



Week 32 - Water Baptism: A Step of Obedience

Water Baptism: A Step of Obedience

Acts 2:38 lists three essentials in Peter's message to those desiring to become Christians: repent; be baptized; and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:41 records their obedience, "Then they that received his word were baptized." Water baptism was the original "altar call."

False teachings about baptism have historically troubled the church. Baptismal regeneration, one extreme, says that it's necessary for salvation. The other extreme calls baptism an empty ritual, thus denying both the significance of baptism and the commands of the Bible. God's Word clarifies this subject.

Baptism is identification with Christ's death and resurrection.

Paul wrote: "...and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:11-12).

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin..." (Romans 6:3-6).

Baptism buries the "body of sin" so that we might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:6). As scripture says, "old things pass away, new things have come" 2 Corinthians 5:17. As a sacrament, baptism is a means of God's grace to us so that we might be identified with Christ and find victory in our fight of faith.

Baptism is an Appeal to God

Peter wrote "... baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 3:20-21)

Baptism appeals to God that our conscience has been cleansed because Christ's blood has cleansed and forgiven us. Water baptism also signifies the gateway to new life in Christ, as the Red Sea signified new life for the nation of Israel as they left Egypt.

Baptism is a Public Acknowledgment that Jesus is Lord

Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven... Matthew 10:32

In water baptism, we cut every ungodly tie so that Jesus will be preeminent and Lord over all of life. It is typically a public event and a testimony of one's faith in Jesus to others.

Why be water baptized?

- Jesus commanded all of his followers to be baptized (Mark 16:16).
- Jesus personally gave an example (Matthew 3:13-17).
- The apostles were baptized and taught its necessity (Acts 2:38, 9:17-18).
- Scripture describes water baptism as necessary for all who desire to follow Jesus (Acts 8:12-15, 35-38, 10:47-48, 16:33, 19:5).
- Water baptism is required for church membership (Acts 2:41).

How should we go about being baptized?

Immediately

Ananias commanded the newly converted Paul, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:26).

By Immersion

At least three Bible passages indicate that early believers were baptized by immersion. Romans 6:4 says we have been "buried" in baptism. In Mark 1:9-11, it records that Jesus "came up out of the water." And Acts 8:38-39 says that Philip and the eunuch "went down into" the water. The Greek word for baptize used in the Bible is baptizo, which means, "to immerse" or "submersion and emergence."

Regarding Children: When Ready

Baptism is for those who are mature enough to repent of their sins and be born again. Although many theological persuasions embrace infant baptism for sound reasons, this practice cannot be found modeled for us in Scripture.

By Local Pastoral Staff

The governing elders of a local church should sanction those who are allowed to baptize. It is unwise to think that any believer can baptize anyone at any time. Consultation with the local church leaders is typically a prerequisite to being baptized.

Blessings of Baptism

The principal blessing from baptism comes in simply obeying the Lord. Many believers also report that after baptism they have a newfound deliverance from bondage to particular sins, which they had been held to for years. Sometimes people experience a fresh infilling, or a refreshing cleansing by the power of the Holy Spirit in baptism. Even children can have a wonderful experience in God.

In conclusion, in the words of Acts 22:16 “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized.”

Review:

1. What is water baptism?
2. Why should we be water baptized? How should we be baptized?
3. What is the “blessing” of baptism?