

## **The Baptism of Believers Only (Acts 2-19)**

*Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church 7/28/2013*

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This morning I want to take a break just 1 week in our studies through the book of Genesis for a reminder of the gospel ordinances as we prepare for both next month as a church. In the gospels, the Lord Jesus gave Christians 2 new ordinances or institutions He ordained as Christ-centered ceremonies for the church: communion (we'll celebrate next week, also called the Lord's Table) and believer's baptism (which we'll celebrate next month as well). It was a blessing to be a part of a recent baptism, but I don't know if we as a church always see these means of grace as the blessing they are, the priority they are, or the importance they have. The last words Jesus gave for us as our priority till the end of the age: "*make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you ...*" (Matthew 28:19).

Baptism was important enough for our Lord to single out in His final words. I fear we don't stress enough baptism as important/essential to discipleship, and I include myself in that we. Do you think it important, your priority to be at church baptisms whenever possible? It's been 3 years since I preached an entire sermon on baptism (I touch on it from time to time, sometimes at communion) so it seemed good today as we prepare for a church baptism, to make sure our disciple-making includes/prioritizes *baptizing and teaching* them to observe all King Jesus commands, *including observing communion*. That's not "the Great Suggestion," it's "The Great Commission" of the One with all authority in heaven and earth who calls us all to disciple all peoples

I've received several questions this year from young people and also parents discipling children and within our family and with other families as to when young people should start to participate in the ordinances Jesus gave to His disciples. Some of you adults have never been baptized and made a public declaration of your faith in the Lord Jesus in baptism.

I've talked with adults this year who as they look back on the baptism they went through years ago they realize they weren't saved. You ask 'should I be baptized as a believer? Why or why not?' Some baptized as infants or a very young child, but now as you read the NT and see believers being baptized, you've questioned the tradition you were raised with or taught before and want to come to your own convictions about being baptized as a believer.

This study is important for all of us because all of us are to be involved in discipleship in the Great Commission and all of us need to know why we believe what we believe and be able to evangelize unbelievers or to teach believers to obey all that Jesus commanded. There are other Christians who believe differently than we do on baptism here and different traditions have developed since the early church, but today I want to look at baptism in the early church in the book of Acts. So let's start in Acts 2 and I want to look at all the Christian baptisms we have recorded in the NT in an inductive study.

Six Questions for our study; who, what, where, when, why, and how

1. *Who* should be baptized?
2. *What* about babies in Christian households?
3. *Where* does communion and commitment to a church fit in?
4. *When* should we baptize today (always right after professed faith)?
5. *Why* do we believe in re-baptism as Christians?
6. *How* should you apply this message?

**#1. Who should be baptized? Believers only**

Acts 2 is the first Christian baptisms on the first day of the Christian church that Jesus had promised to build. In v. 38 Peter says '*repent and be baptized ...*'<sup>40</sup> *And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"*<sup>41</sup> *So then, those who had received his word were baptized ...* [they believed and received his word, the gospel preached, they repented and were baptized, obeying v. 38]

It's because they were saved as v. 40 says, they were baptized as v. 41 says. Baptism doesn't save, but when we are saved we want to obey the Scripture

Turn to Acts 8, the next time we read of people who were baptized in Acts: Acts 8:12 *But when they believed Philip preaching the good news [the gospel] about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.*<sup>13</sup> *Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip ...*

Again, the gospel is preached, and those who believed it were baptized. No little children, but v. 12 says "men and women" believed and were baptized. In v. 34 an Ethiopian asks Philip to explain Isaiah 53 to him:<sup>35</sup> *Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.*<sup>36</sup> *As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"*

Just as an aside, this shows that as Philip explained the gospel and baptism to him, the Ethiopian not only believed and wanted to be baptized, but he also understood it was immersion and not just sprinkling of water on his forehead, otherwise they could have just used a water bottle (or flask) in his chariot. But when he sees a body of water he asks if he can be baptized in it

<sup>38</sup> *And he ordered the chariot to stop; and **they both went down into the water**, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him [or "immersed him"]*. <sup>39</sup> *When they came **up out of the water** ... [again clear immersion]*

Even Calvin and Luther (the fathers of Presbyterians and Lutherans who often don't practice immersion today) both admitted the word "baptize" in the NT meant "to immerse."<sup>1</sup> The footnotes on some of your Bibles debate if the oldest and best manuscripts have the words of Philip "*if you believe...*" but even with or without those words, the context is very clear that Philip explained Jesus was what Isaiah 53 was about and he proclaimed the gospel and what baptism was about, and the Ethiopian eunuch believed in Jesus as fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy and so he wanted to be baptized as a Christian. Early church history tells us this Ethiopian brought Christianity to Africa.

In Acts 9, the next baptism is Saul of Tarsus after the Lord met and saved him on the road to Damascus, and the Lord assures Ananias of Saul's faith and says he would find him praying to the Lord. Ananias in v. 17 calls Saul his "brother" (NT term for fellow believer) and Saul is filled with the Spirit and v. 18 says of Saul: '*And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized ...*' Saul has his Damascus road conversion to Christ, believes, and is baptized.

In Acts 10, Peter preaches the gospel to Cornelius the Gentile and his men. In 10:43, he says of Jesus "... *all the prophets bear witness that through His name **everyone who believes in Him** receives forgiveness of sins.*" <sup>44</sup> *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were **listening** [heeding/responding] to the message.* <sup>45</sup> *All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also [i.e., the uncircumcised non-Jews].* <sup>46</sup> *For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God [probably praising God in Hebrew that they'd never studied]. Then Peter answered,* <sup>47</sup> *"**Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?**"* <sup>48</sup> *And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ ...'*

This is a critical turning point in early church history. In Acts 2 all Jewish believers in Christ received the Holy Spirit and spoke in Gentile tongues or dialects they had never learned and it amazed the speakers of those tongues that these uneducated Galileans could speak other mother tongues from all over the Roman empire. Now these Gentiles receive the same Holy Spirit and the same ability to speak in tongues that these Jews can understand and it proves the non-Jews are Spirit-indwelt believers, too, so they're baptized. It was hard for Jews in Acts 11 and 15 to think non-Jews could be saved without being circumcised, but God giving them the Holy Spirit proved that they were saved believers, and therefore, v. 47, they should be baptized, too

This also proves that baptism does not save. Mark this passage down for the next time someone questions whether we must be baptized to be forgiven or receive the Holy Spirit (a misunderstanding of Acts 2:38). Acts 10:43 says whoever believes has forgiveness, and v. 44 says they received the Spirit as they gave heed to the gospel *before they were baptized* in v. 48. Listen: they weren't saved because they were baptized, Peter says in v. 47 it's *because they are saved they should be baptized*. Acts 10 proves baptism doesn't save and this was powerful enough proof to shut up even staunch Jewish legalists

Acts 11:1 *Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.* <sup>2</sup> *And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him,* <sup>3</sup> *saying, "You went to uncircumcised men ..."* [but Peter explains what happened and in v. 15 Peter says] *"And as I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning.*** <sup>16</sup> *"And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'* <sup>17</sup> *"Therefore if **God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"*** <sup>18</sup> *When they heard this, **they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."***

This was undeniable proof Gentiles had repented and received eternal life by faith alone, and because of that and after that, they were baptized as well. Now turn to Acts 15, where legalists again confuse ceremony and salvation. Look at 15:1 *Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."* ... [and down in v. 5 some of the Pharisees who had believed in Jesus also insist on circumcision and obeying the law of Moses]

In v. 5 they don't say you have to do it to be saved, but that you must do it. Believers understand works don't save, the question is what about OT laws? Later in church history some concluded that physical circumcision of babies in the OT Law is a principle continued in NT in physical baptism of babies. Now follow carefully: *if circumcision had been replaced by baptism* (as my Reformed Presbyterian friends believe, which is why they baptize babies of believers just as OT believers circumcised babies of believers), *Acts 15 was the place in the NT to settle that debate once and for all*. Every theologian of the NT church is here (Peter, Paul, James) and could've easily answered the ceremonialists in v. 5 with: 'no, circumcision has now been replaced by baptism now for converts and their infant children. That's what we must do.'

But that's not how they answer how circumcision relates to NT theology. It is true that by at least the 3rd century some Christians baptized infants, but we don't have any evidence from anyone in church history before the 16th century teaching *baptism is the replacement of circumcision*. The Reformer Zwingli introduced a new covenant theology explanation for infant baptism. Some replacement theologians saw baptism as part of the church replacing Israel *and baptizing infants replacing circumcising infants*, but before the 16th century, others baptized infants for other reasons, thinking it saved.<sup>2</sup>

Notice how Peter answers both of those errors and the circumcision error not by exchanging one physical outward ceremony for another like baptism:<sup>7</sup> *After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe."*<sup>8</sup> *"And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit* [another inward thing], *just as He also did to us;*<sup>9</sup> *and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.* [he's speaking of Acts 10, before they were baptized] ...<sup>11</sup> *"But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."*<sup>12</sup> *All the people kept silent, and they were listening ...*

Again, this is what shut the mouths of even the legalists, the external-based religionists. Not another external religious ceremony for believers or babies, but the inward New Covenant reality of the Spirit that saves by faith alone. Hebrews 8 says everyone in the New Covenant is a believer and is forgiven their sins, all of them know the Lord in a saving way. It's not about physical or outward signs, it's about faith and inward salvation. It's a better covenant than the Old Covenant, the New Covenant seal is the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13)

Even the Old Covenant spoke of the "circumcision of the heart," and that's what Colossians 2 talks about in relation to baptism. Not a surgery done by human hands, Paul says, but the surgery of the heart, spiritual regeneration, that's the New Covenant parallel of what OT circumcision pointed to. Col 2:11-12 speaks of spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism or cleansing. Baptism outwardly proclaims you've had the inward reality of Col 2:11-12. In Acts 2:37 their hearts were cut, regenerated, and then they were baptized.

#1. Who should be baptized? Believers

## #2. What about babies in Christian households?

The next 3 baptisms in Acts mention "households," and so some Reformed theologians will argue there must (or may) have been toddlers or infants in those households also baptized based on the faith of the head of the house.

Acts 16 is the first one. In Acts 16:12 Paul and his team come to Philippi.  
<sup>13</sup> *And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.* <sup>14</sup> *A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.* <sup>15</sup> *And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.*

Some have pointed out that v. 14 only mentions Lydia's belief but v. 15 says her household was baptized. It only mentions women in v. 13 and in the end of v. 15 she refers to her home as 'my house,' and without a husband invites them, so those who know the history of that day say this suggests Lydia is a single but successful business-woman with servant girls in her household.

There's no reason in the text to think Lydia's married or has a baby with her that she brought on her travels from Thyatira hundreds of miles away. Most likely, most scholars suggest "her household" in v. 15 was her servants, but the grammar of v. 14 doesn't mean she or they were converted or baptized all on that first Sabbath, the text implies a period of time of her giving heed to the gospel and God is opening her heart.<sup>3</sup> Acts doesn't say when Lydia or her servants were baptized, if they all were all at once, it doesn't describe the age or faith of the others (or imply a lack of faith). What we do know from v. 40 is that people in Lydia's house were called "brethren" (a NT term for believers, male or female, possibly her servants, definitely Christians).

There's no reason to think the "brethren" in her house didn't believe because the word "believe" isn't in v. 40 or in v. 15 when they were baptized, but we know in the context that 'brethren' or 'baptized' in other places are believers.

Acts 16:31 *They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."* [that doesn't mean if the head of the house trusts the Lord, his whole family is saved, it's a call to all in the house to believe. That's clear in context] <sup>32</sup> *And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.* <sup>33</sup> *And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was **baptized, he and all his household.*** <sup>34</sup> *And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having **believed in God with his whole household...***[the whole house heard, believed, v.32-34, were baptized, v.33]

*The Reformation Study Bible* on v. 15 also lists v. 31 as examples of family salvations: "Throughout redemptive history it has often been God's practice to save entire family units at the same time ... The household baptisms of Acts are striking examples of this (10:47, 48; 16:31–33; cf. 1 Cor. 1:16)."<sup>4</sup>

It's a remarkable thing when a whole family believes so Acts highlights it. It didn't happen all the time but there's just 1 other time in Acts where it did:

**18:8** *Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.* [notice it doesn't say the rest of the Corinthians had all their household baptized with them, it says they were believing and being baptized. But it says Crispus "*believed in the Lord with all his household*"]

This is no evidence of baptizing babies of believing parents, it's actually one of the strongest verses for believers-only baptism. If a Corinthian believed, he was baptized. If his whole house believed with him, they were baptized.

Paul mentions another Corinthian whose whole family was baptized (1 Cor. 1:16). Was Stephanas as head of the household the only convert and based on his faith his wife and kids (even infants if he had them) then baptized? 1 Cor 16:15 ESV: "*...the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints...*"

This family of Stephanas that Paul baptized were the first converts and were devoted to serving other believers as well, not just dad as the covenant head.

And as an aside, covenant theologians don't baptize entire families when the dad believes because he's the covenant head of the family. Our Presbyterian brothers don't baptize dad's unsaved teens, unbelieving wife, atheist workers at his house, etc, if just dad converts to Christianity. But they should to truly be consistent with arguing that the rest of the household was baptized based only on the faith of the head of the household, so-called household baptisms

Robert Reymond in defending infant baptism writes to his own camp: 'I would counsel ... [to] not put much weight on these "household baptisms," for even if [it] could convince the ... baptist that in these cases the believer's *household was baptized on the basis of the believer's faith* ... [it] cannot prove that any of these households had infants or small children in them.'<sup>5</sup>

[nor does it justify only baptizing them and not other unbelievers in the home]

Go to Acts 2 as there is 1 verse that mentions children in a baptism context. In Acts 2:39, right after mentioning baptism, Peter says: "*For the promise is for you **and your children** and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.*" But notice Peter doesn't say "the practice of baptism is for infants," he says "the promise" - what promise? - the promise at the end of v. 38, "*the forgiveness of sins...and the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" God doesn't promise to forgive sins and give His Spirit to all believer's kids. The first part of v. 38 makes clear they had to first repent, and babies can't.

Peter already mentioned "*the promise*" in v. 33: "*the promise of the Holy Spirit.*" The end of v. 39 says the promise is for all the Lord our God calls to Himself, that's NT language for all people God saves. God was going to call some of their children to salvation and also some "far off" (Gentiles in other nations), and the promised Spirit is for all who repent and believe the gospel

- The Presbyterian Louis Berkhof admits there's 'no explicit command in the Bible to baptize children' and he agrees there's 'not a single instance in which we are told that children were baptized'<sup>6</sup> [much less infants baptized!]

- Peter Lange, the famous Lutheran commentator on the Bible, also admits: "All attempts to make out Infant Baptism from the New Testament fail. It is totally opposed to the fundamental principles of the New Testament."

- Martin Luther himself confessed 'It cannot be proved that Infant Baptism was instituted by Christ or begun by the first Christians after the Apostles.'<sup>7</sup>

[I've quoted all non-baptists today and find much help from them in other areas]

I'm very thankful for reformed tradition but the reformation wasn't complete

#1. *Who should be baptized? Believers*

#2. *What about babies in Christian households? No*



### #3. Where does communion and commitment to church fit in?

If you wanted to pick a physical symbol of the New Covenant, communion would be a more logical choice than baptism, because Jesus said holding the cup "*this is the New Covenant in my blood...*" The NT never ties baptism to that sort of wording as a sign or seal but it does for communion as a symbol of the New Covenant. No Presbyterian gives wine to 8-day-old baby boys. A few practice infant *communion and baptism*, trying to be consistent in continuing a *circumcision principle*. Most reject infant communion but their arguments opposing it, also oppose infant baptism, if consistently applied.

On one side of Christianity we have those who baptize infants but don't give them communion until their teen years after a confirmation/catechism level. But on the other side, others lower the bar on communion for little children (who I question if most can 'examine himself' and 'discern the body rightly') and then delay baptism maybe 10 years or more when they reach some level

I don't think either mindset honors the biblical balance for both ordinances. It's not something I will police or pound the pulpit on, but '*make disciples*' implies a process and a mature commitment of following Christ - then Jesus said '*baptizing them*' - then Jesus said '*teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*' (observance of communion as He commanded is part). Let's not reverse that normal order or skip the 1st step of obedience, baptism

[unbaptized adult can talk to us pastors after - we also have a study for parents]

Committing to a church at baptism is another area for us to keep reforming as well, to test our traditions. It's not commanded or as clear as points 1 or 2 but in Acts 2:41-42, the first thing we read of the first church in Acts is they were baptized and then continually devoted or committing themselves to the church's teaching, fellowship, communion (breaking of bread) and prayer. It seems a normal pattern to be baptized (v. 41), then to commit to the body in these ways (v. 42), devoted to to the doctrine and duty to our church family. "Devoted to" meant strong attachment, or adhesion, glued to each other, not just a loose association (an easy-come easy-go anti-membership mentality).

Acts 5:11 mentions 'the whole church' but it distinguishes them from others who just hung around with them. Acts 5:13 says some respected the church but didn't want to "*join* them," a strong word for cleaving like a covenant bond (1 Cor 6:16-17), or inseparable joining of bones to flesh (Ps 102:5), or the public pledge of allegiance to a king (2 Sam 20:2). Today some people complain when asked to *join or commit* to a church on paper or any public profession of the Lord or public pledge to His people, as if it's not biblical.

I don't think it's more than what we see in Acts, I think it's less. They had a greater commitment to each other in Acts than those who protest making a commitment publically today, who communicate otherwise by not joining. The Bible doesn't say you have to say covenant vows before witnesses in a marriage service or to your church family in a church service, but both are platforms to show love, selfless commitment, and fulfill biblical commands. If you want to learn more on that, talk with Pastor Mark up here after and we have packets and a process for those who want to commit to this church.

Many in the modern church will attend a church for teaching (sometimes or maybe most of the times), but more often it's the music or something else they're looking for, not the things of v. 42. Some aren't baptized, or if they are, they didn't at that time commit to a church fellowship, communion, and praying for that church as family. I admit I haven't in the past emphasized to those being baptized to also commit to the church and join its fellowship once they're baptized, not years later (if ever). Not only are there blessings of communion, there's responsibilities in this body that you are baptized into and service opportunities open. I encourage you to join our church and come under its accountability to live this new life you pledge to in baptism.

1 Cor 12:13 speaks of being baptized into one body of many members, and it uses spiritual analogies for the visible realities a church should manifest: *"we were all baptized into one body ...<sup>14</sup> For the body is not one member, but many. ...<sup>18</sup> But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.<sup>19</sup> If they were all one member, where would the body be?<sup>20</sup> But now there are many members, but one body ...<sup>25</sup> so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.<sup>26</sup> And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.<sup>27</sup> Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."*

That physical analogy and spiritual reality is made visible in a local church. Baptists aren't against unity, we're for true unity in a regenerate membership

1. *Who* should be baptized? Believers
2. *What* about babies in Christian households? No
3. *Where* does communion and commitment fit? Ideally after baptism
- 4. *When* should we baptize today (always right after professed faith)?**

This is another one that's not commanded or as clear to me as questions 1-2

Pentecost was an unusual and unrepeatable move of God's Spirit but there are other examples where the text makes clear someone was baptized the same day once the Holy Spirit clearly came and have saved them (Acts 10). But without an obvious miracle (like someone speaking Hebrew fluently suddenly who'd never studied it), it may take time to discern if one is saved.

At Pentecost, these Jews knew very well what Jesus taught, they knew it so well they killed Him for it. They knew there was a cost to publically profess Jesus as Lord in the Jewish community, not only would it cost many their families and religious community, they knew following Christ might even mean a greater cost physically like Christ went through. It would be more like a person willing to come forward and be baptized publically in some Muslim country today - only the Spirit's work in someone's heart can bring that about. But in our easy-believism environment of America, there can be value in taking more time to confirm the Spirit's regenerating work in them.

In Acts 8 there is also the example of the Ethiopian who believes and asks what would keep him from being baptized on his way to Africa. And Philip who will never see him again, and had spent much time explaining the truth to him to know he understood and embraced it, baptizes him then and there. The other example where it clearly says they were baptized within 24 hours was the Philippian jailer, again when Paul is leaving, not to see them again.

But with those 3 examples where they believed and were baptized same day we can find dozens of examples in Acts where people believed but weren't baptized the same day. When the Spirit has clearly regenerated someone, it can happen more quickly, but it didn't always right away in the NT and in our day and age and culture there can be other reasons to be cautious not to rush baptism for the young and/or not to proliferate false convert assurance.

There's reasons Baptists around the world and in this country's history till the 20th century usually waited to baptize children till teens/adolescents or however the culture defines a transition to young adulthood. In Bible times, 12 was the age Jewish males often began to take their ordinance, Passover, which communion later replaced, and the Jews saw males and females then as responsible to the Word as an adult, even apart from their parents. It's not a magic age, but there is a stage of life where their parents faith becomes the child's. We have a study guide that touches on that for parents. Since the NT doesn't give examples of children being baptized or a certain age, wisdom must be applied for high-schoolers and middle-schoolers in the ordinances.

As Baptists began baptizing younger and younger since the 70s, the number of re-baptisms has risen as many realize they weren't saved till later years.

This leads to # 5 ... **Why do we believe in re-baptism as Christians?**

People who believe like our church does were originally called 're-baptizers' in history (*Anabaptists*). When people converted from Roman Catholicism (where infants are baptized) this strand of Christianity called for them to be re-baptized as believers, or in reality to be baptized once in a biblical way. It's not that they were into numbers (though some Baptists since have been). It's not that we're into dunking people multiple times, and it's not that we're just looking for any excuse for a swim party or food, but if you believe in question 1 and 2 that the Bible teaches baptizing believers, not babies, then when someone becomes a believer, they should be baptized. Jesus Himself said "*make disciples, baptizing them...*" (*them=disciples* in the grammar).

Turn to Acts 19, the last baptism passage in Acts we haven't looked at yet. Paul meets some people who were followers of John but apparently not of Jesus, they are ignorant of the apostles teaching, haven't heard of the Holy Spirit, aren't indwelt by the Spirit, and therefore they aren't yet truly saved,

Acts 19:2 *He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."* <sup>3</sup> *And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."* [i.e. not into Christ's body in Christian baptism] <sup>4</sup> *Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to **believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.**"* <sup>5</sup> *When they heard this, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.***

So Paul teaches them they needed to believe in Jesus, the one John pointed to, who was coming after Him. And they "heard" (which means heeded or received in faith) and they were then re-baptized in the name of Jesus. The biblical pattern through Acts is repent/believe in Jesus then be baptized.

### **How should we apply this**

- Some of you may need to repent and believe in Jesus who haven't yet
- Some of you may need to be baptized, if you haven't yet, since then
- Some of you may need to study more or search your heart more and for some who are young or unsure if you're saved, look to Jesus, let others help
- All of us need to take seriously what Christ's great commission prioritizes

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin (father of Reformed tradition that baptize infants) wrote in his *Institutes* (2:1320, McNeil ed.) “The word ‘baptize’ means to immerse, and it is clear that the rite of immersion was observed in the ancient church.” Luther (forefather of Lutherans) wrote in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1960): “I would have those who are to be baptized completely immersed in the water, as the word says and as the mystery indicates ... This is doubtless the way in which it was instituted by Christ.”

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Rainbow demonstrates that the defense of infant baptism proposed by Ulrich Zwingli ... was truly a novelty. For the first time in history, baptism was severed from faith and regeneration. The view that the Reformed take for granted as historic, represented in Zwingli's day a break with previous tradition.<sup>1</sup> - Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright, ed., *Believer's Baptism* (NAC Studies series, B&H Publishing, 2006), p. 8, see also p. 198-199.

<sup>3</sup> Even Lutheran commentator Lenski brings this out in his commentary on Acts, p. 658.

<sup>4</sup> *The Reformation Study Bible*, edited by R.C. Sproul, note on Acts 16:15.

<sup>5</sup> Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998), p. 942, footnote 55.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Eerdmans, 1993), p. 632.

<sup>7</sup> Quotes from C. A. Jenkens, *What Made Me a Baptist* (Roger Williams Heritage Archives, 1901), 73–74.