

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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“WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE CHURCH ORDINANCES”

MATTHEW 3:13-17; 28:18-20

In this series on “**The Foundations on Which we Stand – Why We Believe What We Believe**” in our last message, I spoke about “**The Church Of The Living God**” (1 **Tim.3:15; Matt.16:17-19**) We learned that the church is built on the Rock Jesus Christ and that He is the head of the church and he calls the church His Body and His Bride. The Greek word for church is “**ekklesia**” which means the assembled body of born-again believer who gather to **pray, praise and preach** the Word of God. Now this morning we are going to speak about the **ordinances of the church of the Living God**. As a Bible Believing New Testament church, we have two and only two ordinances. These are, of course, ‘**Baptism**, which we call the initial ordinance, and the **Lord's Supper**, the recurrent ordinance. Our view is that the ordinances, both baptism and the Lord's Supper, are magnificent memorials of gospel truth. Today I will speak about Bible Baptism and what the Bible teaches. Next week I will speak about the Lord's Supper.

First, we need to define ordinance. An **ordinance** according to Dictionary.com is defined as: “an authoritative rule or law; a decree or command.” So, it is a decree or command. Therefore, I believe that there are two decrees that Jesus gave as an example for us to follow. And they are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Now remember they are not **sacraments** (a church ritual that is thought to have saving values). The Bible clearly states that through Christ alone we are saved (**Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 4:12; Titus 3:5**). It is a command to be obeyed a decree. It works no grace or special spiritual operation.

There are - Three distinguishing **marks** characterize the New Testament ordinances:

- ⇒ They were **instituted** by Christ.
- ⇒ They were **taught** by the apostles.
- ⇒ They were **practiced** by the early church. ‘

Now we are going to look very carefully this morning at Bible Baptism which is for believers only and there are three things you need to know as we begin this message:

- ⇒ **Bible Baptism was** - Instituted by Christ: **Matthew 28:19-20**.
- ⇒ **Bible Baptism was** - taught by the apostles: **Romans 6:3-4; Acts 19:1-5**.
- ⇒ **Bible Baptism was** - practiced by the early church: **Acts 2:41; Acts 8:26-40**.

Baptism is a picture of our identification with CHRIST. And there are two illustrations will help us understand the concept of identification. The first is the **Pledge of Allegiance** and the second is the **wedding ring**.

Now there are several questions I want to ask and answer on this important subject of baptism.

I. WHO WAS BAPTIZED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

There are a number of scriptures like the following: **Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:12-13, 35-38; Acts 18:8; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 16:13-15; Acts 16:30-33**. But I want to focus on just one for time's sake and turn with me as we focus on **Acts chapter 8**. No one was ever baptized until he or she had first **received** God's **salvation** offered through Jesus Christ. Baptism never preceded one's acceptance of Christ, thus **the Bible teaches Believer's Baptism only**. Therefore, if you are a Christian and have **not** been baptized, you should be. If you were baptized **before you accepted Christ**, you should consider being re-baptized in order to follow the biblical order of events.

II. HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

The Greek word for “baptize” is the Greek verb: *baptizo* - and the primary meaning is “to dip, plunge, or immerse.”

III. WHY SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?

Christ **commanded** it: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...” (**Matthew 28:19**). His followers **obeyed**: “*Those who accepted His message were baptized...*” (**Acts 2:41**). It is a **demonstration** of our love to Christ: “*Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me...*” (**John 14:21**). Baptism has nothing to do with salvation, but everything to do with obedience to Christ!

IV. WHY IS BAPTISM A PREREQUISITE TO LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

Just as Spirit baptism (**1 Corinthians 12:13**) adds believers in our Lord Jesus Christ to the Church, which is His body, so water baptism is the **means** by which believers are *publicly inducted into discipleship* (**Matthew 28:19-20**) and added to the local New Testament church which is His bride (**Acts 2:41, 47**).