impurity of the foreign nations, and to bring about a re-birth of the individual, described in much the same language as Christians use for spiritual rebirth or salvation.

The key insight of John the Baptist, though, was that not only Gentiles but also Jews were in need of such a spiritual cleansing in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

If we evaluate John's teaching in light of the Jewish sources (such as Josephus who



mentions his ministry), it seems that John taught repentance toward God which was then followed by (or accompanied by) immersion: that is, an inner cleansing by repentance and an outer cleansing by immersion. This ties in well with the Christian view of baptism as an outward sign of an inward reality.

It also explains why Jesus himself had to submit to immersion: as an outward cleansing in preparation for the start of his ministry.

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul sees a foreshadowing of Christian baptism in the experience of Israel at the Red Sea. This is an important teaching which is often overlooked. The miraculous crossing of the Red Sea was God's act of grace toward Israel by which the nation was delivered (saved) by God, and which led them--by grace--into a covenant relationship with God. Just as in Christianity, this was not merited by any works they had done or could ever do, but only by God's grace.

In the same way, Christian salvation and baptism is the incorporation of individuals into the covenant people of God by grace.

This ties directly in with Paul's teaching on dying and rising with Christ (Rom. 6) because in the Jewish baptism of conversion, as in the Christian baptism, you come out of the waters a new, clean, and wholly righteous person, dying to your old self and rising to the new.

I could not put it any better than this article. Baptism then should be *an outward sign of an inward reality*. Listen to what the Spirit of God is saying to your heart. The inward reality is that we have asked God into our hearts and because we

have the outward signs of true repentance then we can be baptized outwardly for the true pouring out of God's Spirit is manifesting inside our lives.

Let us now look at the facts presented to us from this chapter in Matthew and see if it lines up with what was stated above.

1. John wanted people to **repent**—he was directed to give this message to the people. People needed to repent if they wanted God to be in their midst. The Lord is holy and desires His people holy. To biblically repent is to turn from sin and walk in obedience to His commands and voice. This had to be seen in outward fruit that God lived inside the participant of immersion baptism.
2. John went to the river **Jordan** to (1) *to dip a thing into an element or liquid*, and (2) *to put an element or liquid over or on it*. Was this probably backward submersion or forward submersion—most likely according to the custom in Jerusalem and that is forward as kneeling and going under face first.
3. John demanded religious people to have the **evidence** of repentance in their life and then come and be baptized. Baptism then should be *an outward sign of an inward reality*.
4. Jesus took part in this immersion ritual. Did Jesus need to be cleansed? Did Jesus need salvation? Did Jesus need to show fruit of repentance first before He was water baptized? Jesus' water baptism was to fulfill all righteousness thus the completion

of an outward sign of an inward reality of who He was.

5. According to the selected text—who showed at the water Baptism of Jesus? (1) Jesus was there. (2) The Spirit of God descended upon Him from Heaven. (3) And the Father spoke, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*”

From these scriptures we can see many Biblical truths and I do not think we need to go beyond what was given to us since the scriptures tell us:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

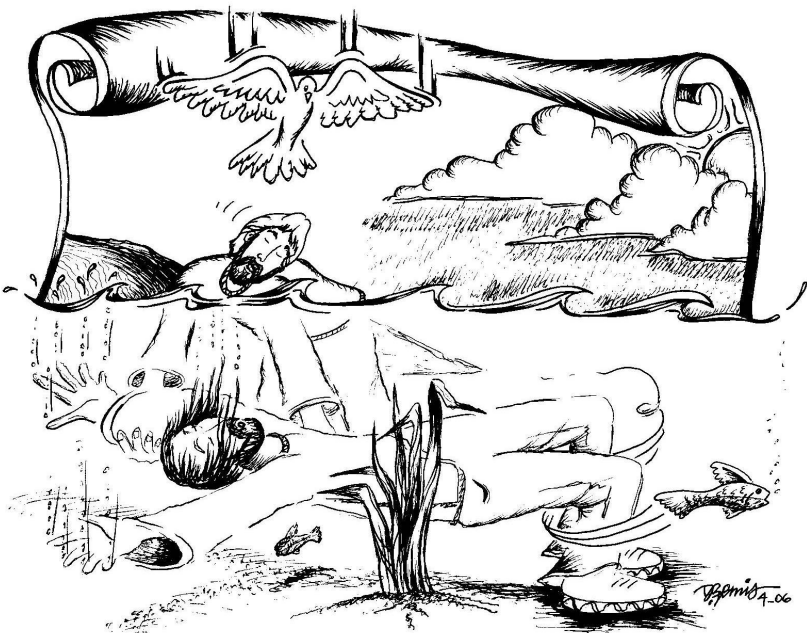
Let us continue getting thoroughly equipped for every good work being convinced about this New Testament word called baptism. Let us look now into Matthew chapter 20 and let us see what is spoken about baptism this time.

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized

They said to Him, "We are able." So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." (Matthew 20:20-23)

We know from the context that Jesus had already been water baptized hence in this setting He was talking about the baptism of death.

- **Do we need to be immersed into this liquid baptism?**
No, we do not need to start a new ritual but we do need to die to self.
- (Galatians 2:20) states this. I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me...
- And again as Jesus says that we must deny ourselves and pick up our cross daily and then follow Him (Luke 9:23).



with the baptism that “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
I am baptized with?”

- **But we see this time in scripture Jesus is not talking about water Baptism but the baptism of His death.**

Again in Matthew we find this:

Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. (Matthew 21:23-27)

Even in the days of Jesus people were wondering about baptism. Jesus in this question to the religious leaders was talking about John the Baptist and his water baptism. Jesus was talking to them about the Jews ritual of Mikvah or immersion cleansing. Jesus was making them think and they did not dare answer Him about John's water baptism for they knew it to be from God as *an outward sign of an inward reality to purify them from God's wrath.*

Let us now go to the last chapter of Matthew and listen to the words of Jesus:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to

Me in heaven and on earth. 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, 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 (Matthew 28:18-20)

First and foremost we find Jesus speaking after His death and resurrection to His disciples. What is it that Jesus is saying?

One: All authority has been given to Him and in His authority He commands us to GO:

Second: As we GO we are to disciple all nations. God is not a respecter of any nations He allows everyone the chance to follow Him all the way to Heaven. We are to disciple the people we come in contact with if at all possible. A disciple is a devotee to Jesus through following and obeying His voice of truth.

Third: We are to baptize these disciples in the name of Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These are the words recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. These are recorded as the words of Jesus. Then I am not going to add to or take away from His truth. And as we baptize and as we teach we are to direct them always back to God who is going to always be with us.

This my dear reader is why I baptize the followers of Jesus in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit because I am commanded by Jesus. Anything else for me would take away from what Jesus commands. Anything else would make Jesus out to be a liar or Matthew a liar of which I can not do. But this is my conclusion from reading the

Gospel of Matthew. You seek God and you obey His voice.

Next let us travel through the words penned by Mark another of Jesus' disciples.

Gospel of Mark

Next in sequence comes the Gospel of Mark and let us see what he records for us in regards to baptism.

John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mark 1:4-11)

Mark records the same as Matthew in that Jesus is mightier than John. And that Jesus would bring the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Mark also shows us that Jesus' baptism was witnessed and present by the Spirit of God and God the Father's voice was heard. This is what is documented by

Mark. Now I want you to think for a moment just for yourself.

1. Who was present at Jesus' water baptism according to Matthew and Mark?

2. Who else received baptism at the Jordan River that day?

3. Why were the religious people coming to John to get water baptized?

4. What was John the Baptist's message to the people who came to the river Jordan?

In your answers did you go beyond what you have just read? Or did you answer according to what we have just

read together? Stay within the scriptures you have just read.

Gospel of Luke

We have looked into what Matthew and Mark recorded about baptism now let us look into what Doctor Luke has to say.

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” So the people asked him, saying, “What shall we

do then?” He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.” Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than what is appointed for you.” Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, “And what shall we do?” So he said to them, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.” Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not, John answered, saying to all, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.” (Luke 3:1-22)

What did you read? The time has come again to think for your-self. The time has come to answer a few questions.

1. Who was present at Jesus' baptism according to Luke?

2. What does this teach you about Jesus' baptism and is it any different then what you have already read?

4. What John preached-how do you apply his teaching to your own life today?

5. What do you think John meant when he said, *"I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

3. What was John's message to all the people who came to him to be baptized?

6. What did John mean when he said, *“Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance...”*

When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the

For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him. (Luke 7:24-30)

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2. What did the ordinary people do in response to Jesus' words of encouragement?

3. Where can we find these words, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' Which prophet of old declared them before the words came true?

4. What do these prophetic words speak to you right now as you think about water baptism?

Let us see what else the good doctor has to say about baptism.

Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to

whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

“I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” (Luke 12:44-53)

1. What kind of baptism is Jesus speaking of in this text?

2. How do you know which kind of baptism Christ is speaking about?

3. Did the good Dr. Luke change your mind about water baptism?

4. If something changed what was it and what is your justification?

Gospel of John

Let us look and listen to John the Lord's beloved. Let us see what he has recorded as important to him?

Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD,"' as the prophet Isaiah said." Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to

The Lord's beloved, John gives an account much like what we have already read. He says he is not the Christ, meaning God's Anointed One. He tells us

We know that John the Baptist is the one preparing the way of the Lord. He is the voice in the wilderness cry out make straight the way of the Lord.

1. Repent and have the real fruit of repentance
2. Then have the baptism of immersion the real Mikvah bath of cleanliness.
3. Jesus is mightier than John himself
4. Jesus is God's Anointed One

What have you personally learned about baptism from reading this sermon?

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1. *Easton's Bible Dictionary 1897*
2. <http://www.totheends.com/questions2.htm#Baptism> "Jewish Roots to Baptism"
3. <http://www.mikvahproject.com/infoabout2.html>
4. *New King James Bible Version*