**Why was Paul baptized?**

**Why was Paul baptized after his experience on the road the Damascus?**

Paul was baptized because that was what he was told to do and he was being obedient to what God told him to do *at that time*.

(Acts 9:6 KJV) And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

(Acts 22:12-16 KJV) And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, {13} Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. {14} And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. {15} For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. {16} And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

When Saul of Tarsus encountered the risen, glorified Lord Jesus Christ on that road to Damascus, he was told that he would be a witness both to the things which he has seen and things which will be revealed to him.

(Acts 26:16 KJV) But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Paul did not receive the mystery revelation all at once; it was revealed over a period of time. Paul did what God told him to do at that particular time, which was to be water baptized. The reason is because the issue of water baptizing had to do with purifying. We see this in John 3 when John was baptizing there arose a question about purifying.

(John 3:23-25 KJV) And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. {24} For John was not yet cast into prison. {25} Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

John’s disciples and the Jews understood from the law that baptism was a washing from defilement and a separation needed to place because the water is called "water of separation" (See Numbers 19:9, 13, 20-21) And the water of separation (or sanctification) was a purification for sin.

(Numbers 19:9 KJV) And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for **a water of separation**: it is a purification for sin.

What they understood was baptism was a purification unto sanctification and a new identity; it changed one from defiled to clean.

To get a better understanding, it is helpful to look at the Greek word that deals with the issue of baptism: baptismos.

**Baptismos**

(Hebrews 6:2 KJV) Of the doctrine of **baptisms**, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

(Hebrews 9:10 KJV) Which stood only in meats and drinks, and **divers washings**, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The baptisms (6:2) and washings (9:10) are the same Greek word ‘baptismos’. From this we can understand baptism has to do with washings. To get an understanding of what this means we can turn to Mark 7:

(Mark 7:1-8 KJV) Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. {2} And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. {3} For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. {4} And when they come from the market, except they **wash**, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the **washing** of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. {5} Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? {6} He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. {7} Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. {8} For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the **washing** of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Here we do not see the word baptize or baptism but in verse 4 the word was wash is ‘baptizo’ and washing is ‘baptismos’. Hence we could read the verse as "...Except they baptize (wash), they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the baptizing (washing) of cups, and pots , brazen vessels, and of tables."

Too often when we think of baptism we think of it in the tradition of man as sprinkling, pouring or immersion. However, from the passage in Mark we can see the concept of baptism is similar to that of washing cups. What do we do when we wash cups? We take a dirty cup and place it into something (water) and perform an action (wash it) which changed its condition from clean to dirty. Now the cup is fit to be used by you or someone else.

When Paul was told to be baptized and wash away his sins; he had the proper understanding of baptism as purification unto sanctification and a new identity.

**Why did Paul baptize others in his early ministry?**

When Paul first started his ministry he did baptize a few. He tells us in Corinthians that he had baptized Crispus and Gaius and those of the household of Stephanas and he knows not whether he baptized any other.

Since those are the few that Paul can remember baptizing, we can assume that Paul received further revelation that this type of washing was no longer necessary early in his ministry. Paul says that Christ did not send him to baptize. This shows that his ministry is different from that of the twelve who were told to go and teach all nations, baptizing them ... (Matthew 28:19). He was sent to preach the gospel. The gospel Paul preached has to do with what Christ accomplished on the cross.

(1 Corinthians 1:17 KJV) For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

In Romans 6 when Paul writes about baptism he is not referring to a water ceremony.

(Romans 6:3-4 KJV) Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? {4} Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Keep in mind the concept of baptism is taking something then placing it into a substance and perform an action to it so that it will be changed from its previous condition. It is all about our identification, which he had already explained on Romans 5; we are either in Adam or in Christ.

When Paul writes about baptism here in Romans 6, he is explaining to us that God takes what we are in Adam and places us into Christ and God’s action of crucifying the old man of sin (what we are in Adam) changes our condition. Our old identification in Adam had been changed to a new identification in Christ. Our previous condition has been changed because of what God has done.

Today, when people participate in the ceremony of water baptism the only thing that happens to them is they go from being dry to being all wet. Referring back to the illustration of the washing of cups (Mark 7:1-8), when my daughter was younger and it was her turn to wash the dishes often times the dishes would be dipped into the water but no action was performed so the dishes’ condition was not changed. They came out of the water wet but still dirty. That is what happens to many who practice the rite of water baptism today. It is of no benefit because there is no understanding of the action God performs on us today when we place our faith in Christ.

The baptism Paul wrote about in Rom 6 and Col 2 have absolutely nothing to do with a water ceremony but that baptism for today is God taking all that we are in Adam and His action of baptizing us into Christ’s death (crucifies that old man of sin) and places us into Christ. We are no longer what we were in Adam!

Baptism: Purification unto sanctification and a new identity.