

“I am FBC Diana”

Baptism & Communion

Intro: Water Baptism and Communion (or Lord’s Supper) are both basic ordinances of any biblical church. While both of these are fundamental to biblical Christianity, it may be easily recognized that much confusion exists in the mind of churchgoers about them. Who is to be baptized? When should a person be baptized? Why should a person be baptized? These questions will garner a range of answers from the average Southern Baptist congregation. These same questions asked of Communion may provide no clearer or unified answers. Because FBC Diana is a Southern Baptist Church, and because these issues are important to the life and ministry of any biblical church, we are taking time to explain the biblical answers to questions like these.

Romans 6:1-11

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Baptism

John MacArthur – “It is safe to say, that there is presently the largest unbaptized population of professing Christians in the history of the church. And for most of them it isn’t really something they’re too concerned about.” “This reality,” he said, “failing to take baptism seriously, is also, likely symptomatic of the independence and unfaithfulness of professing Christians who function like autonomous consumers, rather than under church theology and authority.... [Few] things could be more unmistakable than the fact that the command of Scripture is to baptize and to be baptized.”¹

What is Baptism?

(3 points)

1. Summary answers to the question:

- A. FBC Diana Confession of Faith – “We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believers faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believers death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his or her faith in the final resurrection

¹ <http://www.gty.org/resources/articles/A360/case-for-believers-baptism-the-credo-baptist-position?Term=baptism>

of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lords Supper.”²

B. London Baptist Confession 1689 – “Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.”³

2. Baptism is a *command of Christ and His Apostles*.

- A. Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).
- B. Peter said (with the ‘rest of the apostles’ in agreement, based on Acts 2:37), “**Repent and be baptized every one of you...**” (Acts 2:38).
- C. Paul puts this command – *be baptized, all of you who would follow Christ* – into practice (Acts 16:15) and assumes that it is a universal practice among all Christians (1 Cor. 1:13; Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:1-11).

3. Baptism is a *symbol*.

- A. Note the metaphorical language in the Primary Passage
 - i. “**all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were *baptized into his death***” (v3)
 - ii. “**We were *buried...* with him *by* [through, by way of] **baptism**” (v4)**
 - iii. “**We were *buried...* with him *by baptism into death*” (v4)**
 - iv. “**we have been *united with him in a death like his***” (v5)
 - v. “**our old self was *crucified with him***” (v6)
 - vi. “**we have *died with Christ***” (v8)
 - vii. “**you must *consider yourselves dead***” (v11)
- B. Consider the metaphorical imagery of the ordinance itself, paralleling the physical ceremony with spiritual regeneration.
 - i. Water washes clean
 - ii. The one being baptized is being ‘buried.’
 - iii. The one being baptized is being ‘resurrected from death.’

² <http://www.fbcdiana.org/we-believe-at-fbc/>

³ <http://www.arbca.com/1689-chapter29>

- iv. Baptism is not something that can be done by only one person – at the very least there must be a baptizer and one being baptized.
 - v. There is a prescribed pronouncement of authority upon the ceremony – “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19).
- C. Believing baptism to be anything other than symbolic is to set the Bible against itself – and this undermines the only true authority to which one may appeal for the entire argument.
- i. Paul says, “*by grace you have been saved through faith*” (Eph. 2:8)
 - ii. It is clear that the Holy Scriptures are that which “*make you wise for salvation [which is] through faith in Christ Jesus*” (2 Tim. 3:15)
 - iii. Paul says elsewhere, “*10 [With] the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.’ ... 13 For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’*” (Romans 10:10-13).
 - iv. A clear understanding of the Gospel is that those who hear the message and believe in or trust in the object of such Good News – namely Jesus Christ – are saved because of who He is and what He has done. It follows, then, that those who trust/believe will advance in obedience (James 2:14-26; John 14:23-24), and baptism is rightly viewed as an introductory or elementary act of obedience, but their obedience in no way contributes to their justification before God.
- D. While there may be some passages that seem to associate baptism with salvation so closely that the latter is dependent upon the former, these are not contradictions to the rest of Scripture. Closer attention to these passages will render the Bible’s uniform and coherent perspective on the subject. It is helpful for Christians to know that the Bible understands baptism as an inevitable, necessary, and introductory experience of all genuine believers.

Baptism is a symbol of at least 3 things:

A. *Dying to self*

- i. Primary Passage – “*all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death...*” (v3-4)

1. RSB – “Baptism, the sign and seal of initial union with Christ, is the burial service for the ‘old self’ (v6) as well as the inauguration ceremony for the new person in Christ (v4).”⁴
- ii. Primary Passage – “*We know that our old self was crucified with him*” (v6)
 1. RSB – “While our ‘old self’ includes pre-conversion life, it includes much more, and should be interpreted in light of 5:12-21 to mean all that we were through our union with Adam. We are to think of all this as having been nailed to the cross to die.”⁵
- iii. Primary Passage – “*you also must consider yourselves dead...*” (v11)

B. *Beginning a new life*

- i. Primary Passage – “*just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life*” (v4)
 1. New identity
 - a. “I am no longer the sum total of what I have done or who I have been.”
 - b. “I am IN Christ Jesus! I am righteous before God, I am beloved by the King, and I am part of a priestly family.”
 2. New beliefs
 - a. “I am not the center of the universe, and I am not the measure of truth or morality.”
 - b. “Christ is the central focus of everything, and His words are trustworthy and authoritative.”
 3. New practices
 - a. “I will not live according to my own desires or wisdom.”
 - b. “Christ is both my teacher and my example; I will follow Him.”

C. *Submitting to Christ’s authority*

- i. Just as humans are ‘*enslaved to sin,*’ so we become ‘*slaves to Christ*’ upon trusting / believing in Him (Rom. 6:17-19).

⁴ Reformation Study Bible. See study notes on this passage.

⁵ Reformation Study Bible. See study notes on this passage.

1. Christians “**would no longer be enslaved to sin**” when their “**old self was crucified**” with Christ (v6).
- ii. Just as humans suffer under the dominion of sin and death, so we take on a new King and a new Kingdom when we are brought into Christ Jesus.
 2. Christ lives (v9) “**never to die again,**” for “**death no longer has dominion over him.**” The Apostle Paul continues to reason, “**So you also**” (v11) “**must consider yourselves dead to sin**” [that is dead to sin’s power and death’s dominion (Rom. 5:12-21)] “**and alive to God in Christ Jesus**” [that is born again into the kingdom of God (John 3:1-8)].
- iii. It is important to also note the individual submission of the new believer to the authority of Christ as exhibited in and through the local church.
 3. The new believer is not pronouncing a baptism upon him/herself; rather such a pronouncement is being made by a figure of authority in the context of the local church – usually a pastor.
 4. The new believer is not performing his/her own baptism, but the local church body is authorizing and endorsing the baptism.

Who should be Baptized?

(2 Points)

1. **ALL those who genuinely believe or trust in Christ (His person and work) as much as they are able.**
 - A. Because it is a command of Christ, it is clearly disobedience to neglect such a command.
2. **ONLY those who genuinely trust or believe in Christ (His person and work) as much as they are able.**
 - A. Genuine Christians will vary in their ability to articulate their trust or belief in Christ, but such saving faith must precede Baptism.
 - i. Younger and less intellectually capable converts may struggle to express their faith.
 1. An inability to articulate the Gospel plainly does not necessarily disqualify anyone from being baptized, but it should give us all pause before we baptize.

- ii. It may be appropriate to be more analytical with some cerebral individuals.
 - 1. Superior intelligence in no way disqualifies someone from being baptized, but it should cause us to be very specific and intellectually honest about what we are doing and why.
- B. This obviously precludes any unconverted person from being baptized.
 - i. Biblical Christians in no way view baptism as anything other than a profession and affirmation of one's possession of saving faith. Therefore, the unconverted person blasphemes the ordinance by his/her participation in it.
 - ii. Youngsters who do not yet understand (at least at their level) the Gospel are among the group of unconverted sinners. We, obviously, pray that children would not remain unconverted, but we also understand that baptism cannot have any affect on them being otherwise.
 - iii. There is a marvelous account of the Apostle Peter arguing for the admission of some believers participating in the baptism ordinance (Acts 10:44-48). This is helpful because it not only provides an example of water baptism following conversion (in the sense of chronological experiences), it also provides Peter's rational argument for admitting these people as participants in the ordinance of baptism. The logic goes: *They have been converted, as evidenced by the Holy Spirit power; therefore, they ought to follow in water baptism.*

Conclusion: Because Christ has commanded all His followers to be baptized; all true Christians should submit themselves to this ordinance and enjoy it as a symbol of their spiritual baptism into Christ and His Kingdom - forever.

If you have been baptized, I would encourage you to ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Was I baptized according to biblical authority and description?**
- 2) Was I baptized after I truly believed / trusted Christ?**
- 3) Was I baptized as a symbolic gesture of my identification with Christ?**
- 4) Was I baptized as an entrance into new life and a departure from my former life - living to Christ and dying to self?**

If you have not been baptized, I would encourage you to ask yourself these questions:

1) Have I been uninformed?

A. This option has hopefully been removed as an excuse.

2) Have I been indifferent or uninterested?

A. This seems a precarious position after noting Christ's clear command.

3) Have I been proud?

A. The Christian should humble him/herself before Christ's lordship.

4) Have I been defiant?

A. God help us all to run from such a posture towards Christ.

5) Have I actually trusted Christ as Savior and Lord?

A. May God grant us grace and cause us all to truly know and trust Him.

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 – “23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

What is Communion or the Lord’s Supper?

(3 Points)

1. Summary answers to the question:

A. FBC Diana’s Confession of Faith – “We believe the Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, who are in good standing with this local congregation or another of like faith and practice, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.”⁶

B. London Baptist Confession 1689 – “The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual

⁶ <http://www.fbcdiana.org/we-believe-at-fbc/>

remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death, confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.”⁷

2. Communion or Lord’s Supper is a command of Christ.

- A. [Luke 22:19-20](#) – “And [Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. *Do this in remembrance of me.*”
- B. [1 Corinthians 11:25](#) – “25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. **Do this, as often as you drink it, *in remembrance of me.***”

3. Communion is a symbol.

- A. Note the metaphorical language of the primary passage:
 - i. “***This is my body*** which is for you” (v24)
 - ii. “***This cup is the new covenant in my blood***” (v25)
- B. See Jesus’ metaphorical use of such language elsewhere:
 - i. [John 6:53-54](#) – “So Jesus said to them, ‘ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”
 - 1. Jesus clearly intends a metaphorical or symbolic meaning here because He says this just a few seconds earlier: “[I am the living bread that came down from heaven](#)” (v51). In this way He identifies Himself as the fulfillment of the OT type or shadow of the “[manna](#)” that the OT Hebrews ate in the wilderness (v49).
- C. Christ was neither distributing His literal body as “manna” in the OT wilderness, nor is He spreading His literal body to all Christians today through various qualities and styles of unleavened bread.
 - i. One may find each of the following positions articulated at the links beside them.
 - 1. Transubstantiation
 - a. <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/eucha4.htm>
 - 2. Consubstantiation

⁷ <http://www.arbca.com/1689-chapter30>

- a. <http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Consubstantiation.html>
- 3. Reformed or Protestant view – Symbolism
 - a. <http://www.arbca.com/1689-chapter30>

Communion is a symbol of at least 3 things:

A. Sharing in the substitutionary death of Christ

- ii. We remember that Christ has died for me!
 - 1. Jesus said, “**This is my body which is *for you*. Do this in remembrance of me**” (v24).
 - a. While remembrance can be less than a sharing in what Christ has done, Christians do not merely remember that *Christ did die*. Christians remember and delight in the reality that “*Christ did die for me.*”
- iii. We remember that it was Christ’s sacrifice that was necessary.
 - 1. We abandon all hope in self once more, and we announce afresh our utter dependence upon another – namely the Lord Jesus Christ.
- iv. We remember that we – our ‘old selves’ – were nailed to that cross.
 - 1. Paul says, “[you have died to the law through the body of Christ...](#)” (Rom. 7:4).

B. Participation the “*one body*” of Christ that now is

- v. [1 Corinthians 10:16-17](#) – “[16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.](#)”
 - 1. We are no longer individuals worshiping God from our own positions of grace, but we are a united body – a new single worshiper.

C. Membership in the Church – the Bride of Christ awaiting her Husband

- vi. Jesus said, ““**This is my body which is *for you*. Do this in remembrance of me.**” 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the ***new covenant*** in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

1. The “New Covenant” is the promise of God to save by His grace, and this promise has been personified in the person and work of Christ.
2. Those who participate in Communion or Lord’ Supper, proclaim the ground or basis of the New Covenant and the hope that such a promise provides – “We shall be like Him and with Him forever!”
 - a. It is also helpful to note that the proclamation is both for the proclaimer, for our souls are often in need of courage and trust, and for the observer, for those who may observe such a peculiar ordinance may wonder at the object to which it points.

Who should partake of Communion or Lord’s Supper?

(2 Points)

1. **ALL those who genuinely believe or trust in Christ (His person and work) as much as they are able.**
 - A. Because it is a command of Christ, it is clearly disobedience to neglect such a command.
2. **ONLY those who genuinely trust or believe in Christ (His person and work) as much as they are able.**
 - A. The same explanations given above on account of baptism should be observed here.
 - B. It may be noted that baptism has biblically and historically been the initial ordinance of all true Christians – that is baptism is to be experienced prior to one partaking of Communion or Lord’s Supper.

Conclusion: Because Christ has commanded all His followers to partake of Communion or the Lord’s Supper; all true Christians should submit themselves to this ordinance and enjoy it as a symbol of their spiritual inclusion in Christ and His Kingdom – forever.