

EVANGELICAL CHURCH MAHWALALA

BAPTISM LESSON



By Rev. Mfundo Mohammed

pastor@ecmahwalala.org

+268 7641 7118



FOR THE PROCLAMATION, CONFIRMATION AND DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

1. WHAT IS BAPTISM?

The word Baptism is derived from the Greek root word 'βαπτίζω' [Baptizo] means to plunge, immerse, sink; hence to be immersed.

Christian baptism is an ordinance instituted by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Matt. 28: 19). All believers are commanded to be baptized as a symbol of both their inward experience and baptism with the Holy Spirit into the Body of Jesus Christ [4.1 in the *Evangelical Church Distinctives*].

This is based on the Great Commission,

Matthew 28:19 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,

Therefore, after a person accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, he/she must then be baptised.

Baptism is a **public declaration of faith in Christ**. The Bible talks about water immersion baptism, in which a believer makes a public confession of their faith.

1.1. Misconceptions about Baptism

There are several misconceptions about baptism. Some misinterpret Acts 22:16,

Acts 22:16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

This verse says be baptised by calling on the name of Jesus Christ, then have your sins washed away by calling on the name of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it is important to note that:

- Water baptism does not wash sins away.
- Water baptism does not give power to overcome sin.
- Water baptism is not necessary for salvation.
- Water baptism does not come with miracles.
- Water baptism does not bring 'powers' to the one being baptised
- There is no family baptism; e.g. if the man is baptised, then everyone in the family is forced to be baptised.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

"The New Testament does not know of a Christian who is also not baptized".

Water baptism is a significant step in the life of a Christian for the following reasons:

2.1. Confirms One's Identification With Christ

In baptism, the believer publicly confesses that in Christ's death he/she is dead unto the practice of sin, and in Christ's resurrection, he/she is alive unto God [4.2 in the *Evangelical Church Distinctives*]

Colossians 2:11-13 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

You align with all that Jesus did for us through His death and resurrection.

Romans 6:3-4 Do you not know that 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, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

This confirms that baptism is only possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

2.2. Initiates one into The Church

It is important to note that before the water baptism, there is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

When a person repents from sins and believes in Jesus Christ, they are baptised into the Body of Christ, which is the Church,

Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, “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.”

We, the Evangelical Church, believe that baptism of the Holy Spirit happens once and it is done by Jesus Christ Himself not by a Pastor or divine healer. He automatically baptizes you into His Mystical Body, Eph. 5: 18, Gal. 5: 16. Therefore, there is not need to wait for the Holy Spirit to come and baptize us after salvation because that happens at the point of salvation (Act. 7: 5 – 8, John 16: 16, 17, 20: 22) [7.2.7. in the Evangelical Church Distinctives]

Most denominations believe that this baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at conversion.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit must be followed by water baptism.

2.3. Signifies A New Life In Christ

John the Baptist, who baptized Jesus, taught that the immersion into the water was symbolic of a turning from sin and raising to new life in Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Baptism is an important event in the believer's walk with Jesus Christ that symbolizes new life with the symbolic use of water.

Romans 6:5-8 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Furthermore, Paul uses the imagery of baptism being “putting on Christ”.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Baptism may be viewed as putting on Christ.

3. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTISED?

Baptism is central to the Christian discipleship journey.

All persons who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour shall be baptized (Mat. 28:19) [29.1 BYE-LAW 29 BAPTISM].

There shall be no infant baptism [29.4 BYE-LAW 29 BAPTISM].

3.1. When Should Baptism Happen?

Once a person believes that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, they must be baptised.

Repent > Believe in Jesus Christ > Be Baptized

When a person accepts The Lord as Saviour, he/she must be baptised.

This is demonstrated in,

Acts 8:35-36,38 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

The eunuch was curious about Christianity > Philip explained The Gospel > The eunuch believed in Jesus Christ > The eunuch was baptized.

3.2. How Many Times Should Baptism Happen?

A person is baptised only once.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

4. WHAT HAPPENS DURING BAPTISM

Baptism follows the example of Jesus.

***Mark 1:9-10** In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and **was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water,** immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.*

Jesus Christ was baptised through submersion in Water.

This is why **water baptism is done by full immersion in water** in the Evangelical Church

The Evangelical Church practices water baptism by **immersion once** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, believing it is the command of the Lord for all true believers, and is an ordinance of the local Church as practiced by the Apostles and the New Testament believers [4.4 in the *Evangelical Church Distinctives*].

This is what the Evangelical Church says should happen at baptism:

- Baptism shall be by single immersion [29.1 BYE-LAW 29 BAPTISM]..
- It shall be done in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mat. 28: 19) [29.1 BYE-LAW 29 BAPTISM].

5. WAYS OF BAPTISM

Different denominations do baptism in different ways:

- Sprinkling of water, e.g. in the Roman Catholic Church.
- Pouring of water on the person.
- Immersion in water; which the Evangelical Church believes is the biblically accepted method.
- There shall be no infant baptism [29.1 BYE-LAW 29 BAPTISM].
- Baptism shall be conducted by an ordained pastor or an elder in the church [29.1 BYE-LAW 29 BAPTISM].

Note that baptism of the Holy Spirit is done by God.

Water baptism is conducted by man; and in the Evangelical Church, it is done by an ordained pastor or an elder.

6. LIFE AFTER BAPTISM

It is important to remember that Christians are called to be witness for Christ.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

The first step of witnessing is baptism.

After baptism, Christians should continue to grow through:

- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Church Fellowship
- Serving Others
- Sharing The Gospel

7. PREPARING FOR BAPTISM

The following is important to know as you prepare for baptism.

7.1. Bye-Law 29

29.6 Before being baptized, the candidates shall –

29.6.1 Be counselled and confirm that they have already accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

29.6.2 Be given Bible lessons on the meaning of baptism.

29.7 After baptism, the candidates shall –

29.7.1 Be officially accepted into membership of their local church.

29.7.2 Be given a baptismal certificate.

Be given time to testify

7.2. On The Day

- Bring a change of clothes.
- Do not wear revealing clothes.
- Ensure that you have a body towel.
- Arrive 15 minutes before start time.

CONGRATULATIONS ON CHOOSING TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST!

SOURCES

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