

# What Does Baptism Really Mean? Bible school lecture

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[0:00] We're going to look at the doctrine of baptism, what the Bible says and what we learn from history. Firstly, it's an ordinance of the church commanded by our Lord. There's two ordinances, there's baptism, water baptism and the Lord's supper.

And it's also a public declaration of a believer's faith. So when you're baptized, you're showing your faith, it's declaring it. It's also identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord. So it's an outward declaration of an inward reality.

And baptism is not a means of salvation, but it's a symbolic act of obedience. It doesn't make us saved, but it shows our obedience to save people.

It signifies our union with Christ and our commitment to follow him. And the word baptism, the English word baptism, it comes from the Greek word. It's actually a transliteration of the Greek word baptizo, which means to dip, immerse or submerge.

It indicates that full immersion in water. So when the Bible was translating that word baptize, they could have said dip or immerse. It's dunk. But essentially, it does mean immersion.

[1:16] The very word immersion. And that's what we believe as a church. And like churches, we believe that baptism is an immersion in water. And it's performed under the authority of the church in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And it symbolizes spiritual cleansing, a death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ. It serves as a testimony. So you're testifying of your faith. It's an act of obedience, a step towards membership.

And I like the quote there, every baptism is a sermon. Really, it's pictures that salvation testimony. Every time someone gets baptized, it preaches Christ. It preaches salvation through Christ's work. And it encourages believers to show they belong to the Lord. You could think of it even like baptism as being like a wedding, where we pledge our love publicly. And it shows our love relationship with our Lord.

Baptism, you could also compare it to like a wedding ring. It's not the marriage. It's just a symbol of that marriage commitment that you've made in your heart. So baptism, it doesn't confer salvation, but it reflects that inward transformation.

[2:30] That's through faith. Baptism doesn't make you a believer. It shows that you already are a believer, that you do believe. Baptism does not save you. It is your faith in Christ that saves.

Section number two there, biblical foundations of baptism. Think about what the New Testament teaches us about the mode, the subjects, the purpose, the authority. And the fact that it's founded in Christ's command and the practice of the early church.

So we're going to look at some key passages. What does the Bible actually tell us about baptism? And one of the first ones there is really the Great Commission, they call it, in Matthew 28.

As our Lord was about to ascend, he gave these instructions to the disciples and he told them this. Matthew 28 from verse 19, it reads, It reads, We see that it was our Lord's command to go and baptise.

And then another example in Matthew 3, our Lord's example, we see the Lord Jesus coming to John the Baptist. And it says, It says, And Jesus, And Jesus, And Jesus, And Jesus, And Jesus, When He was baptised, He went straight away up out of the water, The heavens opened unto Him, And He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, And lighting upon Him, And lo, A voice from Heaven, This is my beloved Son, In whom I am well pleased.

[4:32] You see the sun there, You see the Spirit In the form of a dove, And then you hear the Father's voice. So you see the triune Godhead there. and it shows there that even our Lord, he set the example himself to set the example of obeying, of righteousness and we see that where it says he came up straightway out of the water again indicates full submersion.

He wasn't just sprinkled or getting poured on, he was in the water so he was submerged in the water and he came up out of the water.

Another example that it was immersion, immersion. And you look at the early church practice as well. There's some quotes in the book of Acts, Acts 2, 38.

Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now it's interesting, some use this verse in error to teach that baptism is essential to salvation. They say that, well, you're baptised for the remission of your sins.

[5:45] In other words, that the baptism remits you of your sins. But that's not what it's teaching. The Greek word there where it says for is the Greek preposition, is, E-I-S, where it says for the remission of sins.

It means you of, because of the remission of your sins or with a view to forgiveness received through repentance and faith, not that baptism itself remits sins.

So it does not mean in order to get, when it says baptised for the remission. The word for doesn't mean in order to get remission of your sins.

What it means is because you have it. So you could think, as an English example, you could think, for example, you go and see the doctor and he says, take two aspirin for your headache.

It's because you already have a headache. It's not you take two aspirin to get a headache, right? It's you take two aspirin because you have a headache, for your headache. And you think of some, another couple of Bible references, you think in Matthew 12, 41, it reads, the men of Nineveh, they repented at, this is the same word, at the preaching of Jonah.

[7:04] The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. The word at is the same word here, for. It means because of. So they repented because of the preaching of Jonah.

As the result of the preaching of Jonah, not for, not to, in order to get the preaching of Jonah. And it's just to explain that. Another example is Matthew 3, 11, where it says, John says, I baptise you with water unto repentance.

The word unto. It cannot mean in order to get repentance. It means baptised because they had repented. Baptised because of their repentance.

Baptised in regard to their repentance. So it doesn't mean baptised to get repentance. And it's the same here with this word. They're baptised for, meaning because of, their forgiveness that they've already received.

So just to explain that, because we're going to tackle that a little bit later, because one of the false teachings about baptism, some people teach that you have to be baptised to be saved, and that's not true. So we'll unpack that a bit later in a bit more detail.

[8:09] Another scripture there, you've got Acts 2, 41. When they gladly received his word, they were baptised, and the same day were added unto them about 3,000 souls. So they got, they believed, they received, they were baptised, they were added to the church.

And then Acts 8, 12. But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women. So you see in all those examples that the belief precedes the baptism, and there's no mention of infants there.

So that's another false idea that is common in some church circles, that they baptise so they believe or so they think, they christen, they sprinkle infants, thinking that is a baptism, but it's actually not.

Because the word baptise means dip, immerse, dunk. It means submerge. And there's no Bible examples where infants, like little babies in arms, were baptised.

There's no Bible examples of that. Another reference in Acts there, and this is a really good one to understand how the process really follows belief.

[9:18] We see that in Acts 8, 36 to 39. And here's Philip talking to the Ethiopian eunuch. And as they went on their way, they came unto certain water, and the eunuch said, See, here is water.

What doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, If thou believest, with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

So it's a really good verse that explains that baptism follows belief. And it's kind of sad in some Bibles that they cut this out, which is really the enemy cutting out an important Bible reference there, because it's a very important truth that you confess Christ, you confess your belief, and then you're baptised.

And then it reads on, And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, again into submersion, into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him. And when they would come up out of the water, again, they had been in it, now they're coming out of, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.

[10:24] So you can see in that example, baptism follows that confession of faith. It involves immersion. They went down into, they came up out of the water.

And you think of that, well, it's a great example of witnessing too. You see Philip the evangelist, he ran to the man's chariot, he was ready to obey God, to be a witness. And we see some vital ingredients of evangelism.

How do you witness? We see an obedient servant. Philip was obedient to God's call. There was a prepared heart, the eunuch. He was already kind of searching. The spirit of God was there, that urged Philip to go.

The word of God was there, as the man was reading it. And as he was returning from Jerusalem, back to his home country, Philip asked him that simple question, do you understand what you're reading?

He did not understand. He was religious, but he did not know the saviour. And the eunuch, he had the open book, the right book, open at the right place. The one he was witnessing to had an open mind, he was receptive, the preacher had an open mouth.

[11:28] You see all those elements in good witnessing as well. Another example of a baptism is Acts 10. It tells there of the folk, Cornelius and his household, his family.

And it reads there, Can any man forbid water that they should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

So in that example there, Cornelius and his household, they'd obviously got saved. There were signs there that God had received them. And so they were clearly saved.

And then the question was, Can any man forbid water that they should not be baptised? Because it was really that first time where the Gentiles were reached and it was evident that God had received them, they'd received the Holy Spirit, indicating salvation before baptism.

So we see that baptism follows the conversion. Firstly the conversion, then the baptism. It's always the biblical example. Another example is Acts 16, 15, where you read about Lydia.

[12:33] She worshipped God, she heard us, her heart, the Lord opened, she attended unto the things spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household. So she received the word, she believed, then she was baptised.

Another example in Acts 16, 2, is the case of the Philippian jailer. And we see there, Paul and Silas, the jailer brought them out, and he asked, What must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptised, he and all his, straightway.

The Philippian jailer, he was saved, he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, that was his salvation.

And we see how they spoke the word of God to all that were in his house.

They were understanding, they weren't infants that were little babies in arms that were baptised.

They were all able to receive, to understand, to hear the word of God, to receive, to believe.

[13:38] And so they were baptised. There's no mention of infants there. And another one is Acts 18, we read about Christmas, the chief rule of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house.

And many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptised. Again we see believers baptism. Belief first, and then the baptism. Crispus believed with all of his house.

All of those were able to personally believe, and then they were baptised. You don't baptise someone who doesn't believe. You don't baptise an infant who cannot believe.

First belief, then baptism. Just to emphasise that there. And we see the symbolic meaning of baptism. In Romans 6, we read, it tells us, know ye that so many of us who were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

[14:41] For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we shall not serve sin.

So you see in this picture here, it pictures how baptism, you illustrate really graphically, tangibly, these three truths.

You see the death, the burial, and the resurrection. So as they come and they confess Christ publicly, they're dying to self, there's a picture of how we die to the old man, the old self, and then we're buried in the waters of baptism, they go down underneath the water, so like a body gets buried under the ground.

There's a burial, we die to sin and self, it's a picture of that. And then we see the resurrection when they lift it up again out of the water, that it's a picture of the resurrection.

So you see really the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. And you see in a way pictured as well for the individual believer, it's a picture of how spiritually it pictures our salvation, which has already happened, that we've died to ourself, we've been buried, that we've risen to new life, we've got new life in Christ, we're a new creature in Christ.

[15:57] It's all a symbol of all of that, that we're united with Christ's death, the submersion, burial, underwater, the resurrection, emerging out. Of the water. And it's all portrayed like a visual symbol there of all of that.

And you see another example of that in Colossians 2, it says similarly, buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who has raised him from the dead.

It's again that imagery of burial, of resurrection, of that picture of our faith, our spiritual faith, God's work, that is the spiritual work.

And another one is Galatians 3, 27, as many as you have been baptised into Christ or put on Christ. It's got that picture again of identifying with Christ, that picture of our faith.

1 Peter 3, 21 is another one, talks about baptism, and it specifically says it's a figure. So it says, the like figure, whereunto even baptism also doth now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[17:09] So it's telling us specifically here this word figure. It means symbol. So baptism is a symbol of salvation, not the means of it. So it's not saying that baptism saves us, but what it represents is our salvation.

It's a picture of that which saves us, which is our salvation by faith. So not the putting away of the filth of the flesh clarifies it does not cleanse sin, but it represents that faith response.

So we know that the waters of baptism can't cleanse us, but what it pictures does, which is Christ's salvation. Another one too, Acts 22, it reads, and now why tarryest thou?

Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. So it's symbolic there. The washing away of sins is symbolic, tied to the calling on the name of the Lord.

It's the faith that washes away our sins. It's the blood of Jesus that washes away our sins, not the baptism, not the waters of baptism, not the water itself. As the old song goes, what can wash away my sin?

[18:15] Nothing but the blood of Jesus. It's not the water of baptism. It's that faith. As you call on the name of the Lord as you're saved and calling on his name, you trust in Christ.

Another scripture, 1 Corinthians 12, 13, it says, for by one spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.

So you see this baptism, it shows how we're one body. Jews, Gentiles, we're the church, we're one body, united as the one body of Christ, the church. Next section, it talks about belief as a prerequisite.

Again, so it says, he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. Belief is the condition for salvation. The baptism follows on that as an act of obedience. So the condemnation, how we'd be damned, is it's not a lack of baptism, but a lack of faith. It's showing that belief precedes baptism.

[19:20] So as a church, we like to call it believers' baptism. What we teach, what we believe, is believers' baptism. So you don't just, if someone says, I want to get baptised, you want to make sure, are you actually a believer?

Are you saved? That's important. You want to make sure that they know that they're saved, that they're a Christian, they've got faith in Christ, then they can be baptised. So the belief precedes the baptism.

Like we read before, as Philip questioned the eunuch, what hinders me from being baptised, Philip says, if you believe with all your heart, you can be baptised.

And he said that. He confessed that. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Because really, you can baptise someone and you're just making them wet. It's not like anything happening. They're not going to get saved by the baptism. There's some churches that they rush people to baptism thinking that the baptism saves them, but it doesn't. It's the faith.

[20:17] They want to make sure that that's very crystal clear, that they're believing in Christ as their saviour. That's what matters. That is what counts. The baptism is a follow-on from that.

It's not the salvation. All right? So next section there, we see the mode of baptism. The mode of baptism. So how should baptism be conducted?

What's the biblical mode? How should it be done? As I said before, there's some churches they can get just a little bit of water and sprinkle it on a baby or put crosses on their head or do various ceremonies like that or they might pour the water on.

In some churches, they pour the water on someone's head. But the biblical method, the biblical mode is immersion. And why do we say that?

Linguistic, like the language, the very word, baptizo in the Greek, it means to immerse, to submerge. It doesn't mean sprinkling or pouring.

[21:23] So the very word meaning, the language, baptizo, it means to immerse. And the context as well, as we've read before, they came down into the water, they came up out of the water.

In all the context there, it says there was much water there where they were baptising. It's obviously that they went down into the water, they were immersed in the context.

And then symbolically too, it can't symbolise death, burial and resurrection unless you are submerged and come up out of the water. So sprinkling or pouring can't picture that symbol, the very symbol, the fact of the death, burial and the resurrection to be buried in the water as such. And then the early church too, they practised immersion. So there was an early Christian writing called the didache, which is a teaching book that the early church had.

And it says pouring was only permitted when immersion was impossible. So it was always immersion. That was the method in the early church as well. Thinking about the subjects of baptism, who should get baptised?

[22:35] Who can get baptised? Only believers. Only believers in Christ can get baptised. It's only for those who've confessed Christ, that they've professed faith in Christ.

So it excludes infants or unbelievers. There's no point. As much as well-meaning parents might do that for their children, they mean well, but it isn't baptism.

It's just not. And so we see some of the reasons why that we believe that it's only believers that can be baptised. You see that faith was a prerequisite.

Like we said before, Acts 8, 37, the eunuch, can I be baptised? If you believe. If you believe in the Lord Jesus and he said, I believe.

If you believe with all your heart. And he could be because he was a believer. Mark 16, again, he that believeth and is baptised. So the belief precedes the baptism.

[23:31] That's very important. And that's the case with every recorded baptism in the Bible. That they heard, they understood, they received the gospel and they believed in Christ.

and when you think about it, really, a child cannot exercise faith. A child cannot repent. A child cannot believe. And these are prerequisites for the baptism.

All right. Next section, the purpose and significance of baptism. We've touched on this before. Think of all these reasons why it's a good thing to be baptised. It's got all these reasons why there's symbols that matter.

Why should we be baptised? You're obeying the Lord. He commands us to be baptised. And so it's obeying our Lord which ought to be really second nature for the Christian.

It's a public testimony too. You're declaring it to the world. You're declaring it to the church that you believe. You're witnessing your faith. You're saying, I'm a Christian and I'm showing it by following his will and going through this symbolic declaration of my faith.

[24:41] It's a public testimony. It's identifying you with the Lord like we read before with his death, burial and resurrection. So it's all of that symbolic picture there.

You're saying, I identify with Christ. He's my saviour. I belong to him. He belongs to me. We see the picture as well of the spiritual cleansing. It represents the washing away of our sin.

Not by the water but because of Christ's atonement for our sin. And it also marks your entrance into the church as people were baptised. They were admitted to the church.

They were received by the church. They were baptised and added to the church. And then it also signifies that new life in Christ as a believer. Think about how we're a new creature.

Like we're brought up out of the water like a resurrection. It pictures that, hey, I've got new life in Christ. I'm a new creature. I'm a believer. Next section, just thinking about really counselling some of the false ideas about baptism.

[25:44] All right? Some of the false ideas. There's a lot of false ideas out there. And so we're going to cover a couple of them, really, which is infant baptism and baptismal regeneration.

So firstly, infant baptism. And it's interesting looking back through history, like you can see in this paragraph here, I'll just read that out, that these two errors, these two main errors have been a historic thing in the church history.

We see baptismal regeneration. In other words, you've got to be baptised to be saved is what they would teach falsely, an infant baptism. And according to history records, there's been so much shedding of Christian blood over the centuries through these two errors, really.

And over 50 million Christians have died because they rejected these two errors. That seems quite a significant figure there, doesn't it?

because down through church history, the religious establishment of the day had really a preoccupation with these two false ideas. That people had to be infant baptised and that they couldn't be submerged.

[27:00] They just had the sprinkling and pouring methods. So it's a really bad history of the church that so many people died just because they believed really what the Bible says about baptism.

And loyal churches who refused to accept these errors, they were really treated really badly and harshly and a lot of persecution went on because they practised re-baptising.

So they were called anabaptists, which means baptising again. But really they were baptising truly. The baptism of infants is not baptism. So just go and look at these two errors then, these two false ideas about baptism.

So firstly, infant baptism. And it's amazing, a lot of denominations believe and practise infant baptism. Of course we know the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, they practise infant baptism.

So they bring a little infant like a baby, a newborn, and they go through some ceremony and sprinkle the child. And they believe that it brings the child into covenant relationship with God or removes original sin.

[28:16] I'm quite surprised that there are some evangelical Anglicans and Lutherans, but there's some in those camps that actually think that by sprinkling the baby, by having what they think is an infant baptism, they think that the child is born again.

I've heard Lutherans say that, and of course that's not at all true. There's no spiritual benefit from doing such a thing.

There's no biblical grounds for doing such a thing as infant baptism. So you see in the notes there, there's no biblical basis for it. It's just not in the Bible.

It's not there. There's no command or example of infant baptism. All of the baptisms recorded were believers. So you had to believe. So faith was required.

As we touched on before, it's a prerequisite. What's stopping me being baptised? If you believe with all your heart, you can be baptised. If you believe, you can be baptised.

[29:17] But if you can't believe, well, you can't be baptised. It follows, doesn't it? Now you see, there's some examples of household baptism. So it is a wonderful thing when you see a whole family trust Christ at the same time.

But that doesn't always happen, as we know. But, you know, it is lovely. We do encourage that if a husband and wife believe at the same time and they've got believing children, then the whole family can be baptised.

But of course, if there's some in the family who do not believe, then they can't be baptised. But you do see that in some examples there as cited there, that the whole household got baptised.

So the jailer rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. So all the household, all the family believed. So that's a blessed thing that happened there. But it doesn't always happen that the whole family believes at the same time.

What these infant baptisers try to do is they use a misapplication of the Old Testament covenant. So these infant baptisers, they equate baptism with circumcision, but it's not at all the case.

[30:26] You see, as explained in the notes there, there is no correlation there. It says, many as received him to then gave he power to become the children of God.

It's when they believed on his name. And it's also a symbolic inaccuracy too, where they're using sprinkling, it's not signifying the death, burial, and resurrection.

So it's really giving people a false assurance too. As much as we like to, as a church, when there's a newborn, we love it when the parents want to dedicate their child to the Lord and we can have that kind of public prayer for the family, the mums and dads, the little infant, that they'll follow the Lord, that the child will come in time to personal faith and the parents will be led to be godly parents and parenting their child.

So there's nothing wrong with praying and having a baby dedication but not a sprinkling of some supposed baptism because there is no such thing.

So that's the infant baptism. That's one false idea. And then the other false idea, which is another common false idea, is what's called baptismal regeneration. So they believe that there's some kind of salvation benefit out of the baptism that somehow a person has to be baptised in order to be saved.

[31:53] There's some churches that teach that. So there's a lot of churches that teach that. For example, you've got there, we're at B now, false view of baptism. Some groups like Roman Catholicism, the Church of Christ, that's really the American one, or the Disciples of Christ, they're called.

Not necessarily the Churches of Christ in Australia, but it's the American kind of Church of Christ. The Orthodox, Lutherans, Seventh-day Adventists, the Latter-day Saints, of course you've got the

Revival Centre, Adelaide Revival Centre, different churches like that that have got this very false idea that you've got to be baptised to be saved, that the baptism is necessary, that it confers grace or forgiveness of sins.

And it's really not true. It's really not biblical. So we can see how some examples of why we would say that that's not true. We see many scriptures that tell us that salvation is by faith alone.

A classic one, Ephesians 2, 8 through 9, for by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, less than any man should boast. John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Then you've got Romans 3, 24 through 25, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

[33:27] So we see that our salvation is because of the blood of Christ shed for us, that Christ is our sacrifice on our part, that we've put our faith in Christ for our forgiveness of our sins.

And then Romans 3, 28, therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. There's many, many scriptures that tell us that salvation is through faith in Christ's blood, not by any works like baptism.

So it's salvation by faith alone is a very important Bible truth. Next point there is that baptism is a symbol. It's a symbol like we read before in 1 Peter 3, that this figure, this symbol, it's a picture of the salvation that saves.

It's a symbol, not a saving act of itself. It doesn't cleanse us, but it's a picture of that cleansing that we have spiritually. And then Titus 3, 5 says, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

The washing of regeneration is really spiritual renewal. It's not the water baptism. Examples as well of salvation without baptism. In Luke 23, you've got the classic one of the thief on the cross.

[34:43] And Jesus says to him, verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Of course, the thief on the cross was not baptized, but Christ assured him that he was going to be in paradise, in glory with the Saviour.

He was saved without baptism, proving it is not essential for salvation. And then you've got Cornelius and his household. As we read before Acts 10, there was demonstration, there were signs there that they'd received the Holy Spirit.

That was before they got baptized. So they were already saved. The salvation precedes the baptism. And then you've got the misinterpretation of key texts as well.

Like we read before, Acts 2, 38, they misread it that the for the remission of sins means to get it, but it actually means because of, because of the remission of sins we get baptized, because of the forgiveness that we've already received.

Not that the baptism causes the forgiveness. So that's really important as well. And then Mark 16, some misread that to think that lack of baptism will condemn us.

[35:52] No, it's the lack of faith. That's what matters. So baptism is an act of obedience following salvation, but it's not a prerequisite. All right? So it's just important to get around the right way there.

And we think about, like down through history, some of the things about baptism, as we talked about before, there's a bit of a sad history that the kind of medieval church had some practices that were not right.

You know, even like some of the early church fathers, they're not all necessarily of sound doctrine. But we see in the early stages, in the apostolic and early church, that they did practice believers' baptism and as people believed, often immediately after conversion.

So it was the standard mode there. But then by the second and third centuries, some people began viewing baptism as conferring grace. And infant baptism emerged after that.

So we see that things started to get corrupted in that early stage, even in the early stages. And then in the medieval period, you had infant baptism was predominant.

[37:02] There was a lot of that idea. And the Roman Catholic Church formalised baptism as a sacrament. So they taught that it conveyed saving

grace, which is not really true.

It's not a true teaching. And so they started to use a lot of sprinkling and pouring, especially for infants. But there were some that still held fast to what was really the biblical teaching, like the Waldensians.

And they would continue to practice believers' baptism, even though they were persecuted. And then you see there the next one, Reformation, the Anabaptists. Again, these were the ones that really they held fast to what was the biblical practice.

and even though there was people that were against them, like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, they kept doing infant baptism. They viewed it as a covenant sign.

But the Anabaptists, they were the ones who kept practising what was biblical baptism, that it was only for believers and that infant baptism was not valid, that baptism is a sign of obedience, not salvation.

[38:11] So you can see all that history there down through the title. It's kind of sad that there was such a time of false ideas about baptism, but now we're trying to do what really is biblical teaching and the kind of faithful church over history did continue to baptise people by immersion.

Next section there, we've got Baptist distinctives and the theological implications. So as Baptists, we've got several key principles. Believers' baptism, as we said before, it's only those who have personally trusted Christ can be baptised.

And so you want to make sure of that. That's why we try when someone says, I want to be baptised, you want to make sure they're clear about salvation, that they've trusted Christ as their saviour, and that they're definitely saved.

because we only practise believers' baptism. That we only practise immersion because that's the biblical symbol of it. And we teach that baptism is an order and it's not a sacrament.

So some churches call it a sacrament or a means of grace. It's not really that. It's just a symbolic act of obedience. It's not a sacrament or a means of grace.

[39:30] It doesn't convey any spiritual benefit as such. Baptism is administered under the authority of the local church. So it's not like you can just go and baptise yourself or there's some that might just treat baptism a bit lightly.

I know there's a bit of a trend these days. You know, they call it baptism in the park where they just have a mass baptism and it's like, it's all a bit flaky, a little bit so-so because when you baptise, you're added to the church.

It's important really to understand baptism is connected to your church commitment, to your church family that you belong to. You don't just go and get baptised without really identifying with a church really and there's that kind of sense of coming under the authority of a church.

Really, every Christian has direct access to God and there's voluntary church membership too. It marks entry into the local church. Some practical things to think about with baptism.

Who should be baptised? Really, every believer. If you're a believer, then there's nothing stopping you getting baptised really. If you understand that you've got faith in Christ, that you want to follow him in obedience, it's good to testify when there's an opportunity.

[40:53] Oftentimes, at baptisms, we try to give people a bit of a chance to share about their testimony and tell how they've trusted Christ. Now, sometimes it can be that there's a bit of a delay.

You know, I know for myself, I got saved and it was like a year and a half later or so that I got baptised because it's just one thing and another. It wasn't featured at the time and maybe it was maybe a lack of teaching in that church that I was in at that time.

I think the biblical practice really is if someone does get saved, then it should follow on fairly quickly after that but we know it doesn't always happen like that.

So, if the person's trusted Christ, then it really follows on to be baptised I think fairly soon after that. Who may administer baptism?

Again, it should be really under some authority of a local church that it's part of really that orderly thing as someone who identifies as a Christian and they ideally they belong to a church, they start to attend a church and get involved and serve in a church and so it's under that authority of a local

church.

[42:08] When should baptism occur? Like I say, as soon as possible after conversion. Then again, making sure that the candidate knows what it means, the significance of it. It's sometimes helpful for someone to do a class or a catechism and such things to kind of ground them a little on what the significance is so they understand what they're doing.

So, there is benefit in that but otherwise really there's no need to delay the baptism. It's not like someone has to perform or be a certain person before they get baptised.

Some have the idea well I've got to kind of get my act together and clean myself up before I get baptised. No, if you're saved then there's nothing really to necessitate your delay in getting baptised.

It should really follow on as a natural step, one of the first steps you take as a new believer. And then we see church membership too that they were baptised and they were added to the church. That's kind of a follow on from being baptised. Some common questions, just the next section there, common questions about baptism. What about those baptised as infants?

[43:17] you know, you think and I can say for myself my well-meaning parents baptised me as an infant, as a Roman Catholic family. Really, it wasn't a valid baptism.

I can understand that now that it's invalid because it doesn't have faith and it's not immersion. and so really, when someone says I was baptised as a baby, well, you really weren't baptised.

You were christened, you know, there was a ceremony but it wasn't baptism. So, if someone has the idea they were baptised as an infant, as a baby, well, you should still get baptised because that wasn't really a valid baptism.

You weren't a believer. Then the question, is baptism necessary for salvation? Again, many scriptures, Ephesians 2, is for by grace you're saved through faith.

Baptism is not necessary, it's not essential for your salvation but it is an act of obedience that follows salvation. So, it's not to negate it or downplay it but it's not that you're saved by the baptism.

[44:24] Question, what if someone dies before baptism? Again, it doesn't matter if they've trusted Christ, if they're a believer, they're saved, we're saved by faith, we're saved by God's grace, like the thief on the cross, that proves that too.

Salvation depends on faith, that's the essential. And what if someone doubts their salvation after baptism? Now, it could be someone in some of these churches where they baptise just about anybody, they're not really asking a believer, they're not making sure of their confession of Christ as their saviour.

It could be that some people were baptised and they weren't a believer at the time they were baptised. So in such a case you could say, well, you can be baptised. If that first baptism wasn't that you're a believer, then you can be baptised.

And so if someone comes to faith later, they should be baptised as a believer. But then some might just have doubt as a Christian, and we can all have times where we might doubt our salvation as much as we ought not to.

If we've trusted Christ as our saviour, then we are saved. If we've asked Jesus to be our saviour, we've believed on him, we've trusted him to pay for our sin, and we've made sure of that confession, then we are saved.

[45:39] We don't need to have any doubt about our salvation. Because once we are saved, we are forever saved. We've got that assurance. So just to conclude then, you see, hopefully there's some helpful overview here about baptism, what it means.

It's that biblical ordinance that shows our union with Christ, it shows our love for him, our commitment. It's a public testimony of our faith.

So we're showing the world, we're telling others when others come and might witness our baptism. We're showing that we're standing for Christ. It's a symbol of that spiritual reality that we've died to sin, we've been buried in our old life, we've risen to that new life in Christ.

Christ. And so we uphold those truths of baptism is by immersion and that's the full picture of what it means and that baptismal regeneration, the idea that you have to be baptized to be saved, that's

not a biblical idea.

And we've seen that down through history, the faithful believers who kept practicing biblical baptism, they were teaching the truth, they were standing firm for that doctrine against all the error that was going on and we are in their tread, we follow their example.

[46:55] So it's good if we can encourage others amongst us, I know we try to have a baptism service every so often and try to encourage those that are not baptized to obey Christ's command, it's just simply yeah I'm a Christian, I believe Jesus is my saviour, if you know what that means and you are saved then it's good for you to follow on as the next natural step.

In your faith in your walk with God to be baptized and you can glorify God through that and it's not really an optional thing, it's a joyful step of obeying our Lord of discipleship and it's a great public witness of your faith that you have in Christ.

A closing scripture here, it tells us there, therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of God the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

So we can take heart today about these trees, hopefully it's given you a good kind of overview of some of these things. Maybe we'll just close this part in prayer and we might have a little discussion time for further questions people might have.

Dear Lord, we thank you that you yourself took that step of baptism as you went down into the water when John the Baptist baptized you and Lord you set the example for us, that example of obedience unto you.

[48:22] Lord help us Lord to learn and to act upon these truths of baptism and help us Lord to realise the symbol of it as we show your death, burial and resurrection and even of our own spiritual life as we die to self and sin and we are alive in you our Lord and we have that new life in Christ as saved people.

Lord we praise you for these things and help us Lord to counter the false ideas about baptism and also to encourage others amongst our number to take the step of faith and that witness that we can have to our world.

We thank you Lord and praise you for all these things that we can take to heart and learn from these truths of your word. In Jesus name, Amen. Oh yeah, absolutely.

Yeah, I think little ones can be baptised with the consent of their parents naturally if they can believe. A little child can believe, a four or five year old can believe that Jesus died for their sins and rose again and they asked Jesus to be their saviour.

So there's no age limit really. I suppose it's subject to the parents permission and that kind of thing and making it clear that, understanding clearly that the young person, however old they might be, that they've definitely saved, that they've definitely trusted Jesus as their saviour.

[49:57] They're definitely a believer. Yeah, so no problem. Catholics call it a sacrament.

They've got different sacraments, don't they? I don't know how many they've got. Is it five or something? Something like that. Sacrament of marriage or the sacrament of this or that or the sacrament of the mass.

You know, they make things a sacrament as if there's some kind of sacred thing about it. I guess if you look up the word sacrament, it's got connotations that there's something like there's a means of grace that comes out of it.

There's some kind of magical thing happens out of it. And we don't call it a sacrament. We call it an ordinance, like the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, the ordinance of baptism.

Now, some churches have the ordinance of foot washing. We don't have that. I guess it's the sense that it's something, it is a sacred thing, but there's no magical thing that comes out of it.

[50:54] It's more of a symbol, like the symbol of the Lord's Supper, the cup and the bread is a symbol. Baptism is a symbol. It's a picture. And even the foot washing is a symbol in the sense that it's a symbolic of servanthood.

There's a sense that it's an ordinance. It's something that Christ has commanded that we ought to do it, that we ought to obey him. It's his command. But it's not a sacrament in the sense that the sun, some magical benefit out of it, some, yeah, something mysterious happens out of it like that. As Bible-believing Christians, we wouldn't call it a sacrament. It's just not a term that we would use. Although some occasionally might call it a sacrament, not realising what it means.

It's not what we would perceive it as, yeah. Yeah, you only get baptised one time. Yeah. Now, I gave that example where you might get someone who, they might have got baptised not really understanding salvation at the time.

And they might say, oh, look, I wasn't sure that I was a Christian when I got baptised. We'll allow that. Well, yeah, look, if you weren't sure, we can baptise you.

[52:11] Because that might really not have been a valid baptism, because they weren't a believer at that time. That can happen. But really, you only get baptised one time. And some have got the view, oh, you got baptised by this church or that church.

You weren't baptised by a Baptist church. We don't go to that extreme. Because there's some churches that teach you can only be a member of our church if you get baptised by our church. It doesn't matter where you got baptised by someone before.

We don't teach that. I think that's a bit of a false idea. I think if you were a believer and you got baptised, even if it was a bit of a funny church, if you were a believer and you got baptised in it, then that's a valid baptism.

There's no need for you to get baptised again. So one time, you get baptised one time. With communion, the frequency of communion, that's up to the church. Some practice it monthly, three-monthly.

We like to practice it every week. It's not a hard and fast thing on that one. I know some Baptist churches don't like doing it very often. And that's just how they do it.

[53:16] I'm not saying that's wrong. But our local practices, we like to do it every Sunday morning. I think if that person was a believer at that time, then they're saved.

It was a valid baptism. I mean, we all can backslide and have our ups and downs and get out of God's will. We can get out of fellowship.

But if we're saved, we're still saved. Once we have trusted Christ, our salvation is secure and sure. We're in his hands. He saved us. It's by virtue of his blood.

It's not by any works that we've done in getting saved or in keeping being saved or maintaining our salvation. We don't receive salvation by our works and we don't maintain salvation by our works.

But if that person was assuredly saved and they trusted Christ and they were acting in accord with that faith in Christ, then that baptism is valid.

[54:22] Yeah. And it's just that backslidden time. Hey, that person might have been out of God's will and displeasing the Lord, but they're still saved. They're still a son of God, even though they're disobedient.

a disobedient child, they're still a child of the Father. And we've still got the relationship of Father and Son, even if we are astray. Even if we're a bad son, we're still a son.

Yeah. But that said, someone might still want to get baptised again. It's not necessary. I don't see it as being necessary. Yeah.