

BAPTISM, What Is It?

Introductory Considerations

What questions do we usually ask about this subject?

- Must we immerse, or is another mode o.k.?
- Is it right to baptize babies?
- Does baptism actually save one?
- Can one be saved without baptism?
- Are other church's baptisms o.k.?
- Others?

What other questions should we be asking?

- What *is* baptism?
- What does it *mean*?
- How does it *work*?

Questions we should be asking (and some answers)

Baptism is a sacrament (*What is baptism?*)

WSC Q92: *What is a sacrament?* A: A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

- Sensible Sign:

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies *washed with pure water*. (Heb 10:22)

And now why do you wait? Rise and be *baptized* and *wash* away your sins, calling on his name.' (Act 22:16)

- Bap-tid-zo, βαπτίζω: to baptize, wash;
 - ♦ Strictly *dip* or *immerse* in water.

¹⁰ And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash [*louō*] in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean."... So he went down and dipped himself [*ebapīsatō*] seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (2Ki 5:10, 14)

- ♦ Metaphorically *to be in something so as to be marked by it, identified with it*.

My heart staggers; horror has appalled [*baptidzei*] me; the twilight I longed for has been turned for me into trembling. (Isa 21:4)

He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you [*baptasai*] with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Mt 3:11b)

- ♦ Commonly *to make clean by washing with water*.

And when they [the Pharisees] come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash [*baptisōntai*]. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing [*baptismous*] of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches. (Mk 7:4)

¹ Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² and of instruction about washings [*baptismōn*], the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. (Heb 6:1-2)

⁹ According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings [*baptismois*] regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. (Heb 9:9-10)

You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them [*louseis*] with water. (Ex 29:4)

²⁰ When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the LORD, they shall wash [*nipsontai*] with water, so that they may not die. (Ex 30:20)

But its entrails and its legs he shall wash [*plunousin*] with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. (Lv 1:9)

- ♦ Synonym for words referring to ANE bathing practices.

¹⁰ And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash [*louō*] in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." ... So he went down and dipped himself [*ebapitatō*] seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (2Ki 5:10, 14)

It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing [*loumenayn*]; and the woman was very beautiful. (2Sa 11:2)

Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe [*lousasthai*] at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. (Ex 2:5)

Then the priest shall wash [*plunō*] his clothes and bathe [*lousetai*] his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. But the priest shall be unclean until evening. (Nb 19:7)

All the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash [*nipsontai*] their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, (Dt 21:6)

The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash [*ebaptisthay*] before dinner. (Lk 11:38)

Then he [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash [*niptayn*] the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (Jh 13:5)

Baptism is a form of a bath. It is worship practice (sacrament) that pictures the washing away of sins.

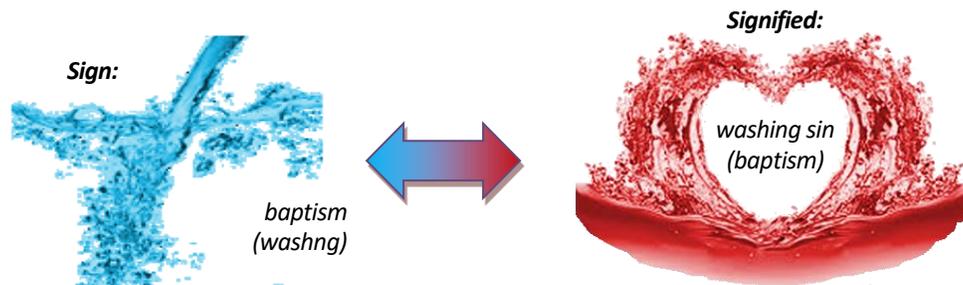
- Sign – Signified Connection:

27.2. In every sacrament there is a spiritual relationship, or sacramental union, between the visible sign and the reality signified by it, and so it happens that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other. (WCF, MESV)

¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (1Co 10:16-17)

²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Mt 26:27-28)

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized [*baptisai*] and wash [*apolousai*] away your sins, calling on his name.' (Ac 22:16 ESV)



Baptism [*baptisma*], which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1Pe 3:21)

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing [*loutrou*] of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Tit 3:5)

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed [*lelousmenoi*] with pure water. (Heb 10:22)

Baptism is a sign, distinguishable from the thing it signifies.

Baptism means cleansing from sin (What does baptism mean?)

- Represented:

Baptism, which corresponds to this [Noah and the ark], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1Pe 3:21)

- Multiple gospel referents: the cluster here shows the weighted relationship between these references. The dominant reference (largest circle) will have the most influence on the meaning of baptism.

- 4 – Atonement:

- 2 – Cleansing from sin - Mk 10:38-39, Lk 12:50;

- 2 – Death to sin - Rom 6:3-4, Col 2:12

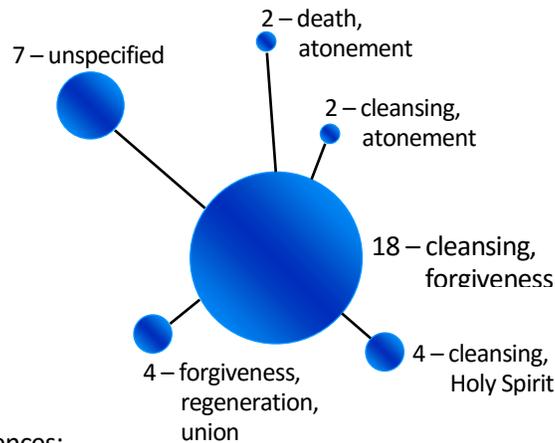
- 7 - Unspecified - Jh 4:1, Mt 28:19, Ac 8:12-16, 36,38, 16:15, 16:33, 18:8)

- 7 – Holy Spirit/cleansing from sin with fire - Mt 3:11, Mk 1:8-9, Lk 3:16, Jh 1:31-33, Ac 1:5, 10:47-48, 11:16

- 22 – Forgiveness of sins:

- 18 – Cleansing from sin - Mt 3:6-7, 21:25, Mk 1:4-5, 11:30, Lk 3:3,7,12, 7:29-30, 20:4, Jh 1:25-26,28, 3:22-23,26, 10:40, Ac 1:22, 2:38,41, 10:37, 13:24, 18:25, 19:3-5, 22:16, 1Co 1:13-17, 1Pe 3:21;

- 4 – Regeneration/union with Christ - Mk 16:16, 1Co 12:13, Gal 3:27, Eph 4:5



- Synonymous gospel references:

λουω, louō – to bath to wash (2Ki 5:10,14; Ac 22:16; Tit 3:5; Heb 10:22)

νιπτω, niptō – to wash (Heb 9:9-10; Ex 29:4; 30:20; Jh 13:5)

πλυνω, plunō – to wash (Nb 19:7)

Express connections can be made between these words and βαπτίζω, baptizō; to baptize, to wash.

- Specific gospel referent:

[Peter] Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Ac 2:38)

Paul] And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. (Acts 22:16)

Baptism is a symbolic bath picturing the washing away of sins. It is a sign that points to God's forgiveness of sins through cleansing of sins.

Baptism works by the Spirit (*How does it work?*)

- Sealed:

I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. (Mk 1:8)

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. (Isa 44:3)

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1Co 12:13)

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ... (Eph 1:13)

- Applied:

... who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:14)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Eph 4:30)

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezk 36:25-27)

- In other words, Baptism is a means of grace:

- ♦ Water Baptism is a picture of Spirit baptism:

I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. (Mk 1:8)

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1Co 12:13)

- ♦ Therefore, Baptism IS NOT a means of professing faith:

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Ac 2:38)

For as many of you as *were baptized* into Christ have put on Christ. (Gal 3:27)

For in one Spirit we *were all baptized* into one body-- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-- and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1Co 12:13)

... *having been buried with him in baptism*, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col 2:12)

- ♦ Baptism IS a means grace, a means of the Spirit's use, not ours:

Baptism does not picture something we do in order to be saved; it pictures something the Spirit does in order to save us. We cannot wash away our sins; only the Spirit can. Baptism is a picture, not of something *from* us, but something *to* us. Baptism is not our profession of faith; it is God's promise of grace.

- Summary of what is Baptism:

Baptism is a symbolic bath picturing the washing away of sins. It is a sign that points to God's forgiveness of sins through cleansing of sins. It is not itself the means of achieving these. The sign is not to be mixed with the thing of which it is a picture.

Baptism pictures both God's promises to cleanse his people from sin (OT) and God's keeping of that promise (NT). Jesus' blood, the symbol of his pure, innocent life, is pictured by the water in baptism. The washing with the water pictures the Spirit's application of Christ's atonement to the believer; propitiation (forgiveness of sins) through expiation (cleansing of sins).

In that baptism specifies the application of the atonement, it therefore is connected and can be related to all other components of redemption. In baptism God makes a profession of promise to us, to wash us clean from our sins by uniting us to Christ, and therefore to secure our possession of all the benefits of redemption. Baptism is not our profession of faith, it is God's promise of grace.

WSC Q94: *What is baptism?* A: Baptism is a sacrament, in which the washing with water; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; signifies and seals: our engrafting into Christ, partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing [*baptizantes*] them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Mt 28:19)

Questions we usually ask (and some answers)

Washing is the mode of baptism (*Must we immerse, or is another mode o.k.?*)

- Baptism in Scripture ordinarily means "wash", *not immersion*.

- ♦ Other Greek verbs for washing used synonymously for baptizdō: louō, niptō, pluō.
- ♦ Primary spiritual reference for baptizdō is spiritual cleansing, i.e., spiritual washing.
- No baptism reference which requires immersion.

⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ... ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; (Mt 3:5-6,16)

³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. (Ac 8:38-39)

¹⁰ And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash [*louō*] in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." ... So he went down and dipped himself [*ebapizatō*] seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (2Ki 5:10, 14)

- Number of baptism references which require modes other than immersion.

The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash [*ebapisthay*] before dinner. (Lk 11:38)

And when they [the Pharisees] come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash [*baptisōntai*]. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing [*baptismous*] of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches. (Mk 7:4)

⁹ According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings [*baptismois*] regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. (Heb 9:9-10; cf. 6:2)

- One baptism inference which require modes other than immersion.

let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed [*eloumevoi*] with pure water. (Heb 10:22)

- Pouring best fits the symbolic bath meaning of baptism.

- ♦ From the comparison with the Holy Spirit's baptism:

For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Ac 1:5)

³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Ac 2:3-4)

If you turn at my reproof, behold, *I will pour out my spirit to you*; I will make my words known to you. (Pro 1:23)

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will *pour my Spirit* upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. (Isa 44:3)

And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when *I pour out my Spirit* upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD." (Ezk 39:29)

²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ Even on the male and female servants in those days *I will pour out my Spirit*. (Joe 2:28-29)

"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. (Zec 12:10)

¹⁷ 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. (Ac 2:17-18)

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. (Ac 2:33)

And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. (Ac 10:45)

... and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Rom 5:5)

⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (Tit 3:5-6)

- ♦ From the comparison with Jesus' baptism by John:

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. (Mt 3:13-15)

⁵ And Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done." ⁶ And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed (*elousen*) them with water. (Lv 8:5-6)

... from thirty years old up to fifty years old, all who can come on duty, to do the work in the tent of meeting. (Nb 4:3)

Therefore he [Jesus] had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (Heb 2:17)

- ♦ From the comparison with Jesus' baptism by God the Father:

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?" (Mk 10:38)

Thus the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. (Jer 25:15)

Pour out your wrath on the nations that know you not, and on the peoples that call not on your name, for they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured him and consumed him, and have laid waste his habitation. (Jer 10:25)

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." (Rev 16:1)

- ♦ From the comparison with ANE bathing practices:

It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. (2Sa 11:2)

Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. (Ex 2:5)

Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. But the priest shall be unclean until evening. (Nb 19:7)

On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. (Zec 13:1)

⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" (Jh 13:8-10)

- ♦ From the specific meaning of baptism as a spiritual bath:

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1Co 6:11)

⁵ He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (Tit 3:5-6)

- ♦ Pouring was the practice of the Apostolic Church.

(Baptismal fonts are everywhere, usually with steps down in. Maximum depth of 3 feet; too shallow for one to kneel in and be submersed, let alone have another stand in beside you, as the pastor would).



Baptismal Font, St. John of Ephesus, Ephesus, Turkey, c. 300's, rebuilt c. 500, Emperor Justinian)



Baptismal Font, Paros, Greece, c. early 300's AD



Baptismal Font, Church of Mary, Ephesus, Turkey, c. early 400's (Council of Ephesus 431)

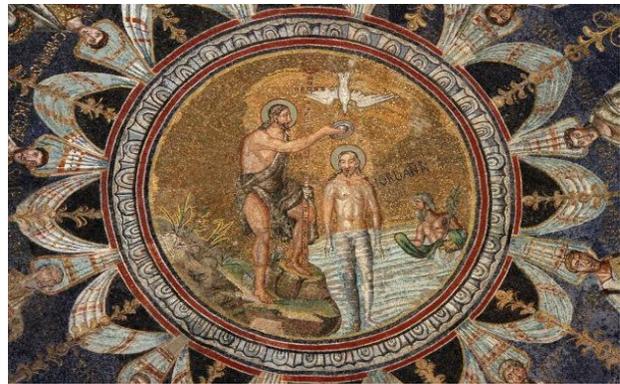


Baptismal Font, Emmaus-Nicopolis, Israel c. 400's AD



Baptismal font, Bulgaria, c. 400's

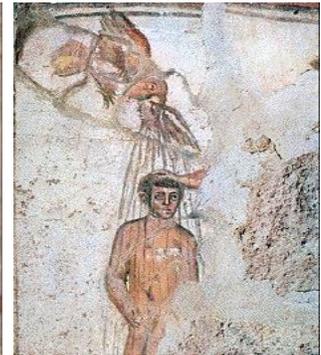
Early church art (after persecutions ceased) exclusively depict pouring as the mode of baptism.



Neonian Baptistry, Ravenna, Italy, c. mid 400's



Baptism (infant) Catacomb of Callixtus, Rome, Italy, 100's-200's



Baptism, Catacombs of Marcellinus and Peter, Rome, c. 200's to 300's

Pouring as a form of daily bathing is still practiced around the world today; it's called a bucket bath.



Bucket bath on a roof, Johannesburg, South Africa, c. 2010

Whereas, the modern "recreation" of the baptismal pool in the Jordan River has had to be specially man made.



Baptism pool at Jordan River (man-made to provide sufficient depth for immersion)

WCF 28.3. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary. Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water on the person. (*Modern English Study Version*)

Believers and their children are to be baptized (*Is it right to baptize babies?*)

- Baptism is given to adults after conversion.

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Ac 2:37-41)

- Baptism is NOT given exclusively to adults after conversion.
 - ♦ Baptism DOES NOT represent a believer's profession of faith.

[Peter] Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the *forgiveness of your sins*, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Ac 2:38)

[Paul] And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and *wash away your sins*, calling on his name. (Acts 22:16)

- ♦ Baptism DOES NOT picture man professing faith, but God keeping His promise.

I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. (Mk 1:8)

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezk 36:25-27)

- ♦ Examples DO NOT limit baptism to believers only.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Ac 2:41)

And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. (Ac 8:36-38)

And he commanded them [Cornelius' household] to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. (Ac 10:48)

And after she [Lydia] was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. (Ac 16:15)

³³ And he [the Philippian Jailer] took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. (Ac 16:33-34)

- ♦ Baptism IS NOT given only to true believers.

³¹ Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. (Jer 31:31-32)

¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. (Ac 8:12-13)

¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²² Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. (Ac 8:18-22)

Among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. (1Ti 1:20)

For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. (2Ti 4:10)

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. (2Ti 1:15)

I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. (3Jo 1:9)

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (1Jo 2:19)

- Baptism IS connected with the old covenant sign of circumcision

- ♦ Correlations between spiritual reality of circumcision and of baptism

¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col 2:11-13)

Circumcision = death; baptism = burial; raised = resurrection.



³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:3-4)

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?" (Mk 10:38)

- ♦ Correlation between covenant promises of circumcision and of baptism

⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you... ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. (Gn 17:6,10)

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:29)

³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Ac 2:38-39)

- ♦ Correlation between meaning and function of circumcision and of baptism.¹

Correlation	Circumcision	Baptism
Sign and seal of covenant of grace	Gn 17:9-14; Dt 30:6; Rom 4:11	Rom 4:11; Col 2:11-12
Physical sign pointing to spiritual reality	Rom 2:28-29; Col 2:11; Phi 3:3	Col 2:12; Rom 6:3-4
Points to union with Christ	Gn 17:7; Ex 19:5-6	Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:26-27
Points to baptism by Holy Spirit	Rom 2:29	Mt 3:11; Ac 2:38; 1Co 12:13; Eph 4:4-5; Tit 3:5
Points to regeneration	Dt 10:16; 60:6; Isa 52:1; Rom 2:28-29	Ac 22:16; Tit 3:5-7
Points to cleansing of, removal of sin	Col 2:11	Ac 22:6; Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12
Points to repentance	Jer 4:54; 9:25; Lv 26:40-41	Ac 2:38; 22:16
Points to justification by faith	Rom 4:11-12	Col 2:11-14
Obligates one to live by faith via new life	Gn 17:9; Dt 10:12-16	Rom 6:34; 1Co 7:14
Points to experience of all redemptive benefits	Rom 2:25	1Co 10:1-12
Initiatory covenant signs	Gn 17:10-11	Mt 28:19; Ac 2:38-39; 8:12
Marks covenant membership (visible and invisible Church); separating one from the world	Gn 17:4; Jos 5:5-7; Ex 12:48	Gal 3:26-29; 1Co 12:13; Ac 2:41
Given to entire households	Gn 17:10	Ac 16:15, 33
External reception (sign) does not guarantee internal reception (seal)	Jer 9:25; Rom 4:1-12	Heb 6:4-8; 10:29
Serious sin to scorn or neglect	Ex 4:24-26	Lk 7:30; Ac 10:47
Can be saved without it	Rom 4:10	Lk 23:43; Ac 10:2-47
To be administered only once	Gn 17:10-13	1Co 7:18; Tit 3:5; Ac 8:22-23

¹ Additional observations in this list were found at Presbyterian Memes, <http://twitter.com/presbymemes>; <https://www.facebook.com/PresbyterianMemes>, accessed 4/12/15.

Given to a believer's offspring	Gn 17:12	Ac 2:39; 16:33
Given to non-elect in the covenant community	Gn 17:25; 25:34; Rom 9:13	Ac 5:1-11; 8:9-24; 1Ti 1:20

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Dt 30:6)

⁴ Circumcise yourselves to the LORD; remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.... ¹⁴ O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil, that you may be saved. How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you? (Jer 4:4,14)

⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." (Jh 13:8-10)

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' (Ac 22:16)

²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom 2:28-29)



- ♦ Correlation between recipients of circumcision and baptism

²³ Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. (Gn 17:23-24)

God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. (Gn 17:19)

And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. (Gn 21:4)

³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Ac 2:38-39)

Correlation	Circumcision Recipients	Baptism Recipients
Adult believers	Abraham	Pentecost 3,000
Children of believers	Ishmael	[Promise to children]
False believers	Ishmael	Simon (Act 8:18)

- Baptism IS a sign of the family structure of the covenant of grace (CoG)
 - ♦ CoG is given to families and individuals

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Gn 12:3)

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. (Ps 22:27)

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. (Ac 2:39)

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation," (Rev 5:9)

- ♦ CoG old covenant sign given to adults and children

Every male among you shall be circumcised. (Gn 17:10b)

- ♦ CoG in new covenant given to adults and children

³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Ac 2:38-39)

- ♦ CoG transition from old covenant sign to new covenant sign did not exclude children

²² Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, ²³ with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings...."

²⁸ For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: ²⁹ that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." (Ac 15:22-23-, 28-29)

- ♦ CoG in new covenant applied to families, undifferentiatedly

And he commanded them [Cornelius' household] to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. (Ac 10:48)

And after she [Lydia] was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. (Ac 16:15)

³³ And he [the Philippian Jailer] took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. (Ac 16:33-34)

(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) (1Co 1:16)

▪ Summary:

- ♦ Baptism is NOT given exclusively to adults after conversion.
 - Baptism DOES NOT represent a believer's profession of faith.
 - Baptism DOES NOT picture man professing faith, but God keeping His promise.
 - DO NOT limit baptism to believers only.
 - Baptism IS NOT given only to true believers.
- ♦ Baptism IS connected with the old covenant sign of circumcision
 - Correlations between spiritual reality of circumcision and of baptism

- Correlation between covenant promises of circumcision and of baptism
- Correlation between meaning and function of circumcision and of baptism
- Correlation between recipients of circumcision and baptism
- ♦ Baptism IS a sign of the family structure of the covenant of grace (CoG)
 - CoG is given to families and individuals
 - CoG old covenant sign given to adults and children
 - CoG in new covenant given to adults and children
 - CoG transition from old covenant sign to new covenant sign did not exclude children
 - CoG in new covenant applied to families, undifferentiatedly
- Early Church practiced infant baptism
 - ♦ Justin Martyr (c. 150): men and woman made disciples in childhood, remained in Christ 60-70 years.
 - ♦ Irenaeus (c. 130-200): infants, boys, youth, old men, all appropriate recipients of baptism.
 - ♦ Tertullian (c. 160-215): concerned that baptism not be withheld from infants (beginning ex opera operata view of baptism).
 - ♦ Origen (c. 185-254): baptism of infants universal church practice, received from apostles.
 - ♦ Cyprian (c. 200-258): provided instructions for baptizing infants, as he learned from by church tradition handed down to him.
 - ♦ Infant baptism begins to wane only with spread of schismatic heresies in 4th C.
- Children are invited to come to Jesus:

But Jesus said, "Let the little children [*paidia*] come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 19:14)

But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children [*paidia*] come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." (Lk 18:16)

Now they were bringing even infants [*brephos*] to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. (Lk 18:15)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>If</i> the thing pictured by the sign (Jesus Christ and all his benefits), belongs to the children of believers, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Then</i> why do we withhold the sign (baptism) from the children of believers?
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Baptism does not regenerate; the Spirit does(Does baptism actually save one?)

- Baptism does not “work” because of you, your parents, pastor, or church

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Tit 3:5)

- Baptism does not “work” because of the physical elements

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1Pe 3:21)

That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (Eph 5:26)

- Baptism points to the Spirit who “works”

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Gal 3:27)

Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col 2:12)

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Tit 3:5)

- The Spirit’s work is not expressly tied to the moment of baptism

⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (Jh 3:5-8)

Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people [Cornelius and family], who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? (Ac 10:47)

^{17:12} He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. ... ^{28:16} Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." ... ^{32:28} Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." (Gn 17:12; 28:16; 32:28)

- So how do we consider baptized children?

- ♦ Members of the Visible Church

For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. (1Co 7:14)

- ♦ Promise of the covenant

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Ac 2:39)

All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children. (Isa 54:13)

- ♦ Ministry of the covenant

³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ... ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Ac 2:39,42)

- ♦ Contingent upon the decree of election

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Rom 8:30)

- ♦ Presumptively regenerated, *upon profession of faith*

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Rom 10:9-10)

So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, (Mt 10:32)

² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ... ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. (1Jo 4:2, 15)

WSC Q95: *To whom is baptism to be administered?* A: Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

Baptism is necessary for faith, not salvation (*Can one be saved without baptism?*)

- The Spirit can save without baptism

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. (Jh 3:8)

¹ And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ² And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." (Ac 19:1-2)

- Yet faith is deficient without baptism

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (Jh 14:21)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ (teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt 28:19-20)

Christian baptism is acceptable (*Are other church's baptisms o.k.?*)

- If in the Trinitarian name

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

- If with water for symbolic washing

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' (Ac 22:16)

- If within in the Church

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ... ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (Eph 4:4-6, 11-12)

WLC Q167: How do we improve our Baptism?

A: The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism, is to be performed by us all our life. This is especially true in times of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of baptism to others. We improve upon it, [through faith]:

1. By serious and thankful consideration of:

- the nature of it,
- the goal for which Christ instituted it,
- the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and
- our solemn vow made therein;

2. By being humbled for:

- Our sinful defilement,
- Our falling short of, and
- Our living contrary to both the grace of baptism, and our commitments [of faith];

3. By growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament;
4. By drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the putting to death of sin, and the bringing to life of grace; and
5. By endeavoring:
 - To live by faith,
 - To have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ, and
 - To walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body. *(updated, RDP)*