



PERSPECTIVES

TOPIC NO. 5: BAPTISM-DOES IT SAVE?

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Monday Night Bible Fellowship

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Baptism is one of the most significant and widely practiced rites in the Christian faith, yet it remains one of the most debated. Across denominations and traditions, Christians hold differing beliefs about its meaning, purpose, timing, and mode. Is baptism a symbol or a sacrament? Should infants be baptized, or only those who profess faith in Christ? Does baptism save, or does it follow salvation?

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

PERSPECTIVE NO. 1: BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

Definition: This view holds that baptism is necessary for salvation—that the act itself conveys saving grace and results in the remission of sins, spiritual rebirth, or incorporation into Christ.

Key beliefs: Baptism is a means of grace.

- One is spiritually regenerated (born again) at baptism.
- Baptism **washes away sins** and imparts the Holy Spirit.

Key Bible Verses

- **Acts 2:38** – “Repent and be baptized... for the forgiveness of your sins...”
- **John 3:5** – “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”
- **Titus 3:5** – “He saved us... through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

- **1 Peter 3:21** – “Baptism... now saves you...”

Groups That Hold This View

- **Roman Catholic Church** – Teaches that baptism removes original sin and is necessary for salvation.
- **Eastern Orthodox Church** – Similar to Catholics; baptism regenerates and brings the Holy Spirit.
- **Lutheran Churches** – Teaches that baptism is necessary and efficacious, especially for infants.
- **Churches of Christ** – Baptism by immersion is required for the remission of sins and salvation.

PERSPECTIVE NO. 2: INFANT BAPTISM (PAEDOBAPTISM)

Definition: The practice of baptizing infants or young children, usually by sprinkling or pouring, based on the faith of the parents and the covenant community.

Key Beliefs

- Baptism is the **sign of the covenant**, analogous to circumcision in the Old Testament.
- Infants are part of the covenant community and thus should receive the sign.
- Baptism does not always regenerate but **marks inclusion in the church**.

Key Bible Verses

- **Acts 2:39** – “The promise is for you and your children...”
- **Acts 16:15, 33** – Whole households were baptized.
- **Colossians 2:11–12** – Links baptism and circumcision.
- **Matthew 19:14** – “Let the little children come to me...”

Groups That Practice Infant Baptism

- **Roman Catholic Church** – Baptism removes original sin and brings the child into

God's family.

- **Eastern Orthodox Church** – Baptism, chrismation (confirmation), and Eucharist are given to infants.
- **Lutheran Churches** – Baptism conveys grace to infants.
- **Anglican/Episcopal Church** – Infants baptized into the covenant community.
- **Presbyterian/Reformed Churches** – Baptism is a sign of the covenant, not necessarily regenerating.

PERSPECTIVE NO. 3: BELIEVER'S BAPTISM (CREDOBAPTISM)

Definition: Baptism should be administered only to those who consciously profess faith in Jesus Christ. It is an outward symbol of inward faith, not a means of salvation.

Key Beliefs:

- Baptism is a **public declaration** of personal faith.
- Baptism follows **repentance and belief**.
- It is not regenerative but **symbolic** of dying and rising with Christ.

Key Bible Verses:

- **Acts 8:36–37** – “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”
- **Matthew 28:19** – “Make disciples... baptizing them...”
- **Romans 6:3–4** – Baptism represents being buried and raised with Christ.
- **Acts 2:41** – “Those who received his word were baptized...”

Groups That Hold This View:

- **Baptists (all branches)** – Insist on believer's baptism by full immersion.
- **Pentecostals** – Baptism follows conversion.
- **Evangelical Free Church**
- **Non-denominational Churches**

WHAT IS THE CORRECT MODE OF BAPTISM?

Perspective No. 1: Sprinkling (Aspersion) is an acceptable mode of baptism

- Water is sprinkled on the head.
- Used in infant baptism traditions.
- Supported by symbolism (e.g., sprinkling blood for cleansing – Hebrews 10:22).
- Groups: Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican

Perspective No. 2: Pouring (Affusion) is an acceptable mode of baptism

- Water is poured over the head.
- The early church sometimes used it when immersion wasn't possible.
- Acts 2 and 10 connect baptism and "pouring out" of the Spirit.
- Groups: Catholic, Orthodox (if immersion not possible), some Reformed traditions

Perspective No. 3: Immersion is an acceptable mode of baptism

- Full-body dipping in water.
- Seen as more literal fulfillment of the word *baptizō* (Greek: "to immerse").
- Symbolizes burial and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6:4).
- Groups: Baptists, Pentecostals, Churches of Christ, many Evangelicals

WHAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON BAPTISM? WHICH VIEW IS MOST CORRECT AND WHY?