

The Calvary Chapel New Believers Bible Study Series

Study Number 15:

Water Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water as a sign of his previous commitment to completely follow the teachings of Christ. There are very few universal Christian rites that are commonly practiced in the Christian Church worldwide. Water baptism is one of those rites that has come down from the early church still practiced today. In the ceremony a new Christian symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. By this external rite he professes his death to sin and resurrection to spiritual life. The ceremony sets forth the fact that the believer has already received Christ and in faith given himself to Him and shows outwardly what has already happened on the inside.

1. As an act of obedience all believers receive this baptism.

Christ commanded:

Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NIV)

Note that baptism follows the choice to become a disciple. (v.19)

In whose name is baptism to be done? _____

2. As an act of obedience and an early Christian rite, Paul explained it and encouraged it

Paul Described it:

Romans 6:2-8 We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (NIV)

2. There is in this ceremony both symbols of death and resurrection. Paul says that

Col 2:9-13 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; 11 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; 12 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. 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions," (NASB)

3. It is not the act of baptism that saves us according to verse 12, what is it? _____

In this baptism there is identification with the one with who we are dying and resurrecting. It is a public declaration of a personal choice to die to ourselves and our old way of life in order to live in the newness of life we have in Christ. The identification is with the death Jesus died for our sins, as well as the resurrection from the dead that brought us newness of life.

4. In fact, although baptism is important and an act of obedience, it was not pivotal enough as an element of salvation that Jesus and the apostle Paul did not spend time doing it.

John 4:1-2 _____

1 Corinthians 1:16-17 What does Paul say about this subject? _____

5. There is no one church organization that you need to be baptized into, we are all baptized into the Body of Christ when we are baptized. If the church you attend believes in Christ for salvation, is faithful to the scriptures and the truth of the gospel, then baptism is right before God. If the group denies the truth of the gospel and salvation by faith through grace, demands that baptism be done only through them, then you should choose to be baptized with another group of believers.

6. The question of baptizing infants sometimes comes up. To this we would simply answer that according to the definition of Paul of the purpose of baptism, (a public declaration of an inner transformation) a child would not understand the meaning of baptism and therefore could not be making a public statement. We therefore decline to baptize infants and children who are too young to understand what they are doing.

7. Is immersion necessary? Even this is not really an issue if there is a public declaration being made during a partial immersion or sprinkling. Different cultures or circumstances may dictate not doing full immersion. Publicly declaring your desire and commitment to follow Christ is what the point of the matter is.

Notes or Questions _____

Assignments: Read **Matthew 28:19-20** and memorize it, and pray for one another.