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Baptism & Anabaptists

The Philadelphia Church practices adult baptism, the complete immersion of a disciple in water. The Philadelphia Church will counsel a disciple who was either sprinkled as an infant, or baptized as an adolescent to be baptized again when the disciple fully understands that with baptism comes judgment. Baptism begins a disciple's day of salvation. So baptism is a serious ceremony, not to be undertaken without consideration of its consequences. It is a necessary ceremony whenever the opportunity allows baptism to occur. In the case of the thief on the cross, when the thief was raised on the cross, he was as good as dead even though he continued to live for a short while. Baptism portrays life after death. The two thieves on the near crosses to Christ represented the entirety of humanity in that, when life is given after death, humanity will either acknowledge that Jesus is Lord (Rom 10:9) or rail against Christ for not being the man they expected Him to be (Luke 23:39-42). There will be no in-between mindsets. And those resurrected individuals who acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, and that the Father raised Him from the dead will enter the kingdom of God (v. 43).

Baptism by water represents actual death. As in the case of the thief on the cross, where life continues after certain death has occurred, baptism loses its significance. The more important concern is sincere repentance and acknowledgement that Christ is Lord – this will be the case for everyone resurrected during the great White Throne Judgment. Salvation is not a process, but a gift given upon receipt of the Holy Spirit. That gift will be given as easily to every human being resurrected from death during the great White Throne Judgment as it was given to the thief on the cross. And that gift will be withheld from all who do not acknowledge their guilt for which they died, and who deny that Jesus is Lord.

All judgment of humanity has been given to Christ Jesus (John 5:22). The thief on the cross represents the reality that Christ Jesus is able to give everlasting life to whom He will (v. 21), and to withhold that same life from whom He will. The Apostle Paul wrote that the first Adam became a breathing creature, but that the last Adam [Christ Jesus] became a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). John the Baptist said, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me...will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt 3:11). Christ Jesus is He who comes after John (John 1:27-34). John's baptism was unto death. Christ Jesus' baptism is unto everlasting life. Judgment follows death (Heb 9:27).

Upon occasion, a person needs to perceive the earth as a single entity, with the entirety of its history (past, present, and future) represented by every single individual. The world will be baptized with three baptisms. One has occurred: the flood of Noah, when all the world was submerged in water. One will occur shortly: the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all humanity (Joel 2:28) when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Messiah (Rev 11:15) 1260 days prior to Christ's return as Lord of lords and King of kings. One will occur following the great White Throne Judgment: the world will be baptized by fire with the arrival of the new heaven and the new earth (Rev 21:1).

God's focus has been on the dual harvests of the earth. These harvests bear the same relationship to the history of the earth as the harvests of Judea do to its yearly agricultural season. Thus, the harvests in the promised land form the shadow of the spiritual harvests of the earth, itself the future promised dwelling place of God the Father (Rev 21:3).

Christ Jesus is the reality of the Wave Sheaf offering (Lev 23:9-11), the first of the firstfruits. So far, He alone has been glorified, or baptized with fire. He alone has been accepted by the Father and gathered into the Father's barn to sit down at the right hand of the Father.

The early barley harvest – the harvest of firstfruits – occurs after that first sheaf of grain has been cut and offered to God. This harvest of firstfruits is the shadow of the harvest of the earth that will be reaped (Rev 14:15) upon Christ's return as the Messiah. Then following the summer of inactivity (because of the heat), the main wheat harvest that had been planted during the winter is reaped. This maincrop harvest is the shadow of the great White Throne Judgment when all of humanity that hadn't previously had judgment come upon it is resurrected to physical life and offered salvation. No one not foreknown and predestined by God the Father – no one not of the holy nation of Israel – is offered salvation, nor comes under judgment prior to this great White Throne Judgment. Humanity does not have eternal life apart from receiving it as a gift of God (Rom 6:23). Thus, no human being other than Christ Jesus is either in heaven or hell. All who have died await resurrection in the dust of the earth. All those who have come under judgment will be resurrected at Christ Jesus' return, when their judgments will be revealed (1 Cor 4:5); these are represented by the early barley harvest, the firstfruits of the earth. Everyone else will be resurrected during the great White Throne Judgment as the maincrop harvest of humanity. They will divide themselves into two categories, one on either side of Christ, in a pattern represented by the two thieves crucified with Jesus.

Traditionally, the Church of God has taught that baptism precedes receiving the Holy Spirit, as in the model of the earth where baptism with the Holy Spirit follows baptism with water unto death. Scripture used to support this concept includes Jesus of Nazareth's own baptismal account (Matt 3:13-17), in which the Breath of the Father descended upon Jesus as a dove, revealing to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Son of God (John 1:29-34). Support for receipt of the Holy Spirit following baptism also includes the account of Philip proclaiming Christ in Samaria (Acts 8:5-8), where the apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to the city that believers might receive the Holy Spirit even though these believers had been baptized (vv. 14-17). Support also includes the account of the twelve believers who had been baptized into John's baptism that the Apostle Paul encounters in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). So the practice of laying hands on disciples following baptism for the direct transfer of the Holy Spirit is not without precedent, nor without Scriptural support. But the practice becomes unnecessary following baptism by the Holy Spirit. In other words, during the last 1260 days after Satan has been cast from heaven (Rev 12:9), after the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and of His Son (Rev 11:15), after the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all humanity (Joel 2:28), after all of humanity becomes the single great nation promised to Abraham (Gen 12:2), baptism will follow receiving the Holy Spirit as in the case of Cornelius' household.

The Philadelphia Church teaches that baptism follows the receipt of the Holy Spirit, and has

ever since Israel was baptized by the Holy Spirit. The woman of Revelation chapter 12 is the holy nation of Israel. In all things pertaining to the Bible, the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46), and the visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20). This nation of Israel was initially Jacob and his twelve sons. They form the visible, physical shadow of the man Jesus and His twelve disciples. Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt seventy in number, which includes the three – Joseph and his two sons – who were already in Egypt (Gen 46:26-27). Jesus sends out seventy disciples (some manuscripts use the number 72) into every town and place where he intends to go (Luke 10:1). These towns and places represent all of spiritual Egypt/Babylon where Christ Jesus will send spiritual Israelites prior to His coming as the Messiah. The visible, physical nation of Israel gave birth to the man, Jesus of Nazareth, who is the male child who "is to rule all nations with a rod of iron" and who has been "caught up to God and to his throne" (Rev 12:5). The invisible, spiritual nation of Israel gives birth to endtime offspring "who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev 12:17).

Six hundred thousand circumcised Israelites leave Egypt, and were baptized into Moses by spirit in the cloud and by water in the Red Sea (1 Cor 10:2). These circumcised Israelites form the visible, physical shadow of humanity as the firstborn son of God, Israel (Exod 4:22 & Hos 11:1), being liberated from bondage to Satan, the spiritual king of Babylon (Isa 14:4-21), 1335 days before the judgment of Israel is revealed (Dan 12:12) when all who have endured to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13 & 10:22). A third of humanity (Rev 9:15), of endtime Israel, shall be slain at this third Passover liberation of the single nation promised to Abraham. This third will be firstborns who have not covered their sins by the blood of the Lamb of God – the firstborns of Israel belong to God (Exod 13:2, 12, 15). During the first 1260 days of the Tribulation – the hard labor pains of childbirth, of Israel bring many heirs of God to glory – the fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7 and the little horn on its head will conquer the world, converting the entirety of humanity to the Christianity of the Cross. There will be no other religion but Christianity, genuine and false. And as with a woman in labor, Israel's total focus will be on completion of the birth process. Humanity will not be preoccupied with Olympic Games, or World Cup soccer matches, or beauty contests. Primitive religious war will be its only focus. And the forced conversion of the world to the Christianity of the Cross will place humanity in the same position of mental bondage to sin that the greater Church now occupies prior to the second Passover liberation of Israel. That is correct. Just prior to the beginning of the Tribulation – when spiritual Israel represents half or a little more of the world's population – this holy nation of God (1 Pet 2:9) shall be liberated from mental bondage to the spiritual king of Babylon. It is this liberation of Israel that will plunge the world into the Tribulation. In one night, the world's focus will transform itself onto religious war, with Christians being hated by all nations for Christ's name's sake.

During the first 1260 days of the Tribulation, the Cross will have tried to eradicate the Christianity of Christ. But the third Passover liberation of Israel will force the man of perdition – Satan as the little horn of Daniel chapter 7 possessing a human being – to declare himself God 1290 days before Christ Jesus returns as the Messiah (Dan 12:11), and 30 days before Jesus splits the Mount of Olives, and causes the earth to swallow the man of perdition's armies (Exod 15:12, Rev 12:16). Satan will be cast from heaven (Rev 12:9) and will come claiming to be Christ. But the fighting doesn't stop. Religious war continues as

the antiChrist physically tries to recapture his former spiritual slaves by requiring all to bear the mark of the beast (Chi xi stigma – the tattoo of the Cross). The laws of God will have been written on the hearts and minds of everyone alive. Satan will attempt to rule their bodies. Thus, all who endure to the end and who shall be saved will be governed by the law in their minds and hearts, not by the law that rules their flesh (Rom 7:13-25). They will, literally, crucify their flesh – or the Cross will kill them spiritually. And this crucifying of the flesh is humanity putting its "old man" to death, as signified through the baptismal ceremony.

The Apostle Peter identifies what occurs on that day of Pentecost following Christ's Ascension as the Wave Sheaf offering for humanity as the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem" (Acts 2:14). Obviously, all who dwelt in Jerusalem didn't hear Peter address them. Certainly many did, for three thousand disciples were added to spiritual Israel this day of Pentecost. But these disciples were from all over Asia Minor and Africa (vv. 8-11) – and when these disciples asked what they must do, Peter told them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (vv. 38-39). What promise? The promise of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon all flesh in the last days (v. 17). This is what Peter believed was occurring (v. 16) even though the heavenly signs attached to Joel's prophecy that Peter quotes has exact time markers that were not fulfilled.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit that occurred on that day of Pentecost placed the men of Judea and all who dwelt in Jerusalem in the same condition or state that all of humanity will be in when Joel's prophesied time markers are fulfilled as indicated in Revelation chapters 8 & 9. Thus, the promise Peter references is the promise of the Holy Spirit coming prior to crucifying the old man through the ceremony of baptism. This promise of receiving the Holy Spirit had not come previously to the Apostle even though they possessed the Holy Spirit through its direct transfer from Christ Jesus (John 20:22). The men of Judea – circumcised Israel – required the direct transfer of the Holy Spirit prior to circumcised Israel being baptized by the Holy Spirit through the 120 disciples assembled together on that day of Pentecost representing all of this circumcised nation.

Gentiles had not yet been baptized by the Holy Spirit when Philip preached Christ in Samaria. Therefore, just as the ten Apostles assembled together the evening following Christ Jesus' Ascension required the direct transfer of the Holy Spirit by the glorified Jesus breathing on them, the Gentile converts in Samaria required the direct transfer of the Holy Spirit by Peter and John laying hands on them. However, Cornelius and his entire household are the representatives of all Gentiles just as the 120 were the representatives of the men of Judea and all who dwelt in Jerusalem. Cornelius and his household are baptized by the Holy Spirit prior to them crucifying their old natures through baptism by water (Acts 10:44-48). Cornelius and his household, as soon as the Holy Spirit fell on them, were in the same condition as humanity will be in when the earth is baptized by the Holy Spirit.

With representatives of both Jews and Gentiles having been baptized by the Holy Spirit, the twelve at Ephesus become a representational anomaly addressed in Revelation. Israel is the

firstborn son of God, but she is also a woman. With God, there is neither male, nor female (Gal 3:28). But in Scripture religious fellowships are inevitably identified as women in subjection to a male deity. In languages that use linguistic gender, this male/female relationship is inescapable even though modern Feminists lobby for a gender-neutral deity. They do so, though, from the perspective of using a gender-neutral language.

The twelve converts that Paul lays hands on at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7) represent the 144,000 "who have not defiled themselves with women" (Rev 14:3). They are spiritual virgins (same verse). They have never been associated with any Christian religious fellowship; they did not convert to the Christianity of the Cross even though the man of perdition went forth conquering and to conquer – and occupied a large portion the holy city. They are 12,000 from 12 tribes of Israel (Rev 7:4) who have been physically sealed – and who will receive the Holy Spirit without any direct transfer, and without having to be grafted into Christ as wild olive branches are. They are a subject of their own.

Once a representational group has been baptized by the Holy Spirit, all members of that group and their children when foreknown and predestined by the Father are as humanity will be when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and of His Son. They receive the Holy Spirit without it being directly transferred to them through contact with a person possessing the Holy Spirit. They are of the world prior to being drawn from the world by the Father (John 6:44, 65). Their minds are actually hostile to God until they receive the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:7). They would not leave the world if they did not receive the Holy Spirit while still a part of the world. They have involuntarily been made a part of the holy nation of Israel, just as a Hebrew infant is circumcised on the eighth day without giving his consent. The infant's parents decide the infant should become part of what was the holy nation of God (Exod 19:5-6). Now, the Father foreknows certain individuals who would otherwise have no interest in a relationship with him, and the Father places these individuals in His holy nation Israel (1 Pet 2:9) without asking for their consent.

Circumcision of the heart and mind [naphesh] (Deu 30:6) is a euphemistic expression for receiving the Holy Spirit. Physical circumcision no longer means anything. Israel is now a spiritual nation. And the teachers of Israel who insist that hands must be laid on post-baptized disciples for the direct transfer of the Holy Spirit to occur are as carnal as the circumcision faction (Gal 2:12) was, a segment of spiritual Israel that tried to blend the physical requirements of the law with the spiritual reality to produce a doubly accursed gospel (Gal 1:8-9). The Holy Spirit is given by God the Father – and it is given when the person is still a part of the world.

Baptism today replaces physical circumcision as the ceremony of inclusion in the holy nation of Israel upon which judgment has come (1 Pet 4:17). Baptism is, thus, unto judgment. A disciple can receive the Holy Spirit and remain as a spiritual Israelite infant of less than eight days of age for years, decades, or even until the disciple's death. A Hebrew male infant didn't become part of that holy nation until he was circumcized on the eighth day. Likewise, a spiritual Israelite doesn't come under judgment until baptized – this spiritual Israelite infant remains, spiritually, as a Hebrew male infant was physically until his eighth day of life. Spiritual maturity has no time-requirement attached to it. A spiritual infant can remain as an infant for a very long time although, usually, Satan retrieves this

person just as Pharaoh came after the physical Israelites who left Egypt. So baptism must be encouraged as soon as a drawn disciple understands that he or she will come under judgment.

The practice of infant baptism as an inclusionary rite into spiritual Israel reveals a lack of spiritual understanding by those who use, encourage, or promote such a practice. The practice is without meaning spiritually – and might well be as harmful as having male infants (or adults) physically circumcised as an inclusionary rite. The practice should be discouraged. Individuals baptized as infants should be baptized through full submersion in water when the individual possesses adult awareness of the consequences of coming under judgment by Christ.

Because everlasting life is a gift of God the Father, a human infant who dies prior to possessing adult awareness of the consequences of judgment will not go to hell, or to heaven, or anywhere else, but will await resurrection in the great White Throne Judgment. This infant's chance to receive salvation has not occurred. A person cannot experience the second (i.e., spiritual) death until the person has received a second (or spiritual) life – until the person has been born-from-above through receiving the Holy Spirit. Therefore, infant baptism as a preventative of the child spending eternity in hell is a nonsensical practice. There is never a place for infant baptism. And there will seldom be an occasion where adolescent baptism is appropriate. But all adults (and young adults) who have an interest in spiritual subjects should be baptized. Their interest is the best indicator that they have received the Holy Spirit and have, by God the Father, been included in His holy nation of Israel. They need to be baptized to continue their spiritual maturation process.

Salvation isn't a process; it is a gift. Maturing from infancy to one's majority is a process. But without a time-attached schedule for spiritual maturation, only the Father and the Son know where each of us is spiritually. Deathbed conversions can, indeed, be legitimate.

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