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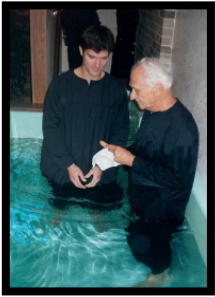
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Who Needs Baptism?

Luke 12:50: (NASB) *But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!*



With 2,000 denominations of Christianity, we can be assured that there are many, many ways to view baptism. Are babies supposed to get baptized, or is baptism only for adults? Does baptism actually take away your sins, or is it an important symbol of a conscious decision already made? Is baptism a "no exceptions" requirement to enter the Kingdom of God, or does it show that the Kingdom of God has entered you? Why does the New Testament refer to "John's baptism" and separately to "Jesus' baptism"? So many questions, so many perspectives, and so little time!

Questions for consideration:

1. Where does baptism fit in the Christian experience?
2. Who is right?
3. If baptism is not the tool that forgives, what is it?
4. Is baptism a sprinkling or a total immersion?
5. What about John's baptism?
6. How many times was Jesus baptised?

1. Where does baptism fit in the Christian experience?

Must baptism come *before* anything else? Matthew 28:19

🔊) "Infant baptism: correlated with circumcision," *No Apologies #93 (Catholic view)*

- *Nowhere does Scripture prohibit infant baptism; lack of the use of reason doesn't prevent them from being a part of the New Covenant.*
- *In the Old Testament, the right of circumcision initiated a child, eight days after birth.*

Acts 16:14-15

🔊) "Is baptism necessary," *The John Ankerberg Show (Baptist View)*

- *Salvation given by God's grace appropriated to us through faith in Jesus apart from and before baptism. Baptism is an ordinance mandated by Christ but has nothing to do with salvation.*

Acts 2:1-8

Peter and the Apostles witness about Jesus to the crowd: Acts 2:37-38: The witness really made a difference to the listeners - they were "*pierced to the heart.*" They were told to be baptized. But where does this fit in to the Christian experience?

🔊) "Without baptism we are not forgiven," *Biblestudyguide.org, Pastor Allan McNabb (Church of Christ View)*

- *We are baptized FOR the remission of our sins...one who has not been baptized has not been forgiven.*

If God is a God of order, shouldn't baptism's part be easy to figure out? Must baptism come *before* anything else?

Peter preaching to the first Gentile convert, Cornelius: Acts 10:44-48: While baptism was part of this account, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit was received by the people *prior* to their baptism. Doesn't that imply forgiveness *before* the baptism?

🔊) "Infant baptism: righteousness conferred at baptism," *No Apologies #93 (Catholic view)*

- *Paul confirms the conferring of righteousness on the soul in Titus 3:5.*
- *Acts 2:38 tells us that through baptism we receive the forgiveness of sin.*

Paul and Silas in prison: Acts 16:26-33

Where do we observe that baptism has come into play thus far?

- For Lydia, it was after she heard the word and her heart was open to its acceptance;





- For those at Pentecost, it was after their consciences were pierced;
- For those in Cornelius' house, it was after hearing, believing and receiving the Holy Spirit;
- For the jailer and his household, it was after believing.

In every case there was first a willingness to *accept and act upon* the Gospel. God's orderliness does not override the paths men take to find Him.

2. Who is right?

There is a text that seems to be a centerpiece of this discussion: Acts 2:38: All three of our quoted sources either refer to it or interpret it, so let's look at it more closely.

"Acts 2:38," *The John Ankerberg Show (Baptist View)*

- *You (all) repent and you (individually) be baptized - for the remission of your (plural - referring back to repentance) sins and you (plural again) shall receive the Holy Spirit - so the thought lays out the process this way - repent - sins remitted - receive the Holy Spirit - then be baptized. (When one repents, he not only receives the remission of sins, but he receives the Holy Spirit. Following that, he is to be baptized.)*

Baptism, this concludes, is not connected to the repenting and the receiving of the Holy Spirit, but it ends up being more of a symbol.

"Acts 2:38," *Biblestudyguide.org, Pastor Allan McNabb (Church of Christ View)*

- *Just as you go to the store for milk, you MUST repent AND baptize for your sins to be remitted.*

So, from this perspective, baptism is on the same par as repentance if you want to have your sins forgiven. These are two different perspectives on the same scripture, so let's go back to the context: Acts 2:39-41: The order of events appears to be: 1) they are called, 2) they received the word, 3) they are baptized. Did the baptism take away their sins, or without the baptism could their sins have still been taken away?

But is this text necessarily laying out a precise order of events, or is it stating the benefits of following Jesus? We have scriptural evidence that the order gets changed around sometimes. When the order is changed around, did those individuals not follow the correct path even though the end result was right?

The Scriptures tell us that baptism does NOT necessarily change us! Acts 8:9-21: Simon had a large following because he could perform astonishing magical feats. As a result of Philip's preaching, Simon, like many others, was baptized. However, the Holy Spirit was not given to these other people until later when Peter and John arrived. The order in which things occur are different from other scriptures.

However, even though Simon was baptized, his heart was not right with God. He wanted to buy the ability to bestow the Holy Spirit so that he could once again have many followers. So baptism in and of itself did not change him.



Observations:

- Simon chose to be a follower and was baptized;
- Simon watched Phillip in amazement, probably because what Philip did was genuine;
- Simon's true base character wanted the glory of real miracles - he saw glory for the miracle workers;
- Baptism did not "change" the people, the Holy Spirit did!

3. If baptism is not the tool that forgives, what is it?

Baptism Defined, *Aussie Preacher, YouTube*

- *Baptism is a symbol, a picture of what has happened to us spiritually;*
- *It is an outward expression of an internal event;*



It represents the old nature being put down into a watery grave and being washed clean into a new spiritual life.

Could baptism be a symbol? 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 1 Peter 3:18-21

Put to death in the flesh - made alive in the spirit; Our baptism is our appeal to God for a good conscience.

The Old Testament Tabernacle symbolism: Hebrews 10:19-22: Literal or symbolic? "...having our hearts sprinkled clean..." These scriptures refer back to the Tabernacle, which was a precursor to the Temple. The sprinkling of the blood was that of a bullock, which symbolized Jesus. The hearts of the people were *symbolically* sprinkled clean.

The forgiveness of sins is clearly through the name of Jesus. Acts 10:42-43 Titus 3:5-7: This uses the symbol of water for bringing forth a new spiritual life.

4. Is baptism a sprinkling or a total immersion?

The actual Greek word does mean to immerse:



(Source: James Montgomery Boice, *Bible Study Magazine*, May 1989:) Not to be confused with Strong's #911, baptō. The clearest example that shows the meaning of "baptizo" is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (baptō) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. Mark 16:16. "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved." Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle!

Baptism should show that you are living a changed life.

5. What about John's baptism?

John was baptized, and yet his baptism was not complete.

 **Repent! *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965)**

Acts 13:23-25: John's baptism was one of repentance, not for the remission of sins.

Luke 3:7-14: All of John's work was valuable, but it was not the whole story - his work was to prepare the people for Jesus. Repentance was a necessary first step, but it was not enough!

Matthew 3:11

6. How many times was Jesus baptized?

We know that he was baptized at Jordan:





Matthew 3:13-17: This was not for repentance or the remission of sins, as Jesus was not sinful. This was the beginning of something new...

Much later in his ministry, Jesus speaks of another baptism: Luke 12:50: Did Jesus mean that he had to be baptized with water again? No, he was describing the real baptism to death - the real immersion into the calling of Christ. His water baptism was a symbol of the change and spiritual focus that eventually cost him his life.

Jesus not only had this path before him, he also placed it before his followers: Mark 10:35-39: Jesus challenges them to do the work and have the discipline necessary to drink that cup of suffering and follow in the baptism of death he had to undergo. This was baptism as a way of life, living a Christ-like life. This is our challenge as well. We believe baptism is a symbol for this way of life, sacrificing until death. To be immersed is to take on a new life. Romans 8:17

Romans 12:1: Who should be baptized? Only those who are willing to walk the walk of Jesus to deny themselves, take up their cross daily and follow him. For everyone else, there is the grace and mercy of the ransom.

Genesis 22:18

Galatians 3:16

Galatians 3:27-29

Those who are baptized into Jesus' death are taking on a new life to live in a Christ-like fashion for the ultimate reason of blessing all the families of the earth. So these true followers of Christ need baptism; others are resurrected toward the Day of Judgment when they will have their opportunity at life. Those that had been baptized into Christ will be working with them as a "royal priesthood."

*Who needs baptism?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*