



BAPTISM

I. Baptism, like the Lord's Supper, is surrounded by controversy, and the practices surrounding the ordinances generally distinguish Baptists from other religious organizations, although, today, many who call themselves Baptists have left, and some have never had, the old Baptists beliefs and cannot be distinguished from other religious organizations. Some even call themselves Protestants, which *true Baptists are not, nor have they ever been.*

Down through the centuries Baptism was one of the Doctrines that comprised the main line of separation between the Lord's Churches and religious organizations. In fact, that's how Baptist's received their name. Long before the Reformation they were called *Ana-baptists* or re-baptizers, because they refused to accept the baptisms of Catholics, and later Protestants, and re-baptized all believers that wanted to unite with them. Later the "*Ana*" was dropped, and they became known as Baptists.

Protestants are disturbed and embarrassed about the difficulties over *their baptism*. If they admit that the Church of Rome is the *true visible church* of Christ then they must surrender their own claims to be the true churches of Christ because they separated themselves and were excluded from the true Church. Neither do their ministers have authority to baptize, or to administer Church ordinances. On the other hand, if they deny that

the Church of Rome is the *true visible Church* of Christ then she could not have the authority to baptize or administer Church ordinances, in which case, the Protestants have no authority to baptize since their founding fathers (Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox) received their baptism from the priests of Rome, as well as all those who composed the first societies of the Reformers, and their baptisms are *unscriptural and invalid*.

What is Baptism?

II....Baptism is one of the *two ordinances* of the Church, the other being the Lord's Supper. By the ordinances, I mean those outward rites which Christ appointed to be administered in His Church as *visible signs* of the saving truth of the gospel, Matt. 28:18-20. They are signs, in that they *vividly express* this truth and confirm it to the believer.

A....Christian Baptism is the *immersion* of a believer in water.

B....Baptism is only symbolical and representative. Baptism identifies the believer with Christ's death to sin and he is buried with Him, pictured by being immersed in water, and is raised to a new life in Christ, Romans 6:1-6. One writer put it this way: "Immersion = Death. Submersion = Burial (the ratification of death). Emergence = Resurrection." The old man, our sin nature, was crucified with Christ, died and was buried. A new man is raised up, a new creation (Eph. 4:24; 2 Cor. 5:17), free from the bondage of sin, and free to be servants of righteousness, Rom. 6:18.

C....Baptism is an outward indication, of the inner change which has already occurred in the believer's life.

D....Baptism serves as a *public identification* of the person with Jesus Christ, and thus also as a *public testimony* of the change that has occurred.

E....Baptism is a *public profession* of the believers commitment to live a life of holiness and obedience to God's Word, Romans 6:11-13. Baptism is an act of obedience, commitment, and proclamation.

F....Baptism is the *way into the fellowship and privileges* of the local church, Acts 2:41. Baptism provides the way for the local church to keep herself as pure as possible by only accepting those who have fulfilled the scriptural teaching of baptism, as explained later in this study.

G....Baptism is the *right or proper act of righteousness*, being in obedience to Christ, Matthew 3:15: "*Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.*" The word translated as "*becometh*" is not from the ordinary Greek state of being verb, but from the word "*prepei*", which has a more limited and definite meaning as that which is *proper, right, or fitting*. It's used in 1 Cor. 11:13; Eph. 5:3; 1 Tim. 2:10; Titus 2:1; Heb. 2:10, 7:26.

1. Jesus declared that his own baptism was in some sense "*to fulfill all righteousness,*" and we may say our baptism is to do the same *in the same sense*. Why was Jesus Baptized? He was Baptized because of the call of God that came through the last and greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist. It was an act of *obedience*. The counterpart to Jesus' act of obedience to the call of God was the divine presence and authentication, Mk. 1:10. The coming of the Spirit upon Jesus and the voice out of heaven not only authenticated Jesus but pointed to his task. That which Jesus heard was from Isaiah 42:1. As a *servant* he fulfilled all righteousness.

2. For what purpose was Jesus baptized in the Jordan River? He came to earth to work out a perfect righteousness for his own---to satisfy the infinite claims of divine justice for all that the Father would give Him. It was this "*all-righteousness*" that He declared He wished to fulfill in His baptism. He could not literally accomplish this by being baptized so He must have done it *figuratively*. 1 Peter 3:21 states that baptism is a figure--"The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us." If it saves us, it saves us *figuratively*. If we are by it baptized into Christ, it is done figuratively, as the Jews were into Moses, 1 Cor. 10:1-2.

3. Christ went to the cross to be made sin for us that we might be

made the righteousness of God in Him, 2 Cor. 5:21. Righteousness is based upon obedience and Christ was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Phil. 2:8. And it is by His obedience that we become righteous, Rom. 5:19. Now since the *obedience of Christ unto death* was the actual fulfillment of *all righteousness* for His people, it follows that His water baptism fulfilled all righteousness only in a typical and prophetic sense.

4. Jesus set before their eyes, in a figure, *the three great acts* by which he did fulfill the "*all- righteousness*" the law required in order that those for whom He appeared might be set free from the penalty of the divine law, and their redemption eternally secured.

a. The law required *the death* of the transgressor, and *Christ must therefore die in their place*. The penalty of sin, which was death, was borne by Christ, not by His mere humanity, in which He was revealed to us, not mere physical, but *spiritual* death also, i.e., separation from God, the withdrawing of God from the soul. Jesus cried from the cross, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Matt. 27:46. Upon Him was all our sins laid and "*He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" It was for this reason the Father hid His face from His Son.

b. "*He was buried*"--He went down into the dark dominions of death and *having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it*, Col. 2:15. He not only died our death (separation from God), He did away with the *sting of death* which is sin (1Cor. 15:56-57), and *the strength of sin*, which is the law (Rom. 10:4), and delivered us from the power of the grave, and *destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil*, (Heb. 2:14).

c. He was resurrected---as He came up out of the water He rose from the dead out of the grave. Paul wrote in Romans 4:24-25, "*righteousness is imputed to us if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our*

Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." Christ's resurrection was proof that He had satisfied all claims against all believers. As He rose from the dead, so also will all believers rise from the dead, 2 Cor. 4:14.

Jesus, by His baptism, *prefigured these three acts*, which Paul says constitute the gospel by which we are saved, 1 Cor. 15:1-4. As the waters of the flood were for destruction and salvation, so water baptism is a figure of the same, the destruction of the old man and the resurrection of the new man by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Four Essential Elements

III....There are four essential elements to scriptural baptism: a scriptural subject, a scriptural mode, a scriptural design, and a scriptural administrator.

A Scriptural Subject

1....Baptism must be *restricted* to those who *exercise faith*, since this is the teaching of scripture. This approach excludes infants, who could not possibly have such faith. The *proper candidates* for baptism are those who already have experienced the new birth on the basis of their personal faith in Jesus Christ and repentance toward God. In every instance of New Testament baptism in which the specific identity of the persons was known, the persons being baptized were able to make a personal, conscious choice of *faith and repentance*. Without this baptism was not administered, <Matthew 3:2-6> and <28:19>. Also, the symbolism of Baptism declares that only a believer can be baptized since it symbolizes a previous spiritual change in him who submits to it. In the New Testament Church repentance and faith came first, followed by baptism.

a. That only a *believer* is a scriptural subject is also born out by many other passages, Acts 2:41---"*then they that "gladly received his word"* were

baptized. Church membership followed and then teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer, verse 42. Acts 8:12;36-39---"*if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*" Acts 10:44-48---"*can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the holy ghost as well as we?*" Also see Acts 16:14-15; 18:8; 22:16.

b. John the Baptist called upon the people to repent (Matt. 3:2,5-6). Those who obeyed came "*confessing their sins,*" thus acknowledging their unfitness to be in the Messiah's coming kingdom. Those who did not come confessing their sins and felt they had nothing to repent of he *refused to baptize* (Matt. 3:7-9). Likewise, the Lord's Church does not baptize anyone who has not *believed* in Jesus Christ and *repented*, had a change of mind toward God, sin, and their manner of life (Acts 2:36-39).

A Scriptural Mode

2...We are told in John 3:23 that John "*was baptizing at Aenon near to Salim, because there was **much** water there*" and that "*Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water*", Matt. 3:16. Although the passage does not say precisely that Jesus was *immersed* in the water, try substituting the word's sprinkle and pour for the word baptize. Also, had the gospel writers wanted to indicate sprinkling, there was a Greek word--- "*rantizo*" that could have been used. This word was used, and was translated as "*sprinkle*" in Heb. 9:13, 19 and 21, and 10:22. Had they desired to indicate "*pouring*", they could have used one of several terms, the most frequent being "*ekcheoo*", as used in John 2:15, Acts 2:17,18, and several times in Rev. 16. But they used the word "*baptizoo*" as the verb form and "*baptisma*" as the noun form. The root or basic word from which the various forms are derived is "*bapto*", which occurs in that form three times, Luke 16:24 (dip); John 13:26 (dipped); Rev. 19:13 (dipped). The meaning is "to dip, plunge, or submerge". When John baptized people, did they take the water to the people being baptized or did they go to the water? Mat. 3:6-7;

Mk. 1:4-5; Acts 8:36. In what kind of places did John baptize? Mat. 3:5-6; Mk. 1:9; John 3:23. How about Phillip? Acts 8:36-39.

To baptize in its general signification means "*to be identified with*"; 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12>. The phrase in <Matt. 28:19>, "*baptizing them into the Name*" would indicate that the "*baptized*" person was closely bound to, or became the property of, the one into whose name he was "*baptized*."

There have not been any authoritative Greek-English Lexicons that define the word *baptizo* to sprinkle or to pour, no matter what the authors affiliation was to a religious organization. The *scriptural mode* is to dip, to immerse, to plunge under. No other mode is acceptable to God or His Church according to His Word, Heb. 8:5. When God gives a pattern in His Word He means for it to be followed to the letter. The word *baptize* in our modern dictionaries say that the meaning is to sprinkle, pour, or immerse, but that is because word meanings are derived from how a word is used, not only from its original meaning or etymology.

The Scriptural Design

3...The design of baptism is to be a *picture* of a believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's a picture of the death and burial of the believers' *sin nature, the old man*, Rom. 6:4-6. The Believer is dead to sin because Christ abolished the legal penalty of sin by His death. It pictures the believers *personal standing* before God in the vicarious (substitutionary) work of Christ. As Paul said in Verse 7, "*For he that is dead is freed (justified) from sin.*" The believer is then pictured as resurrected, (coming up out of the watery grave), to walk in "*newness of life*" as Christ was resurrected from the dead to a higher type of life, vs-4b-5. Since the believer is legally dead to sin he is to reckon or consider himself dead to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, vs-11-13.

Believers are closely identified with, and bound to the Person, work and purpose of Christ, and thereby receive the benefits that result. Just as the Israelites were identified with the person, work and purpose of Moses, (1 Cor. 10:2), whose purpose was to lead the Israelites out of the *old life of slavery* to the Egyptians to a *new life* in service to God, so also does Christ buy us out of slavery to sin that we also may live a *new life* in service to God. The believer is publicly declaring that the *old man* is dead and buried and he is now committed to a *new life* in righteousness unto God through Jesus Christ his Lord, Rom. 6:11-13; Gal. 2:20.

A Look at the Greek Word "Eis"

"Eis" (ice)...this word is translated in, into, unto, to, for, upto, towards, at, and upon. It basically means to *become part of or identified with*. The opposite word "ek" can be seen in 1 John 2:19, "*out from*." When the preposition "eis" comes *after* the verb "baptize" (as in Matt. 28:19) it means "*in identification with*" that name or person and all that it or he stands for, (Hebrew/Greek study Bible). In Galatians 3:25-27 Paul is saying that Christians are no longer under the law because they are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. In verse 27 they are so *identified with and bound* to Christ, symbolized by baptism (to be baptized into is to be identified with that persons character and purpose), that they have put on Christ (Eph. 4:24), become one in Him (v-28) and as Christ is Abraham's seed (verse 16) then they too, even though they are Gentiles, are spiritually Abraham's seed and heir to the promise (v-8,9,13,14,29).

The Scriptural Administrator

4....Confusion as to a scriptural Administrator usually is a result of refusing to accept the baptism of John as the beginning of the authority for scriptural baptism, and the attempt to say the Church is composed of all the

saved and was started on the day of Pentecost.

John 1:6,33 proves that John was authorized by God to baptize with water. John 1:35,40; Acts 1:22 show that the baptism of the apostles was John's baptism. There is no indication anywhere in scripture that they were ever re-baptized so John's baptism was good enough for them as well as Jesus. John recorded in 3:22, 4:1,2; that Jesus' disciples were baptizing. They had to be baptizing under the authority of Jesus Christ, for who else could have given them the authority. They had the authority of God. This was a limited authority to baptize among the house of Israel only. In Matthew 28:18,19 Jesus gave the authority to baptize believers from all over the world to the Church. If the authority to baptize was given to the apostles it died with them, if it was given to all Christians in general the result would be confusion and God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), plus, everyone from the first century to today must have misunderstood Jesus and the apostles as baptism has always been a Church Ordinance, except for a few recorded in history like John Smyth and John Wesley and in my day Pat Boone.

Lets note some things before Pentecost. First of all, there is a difference between organization and empowerment. Note the expression from verse 4 of Acts 1, "*and, being assembled together with them...*" verse 6, "*when they therefore were come together.*" verse 14, "*these all continued with one accord...*" verse 15, "*...Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, (organization) and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.*" These were the same "ye" that Jesus addressed in verse 8 as He promised them power to enable them to continue without His personal presence and guidance the work He had begun in their midst. This can be seen by reading closely verses 6-14 and verse 22 where the one picked had to have the baptism of John and had to have seen Jesus ascend. The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the Church on Pentecost was to furnish the direction, power, and spiritual abilities to enable them to

effectively execute the work given to the Church in the great commission (Matt. 28:18-19), which had been previously furnished by the bodily presence and personal ministry and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What did this *called out assembly* of baptized believers have before Pentecost?

(1) They had the *Authority*.

(2) They had the *Great Commission* of the church age.

(3) They had the *Gospel*, the same good news to tell the world that we have today.

4) They had a definite *organization*, and even a *treasurer*.

(5) They had the *Ordinances*--both Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

(6) They had a *business meeting* and chose an apostle to take the place of Judas.

7) They had a *Prayer meeting*.

(8) They had *rules for discipline* within the church.

They only lacked one thing--they lacked *power*. That lack was supplied on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Church and they were all immersed in the Holy Spirit who "filled all the house where they were sitting, (Acts 2:1-2). Nowhere was there any mention that they were to be *formed* into a church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit or that the Church was "*born*" on that day. What were the disciples told to expect? Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8.

Who else was there to give the authority to except an organized local Church, who could see that all the requirements would be met and that it was done the way Christ instructed his disciples (his Church)? I honestly cannot see any other answer but the local Church. Nothing else makes

sense. Certainly not a universal invisible church which can do nothing, never has done anything, nor will it ever do anything, including assemble together. And certainly not individuals, whom history has shown have gone after false doctrines when left to themselves. Only an assembly of scripturally baptized believers in Jesus Christ, studying to show themselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, can conceivably be the pillar and ground of the Truth, the Church of the Living God, 1 Tim. 3:15.

Those who attempt to deny that the ordinances were given exclusively to the local Church, attempt to use scriptures from the early church in the book of Acts to sustain their contention that individuals did baptize without Church authority. The cases of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, and Ananias and Paul are cited. But it must be noted that these two baptisms were performed under specific orders. Acts 8:26 specifically states that Philip was acting under orders given by "*the Angel of the Lord*," and Acts 9:15 records that Ananias was acting upon authority given directly by the Lord. Certainly God's authority is higher than that He gave to the Church, but that cannot be said of men.

Scriptural baptism must not only be administered by one who has *Divine Authority*, but unless that authority has been specially given, as in the case of John the Baptist, that authority must reside in a *Scriptural Local Church*.

The only reasons I can think of why people want to eliminate Church authority of the great commission, and the Lord's Supper for that matter: **(1)** is to weaken the local Church, which is the work of Satan, **(2)** because they have ministries and functions that operate without Church authority and therefore are justifying their actions, **(3)** they attack baptism and the Lord's Supper to weaken their meaning and importance, because these two Ordinances have been the means of the separation of the Lord's Churches

from other religious organizations since the first century. Look at almost any work of Church History and Ana-baptists, like Orchard, Christian, Cook, Armitage, Cramp, Newman and others that pre-date 1960.

Christ built his Church, committed to it the *Ordinances of Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, and gave it *the Great Commission*. Since that day the *authority* to baptize and to administer the Lord's Supper has resided in the Church that Jesus built. Not in any priest or preacher, but in the local Church. Unless one's baptism has the authority of the Lord's New Testament Church, meets the qualifications, is baptized by the proper mode, and has the proper design, it is not *scriptural baptism*.

Ephesians 3:21 says that God gets *glory in the Church by Jesus Christ* throughout all ages. That means that from the time Jesus started His Church through forever God will receive glory in the church. The Church will never stop giving glory to God and the way today to give him glory is to have membership in His Church, and follow the patterns he has given us the best we possibly can, even though it means being separated from the main stream religious organizations and being seemingly by ourselves. Jesus said, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." We are never by ourselves.

One Baptism

VI. How many baptism's are there? Ephesians 4:5 says there is only *one*. Which one is it, water baptism or Spirit baptism? In Matthew 28: 19 Jesus told His Church to teach all nations, baptizing them. Now the Church certainly cannot baptize them with the Spirit, only Christ is said to baptize with the Holy Ghost Matt. 3:11; John 1:32-33. He did this only *once*, recorded in scripture, and that was upon His Church to give it the power of His Spirit, Acts 1:5,8; 2:1-4. But the one Pentecost had three parts, and they are portrayed in Leviticus 23:22 --- (1) "ye," (2) "corners of thy field," (3) "gleaning of thy harvest." The Holy Spirit came upon the Jews

(Acts 2) [corresponding with "ye"], the Samaritans (Acts 8) [corresponding with the corners of thy field"], and the Gentiles (Acts 10) [corresponding with the "gleaning of thy harvest"]. This truth is further established in the three divisions of Acts 1:8 --- Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. Since Jesus is the only one who can baptize with the Holy Spirit that means that the Church was told by Jesus to *baptize with water*. Philip baptized with water, Acts 8:36-39. Peter baptized with water, Acts 10:44-48 (v-47). There is only *one* Baptism (water baptism) and there is only one kind of Church (the one our Lord started Himself before Pentecost and "*purchased with his own blood*").

Circumcision and Baptism

IV. Colossians 2:11,12...."*In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*" These verses imply that what circumcision symbolized to the Old Testament Israelite believer, baptism represents to the New Testament church. Circumcision refers to a cutting away of the flesh (representing the putting away of sin) and a change of heart <Deut. 10:16; Ezek. 44:7,9>. True circumcision was not just a matter of the flesh, but of the heart, Jer. 4:4. The actual form of the rite, dealing as it did with the organ of procreation, emphasized that it was the product of procreation, the human nature, that was unclean and needed cleansing. Circumcision finds its fulfillment in Christ, whose circumcision is a spiritual act---made without hands, and the believer is made a member of the new Israel in the death and resurrection of Christ, Rom. 2:28-29, 1 Pet. 2:9. In Christ he has been accepted by God.

In like manner, baptism also declares the putting away of the old nature, the old man, depicting a washing away of sin <Acts 2:38; Titus 3:5>

and a spiritual renewal <Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:11-12>. Paul was referring to the same symbolism for baptism as was stressed in Rom. 6:3-6,19,22, particularly verses 4,19,22. The believer is identified with Christ's death and burial by baptism, which symbolizes the death and burial of the old man that serves sin, v-6, and is raised up to walk in newness of life.

The Covenantal View

V. We saw that baptism serves the same purpose for New Testament believers that circumcision did for Old Testament believers. For the Jews, circumcision was the external and visible sign that they were within *the covenant* that God had established with Abraham. Converts to Judaism (or proselytes) also had to undergo this rite. But now, under the new covenant, *baptism* instead of circumcision is required.

Circumcision served as the sign of the Old Covenant, and Exodus 12:48 specifically states that in ancient Israel a man was to bear in his body the sign of the covenant (circumcision) before he ate of the Passover meal. The sign of the New Covenant, *water baptism*, is a symbol of spiritual circumcision, according to Col. 2:11. *As circumcision was a restriction* placed upon an Israelite before he could join in the fellowship and privileges of Israel in the worship of God, *so baptism is a restriction* placed upon a believer before he can join in the fellowship and privileges of the Church in the worship of God, (ie. the Lord's Supper).

If the relationship between circumcision and baptism suggested above is correct what is the implication to those who have not been scripturally baptized and are not members of the Lord's Church? **(1)** They are outside the bride of Christ, in whose promises and privileges they have no part, i.e. the New Jerusalem. **(2)** There is a glory that the Church does and will continue to give God forever that they have no part in nor will they. **(3)** There is a relationship between Christ and His Church that they will never experience.

