

If we teach that such a child is saved from his sins and welcomed into heaven, that sounds good, *but it is not supported anywhere else in the Bible.* Instead, we teach that a believing parent will have a Christian influence on his/her spouse and child – *through which the Holy Spirit can work to bring them to Christ.* However, they are not automatically in Christ.

14: Does the Bible Exclude Infants from being Baptized?

No! *But some people exclude them. Why? Because of the inability of infants to understand, repent, and confess their sins.* However, the gifts of baptism come through **GOD'S WORK**, not our work. As we can gift an infant child with \$100 – *even though the child cannot understand*, so God can give great spiritual and eternal gifts to infants through baptism!

Jesus included infants here: “...make disciples of **all the nations**” (**Matt. 28:19**) – not excluding any person or age-group.

Regarding the forgiveness given through baptism, Peter said: “... [it] is for you and **your children...**” (**Acts 2:39**).

Many households were large and probably included infants. Regarding the Philippian jailer: “...**he was baptized, he and all his household**” (**Acts 16:33**).

15: When Should a Person be Baptized?

God commanded that infant boys should be circumcised on the *eighth day* (**Genesis 17:12**). **Colossians 2:11-12** refers to baptism as a *spiritual circumcision*. **Romans 6:3-4** tells us that through baptism a person is united to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, that is, to His saving work. *God does such things!*

As loving parents make many important decisions for their children, so parents of infants – *once they understand their child's need and the great blessings God is offering* – will gladly say “Yes” to them being baptized. Since the benefits of baptism are so great, *baptism should take place as soon as possible.* Martin Luther was born on 11/10/1483 and baptized the next day.

16: Is Baptism the Same for Infants and Adults?

No, *infants and adults are different.*

Infants are baptized first – receiving faith, forgiveness, spiritual life, eternal life, and the Holy Spirit. Then, as infants grow up, *it is vital for them to be diligently taught God's word.* Moses said to the descendants of Israel: **Deut. 6:6-9** These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts [believe them]. Impress them on your children [teach them]. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (NIV).

Adults are taught first. As adults are being taught, the Holy Spirit is at work to open their spiritual eyes to God's truth, convict them of their sins, and lead them to repent. Then, such people desire to be baptized. In **Acts 8**, after Philip had explained **Isaiah 53**, the Ethiopian eunuch said to Philip: “**Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?**” And [Philip] ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, ...and [Philip] baptized him (36, 38).

17: Is It Essential for a Baptized Person to Continue in Christ?

Yes! Before baptism, people are spiritually dead, separated from God, and on the path to eternal punishment. But God works through baptism to give spiritual life, restore the broken relationship, and put the person on the path to an amazing eternity with God.

People can fall away: 1 Timothy 6:10 “...the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith...”

Therefore, keep putting Christ first!

- **Bible** – keep reading, meditating, and applying! Jesus said: **John 8:31** “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine...”
- **Divine Service** – keep attending and keep receiving God's gifts of forgiveness, assurance, peace, and guidance. Let us not forsake “our own assembling together...” (**Heb. 10:25**).

Conclusion

If you are interested in baptism at Bethlehem, pick up a “Holy Baptism Information Packet” from the rack by our main entrance. Then, let the pastor know your interest and questions.

Bible References: New American Standard Bible, 1995

Connect With Us

Website: www.BLC7500.com

YouTube: “Benefit from the Bible”

Facebook: “Bethlehem Parma”

Saturdays: Class 3:00; Service 4:00

Sundays: Service 9:00; Classes 10:30

7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 / 440-845-2230

(Last Update: 8-23)



Get God's Answers
to Important Questions

Introduction

Dear Friend: *Christians have a wide variety of beliefs on baptism.* Even though it is common to believe what we hear or what makes sense, *it is best to base all our beliefs on God's word, the Bible.*

Please read this brochure with an openness to hear what **God** has to say about baptism. Since the Bible will be the basis of every answer in this brochure, let's begin with a brief word of instruction about the Bible.

1: What Is the Bible?

It is God's very word to us! Yes, men wrote it down, *but they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of God.*

- **2 Timothy 3:16** “All Scripture is God breathed...” (NIV)
- **2 Peter 1:21** “...men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
- For more evidence, read this brochure: [The Bible Is True](#)

2: How were People Saved in the Old Testament?

From the fall to Abraham: On the very day that Adam and Eve fell into sin, God told the devil – *regarding a future descendant of the woman*: “[He shall bruise you on the head](#)” ([Genesis 3:15](#)), that is, *He shall defeat you!* Then the Holy Spirit was at work through God’s promise to enable people to repent of their sins and believe in the Coming Savior.

From Abraham to Jesus: God said to Abraham: “...[you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you](#) ([Genesis 17:11](#)). Abraham, and many males after him, received a **visible sign** and **reminder** of God’s promise. They were called to live with godly sorrow and trust in the Coming Messiah.

3: What Does “Baptize” Mean?

The Greek word, βαπτίζω, means to “dip,” “immerse,” “sink,” “drown,” “bathe,” and “wash.” To “baptize” is to “wash with water.” These words describe *Christian* baptism: “...[be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...](#)” ([Acts 2:38](#)).

4: Why Did Baptism Begin?

Isaiah prophesied about John: “[THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD...’](#)” ([Matthew 3:3](#)). John the Baptizer was sent to prepare peoples’ hearts to receive the Coming Savior.

5: When Did Baptism Begin?

When God commanded John the Baptizer to begin baptizing: “...[John the Baptizer] came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” ([Luke 3:3](#)).

6: Why Does the Bible Record So Many Adult Baptisms?

When baptism began, *no adults had been baptized*. When adults heard John’s preaching and were moved by the Holy Spirit to repent, they were baptized. Beginning on the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection, infants and children began to be baptized. Regarding the forgiveness given through baptism, Peter said: “... [\[it\] is for you and your children...](#)” ([Acts 2:39](#)).

7: Why Was Jesus Baptized?

To do what God commanded everyone to do! The Son of God put on human flesh and was circumcised on the eighth day, then He lived as the *perfect substitute* for all people. Then, *when Jesus stepped forward to be baptized*, He indicated His willingness to bear the sins and the eternal punishment of the whole world. Jesus said to John: “[Permit \[My baptism\] at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness](#)” ([Matt. 3:15](#)).

8: What Did Jesus Command Regarding Baptism?

In between Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, He said: “[Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...](#)” ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)). Notice the order: ♦baptizing, then ♦teaching.

9: Why Is Baptism Important?

- [All people have inherited sin and death: “...just as through one man \[Adam\] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned”](#) ([Rom. 5:12](#)).

- [Jesus is the source of forgiveness and life: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life”](#) ([John 3:16](#)).
- [The benefits of Jesus’ work are given through baptism: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”](#) ([Gal. 3:27](#)).

10: Should We Believe, Even When We Cannot Understand?

Yes! Even though we cannot understand ♦how God created the universe from nothing ([Heb. 11:3](#)), ♦how God, through Moses, parted the Red Sea ([Exo. 14:21-22](#)), and ♦how the Son of God put on human flesh ([Heb. 2:14-15](#)), we still believe such things are true because God – *who is holy and almighty* – has told us about such things in His word, the Bible.

Regarding creation, miracles, baptism, etc., let us believe what the Bible says, even when we cannot understand it!

11: Is Baptism Symbolical or Powerful?

Since no human being can ♦gain his own forgiveness **or** ♦wash away his own sins **or** ♦save himself, **GOD MUST BE AT WORK IN POWERFUL WAYS THROUGH BAPTISM!**

Notice the connections between *baptism* and *forgiveness* in these passages:

- [Acts 2:38](#) “Repent, and each of you [be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.](#)”
- [Acts 22:16](#) “Get up and [be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.](#)”

- [Titus 3:5](#) “[[God the Father](#)] saved us [[forgave us and much more](#)], not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, [by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...](#)”

When the Bible says that God is at work, **God is at work!** However, *when God is working through means, and not directly*:

- An adult can reject God’s work.
- An infant, *after he grows older*, can walk away from Jesus and the great benefits of baptism (Some examples: [Matt. 24:10](#); [Luke 8:13](#); [1Co. 15:2](#); [2Pe. 2:20-21](#)).

12: Does the Bible Clearly Identify an Age of Accountability?

No! However, some teach an age of accountability to reject infant baptism – *by teaching that children under a certain age are automatically welcomed into heaven. I want that to be true, but the Biblical support is weak*. When the first child of David and Bathsheba died, David said: “[I will go to him, but he will not return to me](#)” ([2 Sam. 12:23](#)). The meaning of “**to him**” is uncertain; does it mean “**to heaven**,” or “**to the grave**”?

13: Are Infants Automatically Saved through their Believing Parents?

No! However, some teach that the unbaptized child of a believing parent will *automatically* be welcomed into heaven. Again, the Biblical support is weak: “...[the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy](#)” ([1 Cor. 7:14](#)). What does that mean? ➔