

THE BIBLE AND BAPTISM

Is baptism important? Which baptism is right; the baptism of the covenant or the baptism of the believer? Instead of arguing about the subject, it is wise to look carefully at what God's Word, the Bible, says about this:

"... one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 4:5)

When this matter is investigated two extremes must be guarded against. One is to argue that everyone who disagrees with your baptismal theology is headed for hell and the other extreme is that baptism is not important. God looks at the heart of man.

THE COVENANT BAPTISM:

This baptism has no scriptural basis. There is no scripture in the Bible to justify this. Its origin is from the Roman system and the logic behind it is that God chose certain people to go to heaven and others not. It has been passed down through years of tradition to the Reformed family of churches.

With the sprinkling of the infant, the baptism formula is read, the baby's forehead is wetted with a few drops of water and a quote from the Heidelberg Catechism viz.

Question 74:

Should the young children also be baptized?

Answer:

Yes, since they are included in the covenant of God and His congregation just like the adults.

They are also promised no less than the adults through the blood of Christ the redemption of sins and the Holy Spirit, who works faith.

Therefore, they must also be incorporated into the Christian church through baptism as a sign of the covenant and be distinguished from the children of the unbelievers.

Thus it was done in the Old Covenant by circumcision, in the place of which in the New Covenant baptism was instituted.

In this section of the Heidelberg Catechism on baptism, several scriptures are cited to substantiate the above statements, namely:

Gen. 17:7, Matt. 19:14, Luke 1:15, Ps. 22:11, Isa. 44:1-3, Acts. 2:39, Acts 10:47, Col. 2:11-13.

The reformed Theology teaches that man must believe in God, be baptized as a child and then such a person is chosen to go to heaven.

The problem with this view is that not a single one of the scriptures cited can confirm any of these statements.

Gen. 17:7 is a covenant that God made with Abraham and is directly applicable to Israel.

Mat. 19:14 was Jesus' answer to the disciples who tried to prevent him from blessing the little children.

Luk. 1:15 refers to John the Baptist.

PS 22:11 is part of David's prayer of dedication to God.

Isa. 44:1-3 is God's promise to Israel.

Hand. 2:39 has to do with the filling with the Holy Spirit for those who repented and were baptized.

Hand. 10:47 has to do with people who have come to faith in Jesus Christ and Peter ordered them to be baptized.

Col. 2:11-13 is the only scripture that really has anything to do with baptism. However, it is written here that baptism is a type of burial.

If we therefore look carefully and without preconceived ideas at these scriptures, there is nothing that says that baptism came in place of circumcision and there is also no scripture that says that the infants must be baptized. Nowhere in the entire Bible is there anywhere near a scripture that says that baptism came in the place of circumcision.

The Heidelberg Catechism is NOT the Word of God. The Bible is the Word of God.

This answer from the Heidelberg Catechism is in stark contrast to the Word of God, which the Bible teaches us.

This doctrine does away with conversion first, which is God's plan for ALL people. (2 Pet. 3:9)
The Heidelberg Catechism teaches that if the child is sprinkled, he or she is on his way to heaven.

The Reformed Theology's error regarding baptism is also proven by God's attitude as revealed from Ezek. 18. What does this teach us?

“The soul that sins, it must die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” (Ezek. 18:20)

This means that a parent who has a baby "baptized" Can NOT expect that child to be saved or chosen. The Bible teaches us very clearly that everyone will wear his own suit. You cannot expect to be a child of God simply because your parents had you sprinkled. To become a child of God:

MUST YOU REPENT AND CROWN JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND KING OF YOUR LIFE! (John 1:12) There is NO other way! (John 14:6)

Small children who are too young to convert are sanctified PROVIDED that one or both of their parents belong to Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 7:14)

However, when that child becomes old enough to understand, he or she must make a DECISION and repent! That is why God considers it important that you teach and raise your children in God's ways.

If people do not want to know anything about God, their little children are under a curse. Read it yourself in Ex. 20:5. However, when such children grow old enough to understand and follow Jesus, they are saved provided they repent. Everyone must decide for himself or herself, SELF and choose SELF.

The parent (and not the Sunday school) has a responsibility to explain the Gospel to his or her children.

Let's look at it in the Bible:

"Therefore you must love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

And these words that I command you today must be in your heart;

and you must inculcate it in your children and talk about it when you sit in your house and when you are on your way and when you lie down and when you get up." (Deut. 6:5-7)

It is also a fallacy that the sprinkling places a child in some kind of covenant. The word "covenant" means agreement. God has only one agreement with all people in the New Testament and that is CONVERSION TO JESUS! It involves a decision on the part of the person.

God is not going to press anyone into eternal life. The man who WILLS will live with God forever. Conversion is a decision of the will on your part and your parents cannot do it for you.

Furthermore, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that the sprinkling of the baby "incorporates" him or her into the church. Where is it in the Bible?

Man becomes part of the church of Jesus Christ by converting him or her. (Acts 2:38)

Finally, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that "baptism came in place of circumcision".

(Where does it say in the Bible?) Does this mean that the little girls are all lost?

Anyone with the slightest knowledge of the Bible can see that infant baptism has nothing to do with the Bible. It is a tradition that has gained such a hold on people over the years that we firmly believe it (and will even fight for it!) and apply it in our lives.

WHERE DID BAPTISM BEGIN?

John the Baptist was the last Old Testament Prophet. He baptized crowds in the Jordan river with the baptism of repentance, but NOT in the Name of Jesus because Jesus had not yet paid for our sins on the cross.

Let's read together.

"In those days John the Baptist acted and in the desert of Judea

preached and said: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Because it is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said: The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!

And he, John, wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

And Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan went out to him.

And they were baptized by him in the Jordan with confession of their sins." (Matt. 3:1-6)

Now compare it to Hand. 19:1-5

"And while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the upper regions and came to Ephesus; and there he found some disciples

and asked them: Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers? And they answered him: We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

And he asked them: With what baptism were you then baptized? And they answered: With the baptism of John.

Then Paul says: John baptized with the baptism of repentance and told the people that they should believe in the One who comes after him, that is in Christ Jesus.

And when they heard it, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 19:1-5)

Here we see that Paul explains to some disciples that the baptism of John has been replaced by the baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ.

THE BAPTISM OF THE BELIEVER:

Let's see what the word "baptism" means:

The New Testament was translated from Greek.

The Greek for baptism is *Babtizo* (Strong's 907).

It literally means to submerge something. (As you would dip biscuits in coffee)

How was Jesus baptized? As a believer.

"And after Jesus was baptized, He immediately came up out of the water, (He was therefore baptized by immersion as an adult) and suddenly the heavens opened for Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him. " (Matt. 3:16)

What was Jesus' last command to His disciples?

"Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19)

Note the order 3 commands:

We must first make disciples ie FOLLOWERS of Jesus Christ. These cannot be infants. THEN they must be baptized.

These are therefore people who gave their lives for Jesus, and finally they must be taught, you cannot teach an infant from God's Word.

It's simple:

The Bible does not teach about "grand baptism", "child baptism" or about "rebaptists", only about the baptism of the BELIEVER. A child who understands repentance can therefore be baptized provided he/she has given their life to Jesus.

How were the first Christians baptized?____
As believers.

"Those who then accepted his word with joy were baptized; and about three thousand souls were brought in that day."
(Acts 2:41)

"But when they believed Philip, who preached the gospel concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
(Acts 8:12)

"And Philip opened his mouth and, beginning from this scripture, preached the gospel of Jesus to him.

And as they travel on the road, they come to water; and the courtier said to him: There is water; what prevents me from being baptized?

Then Philip said: If you believe with all your heart, it is lawful. And he answered and said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

(Acts 8:35-38)

So it is very clear that the courtier UNDERSTOOD that he must be baptized after conversion. Should please don't look for this passage in your New Afrikaans Translation because verse 37 has been left out just like many other verses.

However, in the original *Textus Receptus* foundation text from which the King James and the Old Afrikaans Translation come, it is clear.

"And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and immediately he could see again; and he stood up and was baptized." (Acts 9:18)

"And he commanded that they should be baptized in the Name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few more days." (Acts 10:48)

*"And in the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his people."
(Acts 16:33)*

WHAT IS THE USE OF BAPTISM?

What does the baptism of the believer mean? What does God's Word, the Bible, say?

We learn from the Word that the baptism of believers is one of two sacraments (things we must do) that Jesus gave to the church.

One is the Lord's Supper, which must be taken as often as possible, and the other is baptism, which is administered once to the believer.

What does baptism mean?

It is simply a symbolic burial. Just as the Lord's Supper symbolizes the body and blood of Jesus Christ, so it symbolizes that the person who is baptized has died to the world and now lives with Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is not really the blood and body of Jesus as the Roman Catholics believe with their transubstantiation teaching. The bread symbolizes or represents the broken body of Jesus. The grape juice represents or symbolizes the blood He shed for us.

The new convert dies to the world, to sin and satan and rises from the dead and now lives as a new person only for Jesus. It is in the Word of God! YES!! Let's read it together from the Bible.

"Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We are therefore buried with Him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too can walk in a new life." (Rom. 6:3-4)

"because you were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised together through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead." (Col. 2:12)

Now someone will ask:

“ Does this mean that all believers who are not baptized by immersion are lost?

It is foolish to ask such a thing BECAUSE only God is the judge and no man may sit on a judgment seat and judge others. Jesus himself said in Matt. 7:1 said that we are not to be judges.

BUT.....

If God commands something and you don't do it, you will at least lose some of His blessing. If you truly love Jesus, why wouldn't you want to do what He asks? Why then invent clever arguments rather than being obedient?

HOW IMPORTANT IS BAPTISM?

Read carefully with me from Hand. 2:37-38 and you will see that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who are baptized! We also see what Peter's answer was in the passage after 3000 people were converted. These 3000 therefore gave their lives for Jesus.

"When they heard this, they were deeply moved and said to Peter and the other apostles: What should we do, brothers?"

And Peter said to them: Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38)

Number one:

Repentance! It means to BREAK with all sins and

Number two:

to crown Jesus as King of your life.

Isn't this perhaps the reason why so many of Jesus' followers do not have the fullness of the Spirit? They do not want to be baptized because they believe the word of a man rather than the Word of God! Or they argue that it is not important or "what will the people say?"

There is no secret about baptism. Jesus instituted it for everyone who follows Him. It is a step of obedience to be baptized. You don't do it for a person or for some church, but BECAUSE Jesus commanded it.

If you truly love Jesus, dear reader, and you have not yet been baptized, then I ask you to carefully consider the following words:

"If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there will my servant also be; and if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."
(John 12:26)

Don't you want to be honored by the Father?

"And what do you call Me: Lord, Lord! and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46)

"But yet even many of the rulers believed in Him; but for the sake of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so as not to be banished from the synagogue.

Because they loved the honor of the people more than the honor of God." (John 12:42-43)

"And when all the people and the publicans heard this, they justified God by having them baptized with the baptism of John.

But the Pharisees and the scribes rejected the counsel of God concerning them by not having them baptized by him."
(Luke 7:29-30)

"Jesus answered and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our abode with him.

He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." (John 14:23-24)

Dear Reader, forget church doctrine. What does the Bible, God's Word, teach? Will you obey? Don't let anything stop you from being 100% obedient to God. Note God's Word to King Saul from 1 Sam. 15:22-23

"Thereupon Samuel said: Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obedience to the voice of the LORD? Look, to obey is better than victim, to listen better than the fat of rams

For disobedience is a sin of divination, and stubbornness is idolatry and idolatry. Because you rejected the word of the LORD, He rejected you as king." (1 Sam. 15:22-23)

There are many people who testify that they suddenly got victory over problems in their lives after they were baptized. Understand only one thing, no matter how small it is in which you obey.

**OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS ALWAYS
REWARDED!!!!**

*"He who believes and is baptized will be saved;
but he who does not believe will be condemned."
(Mark 16:16) (Old Afrikaans Translation)*

*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be
saved; but he that believes shall not be
damned." (Mark 16:16) (King James Bible)*

Experience the difference