

# Baptism

Systematic III

# Introduction

“Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We believe the Lord has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We believe Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Christ to commemorate his death. Both ordinances visibly and tangibly express the Gospel, spiritually nourishing the believer and bearing witness to the work of our Savior.”

- Immanuel Church Statement of Faith

# 1. The command of baptism - make and baptize disciples.

We believe the Lord has committed baptism as an ordinance (i.e., decree, order) to the local church. Jesus commands us to make disciples and to baptize them.

- Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... - Matthew 28:19

## 2. The mode of baptism - immersion in water.

We believe baptism is the immersion of the believer into water.

- The Greek word “*baptizo*” literally means “to dip,” “to dunk,” or “to submerge” (e.g., sunk vessels and dyed cloth).
  - Luke 11:38 “The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner.”

## 2. The mode of baptism - immersion in water.

- The descriptions of baptism in the Bible seem to indicate submersion in water.
  - And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. - Mark 1:5
  - And when [Jesus] came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. - Mark 1:10
  - [36] And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" [38] And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him ...[39] And when they came up out of the water..." - Acts 8:36-39

## 2. The mode of baptism - immersion in water.

- Baptism by immersion gives the most accurate and vivid depiction of the Gospel- the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and of our participating in it. Baptism by immersion makes the most sense of Paul's description and analogy in Romans 6:3-4.
  - [3] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. - Romans 6:3-4

### 3. The timing of baptism - follows conversion.

We believe baptism is the immersion in water of one who is already a believer. Every New Testament reference to baptism is connected to the presence of repentance and faith in the person being baptized.

- The Baptism of John the Baptist.

[4] John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. [5] And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. - Mark 1:4-5

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- The Baptisms of the First Christians.

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. - Acts 2:38

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- The Baptisms of the Early Church.
  - [26] for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. [27] For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. - Galatians 3:26-27
  - Acts 2:41 - [41] So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
  - Acts 8:12 - [12] But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
  - Acts 10:47–48 - [47] “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” [48] And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

## 4. The meaning and significance of baptism

- Portrays the Gospel and identifies us with it.
  - [3] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. - Romans 6:3-4
  - ...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. - Colossians 2:12

## 4. The meaning and significance of baptism

- Portrays our cleansing from sin.
  - And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. - Acts 22:16
  - ...he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit... - Titus 3:5

## 4. The meaning and significance of baptism

- Expresses our personal faith.
  - Baptism... now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... - 1 Peter 3:21
  - ...Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. - Acts 22:16

## 4. The meaning and significance of baptism

- Is an act of obedience. Because Jesus has commanded baptism as the initiatory rite of the believer, it is an act of obedience.
  - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... - Matthew 28:19
  - And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. - Acts 2:38

## 4. The meaning and significance of baptism

- Identifies us with God's act of re-creation.
  - [20] ...God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. [21] Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... 1 Peter 3:20-21

## 4. The meaning and significance of baptism

- Identifies us publicly with the people of God.
  - For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit. - 1 Corinthians 12:13

## 5. The subjects of baptism - believers.

Because of the timing of baptism (i.e, closely following conversion) and because of the meaning and significance of baptism (i.e., a symbol of belief, salvation, and community), baptism is reserved for believers.

## 6. What baptism is not

- Baptism does not save you.
  - [21] Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ... - 1 Peter 3:21
  - [30] Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” [31] And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” [32] And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. [33] And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. - Acts 16:30-33

## 6. What baptism is not

- Baptism is not a seal of perfection.
  - [2:12] ...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God... [3:1] If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is... [5] Put to death therefore what is earthly in you... - Colossians 2:12; 3:1, 5

## General Reflections

- Baptism is quantitative.
- Baptism is communal.
- Baptism is meaningful.
- Baptism is a gift.
- Baptism is a matter of biblical conviction.

## Other Topics

- Roman Catholic view: Baptism regenerates.
- Restoration Movement: Necessary (vs. Required)
- Infant baptism (paedo): Baptism as identical to circumcision.
- Who can baptize?
- Age of baptism?
- Divisions over baptism?
- Exceptions?