

34. BAPTISM

Aim: To be convinced about believers' baptism by immersion.

To encourage believers to get baptised as soon as possible after salvation.

The conditions of Bible baptism are:

- a) Right candidate - believer. Acts 8:35-39.
- b) Right motive - obedience to Christ. Matthew 28:18-20.
- c) Right method - immersion. Mark 1:9-11.
- d) Right authority - local church. Acts 2:41,47.

Baptism pictures:

- a) The **Gospel** of Christ's death, burial and resurrection that I am trusting in to pay for my sins, as I go down in, under and come up out of water.
- b) **Death** to my old way of life, **burial** of my old man & his habits, & **rising** to a new life with Christ.

We should get baptised because:

- a) Christ was baptised by immersion. Mark 1:9-11.
- b) We can completely obey Christ here.
- c) It greatly helps us take a confident stand publicly for Christ.
- d) It helps our unsaved family and friends to understand the gospel.
- e) It is the answer of a good conscience toward God, meaning that our conscience is eased. 1 Pet.3:21

1. **MEANING OF BAPTISM.** ^{908, 911}

- a) baptizo = to **whelm, make fully wet, dip, cover wholly with a fluid.**
It never means sprinkle (Greek = rantizo⁴⁴⁷²), nor does it mean pour (Greek=ekcheo¹⁶³²).
- b) Baptism means "**identification**" with a person, a group, a message, or an event. For example, John's baptism associated his followers with his message of righteousness.
 - i) For James and John to be baptised with Christ's baptism meant to be associated with Christ's suffering (Mark 10:38-39).
 - ii) To be baptised with the Spirit associates one with the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13) and with the new life in Christ (Romans 6:1-10).
 - iii) To be baptised unto Moses (I Corinthians 10:2) involved identification under his leadership in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt.
 - iv) To be baptised for the dead (I Corinthians 15:29) means to be identified with the Christian group and take the place of a believer who had died.
 - v) Christian baptism (by immersion in water, after salvation) means identification with the **message of the gospel**, the **person of Christ** the Saviour, and with the **group of believers and their beliefs.**
- c) Baptism signifies **repentance** and **forgiveness of sins** (in Acts 2:38, "for" here means "because of"). Forgiveness has already been received at salvation.
- d) Water Baptism signifies **Spirit Baptism**, when the Holy Spirit indwells us at salvation.
I Corinthians 12:13.

- e) Baptism means **obeying Christ's command** to be baptised. Matthew 28:18-20.
- f) Baptism means **separation from sin by death.**
"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3.
- g) Baptism means to **identify with a local church.** I Corinthians 12:13.

2. **IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM.**

Baptism is not part of the Gospel. "For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel"

(I Corinthians 1:17) and does not save us from hell. Baptism is very important as a step of obedience after salvation. Some people who hold to infant sprinkling as the correct baptism, when confronted with the Biblical facts of immersion baptism, defend their position by saying that baptism is not an important doctrine. However, the Bible emphasizes baptism's importance as follows:

- a) **Christ was baptised** (Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17). Note that Jesus came up out of the water showing that He was in, under the water. He was baptised to fulfil all righteousness meaning that it was an example for us to follow to live righteously. (I Peter 2:21).
- b) **Christ approved** of his disciple's baptising. John 4:1,2.
- c) **Christ commanded** that people be baptised in this age. (Matthew 28:19,20). This applies to the apostles and to all believers in the church age, as seen in Christ promising His presence with us all to the end of the age.
- d) **The early church gave an important place to baptism** as seen in these cases: Acts 2:38,41 (Pentecost); 8:12,13 (Simon); 8:36-38 (Eunuch); 9:18 (Paul); 10:47,48 (Cornelius' household); 16:15,33 (Lydia and Philippian jailer); 18:8 (Crispus and the Corinthians); 19:5 (John's disciples were rebaptised). The early church never thought of a believer remaining unbaptised.
- e) The New Testament uses baptism **to picture important theological truths.** For example, Romans 6:1-10 shows our union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.
"For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). This verse shows our putting on Christ.
I Peter 3:21 shows that baptism saves us from a bad conscience.
- f) Hebrews 6:1,2 states that the doctrine of Baptisms is a foundation principle of the **Doctrine of Christ.** It is as important as repentance, faith, resurrection and judgment.
- g) It proves that we wish to **obey Christ** and the **Bible** rather than men.

3. **THE METHOD OF BAPTISM: IMMERSION, POURING or SPRINKLING?**

- a) Baptism in the Greek is "Baptizo" which undoubtedly means immersion, never sprinkling "rantizo", or pouring "ekcheo".
- b) In Mark 1:10, Jesus came "up out of the water" showing that we too should be baptised by immersion.
In Acts 8:38,39, the Eunuch came "up out of the water" showing that he had to have been "in under the water".

- c) Only immersion pictures the meaning of baptism, which is death to my old way of life, burial of my old man with his habits, and rising to a new life with Christ. Romans 6:1-4.
- d) "Pouring", not "sprinkling", was the first exception to immersion and was allowed in the case of sickness. This was called "Christian baptism." Cyprian (250 AD) was the first to approve of sprinkling. Even non-immersionists admit that immersion was the only baptism of the first and second century churches.

Objections: Infant sprinklers think that there MAY have been babies in the Philippian jailer's household in Acts 16:30-34. Yet they forget to read v.34, which says, "believing in God with ALL HIS HOUSE". Since all his household believed, no babies were present. They must all have been of a believing age and therefore qualifying for believer's baptism by immersion.

4. THE CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM.

Question: Should believer's ONLY or babies of believing parents be baptized?

Answer: "What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36,37). This is the condition of baptism, yet how can a baby believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? He cannot. Therefore it is wrong to baptise a baby.

Objection: The circumcision argument.

"Colossians 2:11,12 links circumcision and baptism. Since babies were circumcised under the Old Covenant, shouldn't they be baptised under the New Covenant"?

Answer:

- a) This circumcision is the Holy Spirit circumcising the heart at salvation, because it is made "without hands." Colossians 2:11.
- b) Circumcision shows membership in the Old Covenant, but does not show personal faith. Circumcision initiated people into a theocracy which did have unbelievers in it. However, baptism initiated people into a **believing community**, entry into which is gained by personal faith.
- c) The Biblical order is always believe first and then be baptised as seen in Acts 10:44-48 (Cornelius' household) and 16:14,15 (Lydia).
- d) All who believed in the house were baptised. Acts 16:33,34. This excludes babies from being baptised.

5. THE MOTIVE FOR BAPTISM.

- a) To **obey** Christ's command in Matthew 28:18-20. Here we can completely obey Christ.
- b) Christ was baptised by immersion (Mark 1:9-11). We **should follow Christ's example**. I Peter 2:21.
- c) To **publicly show** our personal faith in Christ. Believers baptism is the believer's decision. Infant baptism is the parent's decision, thus robbing the individual of the chance to publicly express his faith in Christ by baptism.
- d) It helps **unsaved family** and friends to understand the gospel in picture form. It can lead to their salvation.
- e) It is the answer of a **good conscience** towards God. I Peter 3:21. Our conscience is eased by obeying Christ.

6. EXAMPLES OF BAPTISM.

All these (except Jesus) were saved and baptised.

- i) Jesus. Matthew 3:13-16.
- ii) 3000 Believers at Pentecost. Acts 2:41.
- iii) Samaritans. Acts 8:9-12.
- iv) Simon. Acts 8:13.
- v) Ethiopian Eunuch. Acts 8:36-39.
- vi) Paul. Acts 9:18.
- vii) Cornelius, family and friends. Acts 10:44-48.
- viii) Lydia and her household. Acts 16:14,15.
- ix) Philippian jailer and his household. Acts 16:30-34.
- x) Corinthians and Crispus' household. Acts 18:8.
- xi) John's disciples were rebaptised. Acts 19:1-5.
- xii) Crispus and Gaius. I Corinthians 1:14.
- xiii) Stephanas' household. I Corinthians 1:16.

Roman Soldier's Oath

Early Christians called baptism a "sacramentum", which in Latin means a soldier's oath of absolute devotion and obedience to his general.

There are 6 baptisms mentioned in the Gospels:

- i) John the Baptist's was a National Baptism to show Israel's reception of John's message. Mark 1:4.
- ii) Jesus' baptism. This was immersion in water by John (Matthew 3:15) and with the Holy Spirit by the Father. Matthew 3:16.
- iii) Baptism of sin upon Christ at Calvary. Matthew 20:22.
- iv) Baptism of the Holy Spirit on believers at Pentecost. Matthew 3:11.
- v) Baptism of fire of God's wrath on sinners during the Tribulation. Matthew 3:12.
- vi) Baptism of believers in water. Matthew 28:19.

Question: Why was Christ baptised when He never sinned?

- i) To identify Himself with John the Baptist. John 1:31-34.
- ii) To identify Himself with Israel. John 1:11.
- iii) To identify Himself with sinners. "He was numbered with the transgressors". Isaiah 53:12.
- iv) To identify Himself with the offices of Prophet, Priest and King, because all three were anointed in the Old Testament.
- v) To fulfil all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). Jesus was picturing His work of death, burial and resurrection in making righteousness available to all..
- vi) To set us an example to be baptised. If it was good enough for Christ to be baptised by immersion, then it should be good enough for us. Baptism is an act where we humble ourselves to do things God's way (immersion) instead of man's way (sprinkling). Satan always counterfeits God's way. Infant sprinkling is Satan's counterfeit to believers' baptism.

Question: Will you be baptised God's way or by Satan's counterfeit way?

Conclusion:

All believers were baptised immediately after they believed. If you were baptised before salvation, you just went in a dry sinner and came out a wet sinner. This does not qualify as baptism. If you have been saved and not yet baptised, you are disobeying Christ's command. Please tell your pastor today that you wish to be baptised by immersion.

Baptising The Cheque Book.

Pastor R.E. Neighbour was in the baptismal pool with a railway engineer. The pastor was ready to proceed with the baptismal service. "Wait!" whispered the engineer; "I forgot something. I want to return to the robing room, and get my cheque book and let you baptise it with me!". Oh, that more of our cheque books were "baptised". Oh, that more of God's children were taking with seriousness their financial responsibilities to God's work!