

EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

"A first century church in the 21st century"

Bible Reading Plan

Week 10

- Numbers 8-11; *Col 1*
- Num 12-14; Ps 28; *Col 2*
- Num 15-18; Ps 103; *Col 3*
- Num 19-21; *Colossians 4*
- Num 22-25; *Luke 1*

Leading Services

Announcements: Ron V.

Morning:

Song Leader: Bill G.

Opening Prayer: Richard L.

Lord's Table: Larry L.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Ben V.

Evening:

Song Leader: Zack V.

Opening Prayer: Larry L.

Closing Prayer: Brock G.

Scripture Reading: Richard L.
(Matthew 7:1-12)

Sermons

AM: Eternity

PM: Elements of Spiritual Growth



Baptise

Following His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ instructed His apostles, saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20, NKJV). In light of the Lord's instruction concerning baptism, please notice the following excerpt from a recent news article titled "A Priest Used One Wrong Word During Baptisms. The Church Now Says Thousands Were Invalid."

"A Catholic priest in Phoenix has resigned from his position after a church investigation found he had been incorrectly performing baptisms over his 20-year career - rendering the rite invalid for thousands of people, according to Bishop Thomas Olmsted of the Diocese of Phoenix. As he poured the holy water during the baptisms he performed, the Rev. Andres Arango would say, 'We baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'

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Catholic baptism ruled invalid

And getting that word wrong nullified all of the rituals he performed using that language. 'If you were baptized using the wrong words, that means your baptism is invalid, and you are not baptized,' Olmsted wrote in a message to parishioners. 'You will need to be baptized. The issue with using "We" is that it is not the community that baptizes a person, rather, it is Christ, and Him alone, who presides at all of the sacraments, and so it is Christ Jesus who baptizes.'" (Natacha Larnaud, CBSNews.com).

In response to this news, please consider the following:

1. Christ doesn't do the baptizing. Catholic "Bishop" Thomas Olmstead says the baptisms performed by Arango are invalid because, "The issue with using 'We' is that it is not the community that baptizes a person, rather, it is Christ, and Him alone, who presides at all of the sacraments, and so it is Christ Jesus who baptizes." However, even while Jesus was on the earth, the apostle John points out that, "Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples" (John 4:2). According to the New Testament, sinners are not baptized "by" Christ, but "into" Christ. The apostle Paul writes, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). As the gospel spread, people were baptized into Christ by men like Philip (Acts 8:38), Paul (1 Cor. 1:14), and others. While it is by the authority of Christ that men and women are baptized into His body, it is not Christ who does the baptizing.

2. Baptisms can be performed incorrectly. The news article reports that Mr. Arango "found he had been incorrectly performing baptisms." According to the New Testament, it is true that baptisms can be performed in such a way so as to make them incorrect and invalid. For example, when Paul explained to the men he encountered in Ephesus that they had been baptized with John's baptism instead of having been baptized into Christ, the Bible says, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). Those who have been baptized as infants, before they have sinned, before they can believe the gospel, and before they are capable of repentance, have been baptized incorrectly (cf. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). Those who have had water sprinkled or poured on them instead of having been "buried" with Christ through full immersion in water have been baptized incorrectly (cf. Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 2:12). Those who have been baptized with the understanding that baptism has nothing to do with salvation have been baptized incorrectly (cf. Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Those who have been baptized incorrectly need to be baptized correctly.

3. All Catholic baptisms are invalid. The news report states that Mr. Arango's mistake has rendered "the rite invalid for thousands of people" who were baptized by him. However, the news article's estimate is far too low. While Mr. Arango's superiors are fixated on whether he should have used the words "I" or "We" when baptizing, the truth is that the Lord did not specify either as being vital to the correct formula for valid baptism, according to Matthew 28:18-20. The real reason these baptisms are invalid is that, like all Roman Catholic baptisms, they are not performed by the authority of Christ. Baptism cannot be valid if it is performed in the wrong way (sprinkling or pouring water in place of immersion), on the wrong people (infants instead of adults who are in need of forgiveness of sins), or into the wrong body (the Roman Catholic Church rather than into Christ). All such baptisms are invalid, including those performed by Mr. Arango.

Conclusion: The case of the counterfeit Catholic baptisms only serves to highlight the problem with man-made religion. Jesus described those who impose man-made religious rules as, "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matt. 23:24). What good is it to become fixated on particular wording that the Bible never addresses while, at the same time, practicing that which completely contradicts nearly everything the Bible does teach concerning baptism? As the Lord Himself put it, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Is your baptism valid?

- David Dann