

Baptism

In the New Testament every baptism is both “total” and “transitional”

- **“TOTAL”** in that it **involves the whole person** and the **whole personality** of the one being baptised.
- **“TRANSITIONAL”** “to pass from one stage or state to another” – in that, for the person being baptised, it marks the passing out of one stage or realm of experience into a new stage or realm of experience never previously entered into.
 - ▶ E.G This can be compared to the opening and closing of a door – passing through from the old into something new – and closing the door behind you.

This teaching is a Foundational Principle and it is vital:

- To an understanding of salvation.
- To a life of obedience to God’s Word.
- To a life of power in witnessing for God.
- To a life of spiritual and physical surrender to the will of God.

BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Cor 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body”.

WHAT IS “THE BODY OF CHRIST”?

- **Eph 1:22-23** “And (God) put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”.
- **The church “the ekklesia” – “the called out ones”** – the assembly or congregation of believers – is the body of Christ.
 - ▶ **He is the head** and the members of the congregation are His body through whom He moves and acts and reveals Himself.
 - ▶ The Bible, in fact, uses the human body to illustrate the relationship that exists between believers and the Lord Jesus, and between believers and believers within a congregation.
 - 1 Cor 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually”.
- Although one body, it has many members.
- The body must **operate in absolute harmony and unity**.
- Members have **different functions** e.g. “hands, feet, eyes, etc.”
- Every Member is necessary for the development of the whole body and we are **not independent but interdependent**.
- **God has placed** each member in the body as it has pleased Him.
- There should **never be division** in the body –each member should care for the others.

The church is not a building! Nor is it an organisation! It is a living organism pulsating with the very life of Jesus that flows through every member!

HOW DOES A PERSON BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?

- It is the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).
 - No person or denomination or organisation can make anyone a member of the body of Christ, nor can it be achieved by infant baptism, by church membership or by “being born a Christian”.
 - **It is the work of the Holy Spirit,**
 - ▶ in response to a repentant sinner’s cry for mercy and salvation, granting them repentance, washing them in the blood of the Lord Jesus, giving them faith to believe and to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, causing them to be born again and in one moment of time immersing them into the body of Christ, at one with Him, filled with His resurrection life!

When the Holy Spirit baptises us into Christ:

- **Rom 6:3-6** “Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore **buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,** we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that **our old self was crucified** with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin”
- We are baptised into His death. **As far as God is concerned, our old carnal nature – the “old man” – is crucified with Jesus at Calvary. We die with Him!**
- We are buried with Him. The same immersion into Christ means that our **old nature was buried with Him**
- Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, even so we are raised with Him in resurrection life and power.
 - ▶ **2 Cor 5:17** “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away, behold all things become new”.
 - ▶ **Eph 2:6** “He has raised us up together (with Christ), and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!” = position change
 - ▶ **Col 3:1-4** “If you then being raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth! For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory”.
 - ▶ **Col 2:11-13** “In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature,[a] not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision

done by Christ, 12having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature,[b] God made you[c] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins..."

- ▶ **Gal 2:20** "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

WHAT ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS MEMBERS?

- **Eph 4:11-16** "For the **whole body to grow up** into spiritual maturity."
- **Eph 5:27** "To be a glorious church – without spot, wrinkle or blemish when Jesus comes for His bride." **WE MUST BELONG TO A LOCAL CONGREGATION**
- **Heb 13:17** "**Obey those who have the rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you**".
 - ▶ In every instance where the operation of the church is described for us, it is the local congregation that is referred to as "the church".
 - Christians, who refuse to be committed to a local body and claim to belong to the "Universal Church", are **unscriptural, undisciplined, unprotected and unable to face responsibility**.
 - They are spiritual hobos, homeless and always a problem to God's work. We do well to remember :-
 - ▶ E.G: **The hand cut off from the body dies! The coal removed from the fire dies!**
- **SUBMIT YOURSELF TO THE ELDERS**
 - ▶ Heb 13:17 "Obey those who have the rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you".
- **WE MUST BE ACTIVE AND FUNCTIONING.**
 - ▶ Eph 4:15-16 "Speaking the truth in love, we grow up in all things into Him who is the Head (Christ),from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, **according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love**". ****!!**
 - **Development and growth only comes through the regular use and exercise of every part of our bodies. We have no spare parts! Any part that doesn't function has a detrimental effect on the whole body.**

WE MUST BE FAITHFUL IN OUR ATTENDANCE / LIFESTYLE / SOWING

- ▶ **Heb 10:24-25** "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the Day approaching".
- ▶ **Acts 2:42** "And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in prayers".
- ▶ **Mark 12:17** Well, then," Jesus said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." His reply completely amazed them.
- ▶ **Mal 3:8-12** "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," (curse - under world sway, culture)