

BAPTISM

I know for some of you tonight, you probably won't like what I am going to share. Some of you have been taught differently than what I am going to teach tonight. I don't apologize for it because it is the Word of God. I would ask that you be open and check it out for yourself.

1. What is baptism?

- Biblically, baptism is associated with forgiveness (Acts 2:38, 22:16), with union with Christ (Rom. 6:1-10), making disciples (Matt. 28:19), and repentance (Acts 2:38).
- Theologically, baptism may be defined as an act of association or identification with someone, some group, some message, or some event.
- So Christian baptism means identification with the message of the Gospel, the person of the Savior, and the group of believers. Another words, Baptism is an outward sign of commitment to an inward change of the heart or public profession of your faith.

2. What about infant baptism?

There are basically three arguments to infancy baptism.

- (1) The circumcision argument- It talks about how since infants were circumcised under the Old Covenant, they should be baptized under the New Covenant. So they are saying their rite/ceremony is in the covenant, not necessarily personal faith.
- (2) The historical argument- From the early times some church's practiced infant baptism; therefore it is permissible. The fact that the early church practiced or believed something does not in itself make it right. In fact some early church's taught baptismal regeneration which is heresy. It means to be born again by baptism.
- (3) The household argument- Another words some households were baptized where there was one believing parent. There were probably some homes that had infants in them.

The position against infant baptism points out four things.

1. The scripture order is always believe and then be baptized (Matt. 3:2-6; 28:19; Acts 2:37-38; 16:14-15, 34)
2. Baptism is a rite/ceremony into a believing community, the church/body of Christ; therefore it should only be done to believers. By contrast, circumcision initiated people (including infants) into a theocracy or power structure that included unbelievers in it.
3. The age of children is never mentioned in any passage that mentions household baptism. But it is said that all who were baptized in those households believed. This, then, would exclude infants from being included in the baptisms.
4. If you say that the whole house was baptized with one believing parent, then you would have to say that the unbelieving parent was baptized too. And clearly from Scripture you had to believe.

3. If I was baptized as an infant do I need to be baptized again?

There is only one clear example of people being baptized twice (Acts 19:1-5). These twelve men, who were baptized by John the Baptist (A baptism of repentance), were re-baptized by Paul after they believed the Christian message. Being a believer involves more than just turning from sin but also turning to Christ.

4. What about sprinkling, pouring and immersion?

To understand this you have to look at the Greek. There are specific words for sprinkling and pouring and they are never used of baptism. Immersion is the unquestionably primary meaning of baptism. Also, immersion best pictures the significance of baptism, which is death to the old life and resurrection to the new (Rom. 6:1-4).

5. Do you have to be baptized to get into heaven?

Take a look at 1Peter 20-21. So can you? The water saving Noah here means from God's wrath. The baptism, which saves us, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which we get at the point of salvation. So can you? Absolutely, positively NO!! The word baptism (water) is never used as a way to salvation. Take a look at John 14:6. It is very simply said. The word for water baptism is never used in terms of salvation, meaning eternal life. Understanding the word saved can mean different things and that is why it is important to see the context of the passage.

6. Conclusion

So if you have never been baptized before and you have trusted Christ as your personal Savior, then I would encourage you to be baptized. Because what you are doing is saying publicly that you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:19 - NIV

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:19 - Message

Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.