

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO KNOW

Lesson 27

Water Baptism

INTRODUCTION

This is the second lesson in our 3-part series on the church. Last week we looked at the church, its purpose and mission. Our study centered on the "Great Commission", Matthew 28:18-20.

Today we will study the ordinance of water baptism. The New Testament church has two ordinances: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. An ordinance is something ordained by God for us as believers to carry out. Next week we will study the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

The statement from *The Baptist Faith and Message*,

"Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Jesus Christ. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead."(p.14)

[TEACHERS NOTE: Most of this lesson is based on the FAQ Material which is used to teach visitors and new members in our church. Be sure to look up and read all Bible verses with the class.]

Baptism can best be taught through a series of questions...

1. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

The Bible clearly teaches that baptism is reserved only for those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Read Mark 16:15-16 to the class.

Read Acts 8:12.

It is obvious the Bible teaches that in order to be baptized according to the biblical pattern, a person must first exercise faith in Jesus Christ, believing that He died for their sins, was buried and rose from the dead.

Read Romans 10:9 to the class.

An infant or person who does not understand God's plan of salvation cannot make that kind of commitment. The scriptural order is to believe and then be baptized.

2. WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

The Bible indicates several reasons why we should be baptized...

- a. God commands that believers be baptized. It is contained in the Great Commission which we looked at last week – Matthew 28:19 (read). Baptism is part & parcel of making disciples and identifies the believer with a local church where he can be nurtured and grow in his faith. In John 14:15 Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” We show our love for the Lord by obeying His commands.
- b. The Apostles taught and practiced obedience to Christ’s command regarding baptism. Read Acts 10:47-48. Also, in Acts 8:35-38, immediately after the Ethiopian eunuch believed in Jesus, he was baptized. In New Testament times, a believer who had not been baptized was unheard of.
- c. Jesus was baptized as an example of obedience. Read Mark 1:9-11. The baptism of Jesus was an act of obedience to the heavenly Father. Jesus desired that His every action please and honor the Father. God confirmed His approval when He spoke at Jesus’ baptism saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”(Matthew 3:17, NASB)
- d. The baptism of Jesus is a picture of identification. His baptism identified Him with mankind and its sin. His baptism also identified the remedy for sin: His death, burial and resurrection. Believer’s baptism is an act of obedience and a mark of identification. It is a public statement of one’s faith in Jesus Christ, identifying the believer with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. It also symbolizes our death to the old life of sin and proclaims our resurrection to a new life in Christ. Read Romans 6:2-4. When someone is baptized at our church our pastors say, “Buried with Christ unto death; rise to walk in newness of life.” Baptism is a pledge of loyalty and commitment to Jesus Christ; to follow and serve Him.

3. HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

This important question relates to the method of baptism. We baptize by immersion which means going under the water. Consider these facts...

- a. The Greek word “baptizo” translated into the English means “to immerse, dip or submerge”.
- b. Jesus was immersed in His baptism. Matthew 3:16 says that after He was baptized, He “...went up immediately from the water...”
- c. Immersion is the only method of baptism that properly identifies the believer with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. It is a symbol or picture of what has happened to the believer. Read Romans 6:2-4 and Colossians 2:12.

- d. The New Testament Church baptized by immersion. With the Ethiopian eunuch as described in Acts 8:36-38, it says that “they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him.” It is clear that Philip took the Ethiopian into the water and immersed him. Immersion is not just another method of baptism or one of many choices. Immersion is a picture, an outward expression of faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

4. WHEN SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

- a. Baptism should take place after conversion. Baptism is an act of obedience to Jesus Christ. We are not baptized in order to obtain salvation – baptism does not save you. We are baptized to publicly proclaim that we have already believed and received God’s salvation in Jesus Christ. Read Acts 8:12 to the class.
- b. Baptism should take place at the first opportunity after conversion. As already stated, the eunuch in Acts 8:36 wanted to be baptized immediately after believing in Jesus. In another NT account, the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:33 was baptized immediately after trusting Christ. The only possible exceptions to the “first opportunity” principle would be for children or people from other cultural backgrounds. We want everyone to be fully aware of what they are doing before being baptized.

5. WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF BEING BAPTIZED AT SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH?

- a. If you have not already done so, walk forward at the invitation in any of our worship services and join the church. At that time you will meet with a volunteer from our New Member Team, receive a packet of information about our church as well as information about baptism. You may schedule your baptism at that time.
- b. If you are a church member but have not been baptized by immersion, we encourage you to schedule your baptism at the earliest opportunity. You may schedule your baptism by calling the New Member Office on your church campus. Or, you may talk to me immediately after class and I can help you schedule your baptism. [TEACHER: Our idea here is not to pressure someone into getting baptized but to seize the moment when they are considering baptism. Suggestion: get the contact info of anyone who comes forward after class and ask their permission to give their info to the New Member office on your campus who will follow up with them.]
- c. You can be baptized at any of our regular worship services or at special times such as retreats or fountain baptisms with Dr. Young.

NEXT WEEK: The Lord’s Supper

