

Baptism

Romans 6:4-5 · 2 Corinthians 5:17 · Matthew 28:19 · Galatians 3:26-27

Digging Deeper

- Is baptism commanded in the Bible?
 - Christ was baptized and so set the example. Matthew 3:16
 - Christ commanded that His followers be baptized. Matthew 28:19
 - Baptism was very important in the activity of the early church. Acts 2:38-41; 8:12-13; 8:36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5
- Is baptism required for salvation?
 - No. Salvation is by the grace of God alone through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We attain this grace by means of faith, not by works. Eph 2:8-10; Romans 10:9-10
 - Baptismal Regeneration is the belief that baptism is required for salvation. The Bible does not teach this. Jesus said to the thief on the cross next to Him that he would be with Him in paradise, but there was no baptism. Luke 23:39-43
 - Baptism is an ordinance that symbolizes the salvation that has already been accomplished in our lives by spiritual baptism.
 - Romans 6:3-7, speaking of Spiritual baptism, illustrates the meaning of water baptism. Our baptism is a demonstration to observers (including ourselves) that we have become identified, associated, joined to Jesus. It is a public testimony that the believer has been united to Christ by faith in His death and resurrection. It is where the believer confesses Christ before others
- What is the difference between being baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit?
 - The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at the point of salvation. The Spirit indwells the believer, regenerating the believer, leading the believer to truth about Christ, and empowering the believer to do good works. 1 Corinthians 12:13
 - Three main results happen by the baptism of the Holy Spirit:
 - The believer is placed into the family of God – a union with all believers in Jesus Christ
 - The believer is placed into union with Jesus Christ (John 14:20b).
 - The believer is identified in what Christ did in His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - Water baptism occurs after salvation. It is a symbolic reflection of what happened when baptized by the Spirit. Spirit baptism is inward and invisible, where water baptism is an outward expression of that faith.
- Does infant baptism count?
 - The Bible does not give any explicit examples of infants being baptized.
 - The Bible does not tell us explicitly to baptize infants.
 - The pattern in the Bible is that believers are baptized after they make a conscious decision to trust Christ for their salvation. Young children may be baptized, but infants clearly cannot. Acts 2:38
- What is the deal with sprinkling? Does one have to be fully immersed?
 - The New Testament was written primarily in Greek. While the Greek has words for sprinkle and pour, the biblical authors instead used the word baptize, which means to immerse.
 - Jesus was baptized by John “in the Jordan,” and He came up “out of the water” (Mark 1:9, 10). Ethiopian eunuch went down into the water with Peter (Acts 8:38).
 - The early church practiced immersion as well. If you go to Jerusalem today, you can see the remains of the pools called mikveh used by the early church to immerse believers.
 - Immersion best illustrates the truth of death and resurrection of Romans 6.
 - However, if someone is not able to be immersed, it's fine to make your best effort towards baptism.

Communion - The Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:26-29 · Luke 22:14-23 · 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Digging Deeper

- Bread - Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24
 - By Jewish Law, Passover bread must meet three requirements. It must be unleavened, striped and pierced so that when held up against a candle or lamp, the light can be seen through the holes. The holes are poked in rows so when it is baked it comes out striped. "He was pierced for our transgressions...and by His stripes we are healed" – Isaiah 53:5
 - Unleavened – Leaven is the symbol of sin. Jesus was the only Jew who ever kept the Mosaic Law perfectly. His body was sinless.
 - Striped – His body was striped by the Roman whip at the time of scourging.
 - Pierced – His body was pierced by the nails at His crucifixion and the spear thrust into His side.
- Cup - Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26
 - After the Passover main course, the afikomen is brought back out, unwrapped, broken, distributed, then the third of four cups is poured for everyone. This is called The Cup of Redemption.
 - In Judaism, this cup symbolizes the blood of the lamb that saved the Jewish firstborns from the last plague in Egypt. Jesus identified His blood with this cup. "In like manner, after supper..." This cup now becomes the symbol of the blood of the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.
 - This new covenant is throughout the NT but also in the OT. Jeremiah 31:31-34. Like all other covenants, this new one is inaugurated with the shedding of blood.
 - This was also the last time Jesus would drink Passover wine until His return. He will drink it again with them in His Father's kingdom. Jesus will celebrate the first Passover in the millennial kingdom with these 11 remaining disciples.
 - One of the main ways the church proclaims the Lord's death until He comes is by this communion ceremony – a highly abridged version of the Jewish Passover
- Remembrance and Gratitude – Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24
- Guidelines for Communion - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34
 - How often? As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup." The Passover was celebrated once a year. So that establishes a minimum. Biblically, anything with that as a minimum is valid.
 - The early church had turned the Passover celebration into a regular "Love Feast" where they ate together before the ceremony of the Lord's Supper. They were abusing this time by getting drunk or eating food according to class distinctions instead of being unified.
 - The word "this" for "This is my body" points to the bread, not His actual body. "This cup" is more obvious to not be His actual blood. This is a symbolic act that has very deep implications. Symbolism doesn't imply a lack of importance. It's not transubstantiation where it becomes His actual flesh and blood.
 - Examine yourselves – we must prepare our heart as we come to the table for communion. If we come to the table in an "unworthy manner" or in a sinful way we are sinning against the body and blood of Christ. Often people confuse Matthew 5:24 with a communion passage. However, if we are holding fast to any selfish sin or conflicted compromise, we are coming to the table in an unworthy manner. But, the good news is that our worthiness and righteousness is found in Christ. 1 John 1:9 assures us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - This command is more about being a Christian who is holding on to sin or not turning to the forgiveness and grace of Jesus Christ than it is about non-Christians. Non-Christians should not participate in communion but there is no greater judgment they can bring upon themselves if they do.