

BAPTISM - 3



BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

- ❑ Baptismal Regeneration is the idea that water baptism is essential for salvation. It is one of the earliest heresies to enter the church as early as the 2nd century (i.e. during the period of the "Wheat and the Tares").
- ❑ Unlike most heresies from this period, even church fathers like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian - who are all generally sound in doctrine - taught some form of baptismal regeneration.
- ❑ And so Justin Martyr writes in his First Apology (~154-155 AD) in a chapter devoted to baptism:
 - Then [converts] are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

- ❑ The highly respected Irenaeus makes the common mistake of misunderstanding Jesus' words in John 3:5 to be a reference to water baptism. He does however specify that the Lord must be called on as well for salvation ("invocation of the Lord"):
- It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [it served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as newborn babes, even as the Lord has declared: "Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."¹

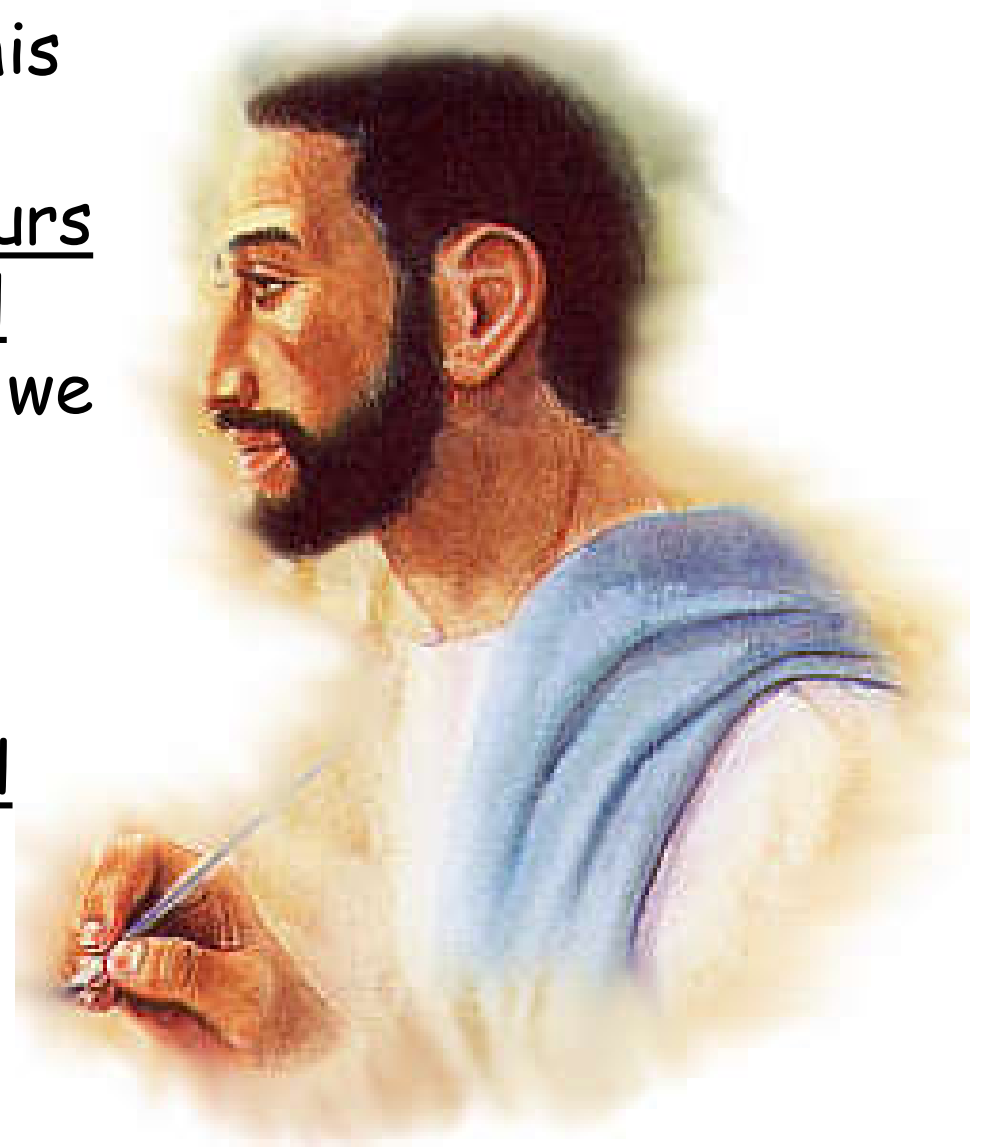
¹ Irenaeus, Fragments From the Lost Writings of Irenaeus: XXXIV)

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

- ❑ And even Tertullian writes, "This discussion of the sacred significance of that water of ours in which the sins of our original blindness are washed away and we are set at liberty unto life eternal..." ¹
- ❑ Augustine writes in AD 412, "... neither salvation nor eternal life can be hoped for by any man without baptism and the Lord's Supper." ²

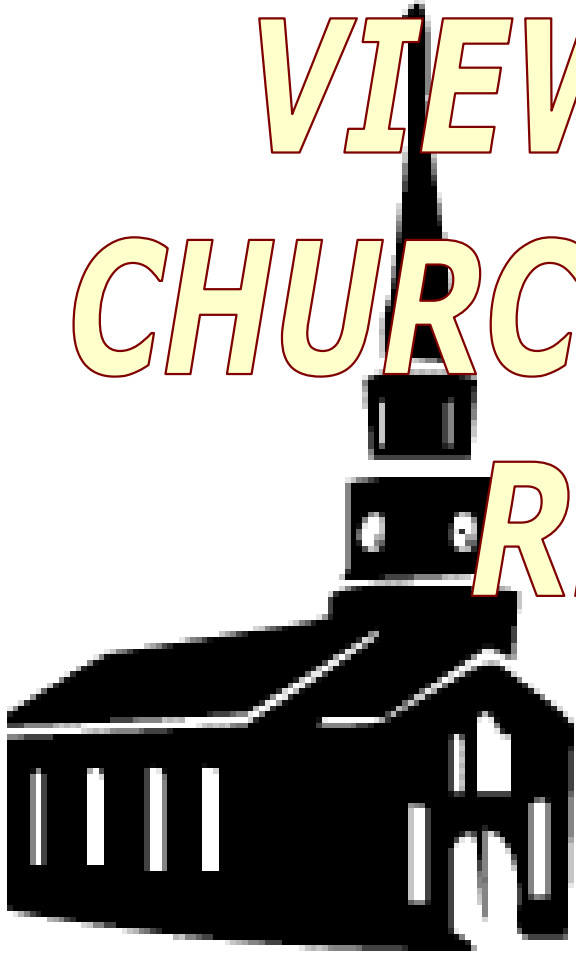
¹ On Baptism

² Forgiveness and the Just Deserts of Sin and the Baptism of Infants.



Augustine

VIEWS OF DIFFERENT CHURCHES ON BAPTISMAL REGENERATION



CATHOLIC CHURCH

- ❑ The Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545-63) ¹ stated that "If anyone says that baptism is... not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema." ²
- ❑ The universal Catechism of the Catholic Church released by the Vatican in 1993 still states, "Baptism is necessary for salvation... the Church does not know of any [other] means... that assures entry into eternal beatitude...."



The Council of Trent

¹ H.J. Schroeder, trans., The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent

² Anathema means accursed or consigned to damnation or destruction.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

Denomination	Baptismal Regeneration
Roman Catholic Church	Yes
Eastern Orthodox Church	Yes
Lutherans	Yes
Anglican (Church of England)	Varies

- ❑ Although Baptismal Regeneration is found in the Church of England Prayer Book, there are evangelicals in that church who present the gospel and who preach regeneration by faith alone. They have a practice of inviting those in their congregations who have been sprinkled in infancy to accept Jesus.

INFANT BAPTISM

Denomination	Baptismal Regeneration	Sprinkle infants
Methodists (Wesleyans)	No	Yes
Reformed churches	No	Yes
Presbyterians	No	Yes
Congregational churches	No	Yes

- ❑ Strangely enough, some churches which reject Baptismal Regeneration still 'baptize' (sprinkle) babies. Baptismal Regeneration really goes hand in hand with Infant Baptism. If you don't believe that water baptism saves - then what is the point of baptizing a baby?

REFORMED CHURCHES

- ❑ The way this seemingly self-contradictory viewpoint is justified is as follows - although the link of the practice (of christening) to Biblical baptism still remains unclear:
 - Presbyterian and Reformed Christians believe that baptism is a symbol, as a wedding ring is a symbol of marriage. The grace it conveys, however, is not justifying grace. Baptism, according to this tradition, does not produce Christians, but identifies the child as a member of the covenant community. Being a member of the covenant community does not guarantee salvation; though it does provide the child with many benefits, including that of one's particular congregation consenting to assist in the raising of that child... ¹

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_baptism#Presbyterian_and_Continental_Reformed_churches

BELIEVERS BAPTISM

Denomination	Baptismal Regeneration	Sprinkle infants
Assemblies of God	No	No
Pentecostals	No	No
Baptists	No	No
Anabaptists	No	No
Seventh-day Adventists	No	No

- ☐ Rejecting both Baptismal Regeneration and Infant Baptism is not only Scriptural - but also logical. Since baptism doesn't regenerate, there is obviously no purpose in baptizing infants.

BELIEVERS BAPTISM

Denomination	Baptismal Regeneration	Sprinkle infants
Churches of Christ	No	No

- ❑ Because of the belief that baptism is a necessary part of salvation, some Baptists hold that the Churches of Christ endorse the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Members of the Churches of Christ reject this, arguing that since faith and repentance are necessary, and that the cleansing of sins is by the blood of Christ through the grace of God, baptism is not an inherently redeeming ritual... Baptism is understood as a confessional expression of faith and repentance, rather than a 'work' that earns salvation.¹

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ

SACRAMENTS

- ❑ The common view before the Reformation was that people acquired grace by participating in the church's sacraments. The definition of a sacrament is that it is an outward sign, that imparts spiritual grace through Christ. The Western Church at this stage recognized seven sacraments:

- 1) Baptism
- 2) The Eucharist (Communion)
- 3) Confirmation
- 4) Confession
- 5) Anointing of the sick
- 6) Marriage
- 7) Holy orders

SACRAMENTS OR SIGNS?

- ❑ Hand in hand with the sacramental view of theology, the idea of baptismal regeneration prevailed through the Middle Ages. But John Wycliffe (c. 1328-1384), known as the "morning star of the Reformation" was accused by his foe Thomas Walden of denying that all sins are abolished in baptism.
- ❑ Most Protestant reformers only accepted two of the sacraments; baptism and communion.
- ❑ Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer from Zurich, adopted the view that the sacrament is the visible sign of an invisible grace.



Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

SACRAMENTS OR SIGNS?

- ❑ The A/G, Anabaptists and Baptists believe that the sacramental approach to Christianity is both flawed and bordering on religious superstition. Baptism and communion are not 'sacraments' in the sense that they impart grace. We agree with Zwingli that they do not "impart grace", but are more correctly viewed as being external visible signs of an internal invisible grace.
- ❑ Neither water baptism nor communion are prerequisites for salvation.
 - Water baptism is an outward sign of the regenerative work of salvation that has already happened inside.
 - Communion is a memorial of Jesus' death and not an additional prop for salvation.

SAVED BY GRACE

- ❑ If baptism were necessary for salvation, that would negate numerous other Bible passages which teach that we are saved by grace through faith and "not by works". (Eph 2:8-9)
- ❑ The error of baptismal regeneration is that it requires man to do something (in this case, be water baptized) in order to be saved. Water baptism is certainly an important result of salvation, but not a means to salvation. The theology of baptismal regeneration is the result of not truly understanding the gospel of grace. The perverted 'gospel' condemned in Galatia was that of faith in Christ plus circumcision. The lesson derived from this is that a 'gospel' of faith in Christ plus anything is really "no gospel at all" (Gal 1:7).¹

¹ Steve Atkerson http://www.ntrf.org/articles/article_detail.php?PRKey=39

*ORIGINS OF
THE BELIEF IN
BAPTISMAL
REGENERATION*



BORN OF WATER

- ❑ Q: So where did the idea come from?
- ❑ A: The belief in baptismal regeneration was partly due to a misunderstanding of Jesus' words in John 3:5. "Born of water" was seen by some as a reference to baptism.
 - John 3:5-6 ... no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.
- ❑ But Jesus is making a reference to the water of the womb¹ or natural birth. He was answering Nicodemus' question "can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Looking in context, Jesus is simply contrasting natural birth with spiritual birth.

¹ The amniotic fluid (which is mainly water) cushions and protects the baby in the womb.

John 3:3-6 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked.

"Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."



- ❑ The context and specifically a comparison between verse 5 and 6 show that natural birth and spiritual birth are being contrasted. Spiritual birth is being “born again”.

	VERSE 5	VERSE 6
	... no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of <u>water</u> ⁽¹⁾ and <u>the Spirit</u> . ⁽²⁾	<u>Flesh</u> ⁽¹⁾ gives birth to flesh, but the <u>Spirit</u> ⁽²⁾ gives birth to spirit.
NATURAL BIRTH	Born of water	Flesh gives birth to flesh
SPIRITUAL BIRTH	Born of the Spirit	The Spirit gives birth to spirit

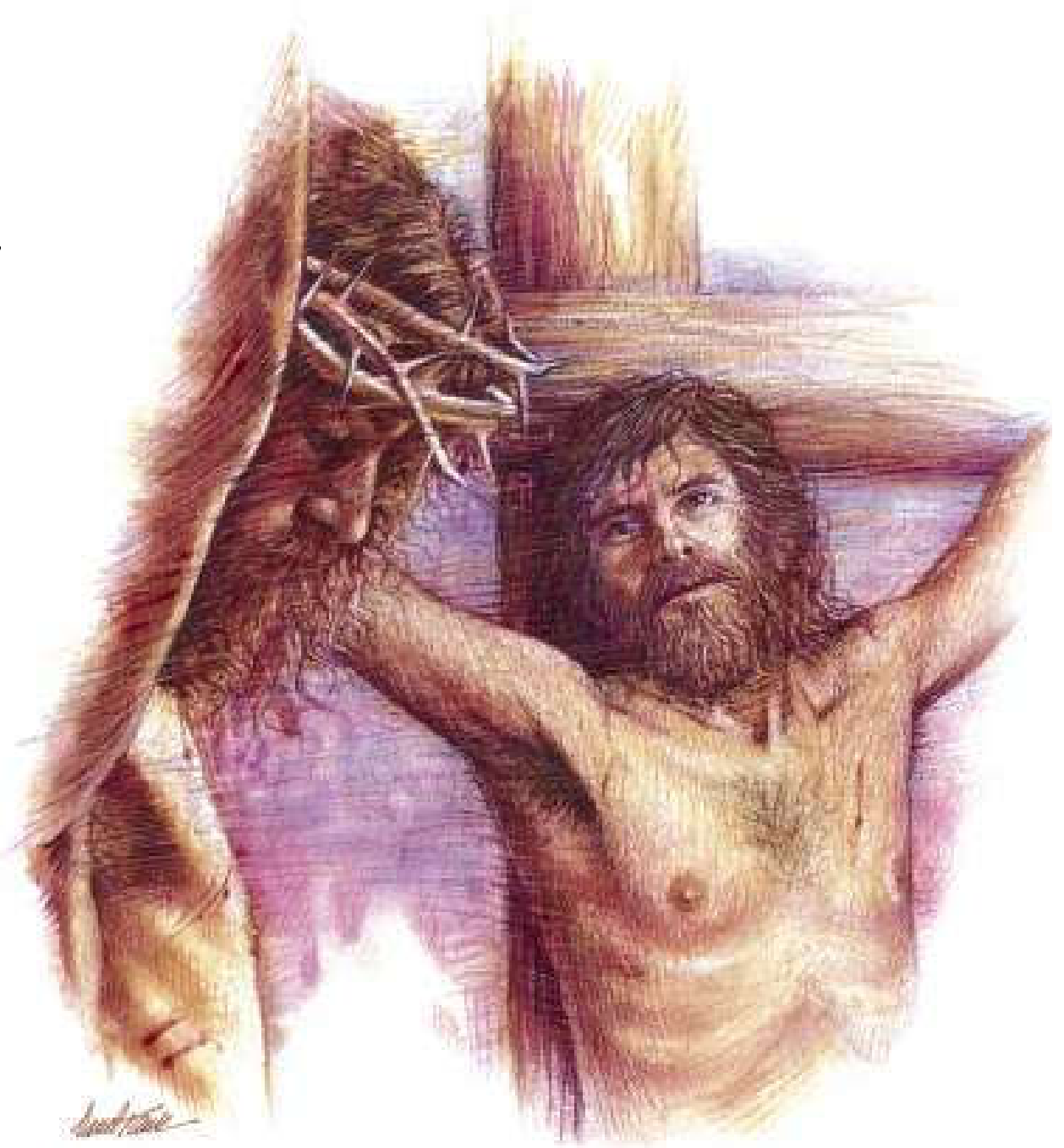
SAVING BAPTISM

- ❑ The idea of baptismal regeneration also arose due to people confusing water baptism with baptism into the body of Christ (which is necessary for salvation).

	1) Baptism into the body of Christ	2) Baptism in water
Baptizer	Holy Spirit	A believer
Candidate	A repentant sinner	A believer
Element	Body of Christ	Water
Necessary for salvation?	YES	NO – but should be done in obedience

ONE SAVING BAPTISM

- ❑ Baptism in water may take place without regeneration (as in the case of Simon the Sorcerer).
- ❑ Regeneration may take place without the baptism in water (for the thief on the cross was not baptized at all, and Cornelius was baptized after both regeneration and the baptism in the Holy Spirit).



ONE SAVING BAPTISM

- ❑ Augustine wrote, "Baptism washes away all, absolutely all, our sins, whether of deed, word, or thought, whether sins original or added, whether knowingly or unknowingly contracted." ¹
- ❑ This comes from a misunderstanding of the passage in Acts 22:16 regarding Saul where Ananias says, "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." Taken in isolation this seems to teach baptismal regeneration.



¹ Against Two Letters of the Pelagians (AD 420)

ONE SAVING BAPTISM

- ❑ But considering it in the context of the entire Scripture, washing away of sins is by "calling on his name" - and baptism in water symbolizes this washing away of sins. Paul had confessed Jesus as Lord (Acts 22:8,10) on the road to Damascus - before Ananias came to him - and thus had already called on the Lord's name.
- ❑ The Greek aorist participle, epikalesamenos (ἐπικαλεσάμενος), translated "calling on His name" refers either to action that is simultaneous with or before that of the main verb, "be baptized." Here Paul's calling on Christ's name for salvation preceded his water baptism. The participle may be translated "having called on His name".¹
 - i.e. "... wash your sins away, having called on his name."

¹ SOURCE: The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament
ed by John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary

ONE SAVING BAPTISM

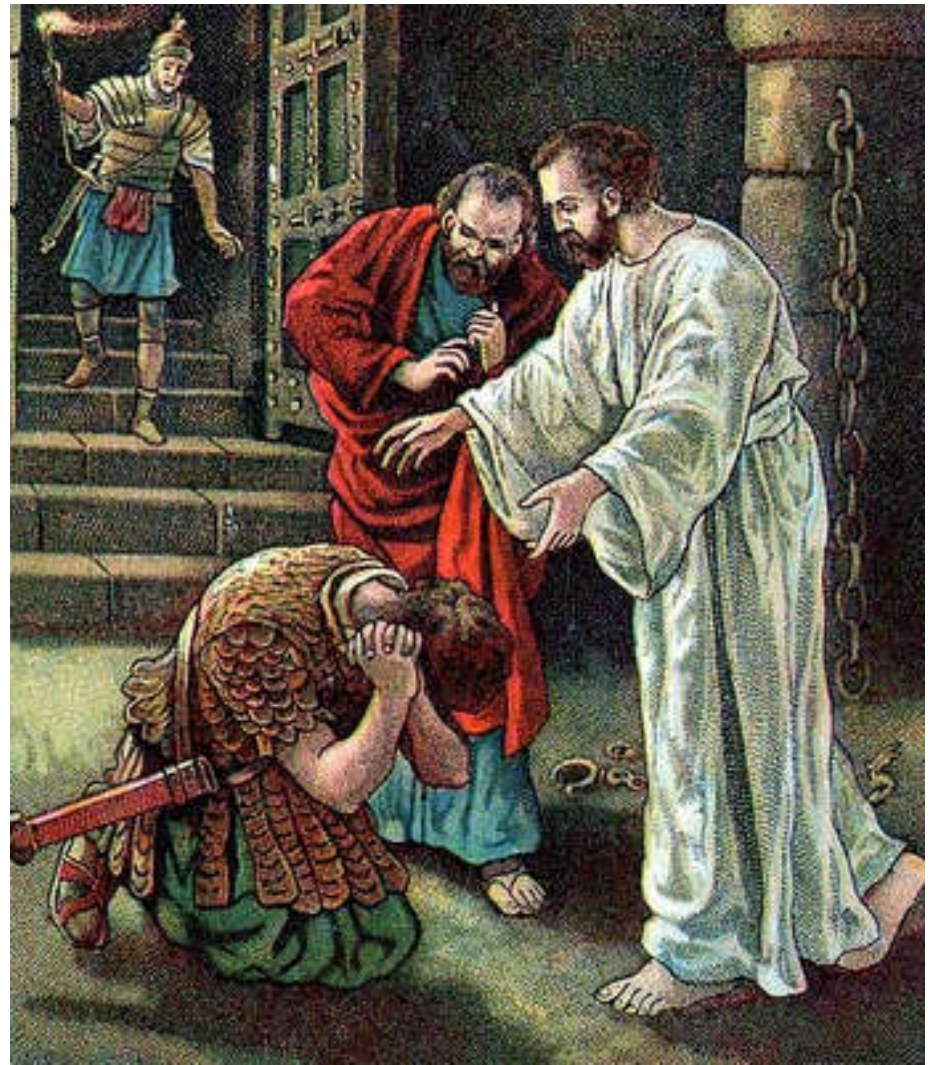
- ❑ When Paul speaks of "one baptism" it is a reference to the one saving baptism. The context of Eph 4:4-6 is about the body of Christ (the church) and hence the passage refers to the one saving baptism (i.e. one baptism by the one Spirit into the one body).
- Eph 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- ❑ So the sequence is to believe first (baptism into the body of Christ) and then to be baptized in water as an outward sign (not as a sacrament administering grace). We see this with the account of the Philippian jailer:

ONE SAVING BAPTISM

- ❑ Acts 16:30-34 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household."

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God - he and his whole family.



ONE SAVING BAPTISM

- ❑ In Acts 10-11 Cornelius and his household heard the gospel (Acts 10:34-43, 11:14), believed (11:17), repented (11:18) and had the evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit (10:44-46).
 - Acts 10:46-48 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
- ❑ Cornelius and his household were saved and received the Holy Spirit prior to being baptized in water, indicating that water baptism is not required for salvation, but nevertheless should follow it - "he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ".

ONE SAVING BAPTISM

- ❑ The examples in the Book of Acts show how baptism in water is preceded by belief and repentance.

	Repentance	Believed	Baptism in water
Pentecost	2:38	2:41	2:38
Samaria		8:12	8:12
Ethiopian Eunuch		8:37	8:38
Saul		9:5	9:18
Cornelius	11:18	10:43	10:48
Lydia	16:15	16:14	16:15
Philippian jailer		16:31,34	16:33
Corinthians		18:8	18:8
Ephesians	19:4	19:4	19:5

JOHN'S BAPTISM

- ❑ John the Baptist stated the purpose of his baptism:
 - "I baptize you with water for repentance" (Matt 3:11).
- ❑ In Mark 1:5 we read that, "Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River."
- ❑ And Luke writes that John "went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Luke 3:3)



JOHN'S BAPTISM

- ❑ Q: Now was John's baptism a means to repentance or the result of having already repented? In other words, did John baptize people so that they could repent or because they already had repented?
- ❑ A: He baptized because they had already repented.
 - Matt 3:7-8 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance."
- ❑ Thus John wanted to see the fruit of repentance in their lives, before he baptized them. So "repentance for the forgiveness of sins" precedes baptism; it is not the result of baptism.

PAUL SELDOM BAPTIZED

- ❑ Paul wrote to the Corinthians:
 - I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel... (1 Cor 1:14-17)
- ❑ Paul makes it clear that he's been called by Christ to preach but not to baptize. If water baptism were really necessary for salvation, then surely baptism should have been included as a part of his directive to "preach the gospel". This clearly doesn't sound like a statement from someone who believed in baptismal regeneration? If baptism was not a critical part of Paul's gospel, it's not a requirement for salvation.

JESUS NEVER BAPTIZED

- ❑ Significantly, while Paul baptized only a few people, Jesus never baptized anyone in water.
 - John 4:1-2 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.
- ❑ Now this would be strange behaviour for the Saviour of the world - if indeed water baptism is required for salvation.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

- ❑ But what of those verses that seem to teach faith plus baptism as a means of salvation? Mk 16:16 states, "whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Certainly, water baptism is an important act of obedience. Any one professing to believe in Jesus and yet refusing to be baptized is of questionable sincerity. Faith and the act of water baptism are closely linked in the NT. Indeed, it is unthinkable that anyone would believe in Jesus and refuse to be baptized. Like love and marriage and a horse and carriage, belief and baptism just go together! Notice, however, those who Jesus said would be condemned: "whoever does not believe." No mention was made of not being baptized. The emphasis is on unbelief, not baptism. Condemnation comes as a result of unbelief, not the lack of any ritual activity.¹

¹ Steve Atkerson http://www.ntrf.org/articles/article_detail.php?PRKey=39

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

- ❑ Titus 3:5b ("He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit") has been used to justify the necessity of water baptism in order to be saved. Does the word 'water' appear anywhere in the chapter? Indeed, where is the word 'baptism'? 'Rebirth' actually does have a 'washing' effect (it washes away our sins), but to read water baptism into this passage is truly to force into it something that is not there. In fact, 3:5a states, "he saved us, not because of righteous things we have done." What is water baptism but one of the "righteous things" which we might do? Verse 7 goes on to reveal clearly that we have been "justified by his grace" (not by water baptism).¹

¹ Ibid

SO WHY BE BAPTIZED?

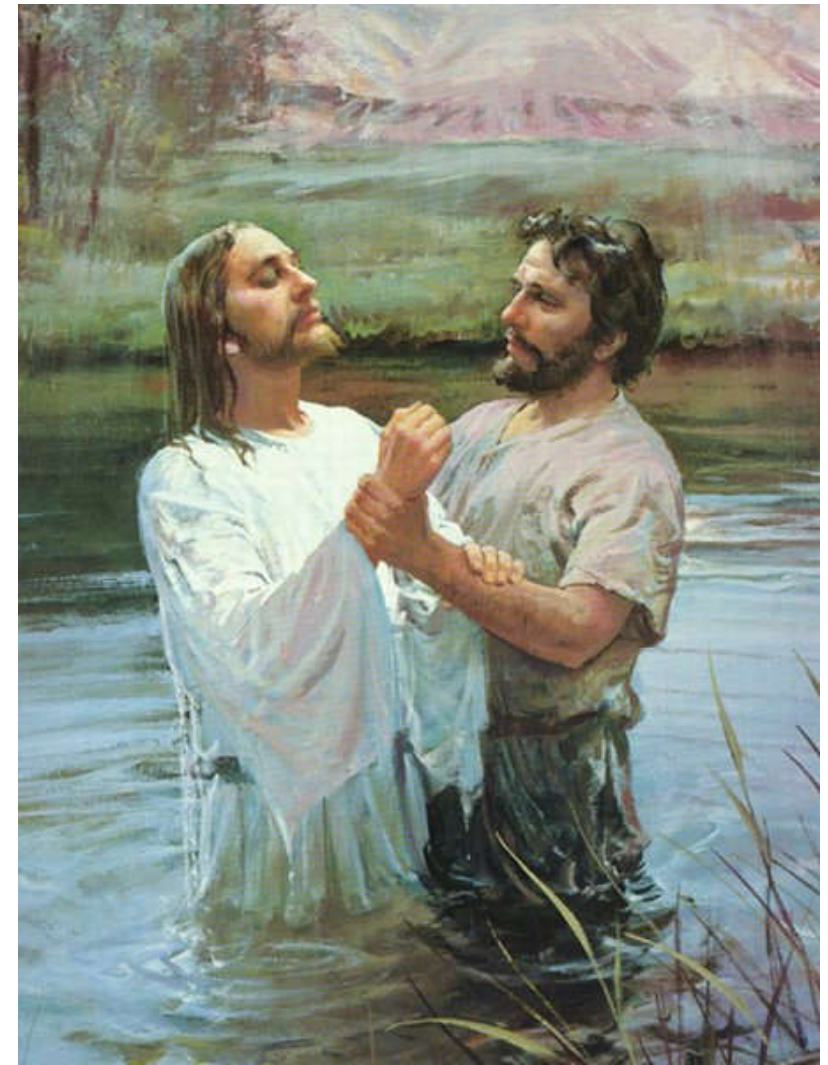


WHY BE BAPTISED?

- ❑ Q: So if baptism is not critical for salvation, why then should we be baptized?
- ❑ A: Firstly, it is a command from the Lord:
 - Matt 28:19-20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..."
- ❑ Anyone who has experienced God's grace in salvation, should automatically respond with a desire to obey his commands. Thus, every true believer should naturally want to be baptized. So while baptism is not necessary for salvation, their experience would be questionable if a person claiming to believe refused to be baptized.

WHY BE BAPTISED?

- ❑ We are baptized to follow the precedent set by Jesus. Not being sinful, Jesus didn't need to be baptized, but nevertheless he chose to both identify with sinful men and to set us an example.
- Matt 3:13-15 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"
Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.



WHY BE BAPTISED?

- ❑ It was the practice of Jesus in his ministry:
 - John 3:22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized.
 - John 3:26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan - the one you testified about - well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."
 - John 4:1-2 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

WHY BE BAPTISED?

- ❑ It was the practice of the early (i.e. apostolic) church. The accounts of repentance and salvation in the book of Acts are always followed by baptism in water. On the day of Pentecost we read:
 - ... they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"
Peter replied, "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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:37-39)
- ❑ Peter makes it clear that the promise is still for us today ("for all whom the Lord our God will call".)

WHY BE BAPTISED?

- ❑ Baptism is a powerful external symbol of at least 7 spiritual things:
 - 1) It is a symbol of **CLEANSING FROM SIN**. Subsequent to his Damascus Road conversion Paul was told by Ananias, "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16).
 - 2) Baptism also symbolizes our **DEATH TO SIN** and the **BURIAL OF THE OLD LIFE OF SIN**.
 - Rom 6:3-4 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

WHY BE BAPTISED?

3) Baptism not only symbolizes our death and the burial to the old life of sin; coming out of the water symbolizes the RESURRECTION TO A NEW LIFE:

➤ Rom 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

➤ Col 2:12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.



WHY BE BAPTISED?

- 4) The immersion in water also symbolizes a "CLOTHING OURSELVES WITH CHRIST":
- Gal 3:26-28 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

WHY BE BAPTISED?

- 5) Then it is "THE PLEDGE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD". By our baptism we publicly declare our faith that Jesus has made us spiritually clean and that our conscience is now clear before God.
- 1 Peter 3:20-21 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.

WHY BE BAPTISED?

- 6) Any covenant must be signed and baptism is the SIGN OF THE NEW COVENANT. In the Old Covenant, circumcision was an outward sign of an inward reality. In the New Covenant baptism is an outward sign of an inward reality.
- Col 2:11-13 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins...

WHY BE BAPTISED?

7) Finally it is a PUBLIC DECLARATION AND CONFESSION OF OUR FAITH to all in attendance:

- Rom 10:9-11 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."
- Matt 10:32-33 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

DO I HAVE TO GET RE-BAPTISED?

- ❑ John's baptism was not the same as Christian baptism. This is evident from the case of the Ephesians in Acts 19 who Paul instructed to be re-baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus because they had only received John's baptism.
- Acts 19:3-5 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"
"John's baptism," they replied.
Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

DO I HAVE TO GET RE-BAPTISED?

- ❑ Thus there is a Scriptural precedent for re-baptism, if the previous baptism was not fully in line with the Scriptural requirements (which is believer's baptism - into the name of Jesus - by full immersion)
- ❑ If you were baptized as an infant, that doesn't constitute Biblical believer's baptism, which should be your own decision based on repentance - not a parent's decision on your behalf, or a religious ritual to protect a baby from hell. In such a case, if you are a believer - you should get baptized by your own choice and understanding that it is a public declaration of your faith in Jesus.

DO I HAVE TO GET RE-BAPTISED?

- ❑ If you were baptized by sprinkling, the type is meaningless with regards to being buried and raised with Christ, or being "clothed with Christ" - you should get baptized by full immersion.
- ❑ If however, you were baptized (by full immersion and at the age of understanding) in another Bible-believing church and you subsequently join our church - there is no Scriptural reason why you should get re-baptized, unless you were not saved when you were baptized.

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