

Baptism

The waters that divide

Baptism in Church History

Theological terms regarding baptism

- Paedobaptism (infant baptism) —
- Credobaptism (believer's baptism) — A key concept is that a credible profession of faith must be given by the recipient before baptism. -Theopedia
- Immersion — the act of dipping in water in baptism
- Aspersio — the act of sprinkling with water in baptism
- Effusion — the act of pouring water in baptism

Baptism in Church History

Justin Martyr: “As many as are persuaded and believe that what we [Christians] teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly . . . are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, ‘Except you be born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ [John 3:3]” (First Apology 61 [A.D. 151]).

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Baptism in Church History

-Tertullian: “Happy is our sacrament of water, in that, by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life. . . .”
(Baptism 1 [A.D. 203]).

“Without baptism, salvation is attainable by none” (ibid., 12).

Baptism in Church History

-Augustine of Hippo: believed in baptismal regeneration of infants. “Likewise, whosoever says that those children who depart out of this life without partaking of that sacrament shall be made alive in Christ, certainly contradicts the apostolic declaration, and condemns the universal Church, in which it is the practice to lose not time and run in haste to administer baptism to infant children, because it is believed, as an indubitable truth, that otherwise they cannot be made alive in Christ. Now he that is not made alive in Christ must necessarily remain under the condemnation, of which the apostle says, that by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.

Romans 5:18 That infants are born under the guilt of this offense is believed by the whole Church.”

“If, however, the infant departs from the present life after he has received baptism, the guilt in which he was involved by original sin being done away, he shall be made perfect in that light of truth, which, remaining unchangeable for evermore, illumines the justified in the presence of their Creator.”

“There are three ways in which sins are forgiven: in baptism, in prayer, and in the greater humility of penance; yet God does not forgive sins except to the baptized” (Sermons to Catechumens on the Creed 7:15 [A.D. 395]).

Baptism in Church History

Paul K. Jewett in Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace states, “Beginning with Augustine and moving back to New Testament times, I have evaluated each relevant passage from ancient Christian sources and have reached the conclusion that the practice of infant baptism appears in the Western Church about the time of Irenaeus (AD. 180), and in the Eastern Church about the time of Irenaeus somewhat later.”

Baptism in Church History

-Catholic Church: “The Lord himself affirms that baptism is necessary for salvation [John 3:5]. . . . Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament [Mark 16:16]” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1257).

Baptism in Church History

- **The Orthodox Church:** “In the Christian Church the practice of baptism takes on a new and particular significance. It no longer remains merely a sign of moral change and spiritual rebirth. It becomes very specifically the act of a person’s death and resurrection in and with Jesus. Christian baptism is man’s participation in the event of Easter. It is a “new birth by water and the Holy Spirit” into the Kingdom of God (Jn 3.5)...After the proclamation of faith, the baptismal water is prayed over and blessed as the sign of the goodness of God’s creation. The person to be baptized is also prayed over and blessed with sanctified oil as the sign that his creation by God is holy and good. And then, after the solemn proclamation of “Alleluia” (from Hebrew, meaning “God be praised”), the person is immersed three times in the water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Through the act of immersion, the baptized person dies to this world and is born again the resurrection of Christ into eternal life.” -Orthodox Church in America

Baptism in Church History

-**Martin Luther:** believed in baptismal regeneration “salvation does not occur in an experience of subjective ecstasy; it happens at the moment the baptized is washed with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” He states that the infant “becomes a saint in the hands of the priest”. For Luther, infants receive the Holy Spirit at baptism and believe with their own faith.

-**John Calvin:** agrees with infant baptism. Some think he believed in baptismal regeneration. It seems unclear.

Baptism in Church History

-Lutheran Church Missouri Synod: “Terms the Bible uses to talk about the beginning of faith include “conversion” and “regeneration.” Although we do not claim to understand fully how this happens, we believe that when an infant is baptized God creates faith in the heart of that infant. We believe this because the Bible says that infants can believe (Matt. 18:6) and that new birth (regeneration) happens in Baptism (John 3:5-7; Titus 3:5-6). The infant’s faith cannot yet, of course, be verbally expressed or articulated by the child, yet it is real and present all the same (see e.g., Acts 2:38-39; Luke 1:15; 2 Tim. 3:15).”

Baptism in Church History

The Anabaptists: (prefix “ana” means “again, anew” the name means “one who rebaptizes). They were called that by their detractors but they believed their infant baptism was of no value so sought to be baptized as believers.

"I have never taught Anabaptism.... But the right baptism of Christ, which is preceded by teaching and oral confession of faith, I teach, and say that infant baptism is a robbery of the right baptism of Christ." — Hubmaier, Balthasar (1526)

The Mennonites and Amish are groups descended from the Anabaptists

Baptism in Church History

Who should be baptized was a major debate in 17th century England between the Westminster Theologians and the Baptists.

The English baptists differed from the Westminster theologians. Regarding baptism, the 1677 Baptist Confession states: “Those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects for this ordinance”

Baptism in Church History: Several views held by Christians

-Baptismal Regeneration—the belief that baptism is necessary for salvation, or more precisely, that regeneration does not occur until a person is water baptized. -gotquestions.org

-Depending on the denomination, this could apply to infants (Catholics, Orthodox) or believers (the view of Church of Christ).

-Baptism as an act of obedience but not essential, for believers. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace. (Common view of most evangelicals)

-Baptism as a sacrament of the covenant of grace. It is more than just a symbol. Spiritual realities occur with baptism. NT baptism correlates to OT circumcision. It is administered to infants as an initiation into covenant with God. (Common view among Reformed churches, including Presbyterians)

-Water baptism is not necessary for believers today. (Common view of Quakers and the Salvation Army)

What is baptism?

What is the definition?

comes from the greek work baptizo. The meaning of this word in history is controversial. Many will say that the word always and only means to immerse or dip. According to Jay E. Adams in his book The meaning and mode of baptism “But it is not true that the word means “immerse” and only “immerse”. Regardless of what else his massive volume, Classic Baptism, proves, R. W. Dale for all time has settled the question of the extra-biblical usage of baptizo. Though the word possibly can mean “immerse” he has clearly demonstrated that this is not usually true and certainly not the basic meaning of the term. In fact, the word is a rather “fluid” one (to use a bad pun) comprising such divergent concepts as “to plunge, to pour, to tinge, to sprinkle, to dye,” and many others. It often doesn’t involved water.

Another quote from R. W. Dale, “Whatever is capable of thoroughly changing the character, state, or condition of any object, is capable of baptizing that object: and by such change of character, state, or condition does, in fact, baptize it.”

How do the Scriptures define baptism?

Heb. 9:10—“*diverse washings*” The word translated “washings” is “baptismois”

Mk. 7:4—“*washing*” —“baptismous”

John 3: 22-26—“*purifying*” —their understanding of baptism

Rom. 6:1-4; I Cor. 12:13—we are identified with Christ by baptism. His death is our death. We are identified with Christ.

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Rom. 6:1-4; I Cor. 12:13—we are identified with Christ by baptism. His death is our death. We are identified with Christ.

-A washing for purification that results in sanctification and a new identification.

“There are three words in Greek used with baptism. Baptizo, Baptisma, and Baptismos (the plural of Baptisma).

The word "baptize" is an un-translated word. There was no word in English that had the meaning of baptizo. The Greek term baptizo was simply brought into the English, without translation. The final "o" (omega) was dropped and the English "e" was added to give us the English verb "baptize." In the case of the Greek baptisma, the final "a" (alpha) was dropped to give us the English noun "baptism."

This is important to note, because this means we must look at historical accounts of these words, as well as the scripture itself to determine its meaning”

—Billy W. The Bible Brown

Different Types of Baptisms in the Scriptures

- Various Old Testament Baptisms (Heb.9) -water
- John's Baptism (Mk.1:1-5; Mt.3:1-7; Lk. 7:28-30; Jn. 1:19-31) -water
- Jesus's Baptism by John -water
- Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Mt. 28:19) -water
- Baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38) -water

Different Types of Baptisms in the Scriptures

- Christ baptizing with the Holy Ghost (Mt. 3:11; Acts 1:4-5,8; 2:1-4) -no water
- Christ baptizing with Fire (Mt. 3:11-12) -no water Baptism of Death (Mt. 20:20-23; Lk. 12:49-50) -no water
- Baptism unto Moses (I Cor. 10:1-2) -no water; the Egyptians were the ones that got wet
- The Holy Spirit baptizing believers into the Body of Christ (I Cor.12:13; Rm.6) -no water

Various OT Baptisms

- Hebrews 9:7-22: verse 10 “diverse washings”—baptisms
 - V. 13—*“ashes of the red heifer sprinkling the unclean...”* Numbers 19:1-22
 - V. 19—*“he took the blood fo calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people”*—Exodus 24:6-8
 - V. 21—*“moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry”*—Leviticus 8:15,19; 16:14-19

John's Baptism

John's water baptism:

purpose:

1. A baptism of repentance for the remission of sins—it was for sinners (Mk.1:1-5; Mt.3:1-7; Lk. 7:28-30; Jn. 1:19-31)
2. in order to make Christ known to Israel (Jn.1:29-34)

Jesus's Baptism by John

Mt.3:13-17

Mt. 3:15-*“Suffer it to be so: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness”*

Jesus, born under the law, obeyed the law perfectly—he was circumcised Lk.2:21, presented in the temple Lk 2:42, he observed the Jewish feasts commanded by the law (Mk.14:12, Lk.22:13; Jn.7:10).

Here he is submitting to the ceremonial act of His ordination to the priesthood.

Requirements for becoming a priest:

- must be 30 yrs old (Nu.4:3,46-47; I Chron. 23:3), this is why Lk.3:21-23 mentions Jesus age of 30 at the time of his baptism
- must be called of God as was Aaron (Heb.5:1-6,10)
- must be consecrated by sprinkling with water. (Nu.8:5-7; Lev.8:6,30)

Christ baptizing with the Holy Ghost

Mt. 3:11 — “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:”

(Acts 1:4-5,8; 2:1-4)

Christ baptizing with fire

Mt. 3:11-12 “he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat in the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Is. 30:24—“The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.”

Winnowing is a farming method developed by ancient people for separating grain from chaff.

-Ps.21:9-11; Is. 1:21-27; Is. 33:10-12; Is. 60:19-21; Eze. 20:33-41; Zeph. 1:18

Painting of man using winnowing fan



Image of Winnowing fans/shovels



Baptism in the name of the Trinity vs Jesus

Mt. 28:19—“...teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 2:38—“...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

—the difference lies in the intended audience: the nations (who know not the Triune God) vs Israel (who knows Jehovah but must identify with Jesus, their messiah). More will be said regarding this.

Baptism of Death

Luke 12:50—*“But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”*

Also see Mt. 20:20-23

Baptism unto Moses

I Cor. 10:1-2—“Moreoever, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

--Exodus: 14:31

-The baptized did not get wet, the Egyptians got wet.

-The effect of the cloud and the sea brought about their identification with Moses. Jay Adams states, “...that the Israelites having been wavering, unstable, and unreliable in their relations to Moses, were made (as a result of the miracles which they had witnessed) to trust, to confide in, to believe upon him, with a confidence second only to that cherished Jehovah himself, whose minister and representative they now fully believed him to be.”

The Holy Spirit Baptizing Believers into the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:13—“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Rom. 6:3-4—“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Gal. 3:27—“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Col. 2:12—“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Questions that may have arisen
during this series

What was the scriptural mode of baptism?

Commonly taught that the proper mode of water baptism is IMMERSION

Scripturally, I am convinced that SPRINKLING is the proper mode.

-Heb. 9:10-*“divers washings”*—baptisms in OT involved sprinkling often using hyssop.
(Nu. 8:6-7;19:1-22)

-Is. 52:15 *“So shall he sprinkle many nations...”*

-Eze.36:24-25 *“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”*

-Immersionists will use verse that speak of people going down or coming up out of the water as proof of baptism by immersion, but that does not mean they went under the water. (Acts 8:38-39)

Is Infant Baptism scriptural?



Is Infant Baptism scriptural?

Short answer: No

Long answer: There is not a verse that explicitly teaches that infants were baptized, instead proponents of this view piece together different verses and themes to arrive at this view.

-Remember, infant baptism began as a necessity without which an infant who died would be condemned because, according to their erroneous view, they still have the guilt of Adam's transgression on them and water baptism was necessary to remove the guilt of Adam.

Once again, Augustine of Hippo stated, "Likewise, whosoever says that those children who depart out of this life without partaking of that sacrament shall be made alive in Christ, certainly contradicts the apostolic declaration, and condemns the universal Church, in which it is the practice to lose not time and run in haste to administer baptism to infant children, because it is believed, as an indubitable truth, that otherwise they cannot be made alive in Christ. Now he that is not made alive in Christ must necessarily remain under the condemnation, of which the apostle says, that by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Romans 5:18 That infants are born under the guilt of this offense is believed by the whole Church."

Is Infant Baptism scriptural?

The reformers, Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli kept the Catholic tradition of infant baptism but tried to find other ways of justifying it, except for Luther who also believed in baptismal regeneration of infants

-Today, Reformed churches and Presbyterians tend to see the scriptures from a Covenant Theology perspective and so see the Old Covenant and New Covenant as being parts of the overarching Covenant of Grace. So, just as circumcision was the sign and seal of the Old Covenant, so baptism is the sign and seal of the New Covenant.

-For them, Infant baptism of believer's children grants them entrance into the covenant community, just as, circumcision granted the recipient access into the covenant community of Israel.

-So, if there is not a verse that explicitly teaches that we should baptize infants, is there a verse that explicitly teaches that only believers received water baptism? Yes, but depending on the Bible you read, it may not be in it. **Acts 8:37**

—For further study on this subject: Mike Winger of [The Bible Thinker](#) Podcast “A Biblical Analysis of Infant Baptism” from

Was water baptism required at certain times in scripture?

Mark 16:16—*“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Acts 2:38—*“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins....”*

-Some would teach that these verses are not speaking of water baptism. Others would say that it is speaking of water baptism but the salvation is not justification unto eternal life.

Is the baptism with the Holy Ghost in Mt.3 the same as the baptism of I Cor. 12:13?

Mt. 3:11—“...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

-Who is the baptizer?

-What were they baptized with?

I Cor. 12:13—“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...”

-Who is the baptizer?

-What were they baptized into?

What Baptism(s) concern us today?

Given that there are many baptisms in scripture, where do we go in the Bible for the instructions specifically to and about us?

First, we need to know who we are and where we fit into the plan and purpose of God. All scripture is for us, but not all scripture is written to and about us.

We are NOT the nation of Israel, we are the Body of Christ. Certain portions of the Bible are written to and about God's nation, Israel, and certain portions of the Bible are written about the church, the Body of Christ. The instructions can be different depending on the audience.

What Baptism(s) concern us today?

According to Dr. Warren Wiersbe, “Again let it be said that God NEVER meant for Paul to belong to the twelve. Their ministry was to the Jews and was related to the Kingdom; Paul’s ministry was to the Gentiles and was related to the mystery of the church, the one Body. The twelve received their call on earth because their message presented the earthly hope of Israel. Paul received his call from heaven, because his message presented the heavenly calling the church has in Christ. There were twelve apostles, associated with the twelve tribes of Israel. Paul was one man (a Jew with a Gentile citizenship), picturing the one body in Christ.” (Expository Outlines of the New Testament, pg. 288)

What Baptism(s) concern us today?

A quote from Sir Robert Anderson, “A forgotten truth I call it, for in common with the Mystery truths (i.e. those truths revealed to and through the Apostle Paul) of the **DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN REVELATION**, it was lost in the interval of time between the Apostolic Age and the era of the Patristic Theologians. And our standard theology is so dominated by the writings of the fathers that it is still untouched by the light of the evangelical revival. (Forgotten Truths by Sir Robert Anderson)

What Baptism(s) concern us today?

Examples of Differences:

Acts 2:36-38—“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 16:29-31—“Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and though shalt be saved, and thy house.”

What Baptism(s) concern us today?

Examples of Differences:

Mt. 28:19—“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”

-This instruction is given by our Lord Jesus to the eleven apostles (Judas had killed himself) after his resurrection.

I Cor. 1:14-17—“I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:”

-Christ does not send Paul to baptize but to preach the gospel. Why the difference?

What Baptism(s) concern us today?

In the gospel accounts (Mt.-Jn.) there are multiple different baptisms referenced (John's baptism, Christ baptizing with the H.G. and fire). Also, Hebrews 6:2 states *"the doctrine of baptisms"*

Eph. 4:4-6 *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, **one baptism**, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

-Today, there is ONE baptism, so the question is, which one?

What Baptism(s) concern us today?

I Corinthians 12:13—“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Rom. 6:3-4—“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Gal. 3:27—“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Col. 2:12—“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

So, why did the Apostle Paul baptize some believers in the book of Acts?

One possible explanation: The apostle Paul had a ministry of provoking the Jews. When Israel saw her things being done among the gentiles it was meant to have an impact on them. Romans 11:13-15. *“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.”*

So, why did the Apostle Paul baptize some believers in the book of Acts?

Another possible explanation: God didn't reveal all of the information to the apostle Paul for our edification at once.

II Cor. 12:1—“...I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.”

Acts: 26:16—“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;”

When Paul gets saved in Acts 9, he is told to get water baptized to wash away his sins, but thru the revelations given to him by the LORD, he ends up stating that Christ didn't send him to baptize and that there is ONE baptism, the spiritual baptism where the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ. No water needed.

Conclusion

- Many different views down through church history
- Scriptural baptisms: numerous types- wet and dry versions
- Today, there is ONE BAPTISM (Eph.4:5), whereby the Holy Spirit baptizes believers “into one body” (I Cor. 12:13)