

=BIBLE DOCTRINES=

Lesson 4

Baptism

POINT OF CONTACT: Why not go through baptism with the pupils—by that I mean pick out someone in the class and baptize them (play like), showing them exactly how it is done. It might be wise to get a baptismal garment and take it to class, or arrange with the custodian to let you take your class to the baptismal dressing rooms sometime. Obviously, we cannot all do this, but think of some way to show how baptism is done. There are many possibilities here.

INTRODUCTION: One of the most disputed doctrines in the Bible is baptism. Some believe it is not for this dispensation. Some believe it is by immersion; others practice sprinkling; still others pour. Some baptize one time backwards; some baptize three times backwards; some believe that a person should be baptized face down; others baptize three times face down. Some baptize only converts; others baptize children; still others baptize babies. Some baptize just in Jesus' name; others baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What does the Bible say constitutes true baptism?

I. A PROPER SUBJECT.

1. A saved person is to be baptized. Notice the divine order in Acts 2:41-47. It is first salvation, then baptism, then church membership, then the Lord's Supper. In Acts 8:36 and 37, we have a necessary prerequisite for baptism—a person must be saved.
2. Hence, those who are saved after baptism are not baptized at all. A person who is sprinkled as a baby, of course, is not baptized. A person who joined the church and was baptized but never born again, of course, was never baptized. Real baptism can be administered only to one who has been born again prior to the ordinance.
3. This means that a person who was baptized as a baby and was converted since that time must be baptized scripturally in order to fulfill the command of God. Not one single baby in all the Bible was baptized. There is no record of any such ordinance. If the Bible does not teach it, Christians should not practice it.
4. Converts were baptized immediately in the Bible. Baptism is not saying you are a good Christian; it is saying you are a Christian. In Acts 8:38, the eunuch was baptized the same day he was saved. In Acts 16:15, Lydia was baptized the same day she was saved. In Acts 2:41, the converts at Pentecost were baptized the same day they were saved. In Acts 16:33, the Philippian jailer was baptized the same day he was saved. There is nothing in the Bible that tells about a waiting period or a testing period. As soon as we believe a person is saved, we are to encourage him to follow Christ in baptism.

II. A PROPER MODE. By this we mean that a person must be immersed in water. Even those who do not now practice baptism by immersion have done so in history. Centuries ago, Catholics had large baptisteries. The Catholic Encyclopedia admits the church changed it. It has been proven that Catholic churches had baptisteries even as late as the 13th Century.

The Episcopal Prayer Book of 1549 advocates immersion. Wesley was immersed. Calvin admitted immersion was right. Now let us notice the reasons why immersion is the Bible form:

1. New Testament baptism requires “much water.” (John 3:23)
2. New Testament baptism requires a going down “into the water.” (Acts 8:38)
3. New Testament baptism requires a burial in water. (Romans 6:4)
4. New Testament baptism requires being “planted” as a seed. (Romans 6:5)
5. New Testament baptism requires a “resurrection” from water. (Romans 6:5)
6. New Testament baptism requires a coming up “out of the water.” (Matthew 3:16, 17)

III. A PROPER MOTIVE. The only reasons that a person should be baptized are as follows:

1. Baptism is a picture of what has happened in the heart. It is an X-ray or a fluoroscope. A person who is saved says to the world, “Look. You cannot see what happened to my heart, so let me show you an X-ray of my heart.” When the convert goes down in the water, he is picturing to the world that he has repented of his sins and turned from the old life. When a person comes out of the water, he is picturing the fact that he is a new creature and has risen to walk in newness of life.

2. Baptism pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When a person is baptized he is saying, "Look! Look what I am trusting for my salvation." As he goes down in the water, he says, "I am trusting the finished work of Calvary when Jesus died and was buried for me." When he comes out of the water, he is saying, "Then I am trusting for my justification the resurrected Christ as is pictured as I come out of the water."
3. Baptism pictures our being identified with Christ in His death. It is our identification tag that we have been made partakers of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.
4. Baptism is the uniform a Christian wears. It is the way the Christian publicly expresses the fact that he has been born again. It is the wedding band, the letter sweater, the insignia—it is the thing that tells the world publicly that we are God's children.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS:

1. Before a person is baptized, he must be (a church member) (a good person) (old enough to know right from wrong) (a Christian) (12 years of age).
2. A person must be baptized by (immersion) (pouring) (sprinkling) (just a spiritual baptism--no water is necessary).
3. A person is baptized (to be saved) (to tell the world that he is saved) (as a part of working his way to Heaven).
4. A person should be baptized (six months after he is saved) (as soon as the people have had time to test his salvation) (immediately upon salvation) (when he is 21).

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. What are some examples of people in the Bible who were baptized as soon as they were saved?
2. Give at least one of the four meanings of baptism.
3. Give the proper order concerning church membership, salvation, Lord's Supper, baptism.

FILL IN THE BLANKS FOR THESE SCRIPTURES:

1. Acts 8:38b, "...and they went down both into the _____."
2. John 3:23, "And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much _____ there: and they came, and were baptized."
3. Romans 6:4a, "Therefore we are _____ with him by baptism into death."
4. Colossians 2:12a, "_____ with him in baptism."
5. Matthew 3:16, 17, "And Jesus, when he was _____, went up straightway out of the _____: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a _____, and lighting upon him: And lo a _____ from heaven, saying, This is my beloved _____, in whom I am well _____."
6. Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, _____ them in the name of the _____, and of the _____, and of the _____."

MEMORY VERSE: Acts 2:41a, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized."