

THE MARKS OF THE
**TRUE
CHURCH**



**The Sacrament of Baptism
Sunday 25th September 2022**

Foundation Scripture:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV): “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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, 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.”

Introduction

The messages so far in The Marks of The True Church series have outlined the marks as the:

1. Preaching of the word;
2. Administration of sacraments; and
3. Exercising of church discipline;

Today’s text will focus on the sacrament of baptism.

Who is a Christian?

Several things are clear in the New Testament:

1. A Christian believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. They don’t merely drift to church, believing that that is all there is to it, they believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour. They have turned their back on their previous way of life. They have made a clean break and refused to disobey God.

2. A Christian's whole desire is to please God, to do His will, and to submit to His sovereign control.
3. A Christian has been spiritually united with Jesus Christ – Christ's life is now ours. This brings the matter out of the natural realm into the supernatural realm.
4. Christ lives within us and His nature becomes our own. This union is shown by baptism through immersion: baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ.
5. The Bible is the book that the Christian reads, studies, and lives by. All Christians that study the Bible in the New Testament practise two things: they are **baptised** and **partake in communion**.

Why do we place so much importance on these two things – known as sacraments?

In this text, we will examine the sacrament of baptism, by answering the question: what is it all about?

Matthew 28:18-20 is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. Its mission is three-fold:

1. Go and make disciples of all nations;
2. Go and baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and
3. Teach them to observe all things.

Baptism is one of the ordinances of the church; it is one of the things that Jesus ordained for the church to do. A practice that Jesus established for the church.

Baptism is the symbolic outward manifestation of the inward experience of salvation. It is an outward expression of the inward salvation that is in Christ Jesus. To believe is to receive Christ for forgiveness of sins and regeneration, so that those who believe become children of God, in an organic union with the triune God.

Baptism is always very closely linked with salvation.

“To be baptised without believing is an empty ritual. Believing without baptism means that your inward belief would not have any outward expression”. *Brother Dele Popoola, New Wine Church, London, United Kingdom.*

Baptism and the Great Commission

Baptism is an integral part of the Great Commission.

In Greek, this is the word, “*Baptizo*”, which means to immerse, soak, drown, drench, plunge.

Some everyday examples include:

- Dyeing a garment;
- A ship that has sunk; and
- Drawing water from a well by immersing a bucket in it.

Likewise, some Biblical examples include:

Acts 8:5:12 (NKJV) which says: “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”

In this scripture, the people believed; the next thing is that they got baptised.

Another Biblical example is the story of an Ethiopian eunuch, where the Holy Spirit enabled Philip to catch up with him to read him the scriptures.

Acts 8:35-37 (NKJV) captures a portion of this conversation:

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Afterwards, the eunuch got baptised.

In **Acts 10:44-48**, Peter reluctantly preaches to a gentile called Cornelius who was a centurion soldier of the Italian regiment. He preached to his household, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, and He commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord.

Jesus, the Son of God was baptised in the River Jordan; He submitted himself to baptised (See **Matthew 3:13-15**).

Who Qualifies to be Baptised?

People that qualify to be baptised are people that are born-again, which means that they have believed into Christ. (**Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36-38**)

There are two categories of people in the world:

1. Those that have believed into Christ; and
2. Those that haven't.

You are either born again or not. On judgment day, Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats and the wheat from the chaff (**Matthew 25:31-46**). No matter how nice you are, if you don't believe in Jesus, you are not born-again. Opening of your heart to receive Jesus Christ as Lord in a definite conscious experience is what makes you born again.

"If you are not born-again and you come for baptism, all you have done is get your body wet." – Brother Dele Popoola, New Wine Church, London, United Kingdom.

Baptism in itself has no saving power – baptism doesn't cause you to be saved; it is an expression of salvation. This is why we don't baptise babies, because they cannot make decisions for themselves. Babies can be dedicated to the Lord.

Salvation is a conscious decision that you make.

"Salvation is not for babies, it is for believers." – Brother Dele Popoola, New Wine Church Woolwich.

The Washing and Regenerating of the Holy Spirit

Titus 3:5 says: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,"

Jesus Christ and His blood blots out our sins and brings salvation.

"We are not saved by the washing of the body; there is a spiritual washing of our sins that God by His mercy does, when we open our hearts to receive Jesus Christ." – Brother Dele Popoola, New Wine Church Woolwich.

What happens when someone gets baptised?

When you are baptised, you are baptised into:

1. *The Name (denoting a person) – of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:* into an organic union with the processed, not raw, Triune God (**Matthew 28:19**). The processed Triune God is the incarnate One who had a human experience, went to the cross, resurrected and ascended to heaven.

There are two aspects: the visible aspect (immersion in water) and the invisible aspect (the Holy Spirit; the reality of what we are seeing that the person is being put inside God. The visible aspect is the expression of the invisible aspect. The Holy Spirit and belief into Jesus (invisible aspect) is what gives the visible aspect (baptism by immersion) its meaning.

To baptise people into the name of the Triune God is to baptise them into spiritual and mystical union with Him, i.e. terminating their old way of life and germinating them with the new life of Christ.

2. *The Name of the Lord Jesus:* According to **Acts 8:16**, to be baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus is to be baptised into the person of the Lord and the entire Godhead.

3. Believers are baptised into the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 10:48**). To be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ is to be baptised into the sphere of Christ's influence.

4. *The ground of His name:* To be baptised into the name of Jesus is to be baptised on the ground of His name. It means to be baptised into everything that Christ is, and has accomplished. It is on this ground that the believer is baptised. (**Acts 2:38**)

5. *Into Christ to put on Christ:* When you get baptised, you put on Christ; it is like wearing Him as a garment. To put on Christ means **we live by Christ, in Christ, and with Christ**. Christ becomes the expression of our living and we 'live out' Christ. (**Galatians 3:27**)

6. *The Death of Christ:* The being of the resurrected Christ includes the element of His effective death. Through baptism, the believer enters into the actual experience of death with Christ. (**Romans 6:3, 4a**)

7. *The Body of Christ* – into the organic entity with Christ as that body. Believers have been baptised into the body of Christ (an organic entity) and made to express Christ, regardless of our nationality or social background. (**1 Corinthians 12:13**)

Putting On Christ

Romans 6:3 (NKJV) says: “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? – when we were baptised into Christ Jesus, we were baptised into His death.

Paul introduced the idea of death here.

It is impossible to separate the death of Christ from Christ Himself.

“The resurrection of Christ carries the element of the effective death of Christ.”
– *Brother Dele Popoola, New Wine Church Woolwich.*

Every candidate for baptism is a person who is in a process of dying. Through baptism that person is put to death, having been identified with Christ and His death, is immersed in water and is buried.” – *Brother Dele Popoola, New Wine Church Woolwich.*

As a result, baptism means that we enter into the actual experience of the death of Christ.

“The Christian life is a life of baptism.” – *Brother Dele Popoola, New Wine Church Woolwich.*

This is because every day, you are conforming to the image of Christ.

The table below is the comparison between what we lost through Adam (debit) but have now gained through Christ (credit):

DEBIT	CREDIT
Adam	Christ
Transgression, Offense or Disobedience	Obedience of Christ – He was obedient, even to the point of death.
Sin	Grace
Judgement	Gift of Righteousness
Condemnation	Justification
DEATH	LIFE

The sum total of your debit account is **death**; the sum total of your credit account is **life**.

Lastly...

To which of these do you belong?:

1. The unsaved; those that haven't believed in Christ. The worst decision you can make is to not accept Christ into your life as Lord and Saviour; or
2. People who have accepted Jesus and are not yet baptised; or
3. Those who have given their lives to Christ and have been baptised.