

A Study of the Church in the New Testament

Lesson 4: Entrance Into the Church of the New Testament

I. Introduction

- A. We must remember that entrance into the New Testament church depends on:
 - 1. The Lord who adds people! (*Acts 2:41, 47; Colossians 1:13*)
 - 2. Entrance is dependent on OBEDIENCE! (*1Peter 1:22; Hebrews 5:8, 9*)
 - 3. Entrance is dependent on TRUTH! (*2Thessalonians 2:10-12; 1Timothy 2:3, 4*)
- B. Entrance is provided by the “covenant” or “will” that God desires to make with us! (*Hebrews 9:15-17*)
 - 1. The Greek word “*diatheke*” means an “agreement” between two or more parties.
 - 2. This word for “covenant” is found about 270 times in the Old Testament, and 33 times in the New Testament, 17 of which are in the book of Hebrews.
 - 3. We must be a part of the Lord’s “New Covenant” (*Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 12:24; 13:20*).
 - 4. Jesus, the Church, and the New Covenant all go together (*Hebrews 12:23, 24*).
- C. In a “will” or “testament,” there must be the DEATH of the one who made it (*Hebrews 9:16, 17*). This is a legal document that goes into effect at death.
 - 1. A “will” must involve the DEATH of the one who made it.
 - 2. A “will” has CONDITIONS to be OBEYED.
 - 3. A “will” has an INHERITANCE to be received by the beneficiaries.

II. Entrance Into the New Testament Church is Preceded By:

- A. Faith in Jesus Christ
 - 1. Salvation is by faith (*Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8, 9*). Salvation is NOT earned or deserved!
 - 2. Faith in the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus (*John 1:1-18; Romans 4:25; 2Corinthians 5:15; 1Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:28*).
 - 3. Biblical faith is always active, responsive, and obedient.

- a. The Greek word for “I believe” means “a conviction...conjoined with obedience to Christ” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon).
- b. See how “unbelief” and “disobedience” are parallel (*Hebrews 3:18, 19*)
- c. Notice how “men of faith” of the Old Testament moved “by faith” in obedience to God (*Hebrews 11:7, 8-10*)
- d. Please see the “obedience of faith” in *Romans 1:5; 16:26*
- e. Real faith must WORK through LOVE (*Galatians 5:6*)
- f. Obedience to Christ is the receiving of the wonderful “gift” God has for us (*Romans 6:16-18, 23*)
- g. Even to the Christian, when helping others in need, his “faith” must be active in what he DOES (*James 2:14-26*)

B. Repentance that produces a new life

1. The Greek word “I repent” means “to change one’s mind for the better...”
2. Repentance has always been a COMMAND of God.
 - a. Noah was a preacher of righteousness (*2Peter 2:5*)
 - b. The nation of Israel was to “turn from evil” (*Ezekiel 33:11*)
 - c. Study: *Matthew 3:1, 2; Mark 1:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 17:30, 31*
3. Repentance is NOT GODLY SORROW, but instead, “godly sorrow” will lead us to repent! (*2Corinthians 7:10*)
4. Repentance is NOT a changed life, but repentance will lead us to a changed life! (*Acts 26:20*)
5. Repentance is a “change of mind” about sin, a decision to turn our loyalty to Christ!
6. Therefore: “Godly sorrow” leads to “repentance” and “repentance” leads to a “changed life.”

C. Confession of faith in our Lord and Savior

1. The Greek word for “I confess” means “to declare, to profess,” “to agree with,” “to assent.” It means to acknowledge or “affirm.” (*Acts 23:8*)
2. To openly declare that Jesus is the Christ who became flesh. (*1John 2:23; 4:2, 3; Romans 10:9; John 9:22; 12:42; Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8; Philippians 2:11*)
3. Timothy made a “good confession” before many (*1Timothy 6:12*).
4. Jesus witnessed the confession before Pilate (*1Timothy 6:13; John 18:36, 37; Luke 23:2, 3*).
5. Confession is not only done with the mouth, but it is also a confession in action (*2Corinthians 9:13; Hebrews 10:23*).
6. Confession is done throughout life, and is NOT limited to a statement made before baptism.

7. See the examples of confession in *Matthew 16:13-19; John 1:29, 41, 49; 6:69*.
8. Confess that Jesus is Lord! (*Romans 10:9, 10; Philippians 2:9-11*)

D. Baptism in water that places one "in Christ"

1. The action of baptism – What is baptism?
 - a. "baptizo" is the Greek word for "baptism." It means, "I immerse."
 - b. "rantizo" is the Greek word for "I sprinkle."
 - c. "ekcheo" is the Greek word meaning "I pour out."
 - d. See how Jesus was "immersed" (*Matthew 3:13-17*).
 - e. Note that John the Baptist was "baptizing" where there was "much water" (*John 3:23*).
 - f. Notice that the Ethiopian was "immersed" in water (*Acts 8:35-39*).
 - g. When we are baptized, we experience a beautiful likeness to Jesus' DEATH, BURIAL, and RESURRECTION. See also *Colossians 2:11, 12*.
 - We must "die to sin" (*Romans 6:1-5*)
 - We must be "buried" with him in our baptism
 - We are "raised" out of baptism to walk a "new life."
2. The subjects or recipients of baptism – Who are to be baptized?
 - a. Sinners are to be baptized, not babies (*Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:6*)
 - b. Believers are to be baptized (*Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12*)
 - c. Those to whom the gospel has been preached (*Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-16; 1Corinthians 1:18-25*)
 - d. Those who have repented (*Acts 2:38*)
3. The purpose of being baptized – Why should we be baptized?
 - a. "For the forgiveness of sins" (*Acts 2:36-38*)
 - Note that John the Baptist was "baptizing" for the "forgiveness of sins" (*Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3*).
 - This phrase means, "in order to obtain forgiveness."
 - Note that Jesus shed His blood "for the forgiveness of sins," so that we can obtain forgiveness (*Matthew 26:28*). This is the same expression in Greek and in English.
 - b. For "salvation" (*Mark 16:16; 1Peter 3:20, 21*).
 - c. To "wash away sins" (*Acts 22:16*).
 - d. To place one "in Christ" (*Romans 6:1-4; Galatians 3:26, 27*).
 - e. To enter the kingdom (*John 3:5; 1Corinthians 12:13*).

- We MUST be “born of water and the spirit.”

Study Questions

1. Can we enter the New Testament church by sprinkling or pouring?
2. Can we enter the New Testament church by baby baptism?
3. Can we enter the New Testament church be believing only?
4. Can we enter the New Testament church by praying only?