

## *Water Baptism – Part 1*

### **THE MODEL AND EXAMPLE**

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As 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 lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

Human continuously struggle with God by disobedience. Man always wants to do his own will and wishes. Adam and Eve disobeyed God when they ate from the forbidden tree and they received the consequences. But GOD who is rich in mercy sent His son Jesus to save us from sin and death. ***“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)***

Jesus is God who became man. Jesus is our Savior. He is our Lord. He is our way to reach God and to have eternal life. He is our model and example in obedience to the will of God. ***“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2: 6-8)***

The above passage for today describes Jesus’ baptism before He started His earthly ministry. He has shown us His very first example in:

- 1- Obedience to God:** Water baptism is immersion in water. It is ordained from God for everyone; having no physical effect but depicting spiritual value. It reflects human understanding of the words - obedience to God. Obeying God without question or doubt describes our trust and full confidence in Him. Although to enter heaven and to be saved water baptism may not be necessary, but as an act of obedience to God it is a righteous thing to do. Jesus was obedient to God the Father, and when He sent His apostles to preach the gospel, ***“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned’.” (Mark 16:15-16)***
- 2- Submission to God:** Obedience describes the attitude of submission. But human pride opposes that act of obedience and submission to God. We cannot reach God with a haughty spirit. It has to be broken. Taking water baptism is an act of submission to God. Jesus, when He requested John to baptize him, he submitted himself to God not to men.

**3- Humility:** Jesus is the Son of God and He is God, but he put aside his Godly nature. He showed us the best example of humility. As a man although having no sin, Jesus was baptized by John who was baptizing the people in water for repentance. Jesus is whom John referred to when he said, ***“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Matthew 3:11)***

**4- Decision-making:** Jesus lived as human for 30 years and before He started his ministry He willingly underwent water baptism. This act represents the point or the mark between his life as a mere man and his ministry as the Son of God; to follow and to do the will of God the Father. Water baptism is a personal decision to choose after firmly understanding its spiritual implications because it represents a covenant between a believer and God. Jesus decided by himself to take water baptism. The person who believes in Jesus and decides to leave behind his old life -the life of sin, and ready to turn to follow God and to serve God, therefore will decide to obey the ordinance of water baptism. Obviously, water baptism is a personal own-decision to make and is not applied to a little child or to anyone who does not understand its significance.

**5- Proclaiming the will of God:** Water baptism is not only a simple act or just an occasion to celebrate. It is the doer’s declaration about his spiritual being not only to God but even to the people around. Water baptism declares the inward condition of the person who has repented from sin and has accepted the saving power of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. He proclaims that he is forgiven and cleansed, and God has made him alive with Christ. While John was preaching and baptizing, Jesus also took water baptism publicly. When Apostle Peter preached about Jesus, ***“Those who accepted His message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.” (Acts 2:41)***

**6- Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit:** After the water baptism of Jesus the Holy Spirit came upon Him as a dove and a voice from heaven said: ***“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*** God is very much pleased whenever His children obey Him. When the people heard the message about the Christ Jesus, they asked the disciples what they needed to do. And Peter replied, ***“Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2: 38-39)***

**My dear and beloved:** It is my prayer that this message will help you to decide to obey Jesus Christ, our model and example. ***“Father God in heaven, I put in your hand my dear brothers and sisters. Bless them with understanding and wisdom to obey you. Fill them with Your love and faithfulness. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name, Amen!***