

## The Ordinance of Baptism # 5

Romans 6: 3-5

Prior to His ascension, Christ left two ordinances for the church to follow: believer's baptism and observance of the Lord's Supper. Each of these ordinances is symbolic of what Christ has done in the heart of the believer. Tonight I want to consider the ordinance of baptism.

We have considered a passage in Romans that deals beautifully with the doctrine of baptism. Prior to beginning our study, let me say that there are many who deny this passage has anything to do with water baptism, and relates only to the spiritual baptism of the believer into the body of Christ at the moment of conversion. I will not argue that Paul is in fact emphasizing spiritual baptism in this passage. [1 Cor.12:13 – For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.](#) [Gal.3:27 – For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.](#) However, I am convinced that literal baptism is in view here as well. Paul uses obedience to water baptism, an activity all believers were familiar with, to illustrate the depth of this spiritual truth. This passage does not detract from either the literal or spiritual application of baptism, but rather confirms both.

Now, baptism has been the subject of debate and heated controversy for centuries. Countless millions gave their lives due to personal convictions regarding baptism during the 13 to 14 centuries of the Dark Ages. *Well documented history reveals that over 50 million Christians were martyred during this period because of their rejection of baptismal regeneration (belief that baptism alone regenerates) and infant baptism.*<sup>i</sup>

We as Baptist use the Word of God as our sole authority for faith and practice. The doctrine of baptism is clearly defined in Scripture, so let's see what it has to say concerning baptism. I want to examine these [biblical truths](#) as we consider: [The Ordinance of Baptism](#).

**I. The Significance of Baptism** (3) – [Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?](#) This reveals of a couple of areas I would like to address. We find that it reveals:

**A. A Testimony of the Lord** – Baptism is an outward testimony of an inward experience. It is a public display of what has happened on the inside. Baptism identifies the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Every time that a believer is immersed in water at baptism, it stands as a testimony of the Lord's substitutionary atonement in death and His bodily resurrection.

- This is a fundamental doctrine we hold dear. Water baptism stands as a testimony for a victorious Lord who conquered death and the grave as He rose again that third, glorious day. [Rev.1:18 – I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.](#) [Rom.6:9-10 – Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. \[10\] For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.](#)

**B. A Testimony of the Living** – [Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?](#) It also presents a clear testimony for the individual believer. It pictures a life that was once filled with sin and controlled by Satan, is now dead unto sin. The believer is now a new creature, resurrected in Christ.

- Baptism testifies that we are no longer the person we used to be. I am now dead to sin and alive in Christ. What a testimony! It identifies every believer with a sovereign Lord, who rose again in power. Through the resurrection of Jesus, we have the hope of a future resurrection. Baptism holds great significance for the believer.

### **I. The Significance of Baptism** (3)

**II. The Observance of Baptism** (4a) – [Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:](#) It is important that all believers participate in the observance of baptism. Now, let's be very clear, baptism does not and cannot save you, but it is God's will for those who've accepted Christ to participate in baptism. Jesus was clear about that: [Mat.28:19-20 – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: \[20\] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.](#)

- Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist. I don't know about you, but I want to follow the example and command of Jesus. [John14:15 – If ye love me, keep my commandments.](#)

- Now, it is important that we look at the Biblical method of baptism. The word [baptize](#) means "[to dip, immerse, or submerge](#)". Many denominations practice sprinkling, but it isn't consistent with the clear teaching of Scripture. Baptist do not practice baptism by immersion to be different or difficult, but to follow the teaching and example of Christ. [Mat.3:16 – And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.](#) [Acts 8:38 – And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.](#)

- Clearly the Bible speaks of baptism by immersion. Many continue to practice sprinkling, but this isn't Biblical. I find nothing in the Bible that reflects the idea of sprinkling. Here again, I want to be identified with Jesus. The evidence clearly reveals His baptism by immersion. I know Fellowship, and most Baptist churches require baptism by immersion for membership. This isn't some crazy notion, but is clearly in line with the Word of God.

### **I. The Significance of Baptism (3)**

### **II. The Observance of Baptism (4a)**

**III. The Remembrance of Baptism (4b)** – that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. We've already established the testimony of baptism; the change that took place, the new man. That should serve as a reminder for those who have been baptized.

- We have identified ourselves with Jesus. We are no longer the same; we have been resurrected a new creature. That happened at the moment we were saved. Just as I was identified with Jesus in baptism, I want to be identified with Him each day!
- Baptism doesn't make me any more saved, but it should challenge us to walk in newness of life. My journey is no longer as it was; I have begun a new journey with Christ. Let me encourage you to never become complacent with your Christian life.
- Many get careless after salvation and baptism. [Rom.6:1-2 – What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? \[2\] God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?](#) Just because we are saved is no license to sin. Keep your focus on what Christ did for you at Calvary and the hope you have through His resurrection. Live each day in that newness of life you felt the moment you were saved.

**IV. The Sequence in Baptism (Acts 8:35-38)** - Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. [36] And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? [37] And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. [38] And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. It is important that we understand the order or sequence of baptism. Many denominations practice the baptism of babies through sprinkling. They are counting on that baptism to secure a place in heaven. Jesus said: **Ye must be born again.**

- Baptism does not save! It is just a testimony of salvation. Countless people will say, “I’ve been baptized; I’m a member of the church.” I remember witnessing to a guy one day and questioned his relationship with Christ. He responded, “Momma told me I was baptized when I was little.” He was trusting in a baptism he didn’t even remember to reach heaven. What a tragedy!
- People must be saved in order to reach heaven. Baptism alone will get you nowhere, except wet. Salvation must come first and then baptism. Consider [Acts 8:37](#) again. [And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.](#) The eunuch trusted Jesus as Savior before he was baptized. You can be baptized in every church in the county and still die lost and go to hell! I cannot emphasize enough: Baptism does not save! If you have been saved you need to be baptized, but be absolutely certain of your salvation! Water baptism is an outward testimony of an inward change. Salvation must come first.

I trust this has helped us to understand the ordinance of baptism and its importance. It is one of the real joys of my ministry to stand in that baptismal pool with a new believer. Let us live a life that honors Him as we did the day we were saved and baptized. I hope you know Christ as Savior of your soul. If not, I urge you to do so. Salvation is the only way to reach heaven!

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Belcher, James R. *The Collegiate Baptist History Workbook*. Missouri: Prairie Fire Press, 2005.