

A Study of Baptism - I

- * The early “organized Church”, The Roman Catholic Church, there were two commands of The Lord that were considered sacraments and therefore practiced as such for many years!
 1. Communion: The Lord’s Supper
 2. Baptism
- * It was believed that the sacraments themselves conveyed a special grace on the adherer. Meaning, the very practice of these provided the work of grace into the lives of people. Later, some protestants rejected this belief! Thus, the very core of the reason for The Reformation!
- * I would like to look at several aspects throughout church history as well throughout scripture concerning the subject of baptism.
- * I believe it is extremely important to know WHY you believe WHAT you believe.

I. Word meaning and “mode” of baptism.

- A. When looking practically within the texts of the New Testament one finds that the practice of baptism was carried out one way: Immersion.
 1. The person was “completely under the water” and brought back up again.
 2. The Greek word used is baptizo: “to plunge, dip, or immerse.”
- B. Let’s visit scripture for the sake of “knowing why we believe what we believe” but NOT for the sake of dogmatic argument!!

Mark 1:5 (NIV)

5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

1. To be specific, the Greek word used is “en.” Not beside, by or near!

Mark 1:10 (NIV)

10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

2. Remember, not to be dogmatic and argumentative, but to simply “know why we believe what we believe” He “came up out of!”
3. Could He have “stepped down into the water” to be “poured?”

4. Sure, but that would distort the “definition” of the word baptizo.

C. Another example from scripture is the Ethiopian eunuch. As they journeyed along and as Philip shared the Gospel story he said;

Acts 8:36 (NIV)

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?”

1. He seemed to wait until he saw water and then asked to be baptized. Presumably responding to Philip’s explanation of baptism!

Acts 8:38-39 (NIV)

38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

2. Again, not to be dogmatic or argumentative...but to simply “know why I believe what I do” about my faith!

II. This understanding and practice of baptism seems extremely logical when considered with the metaphorical examples of scripture!!!!

A. All throughout scripture the writers speak of baptism as our “being buried with Christ!”

Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

3 Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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.

1. Before we go any further, lets approach scripture in the proper way!
2. What is the subject here? Baptism? Buried? Christ raised?
3. No! It is...New Life!
4. Just because we can learn something from a given scripture, doesn’t necessarily mean that is the SUBJECT of that scripture.
5. New life in Christ is the point, while being immersed is understood through the analogy of being “buried with Christ” in baptism!

B. Paul told the Church in Colosse:

Colossians 2:12 (NIV)

12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

1. There it is again...buried and raised! That's "why" I believe!
2. We want to automatically jump to the question: If someone isn't immersed, but rather sprinkled or poured, are they really a Christian?
3. That can only be answered within the answer of, "What is baptism?"
4. We will get there as well, but let's be thorough in our study!
5. Let's settle the fact that "whatever baptism is" it is a picture of being buried with Christ and rising back up in His life!

C. There are opposing views of what baptism shows and symbolizes:

1. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ or...
2. The purification and cleansing of sin!
3. Yes, the Church can even argue over this believe it or not!

Titus 3:5 (NIV)

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Acts 22:16 (NIV)

16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

D. To say that "washing away our sins" is the only purpose of baptism does not faithfully represent the New Testament teaching!

Romans 6:1-11 (NIV)

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

1. Through all our dealings, discussions and arguments about baptism, we can lose sight of its significance and beauty!
2. We have, "passed through the waters of judgement into the safety of Jesus acceptance!"
3. We are "dead to sin and raised in newness of life!"

4. Literally, “our sins are washed away!” I’m not identified by them!
5. I am restored to relationship to my Creator God of the universe!