

Two Ordinances - Part 1

Believer's Baptism

Introduction

There are several Baptist Distinctives wrapped up in this one. The first is the use of the word "ordinance" rather than _____. A sacrament is something that imparts saving grace upon a person. We believe the only "sacrament" is faith in Jesus Christ. (Eph. 2:8-9)

An ordinance is rather a practice ordered by the Lord to be commemorated in the local church. It imparts no grace, but rather teaches doctrine through picture form.

Furthermore, we find only two practices that can properly be called "ordinances" in the New Testament: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion). There are many other things that churches can and may do, but these two are the only ones that were both _____ by Christ, and given clear _____ in the letters of the apostles.

I. The Elements of Baptist Baptism

A. The Proper _____

Throughout the history of Christianity a debate has raged about baptism. Some believe that a person becomes a Christian by being baptized. Baptists believe the New Testament teaching that a person becomes a Christian by faith and after that submits to baptism. Baptists hold that only a _____ is a valid candidate for baptism. Hence the term "believer's baptism."

1. _____ was required (Matthew 3:5-8)
2. Making disciples is required before baptism. (Matthew 28:19)
3. _____ comes before baptism. (Mark 16:15-16)

4. It is always the same order in the book of Acts
 - a) The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41)
 - b) The preaching of Philip (Acts 8:12-13)
 - c) The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:36-38)
 - d) The Corinthians (Acts 18:8)

According to the New Testament, a conscious and willful spiritual decision must be made by an individual to believe on Jesus Christ prior to baptism. For this reason, the baptism of an _____ or before salvation are rejected. In such cases, upon salvation, we would require re-baptism.

B. The Proper _____

There are three main methods by which people are baptized: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. Baptists believe the New Testament teaches only in baptism by immersion. All other forms are invalid.

1. Definition of *baptizo*: "to dip, plunge, or _____"
2. Jesus "went up straightway out of the water" (Matthew 3:16)
3. John baptized where there was "much water" (John 3:22)
4. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:38-39)

C. The Proper _____

As has been shown, baptism is a picture of what saves the soul - the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are other motives explained in the next section. But the main distinction here is that baptism for the purpose of being saved is rejected by Baptists.

1. Salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)
2. Jesus was baptized. (Matthew 3:13-15)
3. The thief on the cross (Luke 23:40-43)

D. The Proper _____

Baptists use the formula given by the Lord Jesus in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

It is obviously crucial to one's testimony of salvation to believe in the complete Trinity of God. To become His child, we need the _____. To be redeemed, we need the sacrifice of God's _____. To be sealed and sanctified, we need the _____.

E. The Proper _____

Not just any Christian or any pastor is authorized to administer the ordinance of baptism. The authority to baptize rests in the local church alone.

1. Only the local church has been promised perpetuity. (Matthew 16:18)
2. The local church was given the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19-20)
3. In the book of Acts, all baptisms were conducted by officials or representatives of local churches.
4. Since not every organization is a legitimate church, the test of what is a true church must go back to doctrine. A group that has left pure Bible doctrine no longer has the authority to administer baptism. (Rev. 2:5)

Ben M. Bogard, "The church only having authority to baptize, it follows that all baptisms administered without church authority are null and void. For this reason Baptists have in all ages refused to recognize the baptisms of those who were not baptized by the authority of a Scriptural church."

If any of the basic elements of baptism are out of place, the baptism was not performed fully according to Scripture, and would require proper baptism in order to become a member at a Baptist church.

Realize that the validity of baptism has nothing to do with the godliness of the one who baptized, or any fond feelings or _____ associated with the previous baptism. It is solely based upon the requirements of _____.

II. The Explanation of Baptist Baptism

A. _____

Baptism is obedience to the _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ. It should be one of the very first acts of obedience of a new Christian.

1. The Great Commission - Matthew 28:19-20
2. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" - John 14:15
3. Ethiopian Eunuch - Acts 8:37-38
4. Cornelius - Acts 10:44-48
5. Apostle Paul - Acts 9:1-19
6. Philippian Jailor Acts 16:30-31
7. Lydia - Acts 16:14-15
8. Crispus & Corinthians - Acts 18:8

B. _____

1. With _____

Proper immersion pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism is a public confession that an individual has believed in and identifies with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Romans 6:3-9)

Illustration: Baptism can be compared to a wedding ring. Baptism does not save us any more than the ring unites two in marriage. Rather it is a public symbol that you are attached by covenant with another individual.

2. With a Body of _____

The Lord walk 60 miles in order to be specifically baptized by John the Baptist. John's baptism was "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark 1:4) Certainly the Lord did not need to repent. Rather He was baptized in order to "fulfil all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15)

The Lord Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist because that baptism identified him with the message John was preaching - with the body of doctrine John held. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." And Jesus wanted His life and ministry to be identified with that doctrine.

3. With a Local _____ and its Doctrine

When Jesus identified with John's message, he also identified with John and John's authority. Baptism not only identifies us with Jesus Christ and with a certain body of doctrine, but also with the authority of the _____ which administered the baptism.

Baptism identifies the believer with a particular church, because the _____ to church membership is baptism (Acts 2:41-42). Since one's baptism identifies them with a particular church and its doctrine, it follows that one joining a Baptist church from some other church with different beliefs must be re-baptized to identify with true Baptist doctrine.

Illustration: if you joined the US Navy, you would be required to wear the Navy uniform. However, if you decided to switch branches of the military, you would still have the same Commander in Chief, and be fighting for the same side. You would simply need to change uniforms to join another branch.

Being baptized by a Lutheran church makes you a Lutheran. Being baptized by a Methodist church makes you a Methodist. And in order to be a member of a Baptist church, you must have Baptist baptism, to identify with the beliefs that make us distinct from other religions. It is essentially a uniform, that publicly shows you are one of us.

C. _____

Baptism is the believer's public testimony to his identification with _____ in salvation, his identification with the local _____ in membership, and his _____ to Christ and His purposes for the believer's life.

Baptism also demonstrates submission to the local church and its authority in his life. (Hebrews 13:17, I Peter 5:5)