

The Growth Institute

Ecclesiology: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Official Baptist Faith and Message Statement (2000) on Baptism: “Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.”

Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12.

❖ **What is baptism?**

- Baptism is an act of obedience (Mt 28:18-20)
- Baptism is primarily a symbol like a wedding ring.
- It is a symbol of Christ's work (Rom. 6:3-4)
- It is a symbol of our future (Rom 6:5)
- It is a symbol of our surrender (Rom. 6:3-4)
 - Surrender of our life with sin
 - Surrender of our new life for God's glory + love
- Can you be a Christian and not be baptized? Yes, but it should be only under strange circumstances (thief on the cross)

❖ **How should a person be baptized?**

- *Baptizo* means “immersion”
- Immersion is in the Bible (Mt. 3:16, Acts 8:35-39).
- Jesus was not sprinkled with death (Rom. 6:3-4)
- Is sprinkling enough? Not really what was intended in the Bible, but the big issue is the who should be

❖ **Who should be baptized?**

- Only those who believe (Acts 2:41-42)
- What about infants being baptized? (Acts 16:30-33)
 - “They spoke God's Word in his household”
 - Only those who can believe should be baptized
 - Infant baptism is not an arranged marriage!

- “Infant baptism is ok if only understood as an act of dedication of the parents and the child to the Lord’s plan and purposes and if the child is later taught that they must experience believer’s baptism as an act of obedience. Because it can be misleading, I prefer to dedicate infants/parents without water to avoid this confusion.” --Pastor Jason

❖ **When should I be baptized?**

- As soon as possible after salvation.
- Delayed obedience is disobedience.

❖ **Why should I be baptized?**

- It is a time symbolizing a new life (Rom 6:3-4)
- By obeying you honor God (Mt. 28:18-20)
- Why not ask, “why should I not?” (Acts 8:36)?
 - Not being baptized is often because of fear of others or circumstances (Mk 8:38, Rom. 8:10)
 - Not being baptized disobeys what Jesus says about following Him (Mk 10:17ff; Mt 28:18-20)

Communion

Why is communion a big deal? Jesus said to do it, it is practiced very differently in differing traditions

What are some other names for it? Eucharist (giving thanks), The Lord’s Supper, ordinance or sacrament

❖ **What is communion?**

- The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. (Baptist Faith and Message 2000)
- It is symbolic and to be done “in remembrance”(Lk 22:19) it does not “become” Christ’s body & blood.

❖ **Who celebrates communion?**

- Examined believers (1 Cor. 11:27-32)
- Why only those? Because anything else mocks the work of Christ in bringing forgiveness (Mt. 26:28).

❖ **Where/when/how is communion celebrated?**

- The frequency and location varies by tradition. The important thing is that it is celebrated truthfully.
- Varieties of ways the elements are celebrated, the important thing is that they are celebrated truthfully

❖ **Why is communion celebrated?**

- It deepens our faith and grows us in grace as we obey Christ's commands and celebrate it in remembrance of his work!
- Taking communion allows us to grow in God's grace by reflecting on the gospel and renewing and strengthening our faith through the physical symbols of the work of Christ on our behalf.
- It is a time of looking back & of giving thanks for the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus, who offers forgiveness.
- It is a time of looking out at those around us and making sure we are in right relationships with other believers.
- It is a time for looking in and making sure that you are living the set apart life God has called you to.
- It is a time for looking ahead to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9) with all believers and Christ reunited in eternity.