

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"

June 29, 2015

Christian Baptism

JOHN 1:32-33 NKJV – (32) And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. **(33)** I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit' ".

Christian baptism is one of two ordinances that Jesus instituted for the church. Just before His ascension, Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (**Matthew 28:19-20**). These instructions specify that the church is responsible to teach Jesus' word, make disciples, and baptize those disciples. These things are to be done everywhere ("all nations") until "the very end of the age." So, if for no other reason, baptism has importance because of Jesus' command.

Baptism was practiced before the founding of the church. The Jews of ancient times would baptize proselytes to signify the converts' "cleansed" nature. John the Baptist used baptism to prepare the way of the Lord, requiring *everyone*, not just Gentiles, to be baptized because *everyone* needs repentance. However, John's baptism, signifying repentance, is not the same as Christian baptism, as seen in **Acts 18:24-26** and **19:1-7**. Christian baptism has a deeper significance.

Baptism is to be done in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit—this is what makes it "Christian" baptism. It is through this ordinance that a person is admitted into the fellowship of the church. When we are saved, we are "baptized" by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, which is the church. **1 Corinthians 12:13** says, "We were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." Baptism by water is a "reenactment" of the baptism by the Spirit.

Christian baptism is the means by which a person makes a public profession of faith and discipleship. In the waters of baptism a person says, wordlessly, "I confess faith in Christ; Jesus has cleansed my soul from sin, and I now have a new life of sanctification."

SCRIPTURE READING: ACTS 8:35-38

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: "One Lord, one faith and one baptism."