



# Infant Baptism or Baptism of the Believers

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The doctrine of baptism has been a dividing matter in the church for ages!! I do not think that it is a matter which will easily be dissolved, because of the deep rooted beliefs of different church factions and denominations. When considering the subject we need to understand that it is one of the issues within our personal relationship with God which cuts to the very essence of our convictions. Baptism is matter of conviction and not a matter of preference. I want to challenge you to study this document and research the subject further. Do not just put it aside because it might not fit your frame of reference. Be mature and face the facts and make an informed decision.

We need to establish a foundation from where we can address this matter if we want to come to a conclusion. We need to establish a point of departure or a basis of agreement. All people within major denominations and Christian faith groupings, profess that the Scriptures as we know it in the collection of the Canon, comprising of the 39 books of the "Old Testament" and the 27 books of the "New Testament", is the basis of their faith and practices. The Scriptures should be our only basis for the establishment of truth.

If we want to be balanced within this matter, we must look at the doctrine of the baptism from both side of the fence. We have to understand that there are two major groupings within what we call the Christian Faith. These two grouping are the Catholics and the Protestants. We also need to realize that the practice of baptism within the Protestant circles are divided into those who side with the Catholics and the Orthodox denominations and those fundamentalists, who prefer the approach of baptism after the "Born Again" experience. The majority of those, who practices infant baptism, holds the view that it is a sacrament and those who practices baptism after being born again holds the view that it is an ordinance. Is there a difference or is it just different words for the same concept?

I do not want to address the finer details of how these different groupings administer this doctrine, because in the administering of baptism there are minor differences in the application of the practice of baptism. I believe we need to focus on the major difference namely; is the prescribed baptism as practiced in the church "Infant Baptism" or "Baptism of the Believers". Is it indeed important which one is scripturally correct or can both be correct? What is the truth? Let us first consider what the two groups advocate.

## ***Sacramental Principle***

The sacramental principle is a characteristic tenet of Roman Catholicism. The sacramental system worked out especially in the middle ages by the schoolmen and subsequently at the Council of Trent envisaged sacraments primarily as "causes of grace" that could be received independent of the merit of the recipient. Recent Catholic sacramental theology emphasizes their function as signs of faith. Sacraments are said to cause grace insofar as they are intelligible

signs of it, and that the fruitfulness, as distinct from the validity, of the sacrament is dependent on the faith and devotion of the recipient. Conservative Catholicism connected sacramental theology to Christology, stressing Christ's institution of the sacraments and the power of the sacraments to infuse the grace of Christ, earned on Calvary, to the recipient. The newer emphasis connects the sacraments to ecclesiology. We do not encounter Christ directly, but the church, which is His body, mediates the presence and action of Christ.

Protestant Churches who also holds to the view of Infant baptism sees the practice in a slightly different way. To understand the difference, we need to understand the differences in definition of the word sacrament. A sacrament is a rite that mediates divine grace. Amongst most Protestants, the word *mediates* would mean only that it is a visible symbol or manifestation of invisible divine grace. Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox hold that sacraments are not mere symbols, but cause their recipients to receive divine grace. Sacraments are usually administered by the clergy to a recipient, and are generally understood to involve visible and invisible components. The invisible component (manifested inwardly) is understood to be God's grace working in the sacrament's participants, while the visible (or outward) component entails the use of water, wine, or oil that is blessed or consecrated. Even though there are this small difference in definition, those who practices Infant baptism, calls it a sacrament. By definition, you must hold the view that when a sacrament is administered, the grace of God is administered. This brings us to the conclusion that if Infant Baptism is administered as a sacrament, the participants must believe that there is some form of salvation in it, because it distributes the grace of God.

The basis of the doctrine of infant baptism is the assumption that it replaced circumcision. This doctrine teaches that, Paul advocates in his letter to the Colossians that baptism has replaced circumcision. The key text for this teaching is Col 2:11–12. The reasoning is that usually only infants were circumcised under the Law of Moses and that circumcision of adults was rare. This reasoning goes further to say that, if a man wanted to become a Jew, he had to believe in the God of Israel and be circumcised. In the New Testament, if one, wants to become a Christian, one must believe in God and Jesus and be baptized. In the Old Testament, those born into Jewish households could be circumcised in anticipation of the Jewish faith in which they would be raised. Thus in the New Testament, those born in Christian households can be baptized in anticipation of the Christian faith in which they will be raised. The pattern is therefore the same: If one is an adult, one must have faith before receiving this rite; if one is a child too young to have faith, one may be given this rite in the knowledge that one will be raised in the faith.

### ***Baptism of the Believers***

The doctrine of the baptism of the believers advocates that personal faith in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus the Christ) as Lord and Saviour, which gives you entrance into the Kingdom of God, must precede water baptism. This type of baptism is for adults and older children, because it is to be administered only after one has undergone a "born again" experience. At the instant of acceptance, when he is "born again," the person becomes a Christian, and his salvation is assured. Baptism follows, though it has no actual saving value. It is thus not a sacrament, but rather an ordinance.

Although many Protestant traditions baptize infants, the Baptists - and "Bible Churches" in the Baptist tradition—insist that baptism is only for those who have come to faith. Nowhere in the New Testament, they point out, do we read of infants being baptized. The only explicit baptism accounts in the Bible involve *converts* from Judaism or paganism. For children of believers there is no explicit mention of baptism in infancy.

## ***The Basis from which the Apostles Operated***

It is important to understand that the writers of the New Testament were all Jews writing to a church that consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. They conveyed their ideas from a very strong Hebrew perspective based on the writings of the Hebrew people. These writings were of three sources - The first was Torah or the Law as we call it. The second was the Prophets and thirdly, the Writings. These three sections put together compile what is known today as "The Old Testament". We need to remember that the idea of a Messiah or Saviour is a Jewish idea and that within the history of Israel all of their enemies were involved in some kind of Baal worship.

As a believer in Yeshua (Jesus) living in the Land of Israel and experiencing Jewish life on a day to day basis, I can make certain statements based on our observations of people who are still living the same religious lifestyle for thousands of years. The basis of Judaism is still very much the same as it was in the time of the Apostles, although there have been certain Kabbalistic influences and additions by those who are called the Sages in Judaism. One of the fundamental practices in Judaism is "mikvah". On a regular basis, observant Jews will go to locations where there is "living waters" (like a spring), to immerse themselves totally as a ritual cleansing from sin or uncleanness, which is called mikvah. This practise is not restricted to men only, but is also observed by women and has its foundations in the Law of Moses.

## ***The Meaning of the Word "Baptism"***

Most people accept the fact that what we call "The New Testament" was written in Greek. I do not want to argue this case at this point in time and for now I am operating from the assumption that the New Testament was indeed written in Greek. Here are certain observations, which is important for this discussion.

The Greek word for baptism is "*bapto*" which means to cover wholly with a fluid or to dip. This is the verb. The noun is "*baptizo*" which simply means baptism and we also read the word "*baptizmon*" in Hebrews 6 which is the plural form "baptisms". The application of this word was widely used to signify the colouring of a garment by dipping it into a fluid.

The word for sprinkling in Greek is "*rantizo*" or "*prosrantizo*". There is no instance in Scriptures where the word "*rantizo*" or any of its variances is used to signify the concept of baptism.

From this and the fact that the apostles operated from a Hebrew perspective is enough evidence to conclude from the basis of Scripture that the method for baptism was immersion and not sprinkling.

## ***History of Infant Baptism***

The first recorded case of sprinkling that I could find was in the year 251C.E. The first law for sprinkling within the Roman Catholic Church was in 752C.E. It was made by a pope who had to flee Rome (Edinburgh Encyclopedia, Article on Baptism). The church fathers cannot be deemed as an absolute reliable source, because they are also just men who interpreted doctrine according to their own frame of reference. Even in the days of Paul there were those who wanted to draw the church into paganism. This influence was around from the very beginning. Paul warns us against these people who will preach another gospel than that which he preached. Right from the start, pagan influences wanted to infiltrate the church. We read this in a number of passages in the New Testament. (2 Cor 11:4, Gal 2:4)

From the pagan influences of Baal Worship, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was proclaimed and this resulted into the teaching that baptism is essential to salvation. If you want to turn it around, it means that water baptism saves the soul (or at least is a part of a person's salvation). This was the teaching which the disciples in Ephesus received and Paul had to correct them. (Acts 19) Consequently, as the teaching of baptismal regeneration started being propagated, it was natural for those holding to this doctrine to believe that everyone should be baptized as soon as possible. Thus, baptism of infants still in the innocent state (and as yet unaccountable for their actions) came into vogue among many of the churches.

### ***1 Where did this Infant Baptism originate?***

You have to go back as far as Genesis 10 and 11 where we read of Noah's Great grandson, Nimrod, and his mother who became his mistress, Semiramus. They started the great pagan Babylon Mystery Religion at the Tower of Babel. This great pagan religion was later known as "Baal Worship" in the Old Testament. This was simply another name for Nimrod. The word Baal is one of the Hebrew words for husband. The religion was named this way because it was the religion of the husband who was declared to be God by the mother/wife. In the book, *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop you will find some background on this Babylon Mystery Religion called Baal Worship, started by Nimrod and Semiramus.

### ***2 Babylon Mystery Religion***

In this mysterious Babylonian Religious System, Nimrod and Semiramus, along with their priests, were the only ones who claimed to "understand" 'The great mysteries of God' and since according to them, it was the only true religion... all others were false... therefore, only the Babylonian priests could forgive and absolve sins...and administer salvation. Salvation could be achieved thru various Sacraments performed during the person's life time. These Sacraments were so-called "Channels of grace" whereby salvation could be achieved. These Sacraments, necessary to salvation began at birth with Infant Baptism through sprinkling water on the forehead of the child. The final sacrament was administered at the end of life - a final anointing with oil at death to prepare one for the hereafter.

Now Since the Babylonian Priest was the only one who could administer these 'sacraments', the person was 'bound' to the Babylonian system helplessly for life! The first essential sacrament, Semiramus taught, was baptism by water. The fact that such "baptism" was practiced 2000 years before it was even mentioned and practiced in Christianity is an established fact, and it can be traced right back to Babylon and Semiramus herself! The ancient historian Bryant (vol.3 p21, 84) traces this pagan baptism back to the practice of commemorating Noah and his 3 son's deliverance thru the waters of the flood, emerging from the ark and entering a New life. To commemorate this event, the Priests of Nimrod would 'baptize' new-born infants the fathers chose to keep, and they would become 'born-again' and become members of the Babylonian Mystery Religion. (Hislop, Two Babylons, p134) The fact that this was practiced in a ritual of baptism over 2000 years before it was even used in Christianity has truly amazed historians!

### **3 Pagan Civil Law and Customs?**

Armitage's History (p73) explains the pagan civil law and social customs of that day. These pagans had no standard of morality. Their marriage rites were different from our modern day society. One man might be the husband of a hundred women, and he might be the father of several hundred children. The mother had no right at all to determine whether the child she bore was to live or not. This was left up to the Father. Just as the farmer would go down to the pigpen and pick out the pigs he wanted to keep and do away with the runts, so was the father the one who decided if the child was to be kept and allowed to live. The mother could not even name the child if it was kept, the pagan priest did that. If the father decided to keep the child, he would take the child down to the pagan priest and the ceremony would be arranged. The Priest first must 'exorcise' evil spirits from the infant by anointing the baby's head with oil. The priest puts the occult mark of Tammuz on the child's head by marking a "T" with the oil. (later this was proclaimed as a false sign "Sign of the Cross") The priest then put salt and spittle on the baby's tongue to preserve it from future influence of evil spirits. "Holy water" is then sprinkled or poured over the baby's head, and the baby is said to be cleansed from any original sin and is then "born-again" and becomes a member of the Babylonian Religion. This process was known as "infant christening" and was practiced hundreds of years before Yeshua our Messiah (Jesus the Christ), (Hislop, p138). This is not commanded anywhere in Scriptures. There is not a single example of a baby being 'baptized' or 'christened' in Scriptures! Knowing what you do now, *WOULD YOU WANT YOUR BABY CHRISTENED?* This was called 'Baal Worship' in the Old Testament, and God called it an abomination!

### **4 What is an Infant?**

"Infant" is defined as a baby or small child who is too young to make a decision. Infant baptism is usually performed by sprinkling or pouring. Sometimes it is done by immersion, but most who read this will be familiar with the practice of sprinkling or pouring. Within the Jewish practices it is very common to bless your children. In fact this is a common practise on every Shabbat for the father of his house to bless his children or for a Rabbi to bless all the children. One of the arguments of people who are pro-infant baptism is the fact that Yeshua (Jesus) said that the infants can be "brought" to Him. This is not a hint or a

reference to infant baptism, but rather a common practise within Judaism for people in spiritual authority to bless the children.

"But Yeshua (Jesus) said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of **such** is the kingdom of heaven'" (Matthew 19:14). Perhaps this verse is used more than any other to support infant baptism. But does it say one word about infant baptism? Is there in all the chapter even one reference to baptism? Yeshua (Jesus) says "**of such**" is the kingdom of heaven. This was referring to the type of faith needed to believe in God – a childlike faith. It had nothing to do with children being baptized.

## **5 No Baptism of Older Children of Christian Parents Recorded**

Another argument of infant baptism is that if the baptism of infants was not acceptable during New Testament times, then when does Scripture mention the alternative - the baptism of the children of believers in Yeshua (Jesus) once they have matured out of infancy? They argue that Scriptures never gives one example of the baptism of such a child as an adult. Scriptures do not give us an account of every detail and of that which is assumed as general knowledge. The Scriptures are there to show us the relationship between God and specific people so that this would become examples to us in our specific relationship with Him. It is not a rule book. It is important that Scripture also does not pinpoint an "age of accountability or reason" which many believe to be at 13 years for boys and 12 years for girls because of the Jewish tradition of Bar- and Bat-Mitzvahs when children are deemed to be adults.

## **More History on Infant Baptism**

The professed conversion of Emperor Constantine in C.E. 313 was looked upon by many as a great triumph for Christianity. However, it was more than likely the greatest tragedy in church history because it resulted in the union of church and state and the establishment of a hierarchy which ultimately developed into the Roman Catholic system. There is great question whether Constantine was ever truly converted. At around the 3rd Century, traces of the Babylon Mystery Religion, now known as Baal Worship, infiltrates the Christian Church. Believers rejected the idea of baptizing babies and baptismal regeneration (the teaching that baptism is essential to salvation). This practise of sprinkling was the initiation process which Constantine use to publicly declare his conversion when he sprinkled his entire army and thus declared them Christians. It makes you wonder where this pagan worshipper got this idea? It was something which he was accustomed to in "sun god worship".

### **1 Every Infant must be baptised**

Emperor Constantine made "Christianity" the official "State Religion" of Rome. A law was passed decreeing infant baptism as the law of the land in 416 C.E. That simply meant that everybody within a certain age limit had to conform to it. Every baby in the Roman Empire had to be baptized at the hands of an authorized Roman priest or they would be persecuted!

Those who disagreed with this teaching and rejected it were soon slanderously called "Anabaptists", and they were persecuted without mercy for not conforming. The historian J.M.Carroll declares, " For 30 miles on the road leading out of Rome were stakes with gory heads of Anabaptists...." Occasionally someone will say, "Don't you think infant baptism is beautiful to look at?" A.A.Davis replies, "If you knew the history of that doctrine, where it came from and the bloodshed that it brought into the world, you would never watch another such service in your lifetime." (The Baptist Story, p67). He quotes historian J.M. Carroll from his "Trail of blood". No other doctrine that ever found its way into Christendom has caused so much bloodshed in this world as the doctrine of Infant Baptism."

Armitage's History (p71-73) tells us that in the 6th century, Emperor Justin issued an edict commanding all parents who were not baptized to present themselves and their children for baptism at once. Leo III issued, another edict in C.E. 723 demanding the forcible baptism of the Jews and Montanists (Anabaptists). Toward the close of the century the baptism of infants was turned to gain in the shape of fees paid for its administration. The charges soon became so enormous that the poor could not pay them. The frightened parents strained every nerve to get them baptized lest their children should die unsaved," (Armitage's history, p71) He continues, "Suppose you owned a section of land with an oil well on it; you had a baby born into your home and you went to the priest to get the baby baptized. The priest would say I want the title to that section of land. When the thing was over, the priest would get the title to the land and the Baby would get a few drops of water on its head. He says this is how the Mother Church of Rome come to own Czechoslovakia, Mexico, etc. One is reminded of Peter's words in 2 Peter 2:1-3

*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who secretly will bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their pernicious ways, and because of them the way of truth will be evil spoken of. And through covetousness they will use you for gain with well-turned words; for whom judgment from of old does not linger, and their destruction does not sleep.*

We could spend pages here looking at the history books showing how those who rejected infant baptism were persecuted in ways almost too horrible to describe. Many were put in a special iron casket called the "iron maiden", which had dozens of sharp spikes inside or those who were laid upon the ground and a horse was hooked to each of his arms and feet, and the signal given so the horses would pull them into 4 quarters.....Why? ... because they believed it was wrong to baptize infants. (Baptist Story, p109) Hot wax was poured into their ears or those who had their tongues pulled out with hot pincers. The wives had their bodies mutilated in terrible ways, as parts of their bodies were cut off....Pregnant women had their stomachs ripped open and the offspring cast to wild hogs as husbands were forced to watch. One man was taken, his body cut open, and ears of corn stuffed inside, and hungry dogs not fed for 4 days turned loose to devour the man's entrails and corn inside. (Baptist Story, p110)

## **2 The "Holy Inquisition" Resulted from this Issue of Infant Baptism**

No wonder the Book of Revelation declared in Revelation 17:6 that this great harlot false religion had become "drunk with the blood of the Saints"...Historian and Bible commentator Sir Robert Anderson estimated that thru out the middle ages over 40 million people were murdered and martyred over this one doctrine of infant baptism! To illustrate this great number of those slain, Anderson said if you lined 40 million people in a line, four abreast and four feet apart, and they marched by at normal marching pace, it would take 4 years and 4 months for this number of people to march by!!!

## **3 Rome laid down the Law – Infant Baptism Essential!**

The General Council of Trent, Seventh Session (1547) Canons on the Sacraments in General:

(a) "If anyone, shall say that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, or that there are more or fewer than seven, namely baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, or that any one of these seven is not truly and intrinsically a sacrament - anathema sit."

(b) "If anyone shall say that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation but are superfluous, and that without them or without the desire of them men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of justification, though all are not necessary for every individual anathema sit."

(c) "If anyone. shall say that by the sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred ex opere operato, but that faith alone in the divine promise is sufficient to obtain grace - anathema sit."

## **4 Rome taught that even infants could not be saved and go to heaven unless they were baptized...**

The Priests of Rome taught and still do, that it is not possible even for newly born infants to be saved so as to enjoy the delights of heaven unless they are baptized. The Council of Trent catechism states in black and white:

*"Infants, unless regenerated unto God thru the grace of Baptism, whether their parents be Christian or infidel, are born to eternal misery and perdition."*

But what a horrible doctrine that was!! And what a contrast with the doctrinal beliefs of the believers, who believed that all those dying in infancy, whether baptized or unbaptized, are saved! Lorraine Boettner, in his Roman Catholicism, declared,

*"The Romish doctrine was so horrible and so unacceptable to the public that it was found necessary to invent a third realm, the Limbus Infantum... later shortened to 'Limbo'...a place where unbaptized infants are sent, in which they are excluded from heaven but in which they suffer no positive PAIN. The Council of Trent and the Councils of Lyons and Florence declare positively that unbaptized infants are confined to this realm." - p190*



*"The primary purpose of the Church of Rome in excluding unbaptized infants from heaven is to force parents to commit their children to her as soon as possible ... the pressure put on members of the Mother Church of Rome parents to see that their children are baptized EARLY is almost UNBELIEVABLE... ..a commitment which once she receives she never relinquishes." – p191*

Consequently, the teaching of Infant Baptism, through the Dark Ages endured for more than twelve centuries - until the Protestant Reformation.

## **5 Protestant Churches of the Reformation Bring Baby Baptism with Them!**

The strange thing about these two diabolical doctrines of baptismal regeneration and infant baptism is that the great reformers (Martin Luther, for one) brought with them out of Rome these two dreaded errors - the union of church and state and infant baptism. Strangely enough, in those days not only did the Roman Catholic church persecute those who would not conform to its ways, but after the Lutheran church became the established church of Germany, it persecuted the nonconformists as well - of course, not as stringently so and not in such numbers as those before them.

John Calvin in France, as well as Oliver Cromwell in England and John Knox in Scotland, stuck to the union of church and state and infant baptism and used their power, when they had power, to seek to force others to conform to their own views.

### ***Did Baptism Replace Circumcision?***

The doctrine of infant baptism has as cornerstone the teaching that circumcision according to the Abrahamic covenant was replaced by baptism. This teaching hinges on Colossians 2:11-12. To be able to assess this, we need to look at the covenant which God made with Abraham. The account of this covenant is found in Genesis 17:4-14. Let us list the condition and promises of this covenant.

#### **Conditions**

- 1 It must be an eternal covenant
- 2 Every male must be circumcised which is born in the house of Abraham

#### **Promises**

- 1 Abraham and his descendants will be exceedingly fruitful to multiply
- 2 Abraham will become the father of many nations
- 3 Kings will come from Abraham's loins
- 4 The Land of Canaan will be given to Abraham's descendants as an eternal inheritance
- 5 God will be the God of the descendants of Abraham

This covenant is an **eternal** covenant. An eternal covenant cannot be changed or transferred. The teaching of the baptism that replace circumcision wants to change a blood covenant into a water covenant and it is depriving Israel from its right of existence. This is at the very heart of replacement theology and has

been the age old plan of the devil to get rid of God's covenantal people, Israel. There is no way that water can replace blood. With circumcision blood had to flow. This blood covenant is still valid until today. If this is not true then why did the leaders of the church have a council meeting to ask the question whether those from the gentiles also had to be circumcised? They knew that circumcision was not replaced by baptism – otherwise they would not have held this council meeting. If it was indeed true that baptism replaced circumcision then this was the biggest waste of time to have such an idiotic meeting. If we have to assume that this doctrine is correct and if we want to be consistent in the application of the promises of this covenant, then everybody that is baptized should have two things as an aim – the one is to be exceedingly fruitful and to multiply by giving birth and the second is that every one who has experience infant baptism should take up their promise to come and live in the land of Israel. The circumcision of the heart is the New Testament equivalent of the circumcision of the flesh. It is a spiritual circumcision with spiritual promises. The physical circumcision had physical promises. If baptism replaced this, the physical promises had to apply as baptism is a physical act. If we want to say that it is a spiritual act, then we agree that it is seen as a distribution of grace and that there is no use for anyone to be born again.

It is very difficult to understand how infant baptism can be applied to Colossians 2:11–12. Verse 11 specifically refers to this circumcision of the heart. Romans 2:29 gives us this exact idea. I believe that the correct way to interpret Scripture is by other verses. Both Colossians 2 and Romans 2 speak about the circumcision of the heart. According to 1 Corinthians 10 there are four baptisms which every believer has to experience. The four baptisms are as follows –

- a Baptism in Moses – This is the baptism into the Body of the Messiah. It is to be born again.
- b Baptism in the sea – This is the baptism in water, which is an identification with our born again experience. It is an outward experience of the inward death and resurrection through the work of salvation that Yeshua (Jesus) did for us.
- c Baptism in the cloud – This is the baptism in the Holy Spirit
- d Baptism into the same spiritual food and drink – This is the baptism into His sufferings. We must be baptised into living a crucified life where we will only eat of the spiritual food and drink of the living water. It means that we have to live the will of the Father and not our own will.

Verse 12 of Colossians 2 refers to this 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> baptism, whereby we outwardly identify with that which has inwardly happened. The key lies herein that this baptism is a result of personal faith according to verse 12. "...you also were raised with Him through faith..."

If we believe that the baptism replaced circumcision, then these two words should be used interchangeable and then Galatians chapter 5 verse 6 would teach us that whether you would be baptised or not would avail nothing and verse 2 would then teach that if you would be baptised, Christ will profit you nothing. According to verse 3 you are then also obligated to keep the whole law and by this be justified. You would then fall from grace. This would be absurd to even think off!!

## ***The Baptism of Households***

The apostolic Church baptized whole "households" (Acts 16:33; 1 Corinthians 1:16). While these texts do not specifically mention - nor exclude - infants, the very use of the term "households" indicates an understanding of the family as a unit. In every instance there are clear indications that there were no infants in those households. Look at Acts 10 – Household of Cornelius – verse 46 "For they heard them speak with tongues" - can this apply to an infant? Likewise in every other instance can be seen that there were no infants.

## ***What does the Scriptures Teach about Baptism***

The wonderful thing, about the Scriptures is that I don't have to defend it. If you read it on face value, it speaks for itself. Just read these verses below and decide for yourself.

### **1 The Great Commandment – Matt 28:18-20, Mar 16:**

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen. - Matt 28:18-20*

*And He said to them, Go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to all the creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15:16*

In the Great Commandment Yeshua (Jesus) instructed His disciples to make disciples. These disciples they had to make were to be baptized. Within their Jewish mindset this could only have meant one thing – mikvah. Mikvah was that which was known to them and was not something which was applied to infants. To them sprinkling water on an infant's head was a Baal worship practise. I do not think that Yeshua (Jesus) would have taken a pagan practise and change it to be baptism.

### **2 The Apostles Practiced it**

*And hearing this, they were stabbed in the heart, and said to Peter and to the other apostles, Men, brothers, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ to remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. - Acts 2:37,38*

When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, it was part and parcel of the gospel to tell people to be baptized. This 3000 people who were born again was well acquainted with the Jewish practise of mikvah which we call baptism.

*But when they believed Philip preaching the gospel, the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also, and being baptized, he continued with Philip. And seeing miracles and mighty works happening, he was amazed. And the apostles in Jerusalem hearing that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; who when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had not fallen on any of them, they were baptized only in the name of the Lord Jesus. - Acts 8:12-16*

Not just the apostles, but also their disciples continued in this practise of baptizing those who believed.

*And instantly scales as it were fell from his eyes, and he instantly saw again. And rising up, he was baptized. - Acts 9:18*

When Paul was born again, the first thing that he did was to be baptized.

*Can anyone forbid water that these, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, should not be baptized? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they begged him to stay certain days. - Acts 10:47,48*

Baptism was such a Jewish thought and practise, that when the first Gentiles were born again, the apostles had to actually make a mindset change to realise that the Gentiles could also participate in this practise of baptism which they called mikvah.

*And when she was baptized, she and her household, she begged us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay. And she constrained us. And taking them in that hour of the night, he washed from their stripes. And he was baptized, he and all his, immediately. - Acts 16:15,33*

*And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house. And hearing this, many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized. - Acts 18:8*

Every time we read about people putting their faith in Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah, they were baptized. The baptism always followed after their conversion. Every person must make a decision to serve God. Every generation is confronted with the gospel. God is not a grandfather – He is a FATHER!

*And he said to them, Then to what were you baptized? And they said, To John's baptism. And Paul said, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe into Him coming after him, that is, into Jesus Christ. And hearing, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. - Acts 19:3-5*

When Paul went to Ephesus, he found some believers and when he enquired about them, he found out that they were baptized with the wrong baptism and commanded them to be re-baptized.

### **3 The Apostles Taught it**

*And, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all were baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were scattered in the wilderness. - 1 Cor 10:1-5*

Paul wrote to the Corinthians teaching them about the four baptisms which every believer should experience. In this he used the analogy of the Israelites leaving Egypt. It is only the blood of Yeshua (Jesus) that deals with death. The blood of the lambs which was applied to the door posts of the Israelites in Egypt caused the death angel to pass over and likewise when the blood of Yeshua (Jesus) is applied to our lives, death passes us over. Paul uses this passing through the sea as an analogy for water baptism. They only pass through the sea after the blood was applied to the door posts. Only after you have believed, you can be baptized.

#### **4 What is the meaning of Baptism and Why is it Important?**

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? Let it not be! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin. For he who died has been justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that when Christ was raised from the dead, He dies no more; death no longer has dominion over Him. - Rom 6:1-9*

Baptism is an identification with the death and resurrection of Yeshua (Jesus). A death and resurrection which has become ours, by faith in Yeshua (Jesus), as our Lord and Saviour. When I am baptized I have a physical experience of being buried with Him and when I rise from the water it is like a physical experience of being risen into a new life.

*And now what do you intend? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. - Acts 22:16*

***The question which now remains is this - Will you remain wandering around between slavery and the sea or will you rise and pass through into an exciting life of faith with Him through baptism.***