



## 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 baptized?

### 1. Where does baptism fit in the Christian experience?

Must baptism come *before* anything else?

Matthew 28:19: (NASB) *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...*

 "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: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. <sup>15</sup>And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay. And she prevailed upon us.

 "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: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ...there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other



tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. <sup>5</sup>Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup>And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup>They were amazed and astonished, saying, Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?

### Peter and the Apostles witness about Jesus to the crowd:

Acts 2:37-38: (NASB) <sup>37</sup>Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? <sup>38</sup>Peter said to them, Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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](http://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: (NASB) <sup>44</sup>While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. <sup>45</sup>All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. <sup>46</sup>For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, <sup>47</sup>Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he? <sup>48</sup>And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

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: (NASB) <sup>26</sup>and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. <sup>27</sup>When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup>But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here! <sup>29</sup>And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, <sup>30</sup>and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup>They said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. <sup>32</sup>And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup>And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.



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: (NASB) *Peter said to them, Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

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: (NASB) <sup>39</sup>*For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.* <sup>40</sup>*And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation!* <sup>41</sup>*So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

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:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great;... <sup>12</sup>But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. <sup>13</sup>Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. <sup>14</sup>Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup>who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit... <sup>17</sup>Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup>saying, Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup>But Peter said to him, May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup>You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

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:** (NASB) <sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. <sup>18</sup>Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.



**1 Peter 3:18-21:** (NASB) *<sup>18</sup>For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, <sup>20</sup>who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. <sup>21</sup>Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...*



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:** (NASB) *<sup>19</sup>Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup>by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh, <sup>21</sup>and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

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:** (NASB) *<sup>42</sup>And he ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the one who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup>Of him all the prophets bear witness that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.*

**Titus 3:5-7:** (NRSV) *<sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

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: (NASB) <sup>23</sup>From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, <sup>24</sup>**after John had proclaimed before his coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.** <sup>25</sup>And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.

John's baptism was one of repentance, not for the remission of sins.

Luke 3:7-14: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham for our father, for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>10</sup>And the crowds were questioning him, saying, Then what shall we do? <sup>11</sup>And he would answer and say to them, The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise. <sup>12</sup>And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, Teacher, what shall we do? <sup>13</sup>And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to. <sup>14</sup>Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, And what about us, what shall we do? And he said to them, Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.

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: (NASB) As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove his sandals; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

## 6. How many times was Jesus baptized?

We know that he was baptized at Jordan:



Matthew 3:13-17: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup>But John tried to prevent him, saying, I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? <sup>15</sup>But Jesus answering said to him, Permit it at this time; for in



this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted him. <sup>16</sup>After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on him, <sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

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

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: (NASB) <sup>35</sup>James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Jesus, saying, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you. <sup>36</sup>And he said to them, What do you want me to do for you? <sup>37</sup>They said to him, Grant that we may sit, one on your right and one on your left, in your glory. <sup>38</sup>But Jesus said to them, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? <sup>39</sup>They said to him, We are able. And Jesus said to them, The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.

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: (NASB) *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.*

Romans 12:1: (NASB) *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

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: (NASB) *In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*

Galatians 3:16: (NASB) *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, And to seeds, as referring to many, but rather to one, And to your seed, that is, Christ.*

Galatians 3:27-29: (NASB) <sup>27</sup>For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ... <sup>29</sup>And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.



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...!**



**And now even more to think about...  
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!**

Regarding the baptism of entire households - were babies included?

Acts 10:1-8: An angel appears to Cornelius; Peter and company arrive at his home.

Acts 10:30-33: (NASB) <sup>30</sup>Cornelius said, Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, <sup>31</sup>and he said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. <sup>32</sup>Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea. <sup>33</sup>So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.

#### **The conversion:**

Acts 10:44-48: (NASB) <sup>44</sup>While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. <sup>45</sup>All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. <sup>46</sup>For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, <sup>47</sup>Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he? <sup>48</sup>And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

These were obviously adults - those who spoke in tongues were those baptized.

#### **Lydia's Household:**

Acts 16:14-15: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. <sup>15</sup>And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay. And she prevailed upon us.

Acts 16:40: (NASB) They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

There is NO indication of any children - the implication is it was only adults. The tradition of the day was that those in a household would follow the lead of the owner regarding their beliefs and worship.





### The Jailer's Household:

**Acts 16:22-34:** (NASB) <sup>22</sup>The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. <sup>23</sup>When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; <sup>24</sup>and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. <sup>25</sup>But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; <sup>26</sup>and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. <sup>27</sup>When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup>But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" <sup>29</sup>And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, <sup>30</sup>and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup>They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup>And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup>And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. <sup>34</sup>And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

This was a middle of the night event; again the implication is that there were obviously no children involved.

### Stephanas' Household:

**1 Corinthians 1:14-17:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup>so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup>Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. <sup>17</sup>For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

**1 Corinthians 16:13-16:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. <sup>14</sup>Let all that you do be done in love. <sup>15</sup>Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), <sup>16</sup>that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors.

Notice that the "household" which had been baptized in 1 Corinthians 1 was devoted for the ministry of the saints and in 1 Corinthians 16:16 are spoken of as men.