

Title: Water Baptism

Text: Acts 2:37-41

(4)

Bible Doctrines

Open your Bibles, please, to the book of Acts. The book of Acts chapter 2, as we continue our series on: WHAT WE BELIEVE. Today, we come to a subject that is certainly important to every believer. WATER BAPTISM.

In our statement of faith we say that WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE INSTRUCTS BAPTISM BY IMMERSION, AND IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S COMMAND BELIEVERS BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION. And the basic teaching for this statement comes from Acts chapter 2 beginning with Vs 37. This text is the conclusion to Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. A wonderful sermon on repentance and salvation. Let's begin with Vs 37.....(READ VS 37-41)

#### PRAYER

I trust you noticed as I read our text that Peter said in Vs 38..."Repent and let each of you be Baptized." The Word BAPTISM appears 120 times in the N.T. It is one of the most frequent topics in all the Bible. So, it is <sup>a</sup>very important topic from God's viewpoint.

Now, I would like to ask you four questions concerning baptism.

(1B) Number one, WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED? According to the Bible, who should be baptized? Not according to me. Or, anybody else, but according to the Bible who should be baptized?

Peter said in Vs 38 of Acts chapter 2..."let each of you." In the context it is those who repent. "Those who repent, let each of you be baptized."

In Acts chapter 8 verse 12 it says, "when they believed, they were baptized."

In Acts chapter 8 verses 36 and 37, when Philip is witnessing to the Ethiopian Eunuch, he says, "If you believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, you may be baptized."

In Acts chapter 18 verse 8 we read that "many of the Corinthians when they heard and believed the Gospel were <sup>Then</sup> baptized."

Dear friends, the N.T. does not know of a believer who was not baptized. The one exception to that, that I know of, is the thief on the cross. I am sure you remember that he said to Jesus: "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." And Jesus said, "today, you shall be with me in Paradise."

But, the N.T. teaches that from the Great Commission of Jesus onward, <sup>are the ones who were</sup> believers ~~were~~ baptized. Every believer was baptized. In other words, only those who believe in Jesus should be baptized. My dear friends, if you were baptized before you came to Christ, you have not been baptized according to the Bible. Baptism follows belief in Jesus Christ. That is why we do not baptize children until they come to the point and the age of understanding when they can believe and accept Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour.

(2B) Now, the second question I would like to ask is: WHEN SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED? WHEN?

Acts chapter 2 verse 41 says, "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about 3 thousand souls."

Literally the phrase "that day" means "in that very same day." The same day that they <sup>believed</sup> ~~accepted the message of~~ Christ, they were baptized.

This often causes me to wonder as a Pastor because I believe folks ought to receive some sort of instruction to help them know what they are doing. But, notice what they did in Peter's day. Those who believed were baptized in that same day they believed. The Bible is very clear about that.

Let me show you how interesting that is. According to Acts 2, Peter started preaching at the third hour of the day. In Jewish time that is 9:00 in the morning. That is the third hour of the day. And the Bible tells us that he preached this sermon. And he used many words to encourage them. It doesn't say how long he preached. But, some time in the late morning Peter concluded his message. Now, the Jewish day ends at 6:00 in the evening. So, from the time Peter concluded his sermon and 6:00 in the evening, 3 thousand people were baptized...I think that is fantastic.

So, when should you be baptized? In that day. Or, as soon as possible. Because baptism is a public identification and demonstration that we have come to know Jesus Christ.

(3 Things)

According to The Bible

(3B) Now, the third question that faces us is: HOW SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?

(1C) First of all, the formula. The only formula for baptism in the entire Bible is found in Matthew 28:19. WOULD YOU TURN THERE, PLEASE. Matthew chapter 28:19.

This is referred to as the GREAT COMMISSION. It is the only place in the entire Bible where instructions are given as to the formula for baptism.

Matt. 28:19 says.. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them <sup>How?</sup> in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Those are the last words of Jesus before He ascended into heaven. He told his disciples to go into all the world and to baptize in the name of THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY Spirit.. And as you know, in this church we use this formula.

NOW WHY? WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT? Why can't we just baptize in the name of God? Or, in the name of Jesus? Why is it necessary to be baptized in the name of THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT?...

I think we need to understand the day in which our Lord Lived. Perhaps we don't have quite the contrast today. But, in the days of Jesus <sup>Jesus</sup> baptisms <sup>was</sup> a common practice. There were many kinds of baptisms. And there were baptisms by immersion. A person to be baptized would go down into the water and be baptized. And after he came out-off the water he would burn his old clothes and put on new clothes as a sign of putting off the old life and putting on the new life.

This form of baptism was, also, used in prosolight baptisms. When a Gentile would come into Judaism, he was baptized in that manner.

But, when a Jewish person was baptized, he was baptized in the name of JEHOVOH. OUR GOD IS ONE GOD.

But, Jesus told us to be baptized in the name of THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

If you remember our text, you will notice a very interesting problem. In Acts chapter 2 verse 38 Peter says, "repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Now, is this a contradiction with Matthew 28, where Jesus said to be baptized in the name of THE FATHER, THE SON, THE H.S.?

No, I don't think so. Because when you translate <sup>literally</sup> from the Greek into English it would go like this. "Let each of you be baptized upon the authority of Jesus Christ." That is a literal translation from the Greek <sup>to English</sup>. So, Peter is really referring back to the Great Commission. Because those Apostles knew what baptism was like. It would make a big difference to the Jew in that day who believed in Jehovah to go into the water and publically be baptized in the name of THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT...WHY?...Because he would be telling the world that he believed they were God.

You see, the greatest obstacle in believing in Jesus and confessing Him publically was to demonstrate through the act of baptism that you believed that Jesus of Nazareth was God and that the Holy Spirit was God.

Dear friends, I believe it is important for us to remember this. To remember that when a Jew made that confession, he was cutting himself off from the life of Israel. They could no longer buy or sell once they had declared that Jesus was God. And here they had to publically go into the water and identify themselves with that fact. And you can bet your bottom dollar that if Jesus wasn't real in their life, they wouldn't do it. Because the results were so severe.

Maybe we need to see more of that in this day and age. That we might know the truth of our convictions that JESUS IS GOD. THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD. AND THAT THE FATHER IS GOD...ALL ARE ONE...THEY ARE ALL GOD.

So, the formula for baptism is very important. We are to baptize in the name of THE FATHER...THE SON..AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(2C) Now, what is the method of baptism? The word "baptism" simply means "to immerse"... "to place beneath the water."

The Greek language does have a word for "pouring", but it never appears in the entire N.T...Never...I find that very interesting.

The Greek language, also, has a word for "sprinkling." And it only appears once in the N.T. It is found in Hebrews chapter 9 verse 13. And in content, it is referring to the O.T. ceremony of sprinkling the ashes of a sacrificial animal. *It is not referring to Baptism*

So, those two concepts of "pouring" and "sprinkling" are immediately ruled out as possible methods of baptism.

O.K. but how do we know that the word "baptism" means "immersion." Let me give you a simple illustration. In Greek writing, whenever a ship was sunk either by natural causes or by an act of war, the word used to describe the sinking of a ship was the word "BAPTIZO."

Now, dear friends, the ship was not sprinkled or poured on. It was sunk.. It was immersed..It went down completely. And that is the word used in the N.T. for the method of baptism.

And, also, if you didn't know what the original language said, you could still find out through Biblical examples. Take the case of Jesus. He went down into the water. And He came up out off the water. Or, the case of Philip and the Ethiopian unuch in Acts chapter 8. They went down into the water and Philip baptized him. And then they came up out off the water.

So, clearly we have taught in the Bible that immersion is the Biblical method of baptism.

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(4B) Now, we come to question number four. <sup>9 rows</sup> WHY SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?

I would like to give you 3 reasons.... 3 Four reason why a christian should be baptized.

(1C) Number one, and this is obvious. Because the Jesus commands it. In Matthew 28:19 and in Acts 2:38 ... "Everyone who believes should be baptized. And Jesus said, "if you love me, you will obey me."

(2C) Secondly, the Bible teaches that we should be baptized because we believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Would you turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 8.....Acts chapter 8 begining with vs 35....Acts 8:35.....(READ Vs 35-38)

Now, I would like you to notice something very interesting about this story. Look back at Vs 27...After Philip was given the commisiion <sup>vs 26</sup> to go and witness to this Ethiopian Eunuch, we read in Vs 27..."that he arose and went, and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official, who was in charge of the queen's treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship."

*you say* Did you see that? This Ethiopian Eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship. BIG DEAL. SO WHAT?.....The word "to worship" is a technical phrase referring to a Gentile <sup>convert</sup> ~~proselyte~~ to Judaism. This man was a Gentile. But he was going to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah. He was a <sup>Jewish Convert</sup> ~~proselyte~~. And that means that he had already been baptized. He was baptized by immersion into the Jewish faith.

And yet, here he is, out in the dessert with Philip. And after Philip had preached to him Jesus, This Ethiopian Eunuch said, "WHAT PREVENTS ME FROM BEING BAPTIZED?" WHY DID HE SAY THAT? Because this Ethiopian Eunuch, this convert to Judiam, clearly understood what Philip had preached to him. And that is, THAT JESUS IS GOD. And the command that Jesus gave and the formula for Baptism was the one thing that declared and deminstrated that fact. Baptism in the name of THE FATHER....THE SON...AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

And so Philip said, "if you believe with all your heart, you may." And the Eunuch answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And then he was baptized.....

*SO, we are Baptized because we Believe in J.C.*



(3C) The Third reason why a christian should be baptized is because it illustrates three important truths about our salvation.

(1D) Number one, water baptism illustrates the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In I Corinthians 12:13 we read that "by one spirit we were all baptized into one body in Christ."

The moment a person receives Jesus as Lord and Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell that person. You see, He immerses us with himself. And our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit of God.

Thus, when we are immersed in water, it is a public symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, spiritual in our lives....

(2D) Secondly, water baptism illustrates cleansing from sin. Just as we take a bath to cleanse the outward body, so we are baptized to illustrate that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin.

In Acts 2:38 Peter said, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins."

Now, I would like to comment on that verse. Some people have taught that Vs 38 is teaching that Baptism saves. You are not saved unless you are baptized.....Wrong..... *That is not the Teaching of that verse*

In the Greek, the verse literal reads, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you upon the authority of Christ as a result of the forgiveness of sins.

It is what we call in Greek "A RESULTANT FORM OF A PREPOSITION." As a result of the forgiveness of sins, because I have been forgiven, because I have been cleansed, therefore, I should be baptized.

(3D) Then, thirdly, baptism illustrates the truth of the death and burial of the old man and the resurrection we have in Christ to new life.

Romans chapter 6 verses 3 to 5 teaches that everyone of us who are baptized are baptized into the likeness of His death. And we have been resurrected to new life in Christ Jesus.

You see, when we go down into the waters of baptism it is like the old ~~man~~ <sup>self</sup> going through death. And as we come up out-off those waters, it is like the new ~~man~~ <sup>self</sup> in christ who has been resurrected to new life. THAT IS WHAT IS BEING PICTURED AND ILLUSTRATED IN WATER BAPTISM.

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(4C) Then, a Christian should be baptized because baptism is a public testimony of a good conscience towards God. Turn, please, to I Peter chapter 3. I Peter chapter 3 reading verses 18-22 (Read Vs 18-22)

Now, the Bible is teaching that baptism is a public testimony of a good conscience towards God. You might say, as many have, that Vs 21 teaches that baptism saves you. But, please notice, it says in content that baptism saves as a figure can save. A figure is a counter part to reality. It points to the reality. But, in no sense is it to be regarded or identified as that reality.

So, what is the point? In Noah's day, eight people were saved from the flood waters. BUT WHAT SAVED THEM? The Ark saved them. It was the Ark in the water that brought them salvation. And the Ark is Christ. The water represents death. The water doesn't save. It was death to all who were not in the Ark. It is simply the answer, the testimony, the witness of a good conscience towards God. My conscience is clear. I have publically demonstrated my faith in Christ. I have given witness to my identification with Him in death, burial, and resurrection. I give public testimony to the fact that new life has occurred in my life. Baptism is a good conscience towards God.

Now, what I have been sharing, today, deals primarily with Christians, as to why we should be baptized. But, dear friends, this was such a great day in Acts chapter 2. It was a day not only of baptism, but, also, of belief in Jesus Christ as savior. Three thousand people were saved.



So, I can't help but emphasize as I close this message that in order to be baptized, we must believe. For baptism doesn't save us. It is only a public demonstration that we have believed. BELIEVED WHAT? That Jesus Christ is God. That He died for my sins. That I am separated from God, and because of that separation I need to ask Jesus to come into my life. And when I confess my sin and ask Jesus to come into my life, at that moment I am saved and I am restored to fellowship with God. For it is written that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleans us from all unrighteousness.

Dear friend, have you received Jesus? Are you trusting Him as your savior? If you have never asked Jesus to come into your life, I pray that you will do so today. And then... be baptized!

Shall we close with a word of prayer