

Water Baptism – Part 3

“³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and 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.³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:37-42)

In the day of Pentecost the Jewish who heard the message of Peter, *Those who accepted his message were baptized; and about three thousand were added to their number that day:* Those people they heard the message and they repented of their sins and willingly they got baptized. After their baptism they devoted themselves to the four following things:

1-The apostles’ teaching: Baptism is not the end of the Christian journey, but is just the beginning of the way. Those who got Baptism the church should continue to teach them and discipline them to continue to live in the ways of the Lord. Jesus also told us the following in *Matthew 28:19-20* *“Therefore 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.”* What the Lord emphasized here that after Baptism we need to continue to teach the new disciples the ways of the Lord and disciplining them to obey everything. So we either go on disciplining the new believers and then we baptize them and continue to teach them, or we baptize the new converts but after baptism we need to continue to teach them the ways of the Lord. What is important here is the following: The church should not Baptise people without teaching or discipleship process whether before or after Baptism. Although in certain occasion we may baptise people who show evidence of true repentance and willingness to obey but we will not be able to follow them up. That should not be the rule to follow, but as an exception that is possible when the Holy Spirit would lead us to do that. The example for that is what Philip did in obeying the leading of God to reach the Eunuch and baptized him in water: *“²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.³² The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.⁴⁰ Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.” (Acts 8:26-40)*

2-The fellowship: The new convert who were baptised they need to be part of the church, the body of Christ, the family of God. They must be fully come out from the worldly ways of life and replace

their old life with new relationships with the body of Christ and their brethren in the church. The fellowship should be concerned about edification and encouraging the members to do what is right and just and directs them in the ways of the Lord. Fellowship also involves counselling and giving the right advice. The importance of fellowship is to strengthen the bonding of the brethren to one another and their unity with God and His word and purpose. Fellowship should not be based and emphasized on arranging food and eating together, that is not what is meant by fellowship. The fellowship also involve to reach those parts of the body who are not able to come with us, like those who are sick in hospitals, and those handicapped and cannot move or those in prison, or those who had great troubles and cannot deal any more with life’s pressure. We need to reach all these categories in order to fellowship with them and strengthen them so that our worship to God would be complete.

3- The breaking of bread: This is the Lord supper that Jesus commanded his apostles to do when he took the Passover with them as we can read here, *“⁴⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you.¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:17-20)* We do the breaking of the bread because the Lord said *do this in remembrance of me.* But we must not do that as a ritual practice and without deep understanding. Jesus did it with His apostles who are his disciples. Therefore the true disciples who are willingly following God should observe that as they are observing and obeying all the commands of God. Jesus said in *John 6:53-58* *“⁵³ Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.”* The bread represents the body of Christ and the cup is the New Covenant in His blood, therefore as long as we abide with Christ and His word we are eligible to take part in the breaking of the bread. Those disciples who are devoted to the apostles’ teaching are eligible for the Lord’s Table. We should not be a traditional church who observes the Lord’s Table but we don’t observe the spiritual condition of our members.

4- Prayer: Is the source of strength that we receive from the Lord to sustain us and His provision for us to face and to solve our problems. The new disciples should get involve in prayerful life. Prayer is our backbone to stand firm in life in serving God. Prayer is our full expression to trust in God and walk in His ways that He will be the one to deliver us from all our troubles. The early church had passed through many hardships and was sustained through prayer. The new disciples should take prayer and petition to the Lord as the only thing that they can trust for to be sustained in life. Read the following Scripture in your bible to see how prayer life was so important in the life of the early church (*Acts 4:23-31; Acts 12:1-19*)

My dear and beloved: *It is my prayer that this message will be a good guide for you to understand the Scripture in a better way especially in what is concern for the water baptism: My Prayer: “Father God in heaven, I come before you in Jesus name, Lord I commit myself to the teaching that I received from your word to comply with and in observing all the details. Lord strengthen me and uphold me with your grace to do that, this is my prayer in Jesus’ name, Amen.*