

BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

After a person has trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation, and has received Him as Lord and Savior, he may ask himself this question, "*Now that I am saved, where should I begin in my new life as a Christian?*" This is a very important question, and I hope this study will help provide the answer.

I believe that a good place for every believer to begin after he is saved is with "***Believer's Baptism.***" Water baptism is a very important subject. Virtually every religious denomination in existence today teaches some form of baptism as part of their doctrine. It is true that the diversities in their teachings are widely varied, but the doctrine of baptism is there nonetheless.

Many people today seem to go to extremes concerning the doctrine and practice of baptism. Some religious denominations under-emphasize baptism, and as a result, do not baptize at all. Others over-emphasize baptism by making it a sacrament, or a means whereby God's grace is imparted. They say that one must be baptized in order to be saved, and that baptism is a vital and necessary part of salvation. Neither of these extremes can be supported from the Word of God. The New -Testament clearly teaches "***Believer's Baptism.***"

This lesson is intended to give a clear understanding concerning what the Bible teaches on this important subject so that you may better understand God's intention regarding the *meaning*, the *method*, and the *motive* of "***Believer's Baptism.***"

I. THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM

A. Some Believe In Infant Baptism.

1. Because Jesus received little children (*Mark 10:13-16*)

- a. Does the word "baptism" appear anywhere in these few verses? _____
- b. Do these verses say that Jesus "baptized" or "blessed" these little children? _____

2. Because of household baptism (*Acts 16:27-34*)

- a. This is an argument totally from silence. It assumes that there must have been infants in the household that were baptized. Do any of these verses say that there were infants in the household that were baptized? _____
- b. What does the Bible say that the Philippian jailor and all his household did? (v.34) _____

3. Because of Old Testament circumcision (*Genesis 17:9-14*)

- a. This argument says that since Old Testament saints had their babies circumcised, New Testament saints should have their babies baptized. Nowhere does the Bible teach that believer's baptism is to replace Jewish circumcision.
- b. In the New Testament, the word "circumcise" appears over seventy-five times, and the word "baptize" appears over one hundred times. Never once are they connected, equaled, or even paralleled.

B. The Bible Teaches Believer's Baptism.

1. The New Testament clearly teaches that "only" those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are to be baptized.

- a. What did the Samaritans do before they were baptized? (*Acts 8:12*) _____
- b. What did the Ethiopian Eunuch do before he was baptized? (*Acts 8:36-38*) _____
- c. What did Crispus and the Corinthians do before they were baptized? (*Acts 18:8*) _____

2. The New Testament clearly teaches that "all" who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are to be baptized.

- a. Every person in the New Testament who believed on Jesus Christ followed the Lord in believer's baptism.
- (1) The Jewish converts in Jerusalem. (*Acts 2:41*)
 - (2) The converts in Samaria. (*Acts 8:12*)
 - (3) The Ethiopian Eunuch. (*Acts 8:38*)
 - (4) Saul of Tarsus. (*Acts 9:18*)
 - (5) Cornelius and his family. (*Acts 10:48*)
 - (6) Lydia and her household. (*Acts 16:15*)
 - (7) The Philippian jailor's household. (*Acts 16:33*)
 - (8) The Ephesian disciples. (*Acts 19:5*)
- b. You cannot find one exception to this except the thief on the cross who believed, and his circumstances were such that they prohibited him from doing so.

II. THE STYLE OF BAPTISM

A. There Are Three Different Styles (*Methods*) Of Baptism Practiced Today.

1. These styles are pouring, sprinkling, and immersion.

- a. The only Biblical method of baptism is immersion.
- b. Never does the Bible associate baptism with pouring or sprinkling.

2. The early church believed in immersion.

- a. Pouring was the first exception to immersion and it was allowed in cases in which people could not be immersed.
- b. Sprinkling began in A.D. 250, though it was not generally accepted in practice until A.D. 1311 (*Roman Catholic Church*) and A.D. 1644 (*Church of England*).

B. Why Do We Believe In Immersion?

1. Because of the basic meaning of the word "*baptize*"

- a. The word "*baptize*" simply means to dip, to plunge under, to submerge, or to immerse.
- b. Never does the word "*baptize*" mean to pour or sprinkle.

2. Because of the places that baptisms occurred.

- a. In what river does the Bible say that John the Baptist baptized? (*Matthew 3:5-6*) _____
- b. Why did John the Baptist baptize in the spring of Aenon? (*John 3:23*) _____
- c. We know that Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch by immersion because the Bible says both he and Phillip went down _____ and both came up. (*Acts 8:38-39*) _____

3. Because of what baptism symbolizes

- a. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward experience. It symbolizes that which has already been done in the heart by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Baptism is similar to a wedding ring. A wedding ring does not make us married. It is simply a symbol to the world that we are married and belong to someone else.
 - c. Baptism is a symbol that we belong someone else. Who do we belong to? (*John 17:11*) _____
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III. THE SYMBOLISM OF BAPTISM

A. The Believer's Identification With Jesus Christ

1. Baptism pictures death, burial, and resurrection.

- a. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we are placed into the body of Christ. This unites us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. (*Romans 6:3-5*)
- b. Only baptism by immersion symbolizes this union.

2. Baptism also symbolizes our death to the old life of sin, and resurrection to a new life of righteousness. It is a public testimony that we want to live for Christ in the new life that we have in Him.

- a. First, the believer takes his stand in the water, this symbolizing death to himself as a natural man.
- h. Then, he is immersed in this element of death. Put completely out of sight through burial.
- c. Finally, he is brought up from this watery grave by the power of another's arm and then lives on, publicly identified with Christ through this act of obedience.

B. The Believer’s Identification With The Church

1. Union with Christ is union with His body.

- a. One is not united to the head without at the same time being united to the body. (*Acts 2:41-42*)
- b. What is the body of Christ? (*Colossians 1:18*) _____

2. Since baptism symbolizes our union with Him, it is the normal initiatory rite into union with the local church.

- a. New converts were, by baptism, outwardly identified with the disciples of Jesus Christ.
- b. *“In the early days of the church, baptism was a declaration that the believer was definitely identifying himself with that group of people who were called Christians and were despised and hated. To be a Christian meant something. To identify yourself with those who were called Christians meant persecution, maybe death; it meant being ostracized from your family, shunned by friends. And the one act, which was the final declaration of this identification, was BAPTISM. As long as a man gathered with Christians, he was tolerated, but when once he submitted to baptism, he declared to all the world, I BELONG TO THIS DESPISED GROUP, and immediately he was persecuted, hated and despised. In baptism, therefore, he believer entered into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. A person might be a believer and keep it strictly a secret and thus avoid the unpleasantness and suffering, but once he submitted to public baptism he had burned his bridges behind him.”* -----
-----M.R.DeHaan

IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAP'TISM

A. Why Should The Believer Be Baptized?

1. To obey the command of the Lord (*Matthew 28:18-20*)

- a. Every believer should do what the Lord tells him to do.
- b. What three things are commanded by the Lord in these verses? _____

2. To follow the example of the Lord (*Matthew 3:13-17*)

- a. After Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, what did God say concerning Him? (*v.17*) _____

- b. Since Jesus thought it was important to be baptized, shouldn't we as well? _____

B. When Should The Believer Be Baptized?

1. How soon after salvation were the people III the following verses baptized'!

- a. (*Acts 2:41*) _____
- b. (*Acts 8:36-38*) _____
- c. (*Acts 16:30-34*) _____

2. All believers should be baptized as soon as possible after they are saved.

- a. Some hold that baptism is essential to salvation. In other words, if you have not been baptized, you cannot be saved. The Word of God, however, says just the opposite. Salvation is essential to baptism. If you have not been saved, you cannot be baptized.
- b. You are not saved by baptism. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are on your way to Heaven whether you get baptized or not. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can redeem - not the waters of baptism. Baptism is the outward symbol of the inward work, which has already taken place in the one who has trusted Christ.

Conclusion: Since baptism is a public confession of faith in Christ, it usually is done publicly in front of a local church. If you have not yet made the decision to be baptized, why not do so NOW! (*Memorize: Acts 2:41*)