

WAS JESUS A REGULAR BAPTIST?



Lesson Eight – Believer Baptism

The Baptist Distinctives

- **Biblical Authority** (Lesson 7)
- **Autonomy of the Local Church** (Lesson 11)
- **Priesthood of the believer** (Lesson 10)
- **Two Ordinances: Baptism (Lesson 8) & Lord’s Supper** (Lesson 9)
- **Individual Soul Liberty** (Lesson 10)
- **Saved, Baptized Church Membership** (Lesson 9)
- **Two Offices: Pastors & Deacons** (Lesson 11)
- **Separation of Church and State** (Lesson 12)

Jesus’ Commission to His Followers (Mt. 28:19-20)

- The command is for the disciples to make more disciples.
- Those who became followers were to be baptized.
- Those who became followers were to be taught to observe everything Jesus commanded.

Why do we practice baptism? Jesus commanded it.

What is Baptism? What Does It Mean?

The Word “Baptize” Means “Immerse.”

When our English Bibles use the word “baptize,” it’s a transliteration of the Greek word βαπτίζω (in English letters that’s “baptizo”).

According to one Greek lexicon (dictionary) it means “to put or go under water¹” or “to immerse.”

¹ William Arndt et al., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 164.

The Biblical Evidence Confirms Baptism as Immersion in Water

- John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan River (Mark 1:5).
- Jesus “came up out of the water” (Mark 1:9-10).
- John chose a place with much water there (John 3:23).
- Philip and the eunuch connected baptism with a body of water (Acts 8:36).
- They went down into the water (Acts 8:38-39).
- They also came up out of the water (Acts 8:38-39).

Immersion Pictures the Meaning of Baptism

- It pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Colossians 2:12).
- It helps us publicly identify with Jesus (Romans 1:3).
- It pictures His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 1:4).
- It’s a commitment to walk in newness of life (Romans 1:4).
- It pictures union with Christ (Romans 1:5).
- It is a believer’s act of obedience to God (1 Peter 3:21).

How Should a Person Be Baptized?

- Meaning determines mode.
- We summarize the *mode* of baptism by saying, “Single immersion in water.”

Who Should Be Baptized?

Baptists believe that believers in Jesus are the only proper subjects for baptism.

Believer Baptism Aligns with the Meaning of Baptism

- The subject must voluntarily choose baptism in order to communicate the right meaning (1 Peter 3:21).
- The subject must be a believer in order to communicate the right meaning (Romans 6:1-5).
- Therefore, the subject cannot be an infant.

The Bible Teaches Believer Baptism

- Baptism comes after a person becomes a follower of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20).
- At Pentecost, those who gladly received (believed) the Word were subsequently baptized (Acts 2:41).
- The Samaritans believed Philip's preaching and then were baptized (Acts 8:12).
- The believers in Cornelius' household were baptized after they had received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47).
- The Philippians Jailer – and those of his household who were saved – were then baptized (Acts 16:30-33).

The Bible does not Teach Infant Baptism

So, the proper subject for baptism is a believer.

When Should a Person Be Baptized?

- The meaning of baptism makes it clear that a person should be baptized after they trust in Jesus as Savior.
- Baptism should occur after the individual understands the meaning of baptism.

Where Should a Person Be Baptized?

Notice the *invisible* things that baptism communicates *visibly*:

- A person's faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus for salvation from their sins.
- A person's identification with Jesus – their desire to be known as a follower of Jesus.
- A person's union with Jesus through Spirit baptism.
- A person's membership in the universal church.
- A person's commitment to walk in obedience to Christ.

Therefore:

- Baptism should normally take place in the context of the local church.

- Just like (invisible) Spirit baptism makes a person a member of the (invisible) universal church, (visible) water baptism should be connected to a person's membership in the (visible) local church.

Review of Believer Baptism

- Who? The subject: a believer in Jesus.
- What? The meaning:
 - It's a picture of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - It's a public profession of faith in Christ.
 - It's the primary step of obedience to Christ, signifying an ongoing commitment to "walk in new life."
- How? The mode: single immersion in water.
- When? The timing: after salvation and an understanding of baptism.
- Where? The authority: the local church. Like Spirit baptism unites a person to the body of Christ, water baptism unites a person to a local church.

These elements reflect the teaching of the New Testament. There are many forms of "baptism" practiced among various denominations that, though their intentions are good, do not align with Scripture.

Baptism is the act by which an individual declares their faith in Jesus Christ, identifies with Jesus' death and resurrection, and commits to walking in obedience to him. By baptizing an individual, the local church affirms his or her profession of faith, welcomes the individual into the body as a member, and commits to hold the individual accountable to live for Jesus.

Conclusion

Our belief in believer baptism by single immersion in water aligns with Jesus' commands and teaching about baptism, with the instructions of His apostles about its meaning and practice, and with the examples seen in the New Testament.