**"Founded on the Rock"**

**Lesson Five – Baptism in Water**

**Hebrews 6:1, 2**

Hebrews 6:1-2

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, 2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. NIV

Part of the foundation of our Christian life is the doctrine of *baptisms*. Why plural? Because there are at *least* two; immersion in water and in the Holy Spirit. In this lesson, we’ll study baptism in water.

I. The Baptism of Israel (1Cor. 10:1, 2)

1 Cor 10:1-2

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. NIV

A. Baptized in the sea and in the cloud.

1. They were slaves, in Egypt, under a cruel king, Pharaoh.

2. God saved them miraculously and set them free. (He took the initiative.)

3. Pharaoh changed his mind, came after them, to take them back to slavery.

4. God parted the Red Sea, they crossed in safety, Pharaoh’s forces were destroyed.

5. Israel was saved, delivered, and they began the trip to the Promised Land.

B. Baptism represents this same thing for us today.

1. We were slaves of sin, living in Egypt (a type of the world), under a cruel king, (Satan).

2. God has taken the initiative, sending His only Son, who died to provide us “so great a salvation.”

(Heb. 2:3)

3. The devil doesn’t want to let us go, he comes to reclaim us.

4. By faith we receive salvation, we receive Christ, identifying ourselves with Him as we follow Him

to the water.

5. Our old self is buried with Him in the water, we die to and leave our old sinful nature behind, and

we rise to walk in newness of life!

II. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord through baptism

A. He was prophesied as the forerunner of Messiah in the OT

1. Is. 40:3 – He prepared the way of the Lord.

2. How was that done? What prepared the way for the Lord? Repentance! A changing of the mind and

a reorientation of the life toward God’s purposes.

B. John baptized those who repented. (Mat. 3:3)

1. It was a way of publicly applying what he preached to them.

2. It was symbolic of leaving the old ways behind, being cleansed, and going forward to live God’s

way. This was how God’s people could prepare the way for Christ in their hearts.

III. Water Baptism was an essential part of Christ’s teaching.

A. Matt. 3:11-15

1. He began His ministry by being baptized. Why did He submit to that (He certainly didn’t need to

repent or be cleansed). He did it to identify with mankind and with Israel in particular, and He did it

to model for us what He wanted us to do. After all, we are followers of Jesus Christ!

2. John 4:1 – Jesus taught His disciples to baptize. (So, doesn’t it seem obvious they would first have

to be baptized themselves?)

B. Christ *commands* us to be baptized and to baptize. (It’s not a suggestion!)

1. Matt. 28:19, make disciples, baptizing them in the name, teaching them to obey everything I’ve

commanded.

2. Acts 10:48 – Peter *commanded* baptism in water.

3. Baptism is a part of the “package” of our salvation, the first step we take in obedience.

IV. What is the significance of water baptism?

A. Definition: “to submerge, immerse, cover with water.”

B. Baptism is an *externa*l act which speaks of or represents an *internal* work of God.

1. Example: Gen. 15 – Abraham believed, and that was accounted to him as righteousness. This was an

inner experience. But then, in Gen. 17, he was circumcised, which was an outward act of obedience.

2. Ro. 4:3, 8-11 – Circumcision was a “sign,” or “seal” of the righteousness by faith that he’d already

expressed and received from God.

3. Col. 2:11, 12 really makes a connection between OT circumcision and NT baptism. They fulfill

similar roles, being outward acts that speak of the inward work of God.

C. Water baptism is a public declaration of our faith in Christ. “I have decided to follow Jesus…”

1. Ro. 10:9, 10 – It’s necessary to confess, to declare publicly our faith in Christ.

2. This serves to “break the ice” of fear, embarrassment, and doubt that we may experience.

3. It serves to strengthen our faith.

D. It is also an identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

1. Ro. 6:1-14 – we have died with Christ and been buried with Him through baptism.

2. This is the “secret” of the Christian life, identification! He died *for* me, I died *in* Him, I rose with/in

Him, it’s no longer I who live (Gal. 2:20).

E. Baptism doesn’t save us!

1. Eph. 2:8, 9 – It’s not by works, but by grace through faith that we’re saved.

2. I’m not saved *because* I’ve been baptized, but if I’m saved, I *will* be baptized.

3. Again, we see the example of Abraham. Ro. 4:8-11, Col. 2:11, 12. He was “saved” or brought into

favor and relationship with God through his faith alone. But after expressing that faith, he followed

through with it, proving its validity, by the outward act of being circumcised.

V. There are two more things I need to mention:

A. In some Christian traditions, babies are baptized.

1. Though we can understand why they do this (equating it with circumcision), those of our “tribes”

don’t believe in this.

2. We believe baptism is for those old enough to repent and believe and take this action on their own.

We dedicate children to the Lord. We do not baptize them.

B. Also, some Christian traditions believe grace is dispersed or administered through baptism.

1. Again, we understand why they believe this. They see baptism as a sacrament, a means by which

God actually disburse or administers His grace to us.

2. However, those of our persuasion view the sacraments or ordinances (baptism and communion),

symbolically. That is, we don’t believe grace is like a substance that God dispenses to us through

these ordinances. Rather, we believe the ordinances symbolize or represent for us the grace God

gives us through our faith.

3. We see grace, not as some sort of substance, but rather, as God’s gracious attitude toward us because

of what Christ has done.

If you haven’t yet been baptized and have been a Christian a good while, you needn’t be ashamed (you might be surprised to learn there are many who delay taking this step). The thing is, just don’t put it off any longer.

If, on the other hand, you are a new Christian, understand that this is the command of the Lord and it’s an important step Jesus wants you to take. Whatever your status, I urge you to take this important step of obedience as soon as possible. Everything God commands is always for our good!