

# Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning

## Understanding the Church: The Ordinance of Baptism

### Concerning Baptism at CBC

1. Baptism is a New Covenant sacrament ordained by Christ as the initiatory sign and seal of fellowship with Him in His death and resurrection. It signifies our regeneration and new birth, our engrafting into Christ, the remission of our sins, and our giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to live and walk in newness of life. It is a means of grace whereby the Holy Spirit imprints a seal upon the faith of the one baptized, a seal that testifies to the realities of the gospel that baptism signifies.
2. The only proper subjects of baptism are those who profess repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as the sole ground of their justification and who desire to obey Him as their Lord and Savior and who have given due consideration to the meaning of baptism, the costs of discipleship, and who are able to examine themselves for participation in the Lord's Supper.
3. Baptism is administered by the church by a properly appointed minister of the gospel as a public witness to a believer's profession of repentance, faith, and obedience and as public affirmation of his or her separation from the world and membership in the body of Christ. Consequently, baptism at CBC is always a public reception of the one being baptized into membership in our local body. Likewise, baptism is a prerequisite for participation in the Lord's Supper.
4. Baptism is to be done by full immersion in water except in unusual circumstances that may require another mode.

### Exposition of key passages:

#### 1. Matthew 28:19

- a. The central command is "make disciples".
- b. The surrounding "commands" are participles modifying the central command.
- c. The command is to baptize *disciples*: "baptizing **them**" (Rev. 5:9; Luke 14:26-27).
- d. The baptism is into covenant relationship: "*into the name*".
- e. The teaching is for the disciples: "teaching **them**".
- f. The promise of presence (v 20) is for "you", for the church (cf. 18:20).

#### 2. Acts 2:38

- a. Peter's active command is "repent".
- b. Repentance is a fundamental change of mind that results in a change of life.
- c. The central matter of repentance (its content) was the lordship and Messiah-ship of Jesus (cf. v 36).
  - i. "God has made Him...Lord"
  - ii. "God has made Him...Christ"
- d. Peter's passive command is "be baptized": this is something done *to us*.
- e. Baptism is the response of repentance, a visible expression of submission.
- f. Baptism is the signification of forgiveness, the washing away of sin.
  - i. Psalm 51:2
  - ii. Acts 22:16
- g. Baptism is connected to the church: "...added about 3,000 souls" (cf. v 42).

### 3. 1 Peter 3:18-21

- a. Baptism corresponds to Noah's deliverance through the waters of judgment.  
    "...a few...were brought safely through water...  
    corresponding to that, baptism now saves you."
- b. Flood waters and baptismal waters signify judgment (cf. Romans 6:3-4  
    "...baptized into His death...baptism into death", cf. Red Sea, Jonah, etc.).
- c. The flood waters lifted up the ark rescuing Noah and his family from destruction,  
    "corresponding to **that**, baptism now saves you."
- d. Not baptism but the "appeal to God for a good conscience" (i.e. repentance).
- e. Baptism signifies our repentance; it is the repentant response.
- f. Deliverance from the waters of baptism pictures our resurrection with Christ,  
    "...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (cf. Romans 6:3-5, "...in the likeness  
    of His resurrection").

### 4. Romans 6:3-7

- a. Our baptism is "into Christ", this would include immersion into His body (cf. 1  
    Corinthians 12:13).
- b. Evangelism apart from membership in Christ's body is a division of Christ.
- c. Our baptism is "into His death", it *signifies* dying (i.e. it is clearly a sign).
- d. Our baptism is a burial and resurrection, it signifies regeneration ("...so we too  
    might walk in newness of life").
- e. Baptism signifies union with Christ in His death and resurrection.
- f. Baptism is an immersion, a burial, and not a sprinkling.

### 5. 1 Corinthians 12:12-18

- a. Paul's instruction must be kept in the context of division within the church (1:13,  
    "by **one** Spirit we were all baptized into **one** body...").
- b. "So also is Christ" is another way of saying "so also is the church" (cf. vs 27-28).
- c. The body of Christ is one body made up of many members, but these individual  
    members are found in local bodies (cf. v 27).
- d. Though the body of Christ is universal, Paul was writing to a local body (1:2, i.e.  
    the universal church is manifestly expressed in local churches).
- e. The Spirit immerses us into this body; and though ultimately this is the universal  
    body, it is never without local expression (i.e. baptism signifies membership in the  
    body of Christ as expressed in local bodies).