

BAPTISM

Burden: For the young people to appreciate what baptism is and to equip with the truth concerning it so that after sharing the mystery of human life they can strengthened it by preaching the five points of baptism.

- I. The meaning of the word *baptism*.
- II. Five Points of Baptism.
- III. The pattern of baptism.
- IV. The type of baptism.
- V. The ones being baptized.
- VI. The one baptizing.
- VII. The time of baptism.
- VIII. The place of baptism.
- IX. The correction of baptism.

In the first sixteen topics we saw the aspects of God's salvation. Now we will study matters that one must practice after being saved. The first of these concerns baptism.

God's interaction with man and the service He requires of man can be divided into the age of the Old Testament and the age of the New Testament. The former is a type of the latter. Thus, the former is a shadow and prefigure, and the latter is the reality, the body of the shadow. In the Old Testament age of shadows and prefigures, service was a matter of rituals and ordinances; in the New Testament age of truth and reality, service is a matter of spirit and life. Nevertheless, in the New Testament age there are at least four matters that God wants man to practice, which from their outward appearance seem to be rituals and ordinances. These four matters are baptism, the laying on of hands, head covering, and the breaking of bread. Although God abolished the rituals and ordinances of the Old Testament and requires man to serve Him in spirit and reality in the New Testament, He requires man to practice four matters that seem to be rituals and ordinances. This proves that these four matters are very important in God's eyes; therefore, we should pay attention to them and not despise them. Actually, they are not matters of ritual and ordinance; rather, they are practical steps and concrete processes through which we receive, obtain, enjoy, and utilize God's salvation and all of its blessings. All that God accomplished and prepared for us in Christ, all that He wants to give us in the new covenant, is dispensed into us through these practical steps and concrete processes. Therefore, if a believer wishes to completely and fully receive and enjoy God's salvation in His Son, he must properly appreciate and practice these steps and processes. The first of these is baptism.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD *BAPTISM*

“Baptized” (Mark 16:16).

Baptizo is the Greek word used here and in other places in the New Testament; it means “to dip in or under, to immerse, or to sink.” This meaning is found in all the well-known Greek lexicons and is agreed upon by all the famous Bible scholars throughout the ages. Martin Luther, the leader of the Reformation, said that he hoped everyone who is baptized would have his whole body put into the water because that is the meaning of the word *baptism*. John Calvin was a great Bible expositor of the Reformation; he said that the meaning of the word *baptism* is to immerse and that this was the practice of the primitive church. Dean Stanley said that the practice of the first thirteen centuries was according to the New Testament and that the people went into the water according to the original meaning of the word *baptizo*.

ANG LIMANG PUNTO NG BAUTISMO

Ang iyong bautismo ay magdadala sa iyo tungo sa 5 mahahalagang punto:

Ang unang punto: ang mabautismuhan ay ang mailibing kalakip ni Kristo tungo sa loob ng Kanyang kamatayan upang tayo ay makalakad sa kabaguhan ng buhay. Kung nais nating makabahagi sa isanlibong taong kaharian bilang isang mandaraig, ang unang hakbangin ay ang mailibing sa pamamagitan ng bautismo nang sa gayon maaari tayong lumago kaisa ni Kristo sa wangis ng Kanyang kamatayan at, gayundin, lalago tayo sa wangis ng Kanyang pagkabuhay-na-muli,

Pakibasa ang Roma 6:3-4, "O hindi ba ninyo nalalamang tayung lahat na nabautismuhan tungo sa loob ni Kristo Hesus ay nabautismuhan tungo sa loob ng Kanyang kamatayan? Tayo nga ay nalibing na kalakip Niya sa pamamagitan ng bautismo tungo sa loob ng kamatayan, na kung paanong si Kristo ay ibinangon mula sa mga patay sa pamamagitan ng kaluwalhatian ng Ama, gayundin naman tayo ay narapat lumakad sa kabaguhan ng buhay. Sapagka't kung tayo nga ay lumagong kaisa Niya sa wangis ng Kanyang kamatayan, tayo ay magiging gayundin sa wangis ng Kanyang pagkabuhay-na-muli."

Ang ikalawang punto: ang mabautismuhan ay ang madala tungo sa organikong kaisahan sa Tres-unong Diyos gaya ng nakatala sa Mateo 28:19, pakibasa: "Kaya't humayo kayo at gawing mga disipulo ang lahat ng mga bansa, bautismuhan sila tungo sa pangalan ng Ama at ng Anak at ng Espiritu Santo."

Ito ay ang mabautismuhan tungo sa pangalan ng Ama, ng Anak, at ng Espiritu Santo. Sa sansinukob, tangi lamang ang Tres-unong Diyos ang namumukod-tanging lalake, sa pang-espirituwal tayong lahat ay mga babae. Ang mabautismuhan tungo sa pangalan ng Tres-unong Diyos ay maihalintulad sa isang babae na pumasok tungo sa pangalan ng isang lalake. Kaya anuman ang ari-arian ng isang lalake, may karapatan ang babae na makibahagi. Sa katunayan, sa sandaling maikasal ang babae sa lalake, siya ay pumapasok tungo sa pangalan ng lalake, ang gagawin lamang niya ay ang idugtong ang titulong "Mrs." bago ang pangalan ng lalake at yaon na siya.

Ang ikatlong punto: ang mabautismuhan ay ang ibihis si Kristo: pakibasa ang Galacia 3:27, "Sapagka't ang lahat ng nabautismuhan tungo sa loob ni Kristo ay ibinihi si Kristo."

Ang bautismo ay ang ibihis si Kristo upang maging iyong kasuotan, kaya't sinasanhi kang makapasok tungo sa loob ni Kristo, samantalang ang pagtawag sa pangalan ng Panginoon, ay nagsasanhi sa Panginoon na makapasok tungo sa loob mo upang maging iyong buhay at panustos-ng-buhay, ang pagbibihis kay Kristo sa pagbabautismo ay nagsasanhi sa iyong pumasok tungo sa loob ni Kristo. Siya ay nagiging iyong proteksyon.

Ang pagbibihis kay Kristo ay katumbas din ng pagsusuot ng uniporme, gaya ng sa isang opisyal na may awtoridad.

Matapos kang mabautismuhan, ikaw ay may awtoridad nang magpahayag ng ebanghelyo at magbautismo rin sa iba. (Gagawin ng mga kapatid-na-babae ito sa pamamagitan ng mga kapatid-na-lalake).

Ang ikaapat na punto: ang mabautismuhan ay ang mailipat mula sa kaharian ni Satanas tungo sa kaharian ng Diyos.

Pakibasa ang Juan 3:5, "Sumagot si Hesus, Katotohanan, katotohanang sinasabi Ko sa iyo, maliban na ang tao ay ipanganak ng tubig at ng Espiritu, hindi siya ' makapapasok sa kaharian ng Diyos."

Kailangang mabautismuhan dahil kung hindi maipanganak ng tubig at ng Espiritu ang isang tao, siya ay hindi makapapasok sa kaharian ng Diyos.'

Ang maipanganak ng tubig ay ang tapusin ang lumang tao at ang maipanganak ng Espiritu ay ang maisilang ang bagong tao.

Ang panghuli nguni't Hindi naman siyang pinakakaunti. ang kahalagahan, ang ikalimang puntong ito ng bautismo ay isang bagay na kinamumuhian ni Satanas na ipaliwanag natin, maaaring hindi nalalaman ito ng mga tao sa sangka-Kristiyanuhan kaya hindi nila ito maipaliwanag o maaaring alam nila nguni't ayaw itong Ipaliwanag sapagka't sa sandaling ang ikalimang puntong ito ay ginawang malinaw, wala nang magiging Katoliko, o Protestante, ni anumang miyembro ng malayang grupo kundi ang bawa't Kristiyano ay magiging isang Kristiyano na lamang at ang bawa't isa ay magiging isang sangkap lamang ng Katawan ni Kristo, na inihahayag ang Katawang ito sa praktikalidad bilang ang ekklesia sa lokalidad.

Ang ikalimang punto ay makikita sa 1 Corinto 12:13, pakibasa nang dalawang beses. "Sapagka't sa iisang Espiritu ay binautismuhan tayong lahat sa iisang Katawan, maging tayo ay Hudyo o Griyego, maging mga alipin o mga laya, at tayong lahat ay pinainom sa iisang Espiritu." (Pakibasa muli).

Ngayon ang Katawang ito ay ang ekklesia ayon sa Efeso 1:22-23, pakibasa, "At ang lahat ng mga bagay ay pinasuko Niya sa ilalim ng Kanyang mga paa, at Siyang pinagkaloobang maging Ulo ng lahat ng bagay sa ekklesia, na siyang Katawan Niya, ang kapuspusan Niyaong pumupuspos ng lahat sa lahat."

Ang ekklesiang ito ay mayroong dalawang aspekto: ang Pansansinukob na aspekto at ang Praktikal na aspekto', pakibasa ang Mateo 16:18, "At sinasabi Ko rin sa iyo na ikaw ay Pedro, at sa ibabaw ng batong ito ay itatayo Ko ang Aking ekklesia, at ang mga pintuan ng Hades ay hindi makapananaig laban dito." Ito ay ang pansansinukob na aspekto. Ang ekklesia sa kanyang kabuuan ay di-nalilimitahan ng panahon at lugar, sa buong sansinukob ay itinatayo sa ibabaw ng bato, na si Kristo at ang pahayag hinggil kay Kristo.

Pakibasa ang Mateo 18:17, "Subali't kung ayaw niyang pakinggan sila, sabihin mo sa ekklesia; at kung ayaw rin niyang pakinggan ang ekklesia, ipalagay mo siyang tulad ng Hentil at ng maniningil ng buwis." Ito ay ang praktikal na aspekto. Ang ekklesia na maaaring puntahan at .sabihan ng mga banal. Ito, mangyari pa, ay ang ekklesia sa praktikalidad.

Ngayon ang ekklesia sa praktikalidad ay mayroon ding dalawang aspekto:

Pangmaramihan gaya ng makikita sa:

Galacia 1:2, pakibasa, "mga ekklesia ng Galacia"

Apocalipsis 1:4, pakibasa, "pitong ekklesia na nasa Asia"

Pang-isahan gaya ng makikita sa:

Gawa 8:1, pakibasa, "ekklesiang nasa Herusalem"

Apocalipsis 2:1, pakibasa, "ekklesia sa Efeso"

Ang Galacia, Asia, Herusalem, Efeso ay mga pangalan ng mga lugar. Bakit ang matatagpuan natin ay mga ekklesia sa Galacia, mga ekklesia sa Asia, samantalang sa Herusalem ay iisa lamang na ekklesia, gayundin sa Efeso iisa lamang ang ekklesia?

Kung titingnan mo ang mapa, makikita mo na ang Galacia ay pangalan ng isang probinsiya, gayundin ang Asia. Sa isang probinsiya ay mayroong maraming bayan, lunsod, lokalidad. Kaya maraming ekklesia. Samantalang ang Herusalem ay pangalan ng isang lunsod, sa gayon iisa lamang na ekklesia, ang Efeso ay pangalan din ng isang lokalidad samakatuwid iisa rin lang na ekklesia.

Gaya rito sa Pilipinas, ang probinsiya ng Bulacan ay mayroong dalawampu't apat na lokalidad, yayamang naekklesiahan na natin ang buong probinsiya, mayroon tayong kabuuang 24 na ekklesia. Hindi maaaring humigit sa 24 na ekklesia. Gayunpaman, sa lokalidad ng Malolos, mayroon lamang iisang ekklesia: ang ekklesia sa Malolos,

Kaya malinaw na inihabayag ng ikalimang puntong ito ng bautismo sa iyo na ikaw ay nabautismuhan tungo sa Katawan ni Kristo, ang Katawang ito ay nahahayag nang praktikal sa ekklesia sa iyong lokalidad, kaya ang iyong bautismo ay nagdadala sa iyo tungo sa loob ng ekklesia sa iyong lokalidad.

Ngayon saang lunsod o lokalidad ka nakatira? _____ - hindi ba? Ngayon aa anong ekklesia ka kabilang?

Sa ekklesia sa _____.

Sa Gawa 11:26, makikita rin natin na sa pang-indibiduwal tayo ay tinatawag na Kristiyano nguni't sa pansama-sama tayo ay walang iba kundi ang ekklesia sa lokalidad.

Pakibasa ang Gawa 11:26, "At nang kanyang matagpuan siya, dinala niya siya sa Antioquia. At nangyari na sa isang buong taon sila ay nakisama sa ekklesia at nagsipagturo sa isang malaking bilang. At ang mga disipulo ay pinasimulang tawaging mga Kristiyano sa Antioquia."

Kung ang lahat ng Kristiyano . ay magpupulong bilang ang ekklesia sa lokalidad, ang kahayagan ng pagkakaisa ay maipapakita, ang Katawan ni Kristo ay maitatayo nang mas mabilis at ito ay magpapabilis sa pagbabahk ng Panginoon, sa gayon ay itinatag ang isanlibong taong kaharian, ikinukulong si Satanas sa kailalimang-walang-hanggan at sa katapusan ng 1000 taon, si Satanas ay ibubulid sa dagat-dagatang apoy. Ang Bagong Herusalem, sa loob ng bagong langit at bagong lupa, ay mapapasukdol nang lubusan.

THE PATTERN OF BAPTISM

1. "Having been baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water" (Matt. 3:16).

God used a clear word *baptism* to tell us that baptism is to be put into water; He also used a pattern or example to show that baptism means to be put into water. People

can explain the clear meaning of the word differently, but the pattern of the example eliminates differing human views. There are two patterns of baptism according to God's record in the Bible. The first is the baptism of the Lord Jesus. After our Lord was baptized, He went up from the water. This means that He first had to go into water. Going into water and coming up from water is the clear pattern established by our Lord Jesus. Should not all those who wish to follow in the footsteps of the Lord follow His pattern? If we want to be like the Lord and "fulfill all righteousness" before God (v. 15), how could we not follow His pattern or example by being baptized in a different way?

2. "They both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water" (Acts 8:38-39).

God not only provided the example of the baptism of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels; He also showed that the apostles followed the footsteps of the Lord in the book of Acts. Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch by going down into water and coming up out of water. By this we know how the early disciples baptized people. The record that they both went down into water and came up out of water is clear and accurate; how could people in later centuries have so much dissension and so many questions concerning the way to baptize people? Should we not go back to the beginning and follow these examples?

THE TYPE OF BAPTISM

1. "Entering into which [the ark], a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through by water. Which water, as the antitype, also now saves you, that is, baptism...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

In the Bible we have not only the pattern of baptism but also the type of baptism. In the Old Testament, God used two events to paint a clear picture of the baptism that was to come in the New Testament; these two events prefigure baptism. The first event involved Noah's household passing through the flood in the ark. Through Peter the Holy Spirit said that this typifies baptism. This type not only clearly explains baptism, but it also shows the effect of baptism. The eight people of Noah's household who were in the ark were covered with water, showing that we should be covered with water in our baptism in Christ. The flood caused the people in the ark to be separated from the old world in which they had lived, freeing them from their corrupt generation. This shows that the water of baptism causes us, who are in Christ, to be separated from the world in which we live, freeing us from this crooked and perverted generation. Thus, just as they were saved by water and freed from their corrupted generation, we also are saved through the water of baptism and are freed from our crooked and perverted generation. On the one hand, they entered into the ark by faith and were saved by the ark from the flood waters of God's judgment; on the other hand, in the ark they passed through the flood and were saved by the flood waters from that old world and were given entrance into a new world. In the same way, we enter into Christ by faith and are saved in Christ from the judgment of God's wrath; we also pass through baptism in Christ and are saved through the water of baptism from the old world and are given entrance into the

new realm of resurrection. They were saved through the ark from God's judgment, and they were saved in the ark by means of the flood waters from the old world; in the same way, we are saved through Christ from God's judgment, and we are saved in Christ by means of the water of baptism from the world to which we originally belonged. Just as the waters of the flood caused them to be separated from the world to which they originally belonged, the water of baptism separates us from our old world. The waters of the flood through which they passed in the ark gave them entrance into a new world; in the same way, the water of baptism through Christ's death and resurrection gives us entrance into a new realm. Thus, the relationship of the floodwaters to the eight people of Noah's household typifies how baptism causes us to be saved by water from the world and into the realm of resurrection.

THE ONES BEING BAPTIZED

1. "He who believes and is baptized" (Mark 16:16).

Who can be baptized? Who is qualified to be baptized? Only a person who believes is qualified. This is because the Lord said, "He who believes and is baptized." This is a principle that does not and cannot change. Those who have not believed are absolutely not qualified to be baptized; only those who believe can be baptized. This believing must be a receiving of the Lord from the heart and must be a believing into the Lord—a receiving of the Lord into our being, allowing Him to enter into us and be mingled with us, and an entering into the Lord to be joined with Him, as we saw in chapter 5. This is not a mere mental belief in doctrines or an act of the will to enter a religion. A person who merely believes a doctrine or enters a religion does not believe in the Lord and does not contact the Lord, receive the Lord, enter into the Lord, or have a direct relationship with the Lord; therefore, he does not have the true and proper faith spoken of in the Bible. Faith in the Bible means to receive the Lord from one's heart, to use one's spirit to contact the Lord Himself, to enter into the Lord, to be joined to Him, and to enter into a life relationship with Him; it is not merely understanding some doctrines. Many understand gospel doctrines and many have received these doctrines, but they have not touched the Lord in their spirit to receive Him, so they cannot be considered as having believed in the Lord; thus, they are not qualified to be baptized. In contrast, some do not understand many doctrines, but they have prayed to the Lord from their heart and spirit and have received the Lord as their Savior. They have truly believed and can be baptized.

An infant, who does not even know the difference between his right and left hand, does not have the capacity to believe and is not qualified to be baptized. According to the principle of "believes and is baptized," infant baptism is absolutely not allowed. It is very much against the Bible.

2. "When they believed...the gospel...and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

In Samaria the ones who were baptized first believed the gospel and the name of the Lord Jesus. They did not only believe the gospel but also the name of the Lord. The

gospel says that the Lord died for our sins, was buried, and rose on the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4); that they believed the gospel means they believed that the Lord died for them and was buried and rose again. The name of the Lord speaks of His person and represents the Lord Himself. That they believed in the name of the Lord means they believed in the Lord Himself and received the Lord Himself (John 1:12). Since they believed in this way, they could be baptized, and they were.

3. “What prevents me from being baptized? And Philip said, If you believe from all your heart, you will be saved. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:36-37).

The conversation between the evangelist Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch shows that if a person believes from all his heart, nothing should prevent him from being baptized. However, we must note that it says, “Believe from all your heart.” It does not tell us to believe with the mind or with the brain but from all the heart. This means our entire heart must believe; we cannot believe halfheartedly or with doubts. We must believe from all our heart before being baptized.

This shows the object of our faith. What do we believe? We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. A person must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in order to receive life in His name (John 20:31). Therefore, one must believe this from all his heart before he can be baptized. As soon as he believes in this way, he can be baptized; he does not need to wait until he understands many doctrines or wait for anything else.

4. “They heard, believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:8).

This word refers to the early Corinthians. They believed and were baptized. They had to believe before being baptized, but once they believed, they could be baptized. We cannot be anything less than a believer, and we need not be anything more.

Note: First Corinthians 15:29 speaks of being “baptized for the dead.” This is not God’s ordination but a practice that some of the Corinthian believers made up. In this verse the apostle Paul based an argument upon this practice with those among the Corinthians who did not believe in the resurrection but who were practicing being baptized for the dead. He pointed out that their beliefs and actions were contradictory since they did not believe in resurrection but were practicing being baptized for the dead. God calls for only believing, living people to be baptized; He never asks someone to be baptized for a believer who died without being baptized. The saved criminal on the cross is an example of a believer who died without being baptized; his case is an example and proof of this point.

THE ONE BAPTIZING

1. “Jesus Himself did not baptize, but rather His disciples” (John 4:2).

When the Lord was on earth gaining disciples, He did not baptize; rather, His disciples baptized. We must pay attention to the fact that it does not say that His

apostles baptized. It says that His disciples baptized. Of course, among the disciples there were apostles, but they did not baptize in their office as apostles but in their position as disciples. This tells us that the Lord had disciples do the baptizing. The disciples, the believers, baptized others. Thus, any believer who is a disciple of the Lord can baptize. The teaching that only the clergy can baptize or that only those with an office in the church can baptize was started and ordained by the Roman Catholic Church. This poison of heresy was also brought into the Reformation from the Roman Catholic Church; this is against the teachings of the Bible and against the Lord's will. According to the Lord's will, a believer does not need to hold an office in the church in order to baptize. Baptism is not based on one's office in the church; rather, any saved believer can baptize someone in his status as a believer. Of course, anyone baptizing another person should carefully consider all sides of the matter and seek the Lord's leading.

2. "Go...baptizing them" (Matt. 28:19).

The Lord's command to preach the gospel to the nations and to baptize the nations was given to the disciples, not to the apostles. Although the eleven who received this command were apostles, they are not called "the eleven apostles"; instead, they are called "the eleven disciples" in verse 16. When the Lord gave this command, He did not consider them to be apostles but disciples. If the Lord had considered them to be apostles when He gave the command, only a small number of apostles would have gone out to preach the gospel to the nations, and not all the disciples would have participated in this matter. This is not the Lord's intention. He wants all the disciples who believe in Him to preach the gospel to others and to baptize them. Anyone who is His disciple should preach the gospel and baptize people. Preaching the gospel is the heavenly occupation of His disciples, and baptizing people is their duty. Preaching the gospel and baptizing are two sides of the Lord's commission to His disciples. Both aspects are the responsibility of His disciples, and both are their authorized right. Therefore, whoever preaches the gospel has the authority to baptize.

3. "A...disciple...named Ananias" (Acts 9:10, see also vv. 17-18).

When the Lord chose Paul to be an apostle, He did not send an apostle to baptize him; He sent a disciple named Ananias. The Bible does not tell us that Ananias held any office in the church; it says only that he was a disciple. This also shows that as long as one is a disciple, he can baptize others; one who baptizes does not need to hold any office in the church. Furthermore, when Paul went to Damascus, the church there may not have been officially established, so the Lord sent a disciple named Ananias to baptize him. This tells us that in any place where there is a church, any of the saints can baptize people together with the whole church, but in a place without a church, any of the scattered disciples can baptize. Of course, this is speaking in principle; we must follow the Lord's leading for the details, just as Ananias did.

4. “They both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:38).

Philip was not an apostle but an evangelist (21:8), yet he not only preached the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch but also baptized him. This clearly tells us that whoever has the authority to preach the gospel can also baptize. Moreover, Philip was on a road in a place without a church, so he baptized the man by himself. This also proves that in places where there are no churches, the believers can baptize those to whom they preach the gospel. Of course, this is in principle; we must also follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as Philip did.

THE TIME OF BAPTISM

1. “Those then who received his word were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

When a person believes in the Lord, he should be baptized immediately without waiting. On the day of Pentecost three thousand people received Peter’s word, believed in the Lord, and were baptized. It was not like today when people believe in the Lord and wait many days before being baptized. Waiting is not according to the Bible, and it quenches the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no passage in the Bible which says that a person waited a long time between believing in the Lord and being baptized. The Bible indicates that when people believed in the Lord, they were immediately baptized. The acts of believing and being baptized should be close together; they should not be separated by a long period of time. When a person is moved by the Holy Spirit to believe, he should immediately be baptized; this will enable the Holy Spirit to work more strongly and more thoroughly in him. If he is not baptized immediately after believing and continues to wait, his heart will become heavy, and the Holy Spirit will be hindered from doing a strong, thorough work in him. Many believe, but they are not living or strong because they did not take advantage of the time immediately after believing, when their hearts were on fire, to be baptized. When a blacksmith pounds on metal to make scissors, he must heat the metal to the right temperature, beat it just the right way, and immediately plunge it into cold water to make the cutting edge sharp. If the metal cools after it is heated and is not pounded properly when it is hot, the cutting edge will be very dull when it is plunged into cold water. Many brothers and sisters do not have a strong salvation because they were not plunged into the cold water of baptism when their faith was burning hot. When someone believes in the Lord, he will suffer loss if he is not baptized immediately.

We have seen in the preceding sections that baptism is a procedural step for people to receive the Lord’s salvation, through which people are put into the Lord and His death, and through which they are buried and resurrected together with Him. In a normal situation, the beginning step in receiving the Lord’s salvation is to believe, and the completing step is to be baptized. Today, however, things are totally differently. Some wait for people to become completely clear about matters related to salvation before baptizing them. A wedding ceremony is the final step in a marriage procedure, but the experience of some related to baptism can be likened to people living as a married couple and then having a wedding ceremony much later to represent their act

of being married. It is no wonder that among us some say that baptism is only a representation of our death, burial, and resurrection together with the Lord. To be baptized is to be put into the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection; it does not represent our death, burial, and resurrection with the Lord. When a person believes and is immediately baptized, his baptism puts him into the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. If he waits a long time after believing before being baptized, his baptism will become merely a representation of his death, burial, and resurrection together with the Lord.

2. "When they believed...they were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

The Samaritans who heard the gospel from Philip believed and were baptized immediately. This is always the pattern in the Bible.

3. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he ordered the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch" (Acts 8:37-38).

The Ethiopian eunuch believed in the Lord as he was traveling on a road. Even though it was not convenient to be baptized, he was still baptized immediately after believing.

4. "Why do you delay? Rise up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16).

Ananias spoke these words to Saul, who had been enlightened by the Lord and had believed in Him on the road to Damascus. Saul had only believed in the Lord for three days without being baptized (9:9), but the Holy Spirit rebuked him for delaying. Today, if a person is baptized only three days after believing, we might rebuke him for being too quick. But should we follow the will of the Holy Spirit or follow our own opinion? The Holy Spirit considers it a delay for someone to wait for three days in order to be baptized. Since the Lord wants people to be baptized immediately after believing, there should not be even one moment's delay. Thus, we should recover the matter of baptism so that the water of baptism always comes after the gospel message. As soon as people receive the gospel, they should immediately go into the water to be baptized. This is according to the Lord's will and the pattern of the Bible, and it results in great spiritual benefit. However, it requires faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. It requires us to preach the gospel in power, and it requires us to baptize people in faith. If we lack these two things, we are only imitating the black and white letters of the Bible and do not have the spiritual reality.

THE PLACE OF BAPTISM

- 1. “As they were going along the road, they came upon some water, and the eunuch said, Look, water. What prevents me from being baptized?” (Acts 8:36).**

The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized as soon as he and Philip came upon some water beside the road. This shows that baptism is not tied to any place; the only thing necessary is water. When I first believed in the Lord, a pastor told me that if we had to imitate the Lord Jesus by going down into the water to be baptized, then we should imitate Him by being baptized in the Jordan River. But this is not the only pattern in the Bible; any place with water is good for baptism.

- 2. “John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people came and were baptized” (John 3:23).**

John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim because there was much water there. This indicates several things, including: (1) There should be much water in a place for baptism. Any place that has enough water to submerge people is good for baptism. (2) When John baptized people, he must have put them into the water, so there was a need for a place with much water. If baptism is only a ritual sprinkling or a ritual dripping, he would have needed only a little water. It would not have mattered how much water was in a particular place. Any place would have been fine. In order to submerge people in water, however, he needed a place with much water.

THE CORRECTION OF BAPTISM

- 1. “He said, Into what then were you baptized? And they said, Into John’s baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe into the One coming after him, that is, into Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:3-5).**

This passage speaks of the disciples in Ephesus, who were baptized with John’s baptism of repentance and did not know that John led people to believe in the Lord Jesus. They also did not know that once the Lord Jesus came to minister, John’s baptism of repentance had ceased and that people should be baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When they learned this, they immediately corrected the problem and were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Thus, according to the pattern recorded in the Bible, if a person is not baptized properly, his baptism can be corrected. In those days the baptism of repentance had ceased and was inadequate, so anyone baptized in that way needed a correction. Today there are rituals of sprinkling, dripping, infant baptism, baptism before one properly believes, and baptism before one has contacted the Lord in spirit. All of these are improper, and anyone baptized in such a way should correct it. When it is corrected, it should be carried out by faith in order to receive all the spiritual realities of baptism.

*Reference: *Five Points of baptism, Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures*