

MOUNTAIN VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

Preparation for Baptism: Teaching Materials

INTRODUCTION

For followers of Jesus, baptism is an opportunity to express our faith and identification with Christ. Baptism is a symbol that we have been united with Christ in his death (going under the water) and that we have been raised to new life with Christ (coming up out of the water). The washing of water symbolizes that we have been cleansed from our sins by the blood of Jesus.

Baptism is a lovely picture of the core of our Christian faith – *“that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,”* (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

WHY IS BAPTISM IMPORTANT?

Baptism is important because it is one of the two ordinances of the church that Jesus commanded his followers to partake. (The other being Lord’s Supper/Communion). (Matt. 28:19-20a; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:29-33; 18:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:26)

WHY DO WE BAPTIZE:

1. We baptize because Jesus commanded us to baptize (Matthew 28:19-20a).

After He had risen from the dead and before He went back to Heaven, Jesus told His disciples, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”* (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Bible clearly calls the Church to preach the Gospel, make disciples, baptize them, and then go on teaching them all the things Jesus taught.

2. We baptize because it was the practice of the early Church (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 35-38; 9:17-18; 10:47-48; 16:13-15, 30-34; 18:8).

The consistent practice of the early Church was that as people heard the gospel and responded in faith: confessing their belief publicly by being baptized. This pattern was repeated throughout the book of Acts: On the day of Pentecost, when people asked, “What shall we do?” Peter replied, *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit... So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”* (Acts 2:38, 41)

The same thing happened when Philip preached to the crowd in Samaria (8:12) and to the Ethiopian in the desert (8:35-38). The same is true of Paul (9:17-18), Cornelius (10:47-48), Lydia (16:13-15), and the Philippian jailer (16:30-34), and when Paul preached in Corinth, many believed and were baptized (18:8).

The pattern is clear – people heard the gospel preached, they believed in their heart, and then proclaimed that belief publicly and outwardly by being baptized. Therefore, our desire should be to follow the Holy Scriptures and obey Jesus' command for us to believe and be baptized.

WHAT BAPTISM IS:

1. Baptism is a public confession of a personal faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38, 41; 18:8).

Baptism always follows a personal confession of faith. Baptism is an **outward** and visible sign of an **inward** faith in Jesus Christ for salvation that God has already worked in a believer's heart.

2. Baptism is an expression of our identification with Christ (Romans 6:3-4).

Through baptism, the believer presents a picture of joining Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection when he goes down into the water and then rises back out of it. Baptism illustrates that we consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God having been raised to a new life in Christ.

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:3-4)

3. Baptism an important step of obedience to Christ (Matthew 28:19-20a).

Being baptized is act of obedience and an outward expression of our desire to be obedient to Christ. The new life we profess to have is a life of obedience under the Lordship of Christ. In the ordinance of baptism, we communicate that Jesus purchased our salvation through His sacrifice on the cross, that He has risen, and that sin shall no longer reign in us: but Jesus shall reign instead.

4. Baptism looks forward to the time when we will be with Christ (Eph. 2:4-7; Col. 3:1-4)

In baptism, the symbol of being resurrected with Christ – rising out of the water – points to our future resurrection to be with Christ.

God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:4-7)

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Col. 3:1-4)

WHAT BAPTISM IS NOT:

1. Baptism is not the means of becoming a Christian (Eph. 2:8-9).

The only way to become a Christian is by **grace** through **faith** in the work of Christ alone.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

2. Baptism is not necessary for salvation.

Salvation and justification for our sins take place at the point of **saving faith in Jesus alone**, not with the act baptism.

3. Baptism is not the washing away of sins (1 John 1:7b).

Sins cannot be washed away by water. Only Jesus' blood purifies us from sin.

The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin (1 Jn. 1:7b).

WHO CAN PERFORM BAPTISM?

While Scripture does not specify any restrictions on who can perform a baptism, since it is an ordinance of the church, per MVBC by-laws, only ordained men will perform baptisms.

WHAT DOES BAPTISM ACCOMPLISH?

When someone is baptized, they receive the blessing of obedience and the joy that comes through the public profession of faith.

It should encourage not only our own faith, but the faith of all believers who witness the baptism. As a result, your step of obedience will encourage others to follow the example of Christ in Scriptures.

QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM: (These issues will not be covered in class but are provided for reference so you will be prepared if these questions are asked.)

1. Why doesn't MVBC baptize infants?

The baptism Jesus commanded and the New Testament Church practiced was the baptism of believers who had professed faith in Christ. Since babies are too young to profess belief, we do not baptize them. We do, however practice "baby dedication" – an opportunity for parents to declare their intention to raise their children to know and love God, and the church to declare its intention to participate in helping the child grow in faith.

2. Can I be baptized more than once/should I be baptized again as part of my becoming a member of Mountain View Baptist Church?

Unlike the Lord's Supper, baptism by immersion is a one-time event. Assuming that you had professed faith in Jesus prior to your baptism, you do not need to be baptized again.

If you have already been baptized by immersion, you do not need to be baptized again in order to join Mountain View Baptist Church, or participate fully in any of its ministries.

3. Why does MVBC practice immersion baptism rather than "sprinkling" or "pouring"?

MVBC practices immersion baptism for several reasons:

- a. The symbolism of union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection seems best symbolized by baptism by immersion where a person is "buried" under the water and "raised" to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12).
- b. The Greek word "baptizo" literally means, "to plunge, dip, immerse" something in water and several New Testament passages seem to require full immersion (Mark 1:5, 10).
- c. Immersion seems to be the pattern of baptism practiced by the early church (Acts 8:35-38; 16:13-15).