

## *XI V. Concerning Baptism & the Lord's Supper*

- Ⓢ ***We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death and resurrection to a new life; that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's Supper; in which the members of a church, by the sacred use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.***

### ***Christian Baptism***

- Ⓢ In discussing the Church we have already discovered that Baptism stands as the grand foyer which must be passed through before entering into the local assembly. This Christian rite is practiced many different ways today, thus, giving rise to many presumptions and differing beliefs about its purpose and effect. The questions that must be answered, then, are <sup>1</sup> What is baptism, <sup>2</sup> Who should be baptized? <sup>3</sup> Who has the authority to baptize? <sup>4</sup> Is any mode acceptable? <sup>5</sup> Is there any regenerating powers in the water? <sup>6</sup> What does it symbolize?
- Ⓢ To begin, J. M. Pendleton writes, *"Baptism is the immersion in water, by a proper administrator, of a believer in Christ, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* (pg. 342). The word "baptize" in the Greek is "baptizo" which literally means, *"to make fully wet, or to overwhelm"* (Strongs, G907). Thayer defines it, *"to dip repeatedly, immerse, to submerge, a sunken vessel."* The English word is not translated, but, rather anglicized meaning that the Greek and English are essentially one and the same. It becomes apparent, therefore, that the New Testament mode of Baptism was immersion of the full body in water. No other "form" or "mode" was appropriate theologically or grammatically. John Calvin, who believed that the sprinkling of infants was appropriate baptism, wrote in his classic "Institutes", *"...but whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only poured or sprinkled upon him, is of no importance; churches ought to be left at liberty, in this respect, to act according to the differences of countries. The very word 'baptize', however, signifies immerse; and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."* To show that immersion was and should remain the appropriate mode of baptism, we turn to the scriptures:
  1. Matt 3:16- Jesus comes up out of the water
  2. Acts 8:37-39- they were both in the water, the Eunuch came out of water
  3. Romans 6:4- How would you bury someone?
- Ⓢ As a side note, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia reads on the subject of baptism, *"There is no need to call for the testimony of a single Baptist scholar on this subject. The world of*

*scholarship has rendered its decision with impartiality and force on the side of the Baptists in this matter”* (See, ‘Baptism’).

## ***Baptism is a Christian Ceremony***

- ⓐ What exactly does Baptism mean? What is its purpose? The New Testament is adamantly clear that baptism “...has a commemorative reference to the burial and resurrection of Christ...[and]...expresses, in emblem, the believer’s death to sin and resurrection to newness of life” (Pendleton, 349). Let us turn to scripture:
  1. Romans 6:2-6:
    - a. Speaks of being “dead” to sin
    - b. keyword: “Likeness” (resemblance, or figure)
    - c. Thus, Paul writes II Cor 5:17
  2. Col 2:12
- ⓐ It is clear that our Lord Jesus Christ designed this ceremony to be practiced by the church until his return.
  1. Matt 28:19-20
  2. Mark 16:16
  3. Heb 6:1-2
  4. Gal 3:27
- ⓐ Today, some denominations believe that baptism is the means by which men must be saved. However, this lies contrary to the word of God. Many claim that the scriptures support this school of thought, however, it is clear that man must be saved before entering the baptismal waters (Acts 8:36-37). Let’s look at a few passages that have been misapplied.
  1. Acts 2:38: In context, Peter is preaching the Pentecostal sermon. In Robertson’s Word Pictures one can read, “*Change of number from plural to singular and of person from second to third. This change marks a break in the thought here that the English translation does not preserve. The first thing to do is make a radical and complete change of heart and life. Then let each one be baptized after this change has taken place, and the act of baptism be performed “in the name of Jesus Christ” (en tōnomati Iēsou Christou)... ‘Unto the remission of your sins’ (eis aphesin tō hamartiōn humōn). This phrase is the subject of endless controversy as men look at it from the standpoint of sacramental or of evangelical theology... My view is decidedly against the idea that Peter, Paul, or any one in the New Testament taught baptism as essential to the remission of sins or the means of securing such remission. So I understand Peter to be urging baptism on each of them who had already turned (repented) and for it to be done in the name of Jesus Christ on the basis of the forgiveness of sins which they had already received.*”
    - a. Note, the parenthetical clause in 2:38 beginning with “repent” and ending with “sins”. Though it is not proper to exclude anything from scripture, doing so would expose the foundational thought or main idea of the sentence. The parenthetical clause is a secondary expression in conjunction with the former thought.
    - b. “For” is translated out of the Greek word “eis” (G1519), which has led to much controversy. To summarize the proper interpretation of this

phraseology, I quote Gill, “*not that forgiveness of sin could be procured either by repentance, or by baptism; for this is only obtained by the blood of Christ; but the apostle advises these awakened, sensible, repenting, and believing souls, to submit to baptism, that by it their faith might be led to Christ, who suffered and died for their sins, who left them buried in his grave, and who rose again for their justification from them; all which is, in a most lively manner, represented in the ordinance of baptism by immersion*” (Gill, Acts 2:38).

2. Mark 16:16: In short, this verse can be divided in the English at the parenthesis making 16:16a and 16:16b. This is a common way of quoting small portions of a verse. If, baptism is needed for salvation in Mark 16:16a, why is not needed in 16:16b? The idea is not that baptism is necessary for salvation, but that baptism is closely linked with salvation. In the world of the early church, no lengthy time span occurred between salvation and baptism. It was done IMMEDIATELY: Acts 16:31-33. This is the obvious meaning here.

a. Also, this is a much debated portion of scripture. Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in the earliest manuscripts of this gospel. Literary stylistic features are markedly different than the rest of the book. However, there are no substantial facts to prove this other than conjecture. In light of this, though, it would be foolish to build a sacramental theology off such a debated portion of scripture.

3. Acts 22:16: Paul here is using figurative language that appears throughout scripture. Mankind has become “dirty” by sin, therefore a cleansing is needed. What cleans away dirt? Water! Therein lays the literary allusion! For proof text, see: I Cor 6:11, Rev 1:5, 7:14, Isa 1:16, Psa 51:2 & 7.

a. This verse must be taken in the consideration of rest of the Word. Tit 3:5 states that the cleansing agent is God’s mercy. Baptism is the declaration of justification! It declares to the world, what God has declared to you! I encourage the curious heart to examine this passage in pursuit of the harmony of scripture and not harmony of a traditional, ceremonial theology!

## ***The Subjects and Administrator of Baptism***

Ⓢ We note in the following verses that subjects of baptism were <sup>1</sup> Saved and <sup>2</sup> Permitted into church fellowship after baptism. It should be noted that one enters the kingdom through salvation before entering the church through baptism. Baptists have maintained a belief in “believer’s baptism” since the time of Christ. Only the saved are permitted into the baptismal waters.

1. Matt 28:19-20

a. make disciples, BAPTIZE...who? Those disciples!

2. Acts 2:41

a. “Received word” (Saved), baptized, Added to the church

3. Acts 8:37-38

4. Acts 18:8

5. Acts 8:12

6. Luke 3:7-8

Ⓢ For Baptism to be scriptural, a proper administrator is needed. That is, the one who actually dips the candidate! It is evident throughout the New Testament that only certain men had authority given to them by God through the church! Notice the following:

1. Matt 3:13-14: this was a distance of 60-70 miles! Only John had the authority to baptize at this time! Therefore, Jesus walked this amazing distance for a proper administrator.

a. Notice that Jesus was baptized of John the Baptist. We also know that the 12 apostles were also followers of John the Baptist: John 1:36-40. This means that when Christ gathered the 12, which became the first church, they were all properly baptized by the administrator in which God designed!

2. Matt 28:19-20: The Great Commission was given to the church! Now, the church has the authority to baptize. The local church gives the authority to baptize to its elder(s). Jesus gave his disciples the authority to baptize for the first church, John 4:1-2, though Jesus never baptized himself.

a. Acts 19:2-5: These in Ephesus were baptized in the name of John and not Jesus Christ, yet they were Christian believers! In other words, they were still following the forerunner and not the Messiah! They were not baptized correctly, therefore, Paul REBAPTIZED them!

b. Note: the name "Baptist" comes from the word "Anabaptist" which means, "to re-baptize." True Christians in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. refused to accept Catholic baptism. They dismissed it as "alien immersion." Believers who came out of the Catholic religion could join a true church upon being re-baptized as those in Ephesus. Thus, those who join our church who have not been baptized properly are not admitted until after being baptized scripturally.

3. Acts 15:22: The church sent out men by the churches authority!

4. Nowhere in scripture, does anyone baptize who is not <sup>1</sup> John the Baptist, <sup>2</sup> an Apostle, <sup>3</sup> An elder. In Acts 8, we read about Phillip preaching in Samaria. Many believe that this was Phillip the Apostle; however, through the study of scriptures, this Phillip is actually Phillip the deacon! So can deacons baptize? We see that Phillip PREACHED in Samaria. Therefore, we see that Phillip was both a deacon and an evangelist. Matthew Henry writes, "*Stephen was advanced to the degree of a martyr, Philip to the degree of an evangelist, which when he entered upon, being obliged by it to give himself to the word and prayer, he was, no doubt, discharged from the office of a deacon; for how could he serve tables at Jerusalem, which by that office he was obliged to do, when he was preaching in Samaria? And it is probable that two others were chosen in the room of Stephen and Philip.*"

- Ⓢ Baptism Summary: Matt 3:13-17. Baptism was decreed by Jesus Christ as the first ordinance of a gospel church. Salvation and baptism stand side by side as the justification and declaration of the mercy of God!

## ***The Lord's Supper***

- Ⓢ The Lord's Supper (often termed "Communion") is the second ordinance of the local church. Today, communion is often practiced as a time of fellowship, open to all who wishes to attend. Many denominations allow communion to be served individually as well as publicly. Some believe in the doctrines of "transubstantiation" and "consubstantiation." That is, the bread and wine LITERALLY morph into the body and blood of Jesus upon digestion. Still, others believe that communion is necessary to the salvation of the human soul. Scripture lays a firm, solid foundation for the practice of communion, its elements, its purpose, its necessity, etc.

### ***The Symbolism and Purpose of Communion***

- Ⓢ We can clearly see the purposes and symbolism of communion in the following scriptures:
  1. I Cor 11:26
  2. Luke 22:19
  3. I Cor 10:16

We must also note that dogmas of transubstantiation and consubstantiation are grounded in fallacy, and should be dismissed as heresy. Matt 26:26-29 records the institution. We understand this language to be figurative and representative as in: John 6:53-54. We understand that communion has no "regenerating power."

- Ⓢ The institution of the Lord's Supper occurred while observing the Jewish Passover: (Luke 22:7-12). Jesus taught in the great commission to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded..." A part of this instruction was the continuance of the Lord's Supper. We see evidence that the early church continued this ordinance with the Apostles: Acts 2:41-42, Acts 20:7, and I Cor 11. The design was commemorate our Lord's death upon the cross and that alone. Pendleton observes, "*The important truth should echo and re-echo throughout Christendom, that the Lord's Supper is a memorial service-that the central idea in its observance is the commemoration of Christ's death. This must never be forgotten*" (pg 360).

### ***Who May Partake of the Lord's Supper?***

- Ⓢ We must now ask who has the right to partake of the Lord's Supper.
  1. Acts 2:41-42: Saved & Baptized Believers

2. Matt 28:19-20: Saved & Baptized Believers

3. I Cor 10:16-17: Saved & Baptized Believers

Communion is an ordinance observed by the Lord's Church! Therefore, only those are a part of the church are invited to the Lord's Table. Concerning this, we may observe a few points:

1. Communion should be observed **ONLY IN CHURCH CAPACITY**: I Cor 11:20, Acts 20:7.
  - a. It is not appropriate to administer the Lord's Supper in a private setting for one (or a few) individual(s). Many administer communion to those on their death bed, however this is unscriptural. However, the assembly can meet collectively in any location to observe this ordinance!
2. Communion should be observed **ONLY BY THE LOCAL CHURCH**: I Cor 11:33.
  - a. Often, many practice what is termed "close communion," meaning that other churches of like faith and order may participate in communion. However, there is no precedence for this in scripture. Communion has an indirect effect of pulling a church together in harmony: I Cor 10:17.
3. Communion should be observed **OCCASIONALLY**: I Cor 11:26.
  - a. Scripture does not mandate a certain number of times the Lord's Supper should be observed. However, we find it a common practice in the early church: Acts 2:46.

### ***What are the Elements of the Lord's Supper?***

🕒 The elements of the Lord's Supper are essentially the same as used during Passover:

1. I Cor 10:16: Un-leaven bread and the fruit of vine!

We may observe a few things concerning the elements:

1. The Bread was and is to un-leavened according to Jewish custom: Exeo 12:19, I Cor 5:8
  - a. When bread begins to leaven, it begins to decay. Therefore, using un-leavened bread shows forth the purity of the body of Christ!
2. Fruit of the Vine: Mark 14:25
  - a. Notice that the word "wine" is **NEVER USED** in connection with the Lord's Supper! "Oinos" which was the common word for wine (fermented or unfermented) was **NOT USED** to describe what was used during communion. Therefore, the debate on "Bible wines" is frivolous in this case. What was the "fruit of the vine?" It denotes the freshest available. To be sure all **WINES FERMENTED TO SOME DEGREE**. However, the "wine" used here was the freshest that could be found. A little known fact is the company "Welchs" was founded by Thomas Welch in 1869. He developed a method of producing non-alcoholic wine and sold it to churches as "Dr.

Welch's Unfermented Wine" when his church declared that unfermented wine was the scriptural element!

### ***Summary***

- ② We have discussed the foundation of the communion service in its elementary form. However, as we close, the Apostle Paul makes it vehemently clear that solemn self examination should ALWAYS precede a communion service: I Cor 11:27-31. He states in verse 30 that carelessness during communion lead sickness, disease, and even death! We should NEVER enter the Lord's Supper nonchalantly or merrily. We must come to the Lord's table with a solemn heart and focused mind! These are the ordinances of Hauser Baptist Church: Baptism followed by the Lord's Supper.