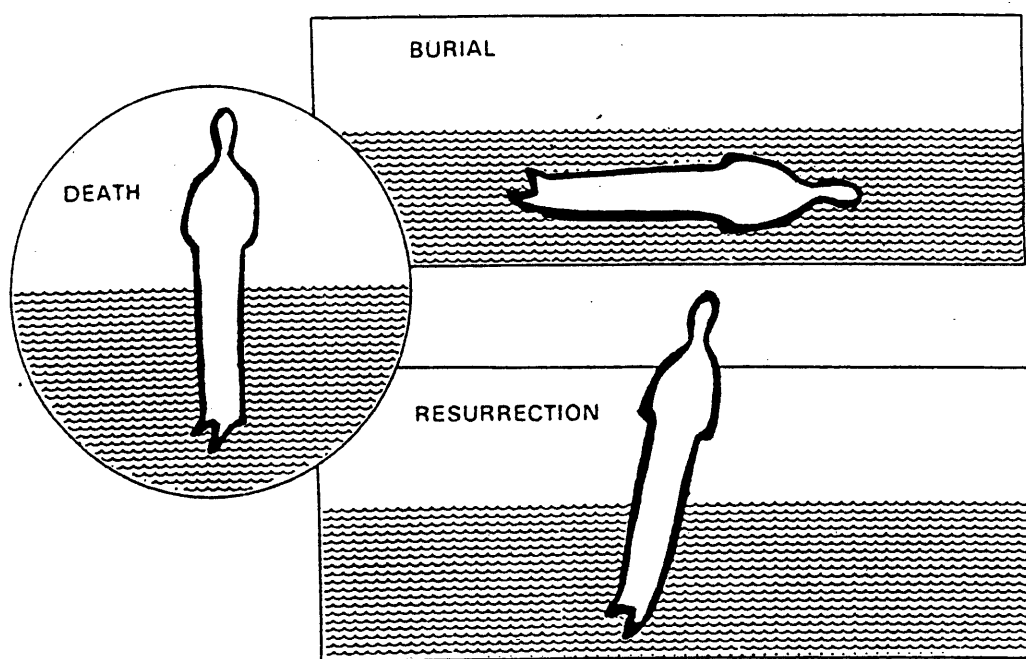
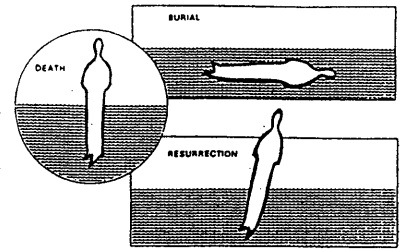


Baptism: A Personal Option or a Plenary Order?



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

Baptism: A Personal Option or a Plenary Order?



1A. INTRODUCTION

Christ gave to the church two ordinances which are to be kept until the rapture. These ordinances are outward rites appointed by Christ and administered by the Church as visible signs of the saving truth of the Gospel.

Because the ordinances are given by the One who has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18), one would expect the Church would obey them implicitly, yet in no area of the practice of the Church has there been greater division.

In contrast to Romanism, which holds to seven sacraments, Baptists have historically taught that there are two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Especially in relation to the rite of baptism, those who are of Baptist persuasion distinguish themselves in maintaining, in contrast to other groups, that the only proper mode of baptism is immersion, that the only proper subjects of baptism are believers and that the mandate of baptism extends to every believer.

Since approximately four-fifths of Christendom does not practice baptism by immersion and since Baptists have frequently been castigated for their strict adherence to their tenets, it is well to set forth to each generation the biblical position of Baptists. The given limits of time and space force us to limit our discussion to the question of the mandate and mode of baptism. To put it differently: Is baptism commanded for every believer? Is immersion the only mode?

2A. THE MANDATE OF BAPTISM

1b. The command given by Christ:

1c. The mandate:

Just prior to His ascension, Christ gave one final mandate to His disciples:

Matt. 28:19

19 ¶ 'Go ye therefore, ^kand
^lteach all nations, baptizing
them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy
Ghost:



2c. The meaning:

The literal rendering of the Master's mandate shows that there is one imperative, with three circumstantial participles, allowing us to formulate the command thus:

THEREFORE
 MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL RACES
 HAVING GONE
 BAPTIZING THEM
 IN THE NAME OF
 THE FATHER
 THE SON
 THE HOLY SPIRIT
 TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE
 ALL THINGS
 WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED UNTO YOU



Christ's commission to the Church is to disciple all nations. This involves going with the Gospel, baptizing believers, and teaching Christian truth. Baptism thus comprises an integral part of the Great Commission. Those churches who make baptism optional for their church members are not fulfilling the Great Commission. A.H. Strong correctly observes that:

There is no intimation whatever that the command of baptism is limited, or to be limited, in its application,-- that it has been or ever is to be repealed; and, until some evidence of such limitation or repeal is produced, the statute must be regarded as universally binding (Systematic Theology [1896] p. 522).

2b. The command obeyed by the Church:

1c. The pattern of the early Church.

It is important to acknowledge not simply that Christ's teachings are inspired, but that the Church's practices are inspired patterns for us insofar as the Church followed the commands of Christ.

The sequence of the events in evangelism is significant:

Acts 2:41

41 ¶ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them ^aabout three thousand souls.

42 And they ^bcontinued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in ^dbreaking of bread, and in prayers.



Those who believed the Gospel were baptized and then they joined the fellowship of the church, which included doctrinal teaching, the Lord's Supper and prayer.

The picture derived from the history of the early Church is that baptism followed faith and baptism was administered to every believer immediately upon conversion:

The evidence for the importance and the immediacy of baptism in the early Church is overwhelming:

Acts 2:41- "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Acts 8:12 - "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Acts 8:36-37 - "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 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."

Acts 10:47 - "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

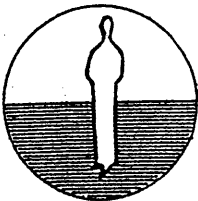
Acts 16:14-15- "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

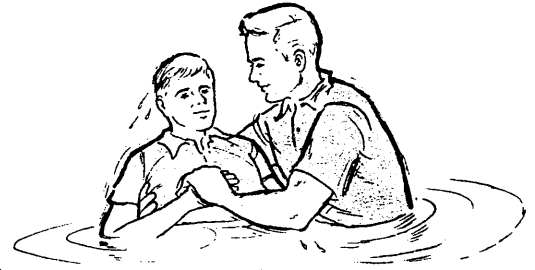
Acts 16:32-33 - "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

Acts 18:8 - "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

Acts 19:5 - "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

(Relevant phrases are underscored for emphasis)





2c. The problem of the priority of baptism:

Several passages concerning baptism seem to suggest that baptism is a requirement for salvation. At least some suggest that the Bible teaches baptismal regeneration. However, when these verses are interpreted in light of the importance and urgency given to baptism in the early Church, they yield most naturally the teaching that the inward decision of faith was immediately followed by the outward demonstration of faith through baptism.

The personal identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection was promptly followed by the public demonstration of that decision. Apparent problem passages such as the two below must be understood in that light.

Mark 16:16 - "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Acts 2:38 - "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

It was unthinkable for a Christian in the early church to believe without being baptized. To 1st century believers baptism was the immediate step of obedience once the inward decision had been made. Identification with Christ was demonstrated by immersion in water.

3b. The command practiced today:

Christendom is greatly divided on the meaning and mode of baptism:

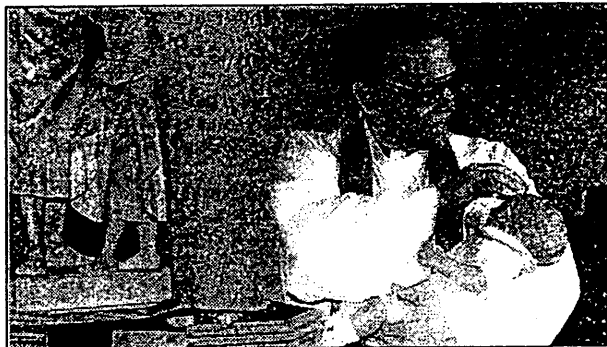
1c. The perversion of the meaning:

Many denominations ascribe not just sacramental but salvatory value to baptism. A sacrament is "a visible means of invisible grace." Numerous groups teach that at baptism salvation is obtained by the individual.

1d. The Lutheran Church generally espouses baptismal regeneration. The Dec. 23, 1987, issue of the Des Moines Register contains an advertisement for baptismal services at St. Johns Lutheran Church:

Baptism

God's Greatest Gift



Lutheran Christians Believe:

Baptism is the way God adopts us into the family. We become the sons and daughters of God.
Baptism is entirely a gift. We do nothing to deserve it.
Baptism is our new birth and when God saves us.
Baptism is when we receive the Holy Spirit.



Baptisms
Christmas Eve
7:00 p.m. Service

Infants: because it's a gift of family from God.

Adults: because it's the way we become a part
of Christ's church.

Call Church Office at 243-7691 to inquire about your baptism.

St. Johns Lutheran Church

Sixth Avenue and Keo Way, Des Moines, Iowa 50309

- 2 d. The Roman Catholic Church traditionally has taught that baptism saves by washing away all original sin. The popular manual on religion, My Catholic Faith, takes the standard approach:

127. The Sacrament of Baptism

WHAT IS BAPTISM?—Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven.

Baptism is the very *first* sacrament we may receive. Unless we are baptized, we are forbidden to receive any other sacraments. Baptism has the three essentials of a sacrament: (a) it was instituted by Christ; (b) it is a sensible sign; and (c) it confers grace.

1. The sacrament of Baptism was *instituted* by Christ at His own Baptism, and commanded at His Ascension.

He said to the Apostles: "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). The Apostles obeyed His command on the very day of Pentecost. In answer to the question of the multitudes, "What shall we do?" after Peter's first sermon, Peter said, "Repent,

and *be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). About 3000 persons were baptized.

2. Christ instituted Baptism as the sacrament of *spiritual rebirth*, making the baptized members of God's family. Baptism infuses grace into their souls, making them supernaturally like to God.

As children of God they are given the right to enter heaven, and to gain merit by their good work. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

3. The *sacramental grace* of Baptism is a regenerative grace that helps those baptized to live well the supernatural life they have begun as children of God.

This sacramental grace entitles them to actual graces needed to live a Christian life.

St. Peter said: "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

WHAT SINS DOES BAPTISM TAKE AWAY?

Baptism takes away original sin, and also actual sins and all the punishment due to them, if the person baptized be guilty of any actual sins and truly sorry for them.

1. Baptism is the only sacrament that can *remit original sin*. It cleanses us from all sin, original and actual, and remits all punishment due.

If an adult receives baptism with the proper dispositions, that is, with faith and contrition, his actual sins are taken away with original sin, as well as all temporal punishment due to his actual sins. Thus if an adult dies immediately after baptism, he goes *straight to heaven*, whatever the sins he may have committed. "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

2. When Baptism takes away original sin, it gives our souls the new life of *sanctifying grace*. Thus by Baptism we are born again.

2c. The positions concerning the mode:

- 1d. Sprinkling:
Those who sprinkle generally see it as a sign of the covenant, taking the place of circumcision in the Old Testament.
- 2d. Pouring:
Churches practicing affusion see it as a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- 3d. Trine Immersion:
Grace Brethren and others who practice trine immersion see it as a picture of the work of the triune God in our salvation.
- 4d. Single Immersion:
Baptists and others who practice this mode see it as a representation of and the sinners identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

3A. THE MODE OF BAPTISM

Despite contrary practice by much of Christendom, it can be shown that the only proper mode of baptism is immersion. A seven-fold proof can be adduced:

1b. The connection of baptism with proselyte baptism:

Proselytes ("newcomers") were individuals who had converted to Judaism. After a number of rituals in preparation for the admission to Judaism, such as circumcision, the final step, that of baptism was taken.

A detailed description of proselyte baptism is given by M'Clintock and Strong:

All this, however, was not enough. The convert was still a "stranger." His children would be counted as bastards, i. e. aliens. Baptism was required to complete his admission. When the wound caused by circumcision was healed, he was stripped of all his clothes, in the presence of the three witnesses who had acted as his teachers, and who now acted as his sponsors, the "fathers" of the proselyte (*Ketubh. xi; Erubh. xv, 1*), and led into the tank or pool. As he stood there, up to his neck in water, they repeated the great commandments of the law. These he promised and vowed to keep, and then, with an accompanying benediction, he plunged under the water. To leave one hand-breadth of his body unsubmerged would have vitiated the whole rite (*Otho, Lex. Rabb. s. v. Baptismus*).

(*Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, VIII, p. 661).

Proselyte baptism appears to be the antecedent of Christian baptism. As the proselyte identifies himself with Judaism, so the convert identifies himself with Christ and his message through total immersion. Baptismal pools (*mikvoth*) serving for ritual baths and proselyte baptism can be seen in large numbers in Israel.

2b. The meaning of baptizo:

When the Savior commanded the disciples to baptize converts, he employed the word baptizo, which is unmistakable in its meaning. It always means immersion. To speak of baptism and make it refer to something other than immersion is a contradiction in terms.

in
all
un-

proper
on, his
as well
ual sins.
baptism,
as he may
as baptized

original sin,
sanctifying
born again.

Various Greek words express the idea of washing, sprinkling, pouring, moistening. Instead, the word baptizo is used. Hiscox is correct in his summary:

Baptizo is found eighty times in the New Testament, and is a derivative from bapto. In nearly all it is used to designate this ordinance--and no other word is ever used for that purpose. Baptisma, a baptism, an immersion, is found twenty-two times, and baptismos, the act of baptizing, or immersing, four times, both formed from baptiso. . . this word means to dip, plunge, or immerse; and that, primarily and properly, it means nothing else. Our Saviour, in leaving a command universally binding on His disciples, meant doubtless to express it so plainly and so positively, that none could misunderstand Him. Therefore, this particular word and no other has been used, because it means just what He intended, and nothing else. (The New Directory for Baptist Churches, p. 396, italics in the original)

Any Greek lexicon will confirm that the basic meaning of the word baptizo is that of immersing. The prestigious Theological Dictionary of the New Testament gives the following definition:

βάπτω, βαπτίζω.

A. The meaning of βάπτω and βαπτίζω.

βάπτω, "to dip in or under" (trans.): Hom. Od., 9, 392; Aesch. Prom., 863: ἐν σφαγαῖσι βάψασα ξίφος; "to dye," used in Josephus only in this sense, Bell., 4, 563; Ant., 3, 102; βάμμα, "dyed material," Ant., 3, 129; P. Par., 52, 10; 53, 5 (163/2 B.C.): βαπτά, "dyed or coloured clothes."

(I, 539)

The more conservative Dictionary of New Testament Theology has the same definition:

βαπτίζω βάπτω (*baptō*), dip; βαπτίζω (*baptizō*), dip, immerse, submerge, baptize; βαπτισμός (*baptismos*), dipping, washing; βάπτισμα (*baptisma*) baptism.

(I, 144)

Arndt and Gingrich, translators of Bauer's Greek-German Lexicon have the same definition:

βαπτίζω fut. βαπτίσω; 1 aor. ἐβάπτισα, mid. ἐβαπτισάμην; impf. pass. ἐβαπτιζόμην; pf. ptc. βεβαπτισμένος; 1 aor. ἐβαπτίσθην; 1 fut. βαπτισθήσομαι (Hippocr., Pla., esp. Polyb. +; UPZ 70, 13 [152/1]; PGM 5, 69; LXX; Philo; Joseph.; Sib. Or. 5, 478) *dip, immerse*, mid. *dip oneself, wash* (in non-Christian lit. also 'plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm', etc.), in our lit. only in ritual sense (as Plut.; Herm. Wr. [s. 2a below]; PGM 4, 44; 7, 441 λουσάμενος κ. βαπτισάμενος; 4 Km 5: 14; Sir 34: 25; Jdth 12: 7).

(p. 131)

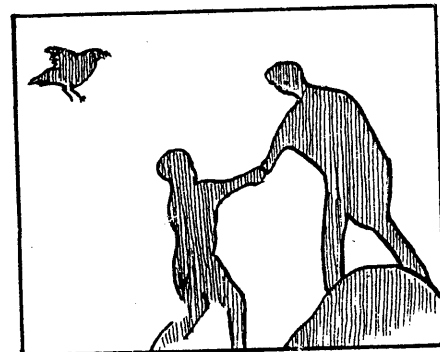


Figure 75. Catacomb depiction of the baptism

No one has made a more definitive study of the word baptizo than T. J. Conant. He published his findings in The Meaning, and Use of Baptizein in 1864. Conant insists that the word baptizein (to baptize) should always be translated by "immerse" in our Bibles, otherwise we are guilty of mistranslating. He concludes:

It is simply the rule, when one professes to communicate the words of another, to tell the truth as to what he has said. Any author, purposely mistranslated or obscured, is falsified by his translator. Just so far as this is done, the translation is a literary forgery; for it conceals while it professes to exhibit what the author has said, or it represents him as saying that which he did not say. When applied to the Word of God, the rule is one of paramount force. . . . The word baptizein, during the whole existence of the Greek as a spoken language, had a perfectly defined and unvarying import. In its literal use it meant, as has been shown, to put entirely into or under a liquid, or other penetrable substance, generally water, so that the object was wholly covered by the inclosing element.

(p. 187)

Baptists are completely correct in their understanding of the biblical term "to baptize." Hiscox makes an excellent point:

We again ask, why did the sacred writers, from all the words in the Greek language, select only and always that one which strictly means to dip or immerse, to express the act by which the sacred ordinance which Christ had commanded, and which His disciples administered, should be performed? The only consistent answer is, because baptism means immersion, and nothing else--and nothing but immersion is baptism. (p. 398)

The above proof should be conclusive that immersion is the proper mode of baptism. However, it can also be shown that the meaning of baptism determines the mode. The only mode which satisfies the biblical demands is that of immersion.

3b. The symbolic meaning of baptism:

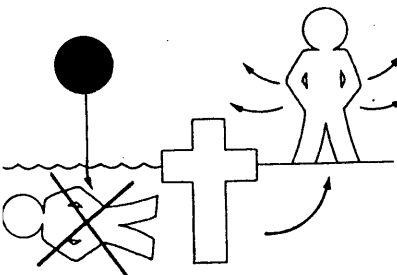
Only two New Testament passages clearly teach the meaning of baptism:

Col. 2:12:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Romans 6:3-4:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized 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.



If the meaning of baptism is the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, then this is best pictured by immersion. On the other hand, if purification is the meaning, sprinkling would do. If the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is in view, then pouring could be the mode. If the work of the triune God is encompassed, then trine immersion would be appropriate. The meaning of baptism, however, clearly stated in these passages, is the believer's death with Christ.

Vanhetloo, commenting on these two crucial passages above, concludes:

There is obviously no way to understand what Paul says apart from recognizing that the symbolism of death, burial and resurrection was portrayed in the water immersion of converts. (Calvary Baptist Theological Journal, Spring 1987, p. 49)

4b. The circumstances surrounding baptism:

Dr. R. T. Ketcham, in his chart Baptism-Sprinkle, Pour or Immerse? has a helpful comparison, showing how the circumstances surrounding baptism argue for immersion.

A CHART OF CONTRASTS IMMERSION AND SPRINKLING UNDER THE LENS

By R. T.
Ketcham,
LL.D.

SCRIPTURAL STATEMENTS	SPRINKLING OR POURING	IMMERSION
BAPTISM A WATER ORDINANCE 1. "They come unto a certain water" (Acts 8:36). 2. "Because there was much water there" (John 3:23). 3. "They went down both into the water" (Acts 8:38). 4. "Were baptized of him in Jordan" (Matt. 3:6). 5. "When they were come up out of the water" (Acts 8:39).	1. Water must be brought to them. 2. Requires but little water. 3. Do not go down into the water. 4. Do not baptize in at all. 5. Do not come up nor out.	1. They must go to the water. 2. Requires much water. 3. Must go down into the water. 4. Must baptize in. 5. Must come up and out.

5b. The use of the prepositions:

The verb baptizo is used with several prepositions forming a grammatical structure which argues most strongly for immersion:

1c. The preposition into (eis):

In Mark 1:9 the Jordan is the element into which the person enters in the act of being baptized:

Mark 1:9:

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in (literally "into") the Jordan.

2c. The preposition in (en):

Texts such as Mark 1:5, 8; Matt. 3:11; John 1:26, 31, 33; cf. Acts 2:2,4) the en is to be taken, not instrumentally but as indicating the element in which the immersion takes place.

Mark 1:5, 8:

They were baptized of him in the river. . . I baptized you with (literally "in") water, but he shall baptize you (literally "in") the Holy Ghost.

3c. The preposition out of (ek):

Mark 1:10:

Coming up out of the water.

Acts 8:38-39:

And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water. . .

Sprinkling or pouring does not necessitate much water nor stepping into the water nor coming up out of the water. And yet denominations are so bound by their man-made traditions, that when the baptism of Christ is pictured in their publications, for example, He is seen in the river but water is simply poured over Him.



Taufe Jesu

Some artists totally contradict Scripture by picturing Christ not in the Jordan but by the Jordan.



6b. The testimony of Church history:

All ancient, recent and living biblical scholars are agreed on two matters relating to baptism: (1) that the word baptizo only means to immerse and (2) that immersion was the N.T. mode of baptism as well as that in the early Church.

One Catholic scholar, after studying the matter thoroughly, comes to the following conclusion:

Thirteen hundred years was baptism generally and regularly an immersion of the person under the water, and only in extraordinary cases a sprinkling or pouring with water; the latter was, moreover, disputed as a mode of baptism, nay even forbidden. (Brenner, cited by Conant, The Meaning and use of Baptizein, p. 164).

Hiscox, who has arrayed a massive volume of quotes from non-Baptistic sources about baptism, its meaning, mode, water supply for baptisms in Jerusalem, etc., observes:

For two hundred and fifty years after Christ we have no evidence of any departure from the primitive practice of immersion-- the first authenticated instance of such a departure being about the middle of the third century, or A.D. 250 (p. 437, *italics in the original*).

After the 3rd century, sacramental value was attributed to baptism. It was reasoned that if there was some saving value in baptism, the earlier a person was baptized, the greater the guarantee that the individual was saved. Baptismal regeneration and baptism of infants thus went hand in hand. For the very old, the sick and the young, sprinkling was deemed sufficient.

Keith L. Brooks has a helpful summary chart of quotes by theologians concerning the early mode of baptism. It is but a sample of the mountain of evidence in support of the biblical and Baptist position.

Testimonies to the Meaning of the Word "Baptizo"
From Bible Scholars of Various Denominations



St. Basil, A.D. 330. "How can we be placed in a condition of likeness to His death? By being buried with Him in baptism. How are we to go down with Him into the grave? By imitating the burial of Christ by baptism, for the bodies of the baptized are in a sense buried in water."

St. Ambrose, 378. "Thou saidst, I do believe and wast immersed—that is, thou wast buried."

St. Chrysostom, 398. "We, as in a sepulchre, immersing our heads in water, the old man is buried and sinking down, the whole body is concealed at once; then as we emerge the new man arises."

John Calvin. "The very word—baptize—means to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the early church."

Martin Luther. "Baptism is a Greek word and may be translated—immersion. I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped in the water."

John Wesley. "Burial with Him by baptism—alluding to the ancient method of immersion."

Tyndal. "Plunging into water signifieth that we die and are buried with Christ as concerning the old life of sin, and the pulling out again signifieth that we arise to walk in newness of life."

Didache, oldest known ecclesiastical manual. "The water to be preferred is living or running water * * but if thou hast not living water baptize in other water and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm."

Dean Stanley. "For the first thirteen centuries, the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament and which is the very meaning of the word 'baptize'—plunged, submerged, immersed into the water."

Dean Lightfoot. "As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer confesses the burial of his corrupt affections and past sins; as he emerges he rises quickened to new hopes and new life."

Chalmers. "There is no doubt that the administration of baptism in the apostles' days was by an actual submerging of the whole body under the water."

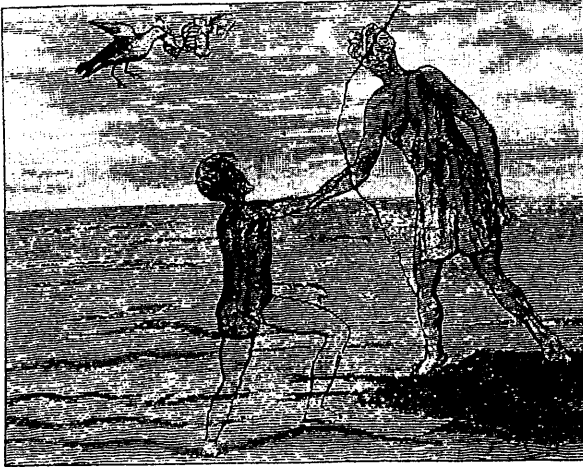
Dods. "The full significance of the rite would have been lost had immersion not been practiced."

Sanday. "Baptism expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ. Immersion—death. Submersion—burial. Emergence—resurrection."

7b. The evidence from archeology:

Near Eastern countries abound with material evidence of the type of baptism practiced by the early Church. The visitor to Israel is especially impressed by the number and size of baptismal pools used in the early Christian centuries--pools which remind one immediately of one's baptismal pools in America's Baptist churches.

Early Christian artists pictured the mode of baptism as immersion. Both pictures below, the baptism of Jesus and that of a Christian convert, were found in the crypt of St. Lucina in the cemetery in Kallistus. The pictures date back to the 3rd century.



Taufe Jesu.



Taufhandlung.

(Beide Darstellungen nach Wandgemälden in der Krypta der heil. Lucina im Cömeterium des Callistus aus dem dritten Jahrh.)

Catholic scholar Bagatti gives an excellent overview of baptistries in early Christian churches in his volume, *The Church from the Gentiles in Palestine*. Many of these baptistries are six feet deep, ten feet long and four feet wide. Bagatti comments on the symbolic shapes of these baptistries:

The dating of the fonts follows that of the baptisteries, and so we can establish, roughly, a chronology of the form: at first rectangular, then hexagonal but low, round or oval and finally quadrilobate and cruciform. This last appears as the ultimate phase. The evolution of the concept is evident. "You have descended into the water three times", writes St. Cyril (*PG* 33), "then you went out, to symbolize the three days which Jesus spent in the tomb". The square or rectangular form of the basin should have recalled to the minds of the catechumens the remembrance of the tomb. With the cruciform basin are associated the death of Christ on the cross and the death of sin in the neophyte. It is the concept developed by St. John Chrysostom (*PG* 60, 450): "Baptism is the cross". The square form, however, was that in use during the first centuries by the Judaeo-Christians. (p. 249)



"Baptismal Ceremony, from a Pontifical of the Ninth Century." From *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, William Smith and Samuel Cheetham.

The baptistry in the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth is a typical 2nd century pool. An identical baptistry, likewise dating to the 2nd century, can be seen in the ruins of a Christian Church in the city park of Augsburg, Germany. Apparently Christians serving in the Roman army were permitted to have their own churches.

Grotto of the Annunciation
in Nazareth

Steps Leading Into Baptismal Pool

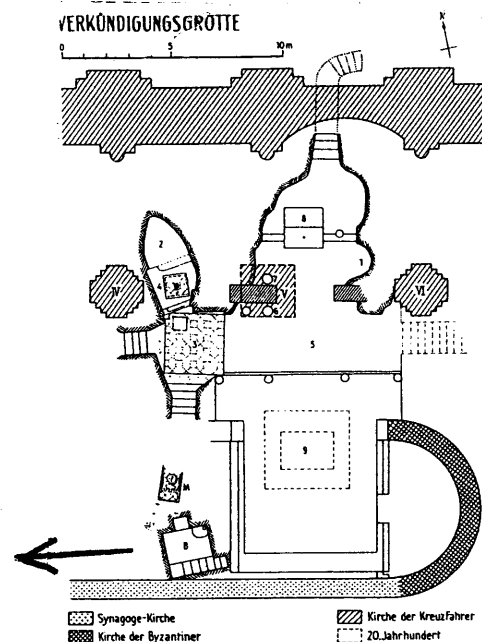


Abb. 67. Plan der Verkündigungsgrotte.

With such strong and varied evidence for immersion, why do many denominations pour or sprinkle? Baptism other than by immersion destroys the symbolism of that beautiful ordinance. Well does Hiscox remark:

Sprinkling, or pouring water on a candidate, has no force in in the direction of this sacred symbolism. It cannot show the death, burial, or the resurrection of Christ; nor the disciple's death to sin, and his rising to a new life. If immersion, therefore, be abandoned, the entire force of the ordinance will be destroyed, and its design obliterated.

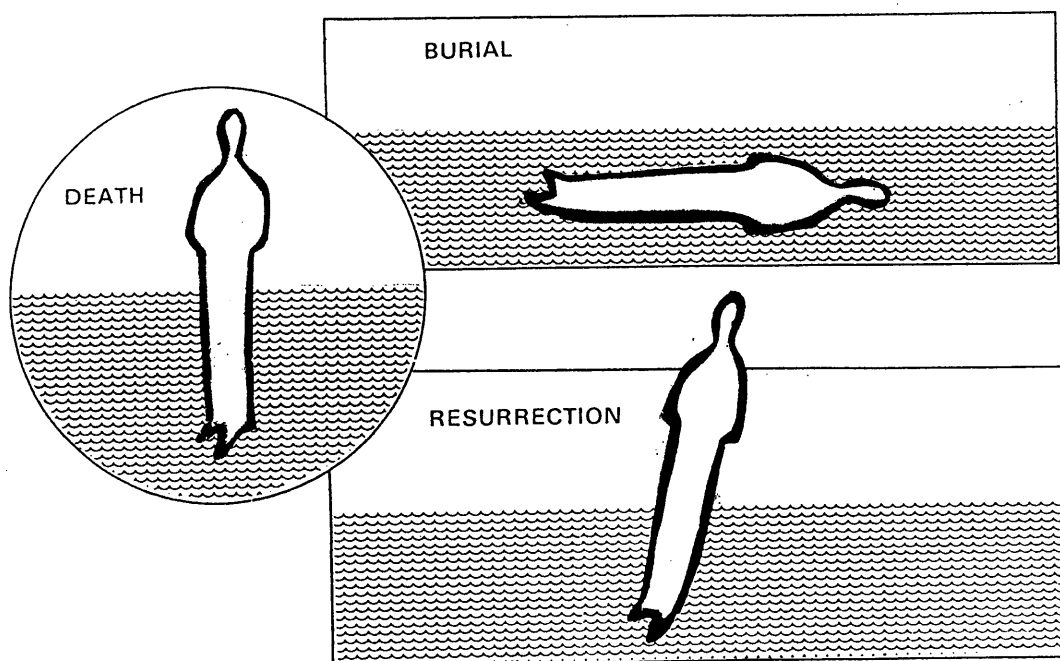
Sprinkling sets forth no great doctrine of the Gospel. Only when the disciple is buried beneath the water, and raised up again, do the beauty, force and meaning, which divine wisdom intended, appear in that sacred ordinance. (p. 430)

Other modes of baptism not only destroy the symbolism, but also demonstrate a lack of love for the Lord. A. E. Wilder-Smith, in a little booklet, Tauferkenntnis und Liebe zu Jesus Christus (Baptismal Understanding and Love for Jesus Christ), shows that basically the issue is one of love for the Lord. The Lord wishes the believer to reflect in the ordinance of baptism the individual's death, burial and resurrection with his Lord. In understanding this, the believer who really loves his Lord is obedient. Love for the Lord is evidenced by obeying His commandments: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3). "If we keep our Lord's commandments, we will remain in His love" (John 15:10) (p. 11).

For the new believer, the first step of obedience is baptism. When Christ commanded that the believer be baptized, he used the term

that can only mean immerse. Disobedience to the Savior's commandment, once understood, demonstrates a lack of love. Biblically an individual has not been correctly baptized unless (1) he has been immersed (2) after salvation (3) once. As Christ died only once, so the believer in baptism is buried once in the waters of baptism. Many of us have come to this point in our lives after much thought, study and prayer. We had been sprinkled before, but never baptized. We thought we were obedient, but we were ignorant of the truth. Then the Holy Spirit revealed the importance of the issue to us and the love of God constrained us to take this step of obedience and testimony. How much do you love the Lord? "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

BAPTISM : SIGNIFICANCE and
SYMBOLISM COL. 2:12
ROM. 6:1-6



What Is Wrong With Other Approaches to BAPTISM ?

Other practices in relation to baptism, such as...

- sprinkling
- pouring
- trine immersion
- baptism before salvation
- making baptism optional

- 1) Destroy the Symbolism
- 2) Disregard the Scriptures
- 3) Disobey the Savior

No one has been biblically baptized unless...

- a. he has been immersed...
- b. after salvation...
- c. once.



The Master's Mandate for Missions

Matthew 28:18-20



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



THE MASTER'S MANDATE FOR MISSIONS

1A. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MANDATE:

1b. It is a climactic command:

It was given on at least four different occasions near the end of Christ's earthly ministry: Mt. 28:19-20; Mk 16:15; Lk. 24:47-49; Jn. 20:21-22; Acts 1:9

2b. It is a corrective command:

It involves a world-wide effort in contrast to the earlier commissioning of the disciples to Israel and not to the Gentiles. Mt. 10:5-7

If one were to look for a contradiction in the Scriptures, it would be the basic difference of Christ commanding in Matthew that none of the Gentiles or Samaritans should be evangelized but only the Jewish people. Then a few months later, He instructs His disciples to disciple all nations. Unless one has a clear dispensational understanding of Christ's earthly ministry and the subsequent church age, it would be impossible to harmonize these two commands from our Savior's lips to the same group of disciples

3b. It is a comprehensive command:

It involves every believer throughout the church age. Mt. 28:20

Various groups deny the applicability of the Master's mandate for today. One group is that of the ultradispensationalists, who suggest that the Jewish church began with Peter and the Christian church began with Paul. The Great Commission is directed to the Bride Church, but now we belong to the Body Church, to whom no such commands for worldwide evangelism are given.

2A. THE IMPERATIVE OF THE MANDATE: Mt. 28:19

1b. What the command is not:

1c. It is not going.

The text assumes that the disciple is in God's place of service.

2c. It is not evangelizing.

The proclaiming of the Gospel is only the first, howbeit, the most important step.

- 2b. What the command is: To make disciples.
The mandate is not merely to make converts but disciples. The disciple is a learner or one who follows a master and consistently adheres to his teachings.

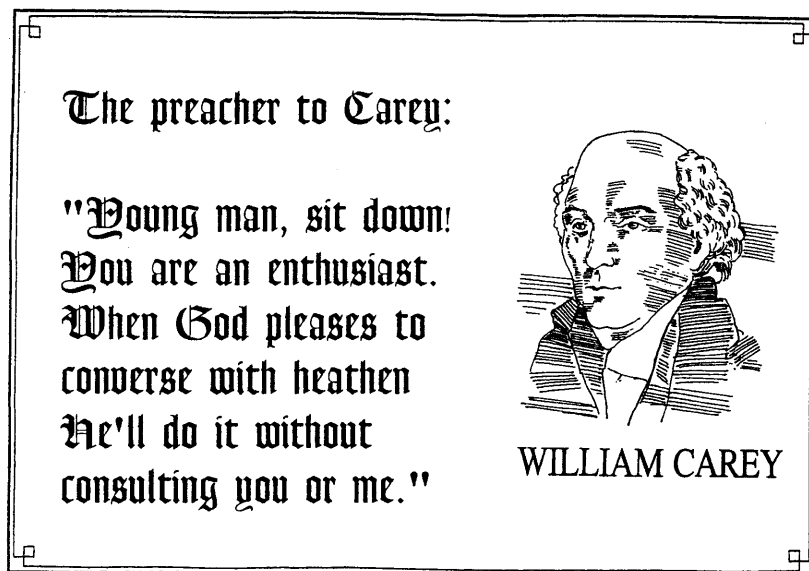
3A. THE INCLUSIVENESS OF THE MANDATE: Mt. 28:18-20

- 1b. The person: 28:18
- 1c. His right: He has all authority.
 - 2c. His realm: In heaven and on earth.
- 2b. The purpose: To make disciples of all nations. v. 19a
- 3b. The program: v. 19b-20a

The only imperative in the Great Commission is to make disciples. This is modified or explained by three participles.

- 1c. Having gone with the Gospel.
 - 2c. Baptizing believers.
 - 3c. Teaching the truth of the Savior.
- 4b. The promise: v. 20b
- 1c. God's promise is His presence until the end of the age.
 - 2c. God's program of making disciples must therefore likewise continue throughout the entire dispensation.

One is reminded of William Carey's rebuke by an ultra-Calvanistic preacher when Carey expressed his desire to evangelize the heathen of India.



4A. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MANDATE

1b. Theological implications:

- 1c. It implies the person has gone where God wants him.
- 2c. It includes the ordinance of baptism.
- 3c. It involves the whole counsel of God.

Vineyard fellowship Heb. 2:3-4

2b. Personal implications:

- 1c. The mandate is directed to individuals, not simply the clergy.
- 2c. The mandate is to be carried out through the local church.
- 3c. The mandate should be foremost in all theological training:
 - 1d. Bible colleges aid churches in carrying out the Great Commission.
 - 2d. Since these are the most important words which Christ ever spoke, they should be every believer's concern.
- 1e. Not every believer is called to be a missionary.
- 2e. Everyone is called to be a witness.

It is not true that every one is either a missionary or mission field. God extends a special call to missionaries but demands of all of us to magnify His name and make the Gospel known to every creature.



ST. MATTHEW 28

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

ST. MARK 16

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

ST. LUKE 24

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

ST. JOHN 20

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

ACTS 1

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

ANALYSIS OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

TEXT	EMPHASIS	DESCRIPTION
MATTHEW 28:18-20	MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS	THE PURPOSE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION
MARK 16:15	PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE	THE EXTENT OF THE GREAT COMMISSION
LUKE 24:46-48	REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS WILL BE PREACHED	THE MESSAGE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION
JOHN 17:18, 20:21	AS THE FATHER SENT ME, SO I SEND YOU	THE EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION
ACTS 1:8	BE WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM, ALL JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND UTTERMOST PART	THE STRATEGY OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Mission of the Twelve

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses;

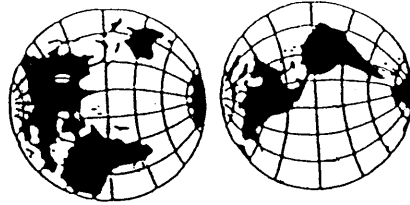
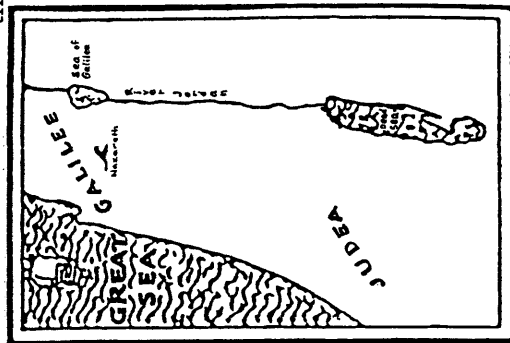
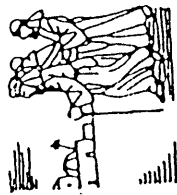
10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into a house, salute it.

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

*Jesus Commissions the Eleven*

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

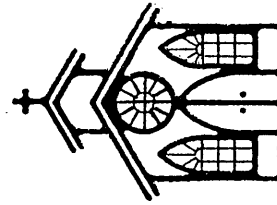
19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIVES

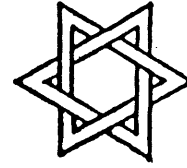
IN THE

MASTER'S MANDATE



ACTS 1

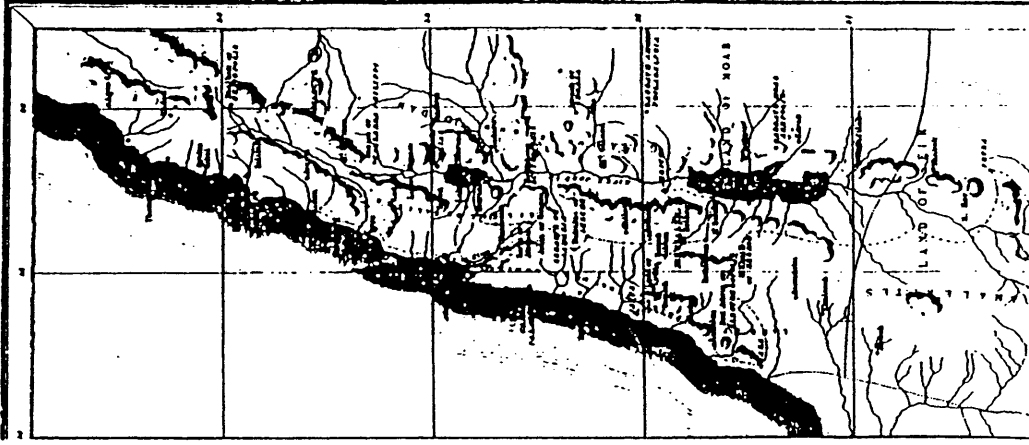
8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Hō'ly Ghōst is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jē-ru'sā-lēm, and in all Jū-dæ'á, and in Sâ-mā'ri-á, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.



ISAIAH 60

ARISE, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.



The Master's Mandate

Matthew 28:18-20

All authority has been given to me
in heaven and
on earth
Therefore
make disciples of all races
having gone
baptizing them
in the name of
the Father
the Son
the Holy Spirit
teaching them to observe
all things
whatsoever I have commanded unto you
And behold
I am with you
until the consummation of the age

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



The Master's Mandate: Matt. 28:18-20



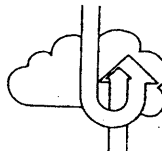
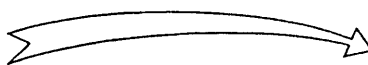
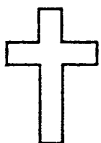
1

2



Make
Disciples
of all
Nations

4



3



Going



Baptizing



Teaching

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



Matthew 28

προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν. 18 καὶ
 they worshipped, but some doubted. And
 προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς
 approaching - Jesus talked with them
 λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν
 saying: was given to me All authority in
 οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς. 19 πορευθέντες
 heaven and on the earth. Going
 οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζ-
 therefore disciple ye all the nations, baptiz-
 οντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς
 ing them in the name of the Father
 καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,
 and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
 20 διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα
 teaching them to observe all things
 ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ
 whatever I gave command to you; and behold I
 μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως
 with you am all the days until
 τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.
 the completion of the age.

DIAGRAM OF MATTHEW 28:19-20

therefore

make disciples of

nations

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having gone

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whatsoever

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teaching

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DIAGRAM OF MATTHEW 28:19-20

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Manfred E. Kober

THE EMBLEMS OF THE CHURCH: Seven Symbols of the Savior and His Saints

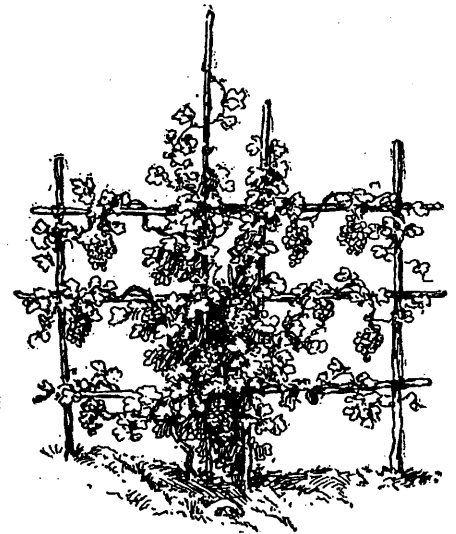
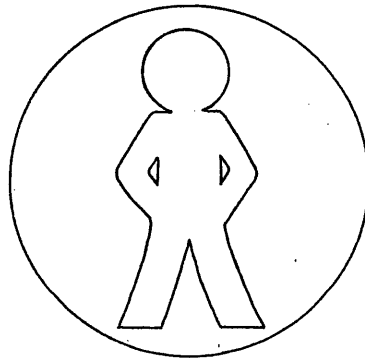
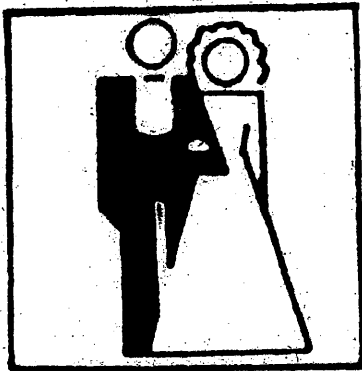
A topic of blessed contemplation for every believer is the high regard which the Savior has for each individual saint and the special position the saints collectively hold in His plan for the ages. The believers constitute the Bride of Christ. No one is more close to the Bridegroom than the Bride. All the other redeemed of the ages are simply the friends of the Bridegroom. The Bible lists these seven symbols or emblems of the church.

Much helpful material has been written on these seven figures of the church. For the believer who wishes to pursue the matter in a more intensive study, three works may be suggested.

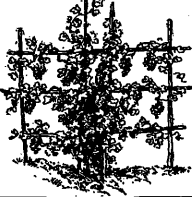
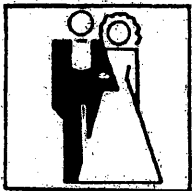
Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 1948, Vol. 4, 54-143.

Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 1989, 349-351.

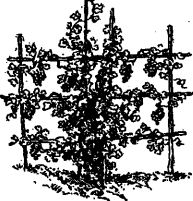
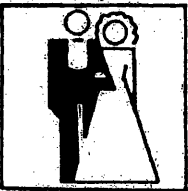
Earl D. Radmacher, *The Nature of the Church*, 1996, 221-316



THE EMBLEMS OF THE CHURCH

	The Symbolism	The Significance	The Scriptures
①	THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP 	CONCERN	John 10
②	THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES 	COMMUNION	John 15
③	THE CORNERSTONE AND THE STONES OF A BUILDING 	COOPERATION	Acts 4:10-11; 1 Pet. 2:4-5; Eph. 2:19-20
④	THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE KINGDOM OF PRIESTS 	CONSECRATION	1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 20:6
⑤	THE HEAD OF THE BODY AND ITS MEMBERS 	COMMUNICATION	Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:18
⑥	THE LAST ADAM AND THE NEW CREATION 	COMMENCEMENT	1 Cor. 15:22, 24; Rom. 5
⑦	THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE 	COMMITMENT	Eph. 5:25-33; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9

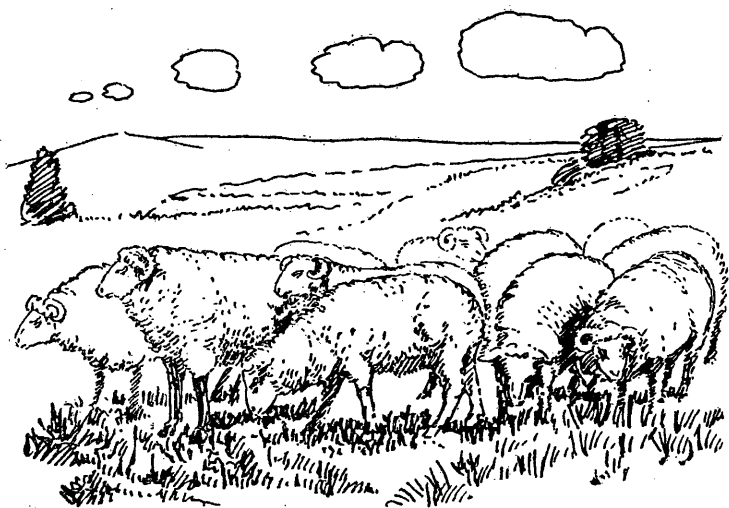
THE EMBLEMS OF THE CHURCH

	The Symbolism	The Significance	The Scriptures
①	THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP 	CONCERN Utter Helplessness	John 10
②	THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES 	COMMUNION Unbroken Fellowship	John 15
③	THE CORNERSTONE AND THE STONES OF A BUILDING 	COOPERATION Unparalleled Interdependence	Acts 4:10-11; 1 Pet. 2:4-5; Eph. 2:19-20
④	THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE KINGDOM OF PRIESTS 	CONSECRATION Unprecedented Responsibilities	1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 20:6
⑤	THE HEAD OF THE BODY AND ITS MEMBERS 	COMMUNICATION Unflinching Obedience	Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:18
⑥	THE LAST ADAM AND THE NEW CREATION 	COMMENCEMENT Unsurpassed Exaltation	1 Cor. 15:22, 24; Rom. 5
⑦	THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE 	COMMITMENT Unending Love and Adoration	Eph. 5:25-33; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9

1A. The Shepherd and the Sheep

A beautiful, tender image depicting the relationship of believers to the Lord is found in John 10:16 where the church is called a flock (cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:3). Israel had a relationship to the Lord as sheep to a shepherd (Psalm 23) and was called a flock (Ps. 80:1; Jer. 13:17), but in the Old Testament that figure was restricted to Israel. The uniqueness about the church being a flock and Christ the Shepherd is that this flock is composed of both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus declared, "I have other sheep [Gentiles], which are not of this fold [Jews]; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock [the church composed of Jews and Gentiles] with one Shepherd" (John 10:16).

The image emphasizes that members of the church as the sheep of Christ belong to Him. Jesus emphasizes that the flock is "My sheep" (John 10:26, 27) and that they are secure in His hand. Moreover, the sheep respond to the Shepherd's voice—there is intimacy for the Shepherd knows His sheep individually, and they recognize His voice and respond to Him.

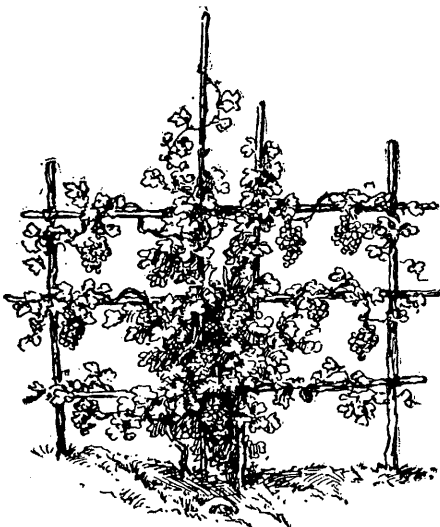


2A. The Vine and the Branches

In John 15 Jesus described the close relationship church age believers enjoy with Him as being one of branches related to a vine. Jesus is the true vine (John 15:1), while the Father is the farmer who tills the land in order that the branches may bear fruit (John 15:1). Church age believers are the branches that draw their life from the vine because they are "in Him" (John 15:4, 5). The branches receive their life-giving nourishment in their attachment to the vine; as they remain in the vine, they are able to grow and bear fruit.

This relationship describes both union and communion of church age believers with Christ. Christ's exhortation to the church is to "abide in me." "Abide" (Gk. *meno*) means essentially "to remain," "stay," or "live." In this context it means to *remain* or *continue* in the realm in which one finds himself. The exhortation to abide in Christ is an exhortation to continue believing in Him (cf. John 2:22, 24, 28).

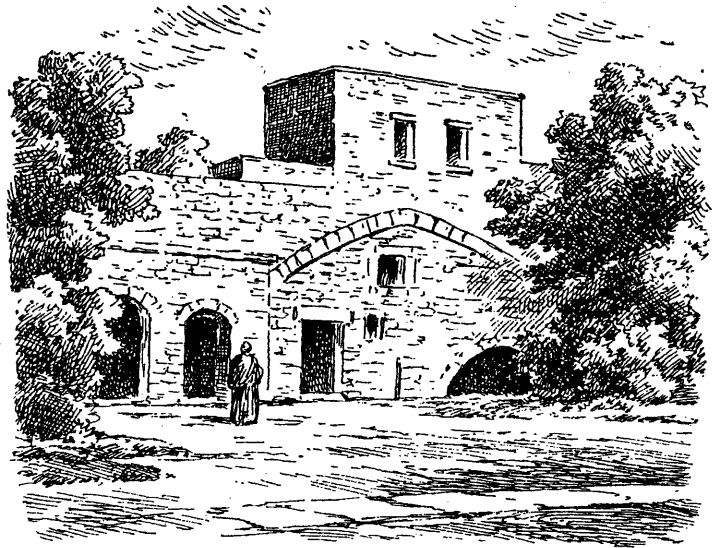
The purpose of the branches abiding in the vine is to produce fruit. Every branch that does not bear fruit he "lifts up" that it may bear fruit. The ones who continue with Christ will bear fruit (John 15:15). To enhance the fruit-bearing process the branches are pruned that they may bear more fruit (John 15:2). The figure of the vine thus demonstrates the vital relationship between the members of the church and Christ.



3A. The Cornerstone and the Stones of a Building

Paul has emphasized that Jews and Gentiles alike are one in Christ because God abolished the wall that separated Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:11-18). Now Paul describes the oneness of the church under the figure of a building. The church, a union of Jews and Gentiles, is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20). "The apostles" are collectively one of the foundational gifts, designed to equip the believers (Eph. 4:12) and bring the church to maturity (Eph. 4:13).

In the figure of the building, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20; cf. 1 Cor. 3:11), which may refer to the primary foundationstone at the angle of the structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of the walls and cross-walls throughout. In Christ the whole building, the church, is being "fitted together" (Gk. *sunarmologoumene*; Eph. 2:21), emphasizing Christ's work of constructing His church. As a building "grows" when under construction, so the church, as a living organism, is growing as new believers are added to the "building" (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5).



4A. The High Priest and the Kingdom of Priests

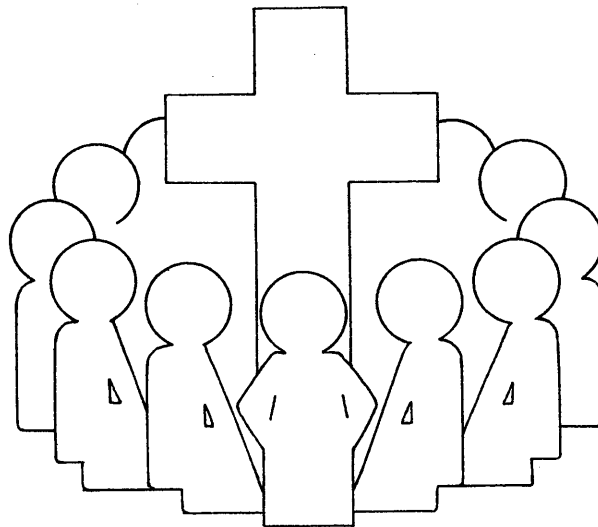
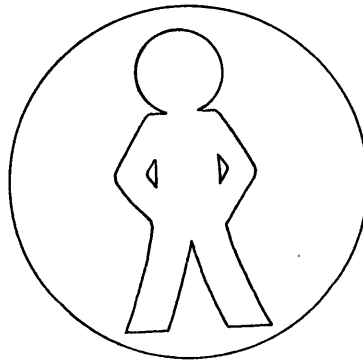
In 1 Peter 2:5 the apostle combines the figures of a building and a priesthood, state, "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood." The statement is reminiscent of Exodus 19:5-6 where God declared that Israel was "a kingdom of priests." In the nation Israel, however, only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests, whereas in the church, every believer is a priest. Peter indicates all believers are priests for the purpose of offering spiritual sacrifices instead of animal sacrifices.

The uniqueness of the New Testament priesthood is further seen in 1 Peter 2:9 where Peter refers to a "royal priesthood." Church age believers are both kings and priests (cf. Rev. 1:6). In the Old Testament it was impossible to combine both offices for one could only be either of the Levitical line or the kingly line, the line of Judah. The entire church functions as a priesthood, whereas in Israel only the Levitical line had that privilege. All church age believers have access to God through Christ, the church's High Priest; in Israel individual believers could approach God only through the Levitical priests. All church age believers may approach God boldly at any time (Heb. 4:14-16), whereas Israelites could approach God only during the particular offerings (Lev. 1-7). These contrasts indicate that while both Israel and the church are called a priesthood, Israel and the church are distinct entities.



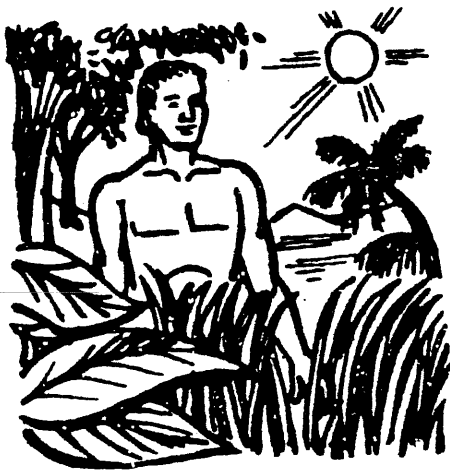
5A. The Head of the Body and Its Members:

A metaphor illustrating the unity and universality of the church is the word *body*. As the head has authority over the physical body and gives direction to it, so Christ is the head of the church, having authority over it and giving it direction (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The illustration of the body also emphasizes the unity of all believers in the church age because the church reconciles Jews and Gentiles into one body. There is no distinction; they are one in Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:16; 4:4). Moreover, Christ nourishes the church by giving gifted leaders to the church that it might grow to maturity and be built up as one body in Christ (Eph. 4:12, 16; Col. 2:19). The participation in the elements of the Lord's Supper illustrates the oneness of the church as Christ's Body (1 Cor. 10:16-17).



6A. The Last Adam and the New Creation:

This division of Ecclesiology which contemplates the true Church as a New Creation with the resurrected Christ as its federal Head introduces a body of truth unsurpassed both in its importance and its transcendent exaltation. Naturally several vast themes combine under this conception: (a) the resurrected Christ, (b) the New Creation, (c) two creations require two commemoration days, and (d) the final transformation. As before indicated, the New Creation, as a designation of the true Church, includes more than is comprehended in the idea of the Church as Christ's Body. In the New Creation reality, Christ is seen to be the all-important part of it, whereas, in the figure of the Body, that entity is viewed as a thing to be completed in itself and separate from, and yet to be joined to, the Head. The Body is an entire unit in itself, which is vitally related to Christ. Over against this, the New Creation is a unit which incorporates the resurrected Christ and could not be what it is apart from that major contribution—the Source of all the verity which enters into it.

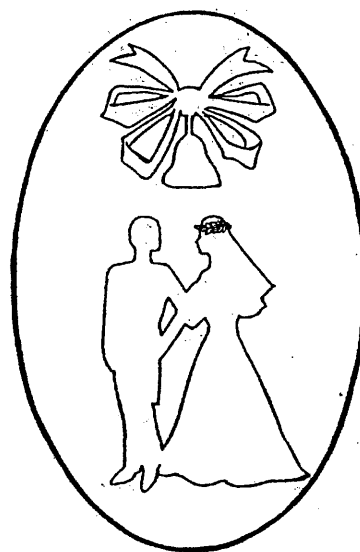


7A. The Bridegroom and the Bride:

The picture of the church as the bride of Christ is seen in Ephesians 5:23 where an analogy is drawn that compares the husband and wife relationship in marriage to Christ and His bride the church. The illustration is apt because it reveals the magnitude of Christ's love for the church (Eph. 5:2, 25). A second emphasis of the illustration is the exalted position of the bride. As in the Oriental wedding custom, at the engagement (betrothal) the bride receives the promise of future blessing with her husband. Similarly, the church today is an espoused bride, awaiting her husband's return from glory. The second stage of the Oriental marriage was the wedding itself, when the husband came to take the bride to be with him. In an analogous figure, the church awaits the return of Christ, when she will be espoused to her husband (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:16-17). In Oriental weddings, the wedding feast followed; similarly the church, as Christ's bride, awaits the husband's return (Rev. 19:7-9) and the glory of the millennial kingdom to follow.



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