**Baptism Position Paper**

**STEP ONE** – OBSERVATION / READING

**Question:** What is the most biblical method of baptism?

**I. Scripture Search:**

1. Look up all baptism passages
2. Weed out passages that do not specifically answer the question.
3. Taking the genre, context, meaning and significance of each passage, what are the timeless truths (significance) regarding “method of baptism?”

Search Word: “Baptism”

**Mark 1:9, (& John 3:23** “much water available”)

*In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.*

**Summary Statement**: John baptized people in a river. Therefore, a body of water, such as a river, is an acceptable location for baptisms.

**Romans 6:4**

*We were buried therefore with him by****baptism****into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

**Summary Statement**: Baptism signifies burial with Jesus Christ. Submersion baptism seems to best resemble this “burial”

Search Word: “Baptized”

**Acts 2:38**

*And Peter said to 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.*

**Summary Statement:** Baptism is directed immediately after repentance for salvation.

**Acts 8:35-38**

***35****Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.****36****And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?”****38****And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.****39****And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.*

**Summary Statement**: Baptism, after being converted by the gospel, transpired in a body of water. The parties went “into the river” signifying they waded into water for a baptism ceremony.

**Word Study:** The term “baptism” by definition means “to submerge.”

**Summary Statement**: The term baptism indicates submersion under water.

Greek = “Baptisma” / immerse

**II. Rejoinder Passages**

**Acts 16:14-15**

 *The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.****15****And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.*

**Summary Statement:** Not applicable to method of baptism

**Acts 16:29-33**

***29****And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas.****30****Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”****31****And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”****32****And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.****33****And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.*

**Summary Statement:** Not applicable to method of baptism

**III. Background / Setting**

According to the Didache’ (a 1st or early 2nd century church handbook) the baptism method norm was to baptize by submerging a person in a moving body of water (such as a river). The middle east has many dry, arid places, leaving candidates for baptism without an available source of moving water. The Didache instructed individuals to use “pouring” rather than “submersion” when a sufficient “moving water” source was unavailable for the norm of submersion.

**Summary Statement:** Church history instructs us baptism was done in a moving body of water (a river) unless there was no sufficient water source, in which case baptism was done by “pouring.”]

**STEP TWO:** Paste summary statements together and wordsmith

**Mark 1:9 Summary Statement**: John baptized people in a river. Therefore, a body of water, such as a river, is an acceptable location for baptisms.

**Romans 6:4 Summary Statement**: Baptism signifies burial with Jesus Christ. Submersion baptism seems to best resemble this “burial”

**[Romans 6:4 indicates baptism is a spiritual “burial” with Jesus Christ in which the old life dies with Jesus Christ. This, along with John’s river baptisms (Mk1:9), suggest water baptism is to be performed with water submersion]**

**Acts 2:38**

**Summary Statement:** Baptism is directed immediately after repentance for salvation.

**Acts 8:35-38**

**Summary Statement**: Baptism, after being converted by the gospel, transpired in a body of water. The parties went “into the river” signifying they waded into water for a baptism ceremony.

**[Baptism is directed immediately following repentance to salvation. Phillip baptized the Ethiopian in a body of water. I conclude that baptism, immediately following conversion, is normally performed in a body of water, indicating submersion baptism]**

**Summary Statement**: The term baptism indicates submersion under water.

Greek = “Baptisma” / immerse

**[Transliteration of the Greek “Baptisma” means; “immerse”]**

**II. Rejoinder Passages**

**Acts 16:14-15**

**Summary Statement:** Not applicable to method of baptism

**Acts 16:29-33**

**Summary Statement:** Not applicable to method of baptism

**[Church history instructs us baptism was done in a moving body of water (a river) unless there was no sufficient water source, in which case baptism was done by “pouring.”]**

**STEP THREE:** Gather all reworded summary statements

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

**Church history informs us the method of Baptism by submersion was the norm until the 12 to 14th century. (Wiki)**

**[Church history instructs us baptism was done in a moving body of water (a river) unless there was no sufficient water source, in which case baptism was done by “pouring.”]**

**[Transliteration of the Greek “Baptisma” means; “immerse”]**

**[Baptism is directed immediately following repentance to salvation. Phillip baptized the Ethiopian in a body of water. I conclude that baptism, immediately following conversion is normally performed in a body of water, indicating submersion baptism]**

**[Romans 6:4 indicates baptism is a spiritual “burial” with Jesus Christ in which the old life dies with Jesus Christ. This along with John’s river baptisms (Mk1:9), suggests water baptism is to be performed with water submersion]**

**STEP FOUR:** Form a position statementusing an economy of words

**Mike’s Position on Baptism**

Not until between the 12th and 14th centuries did affusion became the usual manner of administering **baptism** in Western Europe, though immersion continued to be found in some places even as late as the 16th century (Wiki). The Didache’ confirms immersion was the early church norm by including specific instructions to baptismal candidates, that they be baptized by immersion under moving waters (a river or stream). If there were no water sources for the normal practice, baptism by “pouring” was the alternative practice.(Didache’)

The early church practice of immersion is supported, as the desired norm, in the whole of scripture. John baptized in a river, and the Ethiopian (Acts 8) was baptized by Phillip into a body of water.

The spiritual significance of water baptism is seen as symbolic of a burial of the old life of sin. This old life of sin and corruption is symbolically buried with Jesus Christ through our baptism by submersion. (Ro.6:4)

There are no biblical passages that warrant another method.