

TH505 Ecclesiology
Question #8 - Nov. 2, 2000
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Ordinances:

1. List three passages that clearly help you see the need for baptism by immersion. Briefly explain why you choose these three.

Modeled by Christ: Matthew 3:13 – 17:

Vs. 17: "...Jesus came up immediately from the water..."

First of all John was baptizing in the Jordan river, not some shallow stream or just with a basin of water pouring/sprinkling the people.

Secondly Jesus came up out of the water. He had to go down into the water in order to come up out of it.

Practiced by the apostles: Philip – Acts 8:26 – 39:

Vs. 36: They came to a body of water and the eunuch asked to be baptized. Also, again in vs. 38 we see that they went down into the water and in vs. 39 they came up out of the water. There would have been no reason to do that if immersion was not going to take place. Philip could have just gotten some water and sprinkled it over his head, etc.

Explained in the Epistles: Rom. 6:1-6:

This will be explained in more detail in the next question. But I believe that this passage is alluding to water baptism as being a picture/symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, which we take part in at conversion.

The only mode of baptism that truly symbolizes, death, burial and resurrection is immersion.

2. Is Romans 6:1-6 discussing water baptism? (i.e. is this passage “wet” or “dry”?)

I believe the primary focus of this passage is “dry”, baptism of the Spirit or regeneration. In this passage Paul is looking back on Christ death burial and resurrection and connecting that to all that has occurred in a believer’s life:

- buried into His death
- raised to walk in newness of life
- united with Him in the likeness of His death
- in the likeness of His resurrection
- our old self having been crucified
- our old body of sin being done away with
- no longer slaves to sin

All of this happens at regeneration not water baptism! To say that this passage is speaking exclusively or even primarily of water baptism is to teach baptismal regeneration.

Secondly, the focus of the first 5 chapters of Romans has been salvation by faith alone. There is no reason for Paul to suddenly change to speaking about another way of salvation. And, seeing that water baptism has hardly been mentioned in the first 5 chapters, it would seem odd for Paul to make that his focus here.

However, a secondary application of this passage can be made to water baptism. Paul readers would have understood the picture of baptism, seeing that they practiced immersion. It is very likely that Paul could write talking about what happens to a person when they are saved while at the same time with the same words showing what water baptism represents. Unfortunately as 21st century English speaking people, we try to make the passage say one thing or another, when 1st century Semitic people could have understood both.

3. If someone was saved and afterward baptized by pouring would you suggest they be “rebaptized”? What about a Christian who comes to your church from a Grace Brethren background where they were baptized by immersion, but it was done three times forward?

Yes. Although I don’t believe the form of immersion is entirely critical (1st century believers may have just knelt and leaned forward once), it is important that a person be baptized by immersion due to the reasons given in answers one and two.

As far as a Grace Brethren being baptized three times forward. I would require them to be rebaptized as well. Baptism by immersion is intended to be a picture of what Christ did for us in His death, burial and resurrection. He only died and rose once and only He died. The Father and the Spirit did not. When the Great Commission tells us to “Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost”, it is telling us to baptize once in the name of all three.

- Water Baptism in the First Five Centuries Part II: Modes of Water Baptism in the Ancient Church
William A. BeVier BSac—V116 #463—Jul 59—23
- The Focus of Baptism in the New Testament—*GTJ*—V2 #2—Fall 81—266
- Baptism and Triune Immersion—*GTJ*—V6 #2—Fall 85—384
- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit Lewis Sperry Chafer BSac—V109 #435—Jul 52—201

4. I Cor. 11:17-22 What was happening in the church that Paul wanted to correct?

The people of the church at Corinth were using the time for the observance of the Lord’s Supper as a time of selfishness rather than one of unity. They were not caring for the needs of others and were and had created divisions among the brethren.

There very thing that the death of Christ, which they were to be gathering together to remember, was to cause in these people, they were acting against. Through Christ’s death they were to show love toward one another and care for one another, by acting selflessly, as Christ to create a unity among the people in the church. However, they were not waiting on

others before they ate and the well off were eating and drinking in excess, while the poor went hungry.

The root issue that Paul was addressing was the divisions in the church and one sinning against his brother, yet still partaking of the Lord's Supper as though all was fine.

5. Explain I Cor. 11:27. (i.e. what does Paul mean by "unworthily" – both here and in verse 29)?

Paul is speaking of taking part in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. It does not mean that one cannot take part unless they have achieved some level of worthiness in God's eyes. No one is worthy of Christ or what He did for us. However, we are to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper in a manner worthy of the one we are remembering.

This refers back to verses 18-22, as to how many of the people at the church of Corinth were partaking of the Lord's Supper.

This also refers forward to verse 28, in that each person is to examine themselves before partaking of the Lord's Supper to see if there be anything in them that would "disqualify" them from remembering what Christ has done for them.

6. Explain I Cor. 11:30-32. Was this a charge to the Corinthians only? How literally do we interpret this today?

No, I don't believe that this was a charge to the Corinthians only. Although, I believe it is not in God's normal working with us today to take someone's life for not observing the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. It is also, not beyond God to do what He wants and take a Christian out of this world who consistently and habitually misuses and partakes of the Lord's Supper when he should not.

It does not seem like this was a one time incident at the church of Corinth. From Paul's comments in verses 17-22, this has been a consistent pattern at the church to the point of causing large divisions in the church.

This is an example of the principle, "You reap what you sow". You don't usually reap what you sow the next day, the consequences may be separated by a large amount of time, so that it doesn't even seem like they are related, but they are. These people who became sick and died probably did not die in the church as they drank of the cup, otherwise Paul wouldn't have to explain why they died. They died at a later time, probably after having violated the Lord's Supper on numerous occasions, so that the people of the church had come to a place where they believed you could do this and there were no consequences, because they did not realize the connection until Paul pointed it out.

- I Corinthians – John MacArthur
- I Corinthians – Albert Barnes
- The Head Covering and the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:2-34
David K. Lowery BSac—V143 #570—Apr 86—160