



What does the Bible say?

A Sermon Given on Sunday, August 17, 2014, at Bethlehem, Parma

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Within the one Christian Church there is some agreement on the topics of ♦sin, ♦Jesus, and ♦salvation, but there is much disagreement on the topic of baptism, *especially infant baptism*:

- Some say baptism is needed, others see it as optional.
- Some say baptism is God's action, others say man's action.
- Some baptize babies, others do not.

Therefore, in this sermon, we will answer some key questions about baptism *by looking at what the Bible says*. However, before I continue, why should we rely on the Bible? Here are a few quick answers:

- Prophecy—thousands of times God told what would happen, *then such did happen!*
- Archeology—over 25,000 sites point to the Bible's *accuracy!*
- The Bible Itself—The Psalmist prayed: “**The sum of Your word is truth**” (119:160 NAU) and Jesus prayed to the Father: “**Your word is truth**” (John 17:17 NAU). So let us move into the topic of holy baptism, *confident in the Bible!*

1. **Why Do Infants Need to Be Baptized?** The realities in this sermon are *unseen* and *unknown*—apart from the Bible; but

since we know the Bible is true, we should believe them – even when our own *reason* or *feelings* disagree:

- a. Infants are sinful:
 - i. David confessed: “Surely I was **sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me**” (Psalm 51:5 NIV).
 - ii. Each person inherits sin: “...just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so **death spread to all men** because all sinned...” (Rom 5:12 ESV). So our *actual sins* show that we have *inherited sin!*
- b. Infants are spiritually dead: Paul reminded the Christians in Ephesus of their *previous* condition: “...you were dead in your trespasses and sins...” (Eph. 2:1 NAS).
- c. Infants are unrighteous: “...Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous [one – *that is Jesus*] for [all] the unrighteous [ones – *that is everyone else*], that he might bring us to God...” (1Pe 3:18 ESV). Since the fall of Adam and Eve, all are sinful – *thus unrighteous* – from conception and in need of Jesus’ saving work!
- d. Infants need God’s forgiveness: “In [*Jesus*] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses...” (Eph. 1:7 ESV). *But it’s not automatic!*

2. **Why Must God the Father Act through Baptism?**

- a. The spiritually dead can do nothing: As a physically dead person cannot do a physical action, so a spiritually dead person cannot do a spiritual action – *such as believing in Jesus as Savior!*
 - i. “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness...” (1Co 1:18 NAS).
 - ii. “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God... he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually

discerned” (1Co 2:14 NIV). So, *left to ourselves*, we would always see God’s action to save us from our sins through *the living and suffering of Jesus* as foolishness.

iii. Jesus said: “**No one** can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44 ESV).

b. God must do everything:

i. “But by [God’s] doing you are in Christ Jesus...” (1Co 1:30 NAS). *God acted for us!*

ii. “...**God**, who is rich in mercy, **made us alive with Christ** even when we were dead in transgressions...” (Eph. 2:4-5 NIV).

iii. **God the Father** “chose to give us [*spiritual*] birth through the word of truth...” (James 1:18 NIV).

Summary: From God’s Word we know that infants need God’s forgiveness *BUT are helpless to obtain it!* So we turn our attention to **infant baptism** – *the means through which God has chosen to work* to impart the benefits of Jesus’ saving work: ♦forgiveness, ♦righteousness, ♦spiritual life!

3. What Does the Bible Say About Infant Baptism?

a. Infants are not excluded:

i. Jesus said: “Go...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 NAS).

ii. The Bible records *all the members of various households* being baptized – such as that of Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:16), Lydia (Acts 16:14-15), and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:23-34). A household in ancient Israel included “**parents with probably two to four children, as well as multiple generations, but it also might include debt servants, slaves, concubines, resident aliens, sojourners, day**

laborers and orphans”¹ as well as young children and infants. For a very large household, read Genesis 14:14.

iii. When asked about the way to be saved: Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, **every one of you**, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins... The promise is for you **and your children**...” (Acts 2:38-39 NIV).

b. God’s action through baptism to save:

i. God unites us to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection: “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 (Rom 6:3-4 NIV).

ii. God wraps us in Jesus’ righteousness! “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Gal 3:27 NAS).

iii. God the Father, *by the Holy Spirit thru baptism*, saved us thru Jesus: [God] “saved us, 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...” (Titus 3:5 NAS).

Conclusion: What is important for the parents and sponsors?

- ⇒ Recognize God’s wonderful work through baptism!
- ⇒ Keep learning and modeling God’s Word!
- ⇒ Keep teaching the baptized about ♦our sin, ♦Jesus’ saving work, and ♦our response of faithful Christ-like living!

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¹ Kruse Kronicle: <http://bit.ly/1qaRzvE>