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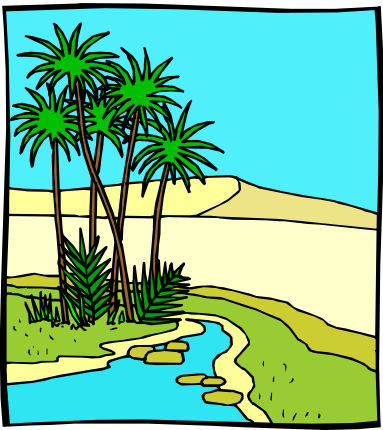
Baptism is submerging somebody in water. It's that simple. The word *baptism* is actually a Greek work – not even translated. It meant overwhelmed, submerged or sunk!

So baptising required a fair amount of water.

John 3:23 Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.

Acts 8:36-38 As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" … And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

You can't baptise people with a bucket a bowl or a bottle. You need a lot more water than that.

WHERE BAPTISM LEADS

TO THE LAUNDRY – Sin is filthy and disgusting – even though we have got used to the smell. When we repented we turned away from the sin that had affected us in the past. By being baptised we want to be sure that none of it has stuck. We sometimes talk of the blood of Jesus washing away our sin and the water of baptism certainly does more than affect our bodies. It can get right through to our consciences, too. *(1 Peter 3:21)*

TO THE CEMETRY-- Baptism only works with a dead body -- our old sinful nature, the part of us that rebelled against God and wanted its own way. The Bible says that we were crucified with Christ. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. (Romans 6:6) There are two problems here.

1. Jesus died a long time before we got into repentance and faith. The answer is simply that the benefits of the cross only come to us when we accept them

2. Some times we still feel that our old nature is alive and kicking! The fact is that if we are in Christ our old and uncontrollable nature is rotting. The pressure to sin comes not from an old nature but from the flesh -- our body and mind. We can control these easily if we choose God's help. The idea that our old nature is still around is a complete con! We need to count ourselves dead to sin. *(Romans 6:11)* It's a matter of facing the facts! When our old nature is really dead, then the best thing that we can do is to give it a proper burial!

TO THE MATERNITY WARD – faith in Christ is about being born all over again. We have a new set of reflexes, a new genetic makeup and a new father. "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the wonderful power of the Father, we also can live a new life." (Romans 6:3)

We don't keep people under the water when they are baptised. They come up celebrating the new life that Jesus has promised. Jesus defeated death, sin and all its power when he rose from the dead. That same power is available to us to live a new life that pleases God

" DOES BAPTISM MAKE ME PERFECT?"

Not really! God's grace does that. God sees us in Jesus and therefore we are perfect to him. In practice we can be as perfect as we want to be. Sin's power is disconnected. See back page for more on SANCTIFICATION.

WEIRD?

FOR US BAPTISM IS A STRANGE BUSINESS:

✓ But it's no more strange than lots of other customs – like eating bread and wine for instance or laying hands on somebody when you pray for them. Baptism is just inconvenient and very wet!

✓ But from the point of view of history baptism is not at all strange. Even people who don't go for baptism agree that for the first twelve centuries people got baptised by being completely covered with water. So its not stretching a point too far to guess that Guthrum the Viking invader was baptised in the Avon at Chippenham all those centuries ago.

✓ But it isn't strange from a global viewpoint. All Pentecostals baptise believers and worldwide they are now second only to the Catholic church. Thousands more people get baptised – every day.

JUST DO IT!

✓ **Jesus was baptised – even though he did not need to be**

✓ **We are commanded to be baptised**

✓ **It is evidence of a change of life**

✓ **It is a response to God**

✓ **The New Testament assumes that all Christians get baptised**

✓ **It is a basis for high quality unity**