



The Church VS the Churches

BIBLICAL BAPTISM



The Form of Baptism

SPRINKLING, POURING, OR IMMERSION?

Catholic



“Secondly, through faith in Jesus Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism, the believer receives his new heart and human spirit in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This happens at the moment when the Priest baptizes the new convert by saying the baptismal words and sprinkling the water.” (*Catholic Encyclopedia* – www.newadvent.org).

Presbyterian



“Concerning Form: There are two forms or modes of baptism, immersion and sprinkling or pouring. Each of these forms seems to have good spiritual backing; each of these forms is deeply meaningful to millions. Sprinkling is the form of baptism which has been practiced by the vast majority of Christians down through the centuries. The Presbyterian form, sprinkling or pouring, symbolizes our cleansing from sin.” (Baptism in the Presbyterian Church, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky).

Methodist



“Our church has always offered to people being baptized and to the parents of infants the choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. Sprinkling is a common practice, but the person being baptized (or their sponsors) can choose the method most meaningful to them. We believe that "the power of the Spirit in baptism does not depend upon the mode by which water is administered..." (By Water and the Spirit) (www.umc.org/what-we-believe/)

What We Learn...

- ▶ Many churches believe various forms of baptism are acceptable
- ▶ The mode of baptism has nothing to do with its purpose or power.
- ▶ Whatever is meaningful for the individual is to be used.

Baptism Means **Immersion**

- ▶ **Thayer** – “to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk) 2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one’s self, bathe 3) to overwhelm”
- ▶ **BDAG** – “dip, immerse, dip oneself, wash”
- ▶ **Vine** – “baptism, consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence (from *bapto*, “to dip”)
- ▶ What we learn:
 - ▶ Baptism is a (spiritual) washing – Acts 22:16
 - ▶ This washing takes place in immersion – Col. 2:12

Why the Confusion and Contradictions?

- ▶ Problems continue because the KJV began the practice of **transliteration** of the Greek “Βαπτίζο” into *baptize*, which has no meaning in English.
- ▶ The main problem is men’s doctrine:
 - ▶ **John Calvin** – “But whether the person who is baptized be wholly immersed, and whether thrice or once, or whether water be only poured or sprinkled upon him, is of no importance. Churches ought to be left at liberty in this respect to act according to the difference of climates. The very word baptize, however, signifies immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church” (*Institutes*, Vol. 3, p. 343).
 - ▶ How can what is specifically commanded by God be **unimportant?**



The Subjects of Baptism

INFANT BAPTISM?

Presbyterian

“In company with most of the major denominations of the world, Presbyterians baptize the infants of believing members. Our reason is theological. We baptize infants because the covenant of God with his people, made first with Abraham, renewed at various times, and brought to fruition in Jesus Christ, also includes the New Israel, the new people of God, the church... When we present our babies for baptism, we do so because we believe they already belong to God by virtue of his covenanted mercies. We believe that the visible church is composed of believers and their children...they are Christians, and federally holy before baptism, and therefore they are baptized.” (***Baptism in the Presbyterian Church***)

Methodist

“We believe children are under the atonement of Christ and as heirs of the Kingdom of God are acceptable subjects for Christian baptism. Children of believing parents through baptism become the special responsibility of the Church. They should be nurtured and led to personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their baptism.” (***Methodist Discipline***, p.70)

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Catholic

- ▶ “Because of the greatness of the eternal gift that is received during the Sacrament of Baptism, the Church does not desire to see anyone die without receiving this Sacrament. (C.C.C. #1250) The Church also realizes that the Sacrament of Baptism requires a Profession of faith, something that infants and younger children cannot profess...the Catholic Church determined in its spiritual wisdom to baptize infants as soon as they were born. This would ensure that infants would also receive their new heart and new human spirit to guide them in life... Because of this decision, the Church also realized that infants must be educated later on after their Baptism, this being a parental role.”
(Catholic Encyclopedia)
- ▶ “St. Augustine (III De Anima) says ‘If you wish to be a Catholic, do not believe, nor say, nor teach, that infants who die before baptism can obtain the remission of original sin.’” **(Catholic Encyclopedia)**

What We Learn

- ▶ Protestants baptize infants because they believe they are already saved by the atoning blood of Jesus from original sin, or total hereditary depravity.
 - ▶ In time they are to confess their faith and “confirm their baptism.”
 - ▶ Baptism puts them in the visible church.
- ▶ Catholic Church baptizes infants because they also believe in original sin, but do so believing baptism forgives babies of that sin, who must later profess faith in Christ.

Baptism is for **Believers**

- ▶ There are no accounts of infant baptism because Bible baptism requires that one first believe – Mark 16:15-16
- ▶ Only those who met the condition of belief were baptized:
 - ▶ Pentecost – Acts 2:36, 38
 - ▶ The Eunuch – Acts 8:36-37
 - ▶ The Philippian Jailor – Acts 16:30-34
- ▶ In each case the ability to understand and believe what was preached was implied/assumed, which eliminates infants from being baptized.

Infant Baptism Changes God's Order of Salvation

- ▶ Protestant Churches: Saved (unconditionally) → Parents choose to Baptize → Later Believes
- ▶ Catholic Church: Church/Parents chooses to Baptize = Saved → Later Believes
- ▶ BIBLE: Hear + Believe + Baptized = Saved



The Purpose of baptism

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY?

Presbyterian

“Presbyterians do not believe that baptism is essential to salvation, nor do we believe that we are saved by baptism. We believe that the normal mode of entrance into the church is by baptism, but we recognize that not all genuine believers have been baptized.” (***Baptism in the Presbyterian Church***)

Methodist

“Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort...Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. (**Methodist Discipline**).

Baptist

“It has already been pointed out that baptism follows salvation. Since baptism is a picture of the “new birth” experience of becoming “dead to sin and alive unto God,” only the person having that experience can tell the story. The Ethiopian eunuch asked, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” To this, Philip responded, “If thou believest . . ., thou mayest” (Acts 8:36-37). This means that the form of baptism experienced without salvation is not baptism. It is so that infant baptism is repudiated. Baptism is true baptism only if the person baptized has already been saved. – (“*Baptizing Them In The Name...*” by Robert E. Naylor)

Baptists

“Peter tell us in his epistle that baptism was a “figure” and was the answer of a good conscience toward God. Baptism, then, is the outward expression of an inward salvation. Baptism follows salvation. Baptism is essential to obedience but not to salvation.” - **The Truth About The Church Of Christ**, by Hugh F. Pyle, D.D.

What We Learn

- ▶ Protestants generally teach that baptism is not necessary for salvation (based on belief that we are saved by faith only).
- ▶ Only those who are already saved are proper candidates for baptism, seeing it is believed to be an outward expression of an inward salvation already received.
- ▶ Baptism adds one to the visible/local church, while having nothing to do with entering Christ's church, the body of Christ, the saved.

The Bible: **Baptism Before Salvation**

- ▶ The Great Commission – Mark 16:16
- ▶ Pentecost – Acts 2:36-38
- ▶ The Epistles – Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12
- ▶ Baptism is for the lost who are seeking salvation, for the forgiveness of sins – Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21

Baptism of the Saved Violates God's Order of Salvation

- ▶ Protestant Churches: Hear + Believe/Repent = Saved/Forgiven → Baptized
- ▶ **BIBLE: Hear + Believe + Repent + Baptized = Saved/Forgiven**

Baptism is an **Antitype**

- ▶ **Like figure** (KJV) **is not** something less than real, a shadow, an expression of what is real, but the real thing!
- ▶ The translations of 1 Peter 3:21 bear this out:
 - ▶ NKJV – “There is also an **antitype** which now saves us—
—baptism
 - ▶ NASB – “And **corresponding to that**, baptism now saves you”
 - ▶ ESV – “Baptism, which **corresponds to this**, now saves you...”

Baptism is an **Antitype**

- ▶ **Thayer Greek-English Lexicon** – “a thing resembling another, its counterpart; something in the Messianic times which answers to the type...prefiguring it in the O.T..., as baptism corresponds to the deluge 1 Pet. iii 21”
- ▶ **BDAG: A Greek-English Lexicon Of The N.T.** – “adj. corresponding to something that has gone before...means baptism, which is a fulfillment (of the type), now saves you, i.e., the saving of Noah from the flood is a tupos, or ‘foreshadowing’ ..., and baptism corresponds to it”
- ▶ Thus, baptism *corresponds to* what was *foreshadowed* by Noah being “saved through water” (3:20-21).

Conclusion

- ▶ The N.T. church must teach the truth.
- ▶ This means that despite the denominational teaching that baptism...
 - ▶ Can be sprinkling/pouring, we must teach immersion
 - ▶ Is for infants, we must teach it is for believers
 - ▶ Is only an outward expression of inward salvation, we must teach that it is for salvation/forgiveness of sins
- ▶ The Church is distinct from the churches of today even concerning the most basic of doctrines.