

16 DECLARATIONS OF FAITH OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

VI: Our church practices 2 ordinances

Our churches have 2 ordinances that were ordained by Jesus Himself. Baptism in water and Holy Communion. Some churches use the term “sacraments” instead of ordinances. Using the word “sacraments” may lead to the idea that spiritual work occurs within a person when the sacrament is received or experienced.

Our church chooses to call water baptism and Holy Communion ordinances because they are religious practices **ordained and established by Jesus** that have deep symbolism and are emblematic of our faith

Baptism is a command of the Lord

The Holy Scriptures command the ordinance of baptism by immersion. All who repent and believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord are to be baptized. Thus, they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

The ordinance of baptism by full immersion in water [not sprinkling] is commanded in scripture, **Mark 16:16** He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. All who repent and believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord **must** be baptized. This act of baptism symbolically declares to everyone that the old sinful nature and lifestyle of the baptized believer died with Christ, and salvation and a new spiritual being have been raised with Christ through his resurrection to live a new life.

Mathew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Also commanded by the church leaders, there was an urgency for new believers to be baptized. **Acts 10:48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Concluding from the Book of Acts, baptism was part of the initial declaration of faith in Jesus
The Book of Acts does not have unbaptized believers

Baptism in water

- The ordinance of baptism by full immersion in water [not sprinkling] is commanded in scripture.
- Even though scripture is clear about water baptism, many believers are still confused about it.
- There is only one baptism, **Ephesians 4:5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
 - Different examples of baptisms: sprinkled, infant, hose, and even internet baptism
 - These kinds of baptisms are not Biblical
- There is only one form of Biblical baptism
- Baptism is by full emersión. **Baptizo**: to immerse, plunge under, or submerge.
 - **Acts 8:38** So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. **39** Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.
 - The Eunuch went INTO the water and came UP OUT OF the water
 - For someone to be baptized, they must go fully underwater

- Why does God require that we go fully underwater? It is for the purpose of **Symbolism**

Baptism has profound symbolism

- **Romans 6:4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, **6** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.
- Baptism is compared to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus
- As we go underwater, it symbolizes death and burial.
 - Death to sin, and the old way of living
- As we rise out of the water, it symbolizes a resurrection to a new life in Jesus Christ
- *Without fully submerging in water, this profound symbolism is lost*
- **Mark 1:9** It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** And immediately, **coming up from** the water, He saw the heavens *[d]parting* and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. **11** Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- Jesus showed us the way. He is our example to follow, **1 Peter 2:21** For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:
- We must note that the very first step He took was to be baptized
- This is why in the Book of Acts and throughout the history of the church, the first step after confessing faith in Jesus is baptism.

Is baptism necessary for Salvation?

- No... **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God*, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast.
- Our works, sanctification, and obedience do Matter. They are proof that our faith is genuine. **James 2:26** Faith without works is dead.
- Baptism is an act of obedience **to the example and command** of Jesus.
- Baptism is an outward sign of an inner commitment
- **James 4:17** Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. So if we know that we should be baptized and refuse to do so, we are being disobedient, and that is a sin. (A command of Jesus that becomes a sin to us)
- If we believe and put our full trust in the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Savior, then we will obey His commandments; we should obey His commandments, therefore, there should be no unbaptized believers.
- **If we refuse to be baptized, then in truth we have not believed.**
- What about the thief on the Cross, was he saved? Yes, he placed his trust and faith in Jesus; therefore, Jesus said to him, "*Today you will be with me in paradise.*"
 - If the thief on the cross had the opportunity, I believe he would have been one of His disciples, he would have been baptized, he would have joined the disciples in their preaching, he would have joined the church, and followed Jesus

- If you have the opportunity to be baptized, be obedient to the mandate of the Lord

Teaching goes along with baptism

- **Matthew 28:20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.
- You need to know the basics about the Bible, about Jesus, and about Salvation.
- Before we unite with Christ in Baptism, we should know
 - Creator **Colossians 1:16**
 - Our Savior **John 3:16**
 - Judge **John 5:22**
 - Our Lord **Luke 2:11**
 - Lawgiver **Isaiah 33:22**
 - Our coming King **1 Thessalonians 4:16**
- You don't have to know everything before being baptized, but it is important to know the foundations of the Gospel, what Jesus did on the Cross, and why He did it.
- **John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.
- It's important to know these things, so you understand for yourself the why behind your decision to get baptized.
- Sometimes, it might be NECESSARY to unlearn false teachings and learn true biblical teachings before being baptized (spin-offs of Christianity)

Repentance and baptism

- To believe in Jesus means that you have repented of your sins
- Baptism is a public declaration of our faith in Jesus and repentance from our sins
- As we have mentioned, believing in Jesus means forsaking our old way of living, “dying to the old life of sin”
- **Acts 2:38** Then Peter said to them, “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Repentance involves confessing, repenting, and turning away from our sins. **Proverbs 28:13** He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy
- Repentance must happen before baptism
- **If there is no repentance, you will just be a wet sinner**

There was an urgency for water baptism

- In the Early Church, there was **no such thing as an unbaptized Christian.** Everyone who believed was baptized almost immediately.
 - All converts mentioned in the Book of Acts were baptized as soon as they were converted: **Acts 2:41**, the Samaritans, **Acts 8:12**; the Ethiopian eunuch, **Acts 8:38**; the apostle Paul, **Acts 9:18**; Cornelius and his family, **Acts 10:47**; Lydia and

her household **Acts 16:15**; the Philippian jailer and his family **Acts 16:33**; and the Ephesian disciples **Acts 19:5**.

- This urgency was demonstrated by both the leadership and the new believers
- There is no indication in Scripture that anyone was put on a probation period before being baptized in water.
 - Baptism stood at the very threshold of the Christian life.
 - For the church in the book of Acts, Baptism was part of their initial declaration of Faith in Jesus Christ
 - This was due to the fact that in Bible times, a person who converted from one religion to another was often baptized to identify conversion. Baptism was the means of making a decision public. Those who refused to be baptized were saying they did not truly believe. So, in the minds of the apostles and early disciples, the idea of an **unbaptized** believer was unheard of. When a person claimed to believe in Christ, yet was ashamed to proclaim his faith in public, it indicated that he did not have true faith.

Baptism and the church.

- Could I be baptized and not join a church? No!!! To the early church, this was not even a possibility
- The biggest reason for baptism was that it was baptism that joined you to Christ and the body of Christ (the church).
- The Bible teaches us that the church is the body of Christ
- **Colossians 1:18** And He is the head of the body, the church. God called us to be a part of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. **Colossians 3:15** You were called in one body;
- When we get baptized, we are added to the church (not by a pastor but **by Jesus**), **Acts 2:47**, and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. So get active in attendance, engaging, serving, and giving.
- **Acts 2:42** They were continually and faithfully devoting themselves to the instruction of the apostles, and fellowship, to eating meals together and to prayers.
 - You cannot be united with Christ and not be a part of His Body (church)

Rebaptism

- There is only one baptism, and we don't see anyone who was properly baptized be baptised more than once, **Ephesians 4:4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- There is only one example of rebaptism, **Acts 19:2** he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." **3** And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." **4** Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." **5** When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus
- They were rebaptized because they were not baptized properly in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They didn't know that Jesus had come

- In the same way, when someone was not baptized through the true biblical foundation, that is a good reason to be rebaptized
- Re-baptism is appropriate for those who were baptized with an unbiblical method. Ex as babies, not fully immersed in water, not in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or in some extreme cases, where they were baptized not knowing what they were really doing.

Baptism is a public declaration of our faith

Baptism is like a wedding ring; it says, " I'm all in."

I give a public declaration of my newfound faith in the Lord Jesus

I'm not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God

Acts 22:16 *And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'*

The significance of this doctrine

Water baptism and communion are not simply religious customs. Both embody the central message of the Christian faith. Water baptism is a one-time event (*we don't see anyone in the Bible being baptized the proper way twice*) in which the new believer announces publicly that they are now a child of God who has identified with Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection. Communion is a periodic [often monthly] reminder that the believer has received free salvation through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both ordinances focus regular attention on the central truth of Christianity