

# We Are Baptists

## Baptism

**Mark 1:4-11** *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

### Introduction

This series explains our distinct differences as Baptists from other Christian denominations. It is designed to strengthen our faith in what we believe and who we are. One of those distinctions is how we practice and promote baptism.

We should not be embarrassed or ashamed to be called Baptist. We are not saying other Christian groups are not saved, don't love the Lord, etc. We are saying that being a Baptist has distinct differences than other Christian denominations. This principle of identification is seen throughout our society. For instance, although OU and OSU play football, we see that fans are clearly loyal to one or the other in the state of Oklahoma! They readily promote their team as better without apology. I also want to remind you that we see this playing out in politics. If you are a Republican, you feel as though the values you hold should be held by everyone. You don't understand how someone could be a Democrat. The same goes for Democrats in their view of Republicans. We are all Americans, but we identify and defend different values and beliefs. The same can be noticed in religion. It should not be strange for a Baptist to be solid in their faith and to believe that our doctrines are right, and even to wonder why everyone is not a Baptist. I am a Baptist by conviction and yet I also respect, although I don't agree with, other believers who are a part of a different denomination. It is a reality of identification.

One such distinction is found in the ordinance of Baptism. Obviously, we have a strong stand on baptism since our very name identifies with this doctrine.

Our stance on Baptism has been hotly contested for generations. It is a doctrine that has cost many Baptists before us their lives. Their strong faith in what baptism was, who should be baptized, and why, has made them a target of hate and cost them greatly. For us to abandon such a doctrine would be to abandon those who gave their lives to keep it pure! It is a significant doctrine that is seen by the very fact that we as a congregation bear its name! It is our identifying mark.

A form of baptism began thousands of years ago when Jews would require Gentile proselytes to be baptized to become a part of the Jewish nation and faith. They were in essence denouncing their false gods and beliefs and accepting Jehovah as their God and His doctrines. Even today, for a convert to be baptized can cost them everything they hold dear in this life. It is not uncommon for young people to be cast out of their homes and abandoned if they put their faith in Jesus Christ and then follow with baptism. In some cultures, you can put your faith in Jesus, but the problem comes when you get baptized. Why? Because they realize that baptism is their identification with that church and a denouncement of what their family believes.

## **I. What was the baptism of John the Baptist?**

**Mark 1:4-8** *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*

### **A. Historical Explanation**

John's baptism was an adaptation of the mikvah, or ritual immersion bath, that had been part of Jewish life for generations and symbolized a spiritual cleansing. It was part of the preparation for undertaking a new beginning. Jewish men took a mikvah each Sabbath in preparation for the new week. Women took a mikvah after each monthly period as a spiritual cleansing. On Yom Kippur the High Priest took 7 mikvot (plural of mikvah) during the ceremonies in preparation for entering the Holy of Holies. Jesus came to John for a mikvah at the beginning of His ministry.

*The reason John had people take a mikvah was to show that they had changed their minds (repented) about their need for a Savior and were taking a new direction regarding their salvation. No longer would they focus on keeping the Law but would look*

*instead to the coming redeemer whose arrival John was announcing. Today, baptism is no longer an act of spiritual cleansing in preparation for a new direction, but a public declaration that the spiritual cleansing has already happened and the new direction has been taken. (Jack Kelley)*

*John was bridging the dispensation of the law and grace. In both salvation was the same, and that was for a person to put their faith in God. In the O.T. it was to trust in the Messiah and not the law to save them. In the N.T. it was to trust in the Messiah – Jesus Christ – who had paid the price for our sins on the cross and to by faith put our trust in Him. (Pastor Waterloo)*

From this we see that baptism was an outward expression of an inward faith. Secondly, we see through Jewish history and Bible example in Acts 19, that baptism identified you with a particular group. In Jewish practice all proselytes were baptized into Judaism. They were to renounce their false gods and accept Jehovah. Then in the N.T. those baptized by John still had to be baptized to be a part of the church. Again, this was not because they believed in a false god, but to identify them with the new church. This practice of symbolic baptism to represent spiritual cleansing, salvation accepted through confession of sins, and then to identify with that local church has been practiced for many generations.

It held a symbolic meaning and not a saving one in every instance. Therefore we do not hold to the doctrine that baptism saves you. It never has and never will. It is but a picture of what has taken place in your heart and mind!

B. John taught baptism of **repentance**.

1. You would first need to repent of your sins
2. You would then be baptized as an outward token of your sincere repentance
3. The baptism did not save you. We are all saved by faith!

*John came, that is, that he might rouse the people to repentance, and prepare them, by the outward cleansing of their bodies, to receive the cleansing of their souls through Christ's baptism, which was to follow his. So that the baptism of John was the profession of their penitence. Hence they who were baptized with his baptism confessed their sins, and thus made the first step towards the forgiving mercy which was to be found in Christ; and the seal of his forgiveness they were to look for in his baptism, which is a baptism for the remission of sins to all true penitents and faithful*

*believers. Christ's baptism was, therefore, the perfection and consummation of the baptism of John. (Pulpit commentary)*

## II. Why was Jesus baptized?

***To be baptized of him:** It may reasonably be inquired what should be Christ's view in desiring to be baptized; it could not be to take away original or actual sin, since he had neither; nor has baptism any such efficacy to do this, in those who have either or both: but, it was to show his approbation of John's baptism, and to bear a testimony of it, that it was from heaven; and also that he himself might receive a testimony both from heaven, and from John, that he was the Son of God and true Messiah, before he entered upon his public ministry, into which he was in some measure initiated and installed hereby; and moreover, to set an example to his followers, and thereby engage their attention and subjection to this ordinance; and, in a word, as he himself says, to fulfil all righteousness. (John Gill)*

- A. Jesus was not baptized to remove original or actual sin, since He is **sinless**. Nor does baptism have the power to remove sin.
- B. Why was Jesus then baptized? (Gill gives three good reasons)
  1. To show that John's baptism and ministry was from **God!**
  2. To receive a **testimony** from heaven – the voice and dove – that He was truly the Son of God and Messiah.
  3. To set an example for His followers to follow the **ordinance** as He did to fulfill all righteousness.
    - It seems by the phrase to fulfill all righteousness He is showing that doing the ordinances is important and that we all should submit to God's principles and practices to fulfill them all.
    - Baptism is part of obedience and identification with Christ and illustrates a new life with Him. It is thus, not to be ignored, but fulfilled.

### III. What is the significance of baptism today?

**John 4:1-2** *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)*

- A. It represents **obedience** – fulfilling all righteousness.
1. We are commanded to be baptized! – Matthew 28
  2. It is what is called the first step of obedience. Whether you understand all the details of baptism or not, it is a significant step in our walk with the Lord.
- B. It represents a **new beginning**. Like the mikvah which was a spiritual cleansing that represented a new beginning, we see that Paul called baptism after salvation to be a new beginning.

**Romans 6:3-4** *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

- It is your outward testimony that you have put your trust in Jesus Christ.
- C. It **identifies** you with your local church.
1. John the Baptist required everyone to be baptized to be a part of his sect. It was not a suggestion; it was a requirement. The Jews had no problem with it. They were used to a weekly cleansing through the mikvah, so this was only slightly different.
  2. When the disciples of John joined the New Testament church, they had already been baptized by John, but now would need to be baptized to be a part of the New Testament church. This is shown in Acts:

**Acts 19:1-5** *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily*

*baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

- Notice now they were baptized in Jesus name to identify with Him.
3. As Baptists we have practiced **rebaptism** for many generations.
- In following the example of John the Baptist and the New Testament church, baptism identifies you with the church you are a part of. Since only Baptists in this generation hold to our Baptist doctrines completely, we rebaptize people coming from a non-Baptist church. This does not mean they were not saved. It is just a form of identifying with our doctrines. Just as John made the Jews get baptized into his sect, we follow the same example. It is a way of keeping the doctrines intact and the purity of our faith and practices where they need to be.
    - a. Those sprinkled need to be baptized.
    - b. Those joining from a different denomination need to be baptized into our church.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

- A. Although Baptism does not save you, it does reveal your testimony of salvation!
- B. Although Baptism does not save you, it does reveal your desire to live the Christian life!
- C. Although Baptism does not save you, it identifies you with a local church and doctrine.
- D. If you have not been baptized, and you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, then today is the day to pursue that ordinance.

# We are Baptist

## Lord's Supper

**1 Corinthians 11:17-34** *Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*

## Introduction

In the beginning of the chapter in verse 2, Paul mentions the fact of keeping the ordinances. There are different ordinances, or traditions, that have been delivered to the church. The main two spoken of as given to the church to symbolize and remember Christ's death, burial, and resurrection are the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the above few verses Paul addresses the importance of order in the church and reminds them of the tradition and subsequent command of the role of women in the church leadership. We too often look at ordinances or traditions as man-made and thus not necessary or good. The reality is that some traditions are just teachings that are habitual because Jesus commanded them to be so. So many churches today are abandoning God's truth and trying to say it was just a tradition of man and not a bible truth! That is not correct! Just because our society has gone mad and decides that it does not want to obey God's Word and traditions does not mean the church is right is following suit.

The prohibition of women leading in the church is not an archaic teaching that needs updating, it is a command of God. Not just a tradition, but a tradition God instituted! The command to baptize people by immersion is not something new. It was happening since the time of Christ. Now Paul addresses another ordinance of the church in that he talks about the Lord's Supper and how to perform it properly. It was a new ordinance for the church and already people were doing it wrong and so Paul set them straight!

It is interesting how the church has moved away from the Bible teaching on order and then ordinances in the church. The very word ordinances has a reference to order. It is how God wants the church to operate. We have no right to change what God has set in place. We are not smarter than God. We are not better than God!

There is a spirit in the church today that is questioning and changing everything that is a tradition or old. If it has been done for years the philosophy is to change it! Now I am telling you this spirit is not of Christ. The Bible says to try or prove the spirits! Just because something has been done for a long time doesn't make it wrong or outdated! If it is not unbiblical, don't change it! Churches are taking hymns out of the services. Churches are letting anyone baptize. Churches are having women serve as pastors. Churches are inviting anyone to take the Lord's Supper! These changes are not biblical!



## I. The Passover

**Leviticus 23:5-6** *In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.*

- A. The Passover is also known as the first day of **unleavened** Bread
- B. This was an annual **feast** to celebrate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and from the death angel.

*Called the "festival [of] the matzos" (Hebrew: חג המצות hag hamatzot) in the Hebrew Bible, the commandment to keep Passover is recorded in the Book of Leviticus:*

*In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month between the two evenings is the LORD's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD; seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. And ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days; in the seventh day is a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. (Leviticus 23:5)*

*The biblical regulations for the observance of the festival require that all leavening be disposed of before the beginning of the 15th of Nisan. An unblemished lamb or goat, known as the Korban Pesach or "Paschal Lamb", is to be set apart on Nisan 10, and slaughtered at dusk as Nisan 14 ends in preparation for the 15th of Nisan when it will be eaten after being roasted. The literal meaning of the Hebrew is "between the two evenings". It is then to be eaten "that night", Nisan 15, roasted, without the removal of its internal organs with unleavened bread, known as matzo, and bitter herbs known as maror. Nothing of the sacrifice on which the sun rises by the morning of the 15th of Nisan may be eaten, but must be burned. The sacrifices may only be performed in a specific place prescribed by God (for Judaism, Jerusalem, and for Samaritans, Mount Gerizim).*

*The biblical regulations pertaining to the original Passover, at the time of the Exodus only, also include how the meal was to be eaten: "with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover" Exodus 12:11.*

- C. The biblical commandments concerning the Passover (and the Feast of Unleavened Bread) stress **the importance of remembering**
- D. The obvious symbolism of Jesus being the Passover Lamb and being crucified during the Passover time is by no mistake! It is a great symbol that He is our Passover Lamb!

## **II. The New Institution of Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper**

- A. The Lord's Supper is not to commemorate the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, but rather the **deliverance** of the world from sin to salvation.
- B. It can be taken wrong. Paul strongly rebukes the church for not taking it **properly**.
  1. They came eating and drinking a meal irreverently and disrespecting the poor. This was not the spirit they were to partake the Lord's Supper

**1 Corinthians 11:27-30** *Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

2. There was division among them

**1 Corinthians 11:18** *For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.*

3. Some were coming unworthy. They were coming in sin and had not confessed their sins.

**I Corinthians 11: 29-30** *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

C. Why should it be taken?

1. To **Remember!**

- As a time to remember the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- We reject the doctrine of transubstantiation. This doctrine falsely interprets Jesus words in the book of John 6:53-54 and says that when you take communion the bread miraculously becomes the flesh of Jesus and the wine becomes His blood. That passage was written in symbolism and was not intended to be literal. The same goes for when Jesus says you should hate your mother and father. He was talking symbolically and comparatively, not literally. We can determine this by looking at Scripture as a whole and understanding His teachings on obeying your parents and loving them. Jesus did use symbolism and the Lord's supper is wrapped in symbolism.
- Just as the Passover was taken each year to remember, so the Lord's Supper is taken each year to remember as well.

2. To **Examine** oneself

**Corinthians 11:28** *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

- Of their salvation
- Of their sins confessed before the Lord

D. Who should partake of the Lords supper?

1. **Saved** People
  2. **Baptized** People
  3. Three beliefs on who should take communion
    - a. **Open** – anyone who claims to be a Christian
    - b. **Close** – all saved and baptized believers of life-faith
    - c. **Closed** – saved and baptized believers in your church
- We hold to the closed position because of our belief in the local church. We do not believe in a universal church until we are all in heaven. Until then, the Scriptures teach a local body of believers. Each local body has a pastor, deacons, and teachers. Each local body gives to the local church to sustain the church and promote missions. Each body of believers is commissioned to baptize new believers into their church. Since there are only two ordinances given to the church – baptism and the communion; then if baptism is for the local church, so must communion be for the local church.
  - In 1 Corinthians the local church was taking the Lord's supper. They were to examine themselves, not the universal church because that would be impossible. It would also be impossible for everyone to partake at the same time. The only consistent way to interpret the Scriptures is that the local body takes it together.

E. How often should we **partake**?

**1 Corinthians 11:26** *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

1. This is left up to each church to decide
2. Some take it every week – although not wrong, it loses its importance by many as it becomes a ritual with little meaning
3. We take it several times annually as a time to remember!

F. Who has the **authority** to dispense the Lord's supper?

1. Local Churches
2. If the local church has the authority baptize, then it also retains the authority of this ordinance as well.
3. One cannot give communion to others of their own authority. It is for the church, not the individual.

### **III. Conclusion**

A. The Lord's Supper is one of two ordinances given to the local church by Jesus Christ.

B. Because the local church is autonomous, the Lord's Supper should be taken in your local church, not any church.

C. The Lord's Supper is for saved, baptized members of the local church.

D. Every denomination practiced closed communion for centuries. We have not changed the doctrine or practice of the Lord's supper, yet other denominations have. If God's Word has not changed, then why have all the other churches changed their doctrine?

E. The Lord's Supper is a time to remember what Jesus Christ did for us in regard to our salvation. It should never be forgotten.