

BAPTISM

INSTITUTED BY JESUS CHRIST

The reason the Church baptizes people in water is because this is exactly what Jesus Christ has told us to do. After His resurrection and before He returned to heaven, Jesus gave this command to His followers: "Go ye therefore, and *teach* (make disciples of) all nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Jesus said it and the Church must obey it!

WHAT IS THE PROPER METHOD OR MODE OF BAPTISM?

Today different churches baptize people in different ways. Baptism by *sprinkling* is done by placing a few drops of water on the head of a child or an adult. Baptism by *pouring* is done, as the name implies, by pouring a larger amount of water on the head of the individual. Baptism by *immersion* is done by placing the person completely under the water (complete submersion) and then raising him out of it. Which method is taught in the Bible?

We must first understand what the word "**baptize**" really means. This word does not mean "to sprinkle" and it does not mean "to pour." The word "**baptize**" is a Greek word which means "to dip, to immerse, to plunge into something that surrounds or covers." When used of a liquid it means that an object or a person is put into or under a liquid so as to be completely covered by the liquid (totally submerged).

Open your Bible, place a dollar bill there and then close your Bible so that the dollar is no longer visible. You could now say, "I baptized this dollar bill in my Bible." Think of a sleeping bag. What would a person need to do in order to be baptized in the sleeping bag? Have you ever had an ice cream cone whose top had been "baptized"? This happens when the top of the ice cream cone is immersed or dipped into some kind of topping such as chocolate, butterscotch or cherry. These are usually called "dipped" cones.

In Acts 8:36-39 we read about the time when the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized. In verse 38 it says that "they went down _____ the _____, both Philip and the eunuch; and he (Philip) _____ (immersed) him (the eunuch)." After this baptism they came "up out of the _____" (verse 39). According to these verses, what method or mode of baptism do you think was used? Was it baptism by sprinkling, by pouring or by immersion? _____ Compare the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:16 ("out of the _____").

WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

1. I Should Be Baptized to Obey my Lord's Command.

We have already seen that baptism is something that Jesus Christ has told us to do (Matthew 28:19-20). In Acts chapter 10 the Apostle Peter preached the gospel message to a group of Gentiles.

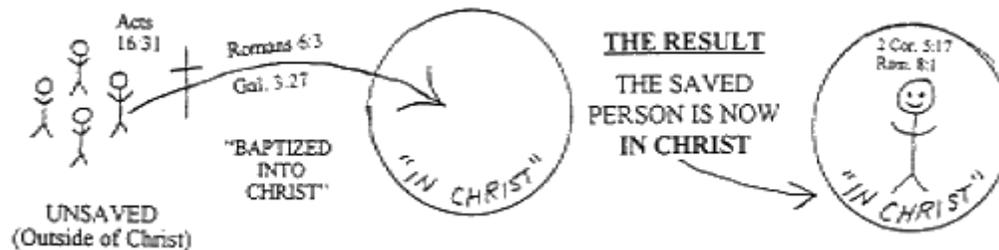
These Gentiles believed the message which Peter preached. In Acts 10:48 we learn that "he (Peter) _____ them to be _____ in the name of the Lord." Peter did not say, "You can be baptized if you wish, but it is not something you have to do." No, Peter **commanded** these believers to be baptized. Baptism is something that every believer should do in obedience to the Lord !

Another example of baptism being a command is found in Acts 2:38. Peter spoke to the multitude of Jews and he gave this command (Acts 2:38): "Be B_____ every _____ of you." Commands must be obeyed. What command does God give to an unsaved person (the first part of 1 John 3:23)? _____

When a person believes in Christ he or she is saved and God then has another important command: **Be baptized!** Read Acts 2:38 and Acts 2:41. Did these new believers obey the command to be baptized? _____

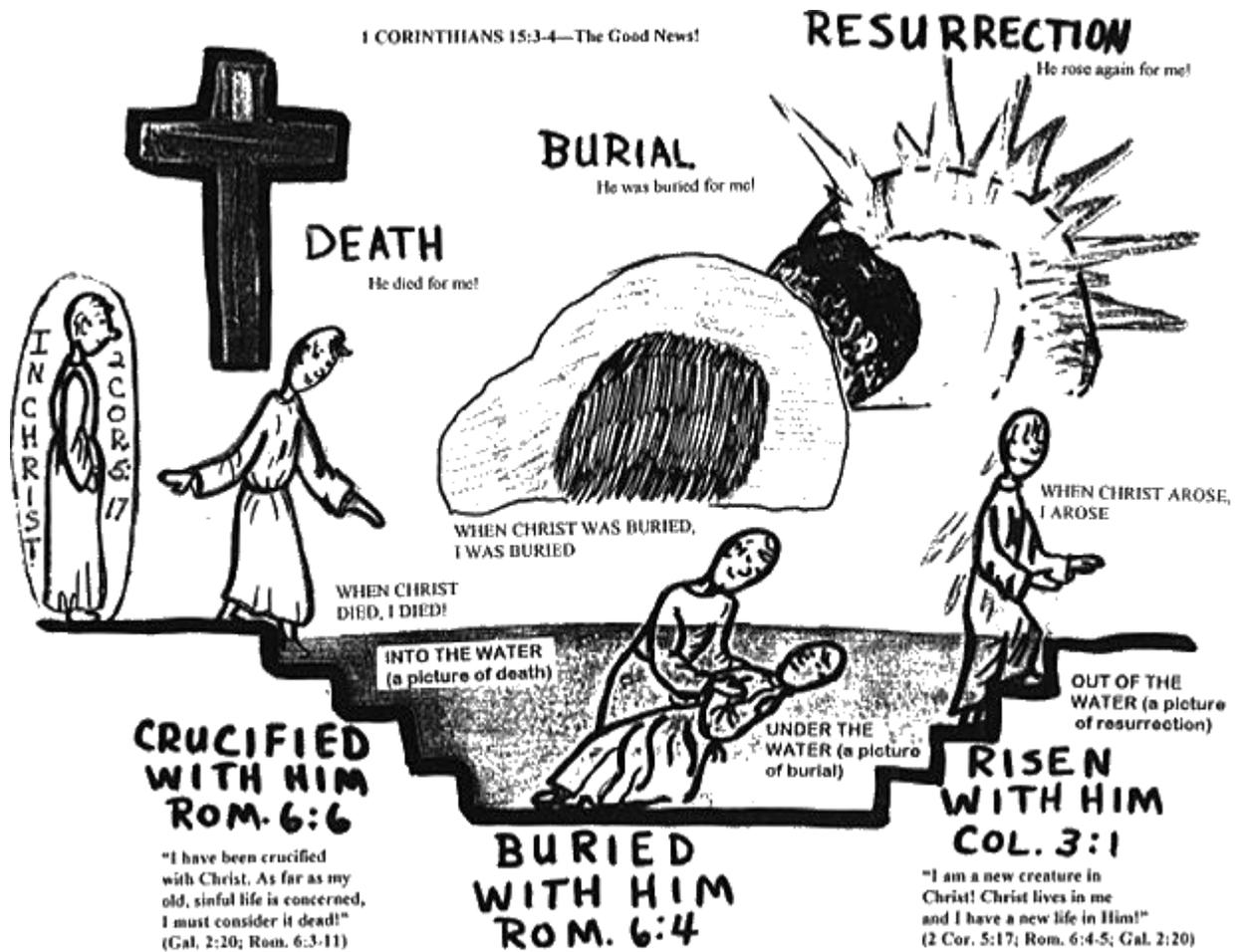
2. I Should Be Baptized to Present a Picture.

Water baptism is a wonderful picture of what happened to me when I was saved. The moment I was saved I was "baptized (immersed) into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27). This is illustrated below:



Every person is either **saved** ("in Christ") or **unsaved** ("outside of Christ"). The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "if any man be _____ he is a new creature." When a person believes in Christ, God does a wonderful thing. God baptizes him into (places him into) Jesus Christ. This means that every believer is totally **identified** with Jesus Christ. The believer is totally **identified** with Jesus Christ in His death, His burial and His resurrection (see Romans 6:3-5). Water baptism is meant to be a **picture** of this wonderful identification (this wonderful **union**) that a believer has with his Saviour because he is "IN CHRIST."

The picture presented by water baptism is shown below:



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HOLY COMMUNION

DIFFERENT NAMES FOR COMMUNION

The Communion service is called by different names. Here are the different names and what they mean:

1. COMMUNION (see 1 Corinthians 10:16)

This word means "fellowship, participation, the sharing of a common life." Communion is not something that just the Pastor and Elders and Deacons share in, but it is something that all the believers share in and participate in. The Bible says, "for we are _____ partakers of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). It is our privilege to enjoy **fellowship** with our risen Lord and with one another (1 John 1:3, and compare 1 Cor. 1:9).

2. THE LORD'S TABLE

This name is found in 1 Corinthians 10:21--"ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's _____ and of the table of devils." It was at a table that the Lord Jesus first instituted Communion. It was at a table that the Lord first broke the bread and passed the cup. A "table" reminds us of FELLOWSHIP (compare Revelation 3:20--"I will sup with _____ and He with _____." Those who sit at the same table partake together of the same food. All believers partake of the same Saviour. All believers are trusting His shed blood. All believers are sharing His life.

3. THE LORD'S SUPPER (see 1 Corinthians 11:20)

On the night before He was crucified, Jesus shared in a supper meal with His disciples. After this supper Jesus instituted the bread and the cup (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25).

4. THE EUCHARIST

This is a Greek word which means "giving of thanks." Before breaking the bread and passing the cup Jesus gave thanks to God (Matthew 26:27; Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24). The Communion service ought to be a special time when believers thank God for what Christ has done for them.

5. THE BREAKING OF BREAD

This is what Jesus did (Matthew 26:26) and this is what the followers of Jesus continued to do (Acts 2:42).

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The Communion service was instituted on the same night the Lord Jesus was betrayed. On the very next day Jesus would go to the cross, suffer and shed His blood for us. We read about what Jesus did on this night in the gospels (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19-20) and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.

Notice the commands that we find in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25:

Take (v. 24)

E _____(v. 24)

This _____ in remembrance of me (v. 24).

This _____ ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me (v. 25).

The reason we observe Communion is because Jesus Christ has told us to! Jesus said it and the Church must obey it!

WHAT DOES COMMUNION PICTURE?

Like Baptism, Communion presents a very important picture. The bread is a symbol (a picture) of _____ (Matthew 26:26) and the cup is a symbol (a picture) of _____ (Matthew 26:27-28). What did Jesus mean when He said, "**This is My Body**" and "**This is My blood**"? There are churches today that believe that the Communion bread actually changes and becomes the body of Christ. They believe also that the juice of the grape actually changes and becomes the blood of Jesus.

Suppose a man has a picture or a photograph of his wife. One day he shows it to a friend and says, "Look, this is my wife." What does he mean? Obviously he does not mean that this small piece of photographic paper is actually his wife. He is merely using a common figure of speech called a metaphor. What he really means is: "This represents my wife. This is a picture of my wife. When you look at this picture you will think of my wife."

This is exactly what Jesus meant. Jesus said, "**This is My Body**" and the meaning of these words is: "This bread represents My body. This bread is a picture (symbol) of My body. When you look at this bread you will think of My body and what I did for you when I died on the cross." When Jesus said, "This is My body," it **had** to be symbolic because His body was right there and separate from the bread.

What did Jesus mean when He said "**This is My blood**"?

A TIME TO REMEMBER

The Lord Jesus has told us **why** we should observe Communion. He has told us why we should eat the bread and drink the cup. He said, "This do in _____ of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24, and see verse 25). God knows that people are prone to forget. We tend to forget even important things! But there is one thing that God never wants us to forget. He never wants us to forget what our Saviour did for us on the cross:

HIS BODY WAS OFFERED AS A SACRIFICE FOR SIN

(See 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

HIS BLOOD WAS SHED SO THAT OUR SINS COULD BE FORGIVEN

(See Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5)

The communion service is a time when we think back to the cross and remember what Jesus did for us when He died in our place