

Questions and Answers

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Baptism

Q. Was John's baptism Christian baptism? and were the baptisms practiced by the disciples of Christ previous to His crucifixion identical with those practiced by His apostles after His ascension? and did John baptize in any name, and, if in the name of Christ, was Christ baptized in His own name?

A. John's baptism was from heaven, and he therefore baptized by the authority or in the name of God. He baptized Christ, although Christ was sinless, to fulfill all righteousness; that is, to do the righteous will of God, to point forward to Christ's atoning death for our sins and His resurrection for our justification, and to show the example that we are to follow. Though Christ had no sin of His own, He was the representative of His sinful people. He was a real man, as well as the real God, and He was baptized and labored and suffered and bled and died and rose as a man. Some of John's disciples whom he had baptized followed Christ, and were not baptized in water again, so far as we are told in the Scriptures. The baptisms performed by Christ's disciples before His crucifixion were undoubtedly in the name or by authority of God (Christ is God), and did not have to be repeated, and were therefore substantially the same as those performed by His apostles after His ascension, though the form of words used was not probably the same; the Scriptures do not tell us the form of words used in the baptisms performed by John or in those performed by the disciples of Christ before His crucifixion, and it is, therefore, not necessary for us to know that form of words. An attempt to be wise above what is written, and speculation upon things that the Lord has not revealed to us, are not only unprofitable but injurious to the people of God, tending, not to edify and unite, but to confuse and divide them.

Q. Do the Scriptures teach that sprinkling or pouring translated to sprinkle, to pour, and to baptize (immerse) are entirely different, and are never confounded with each other?

A. Never. The Hebrew and Greek words translated "baptize" do not mean "sprinkle" or "pour." The Roman Catholics admit that they invented and substituted sprinkling and pouring for baptism, and that Protestants derived from them, and not from the Scriptures, these pretended forms of baptism; and this is the truth.

Q. What passage of Scripture contains the strongest proof that immersion or dipping is baptism?

A. There are so many passages proving this fact that it is hard to say which is the strongest proof of it. Perhaps Rom. 6:4,5 is the strongest passage; but such passages as Matt. 3:13-17 and Acts 8:36-39 are strong enough. But the strongest proof of all is the Greek word baptizo, translated or rather transliterated baptize, which, according to all European and American scholars, never means to sprinkle or pour, but always means to dip or immerse.

Q. It is said that "they were baptized (that is, dipped or immersed) in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:5). Did John the Baptist require this, or was it voluntary?

A. Both. John would baptize none unless they "brought forth fruits meet for repentance," that is, unless their lives proved that they were truly penitent, and these he, being sent of God to baptize, no doubt, exhorted to be baptized in token of their repentance for their sins and their faith in the coming Saviour, whom he preached, and they were made of God willing to submit to the Heavenly ordinance.

Q. Does the word of God authorize gospel ministers to baptize or sprinkle infants?

A. Most certainly not, in any passage of the Scriptures.

Q. Does it teach that parents should have their infants baptized or sprinkled?

A. Not at all.

Q. Why do the Old Baptists teach that true believers are the only proper subjects for baptism?

A. Because the Scriptures so teach (Matt. 3:6,8; 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-38; 10:44-48; 16:31-34).

Q. Why do they baptize by immersion only?

A. Because, as all scholars admit, baptism, a Greek word, means nothing but immersion, and does not in a single passage in Greek literature up to A.D. 100, the end of the Apostolic Age, mean sprinkling or pouring. For several years a thousand dollars has been offered, by the Western Recorder, of Louisville, Kentucky, to any person in the world who will show a single instance in ancient Greek literature in which the Greek word baptizo means to sprinkle or pour; and no human being, Catholic or Protestant, has ever been able to show such a passage, and thus earn the thousand dollars - not because they do not want the money, but because no such passage exists.

Q. When was infant sprinkling first practiced, and by whom and why?

A. The first recorded instance of sprinkling for baptism was that of the adult Novatian, said to have been a native of Phrygia in Asia Minor, about 240 A.D., when on a sick bed he was in hourly expectation of death, and his so-called (clinical) "baptism" was generally regarded even among Catholics as invalid. After this the Roman (but not the Greek) Catholics began gradually to recognize the sprinkling of sick persons as "baptism;" but the Roman Catholic Council of Ravenna, in A.D. 1311, was the first council of even that apostate communion that legalized "baptism" by sprinkling, by leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister. The Greek Catholics have never allowed the validity of sprinkling for baptism, and they call the Roman Catholic Pope "an unbaptized heretic." The first known instance of infant baptism was in North Africa in A.D. 256. These two errors, therefore, of the substitution of sprinkling for baptism, and of the baptism of infants, originated in the Roman Catholic so-called "church" about the same time; and the cause of them was the thoroughly anti-scriptural, idolatrous superstition of "baptismal regeneration" - that there is a magical, regenerating, saving power in water, while the Scriptures plainly teach that baptism, immersion in water, is but an emblem of our previous spiritual experience of our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ, our only Saviour and Lord.

Q. Did the Old Baptists ever practice it, and, if so, why?

A. Some called Baptists may have practiced sprinkling for baptism in England in the 16th and 17th centuries; and they did so because

they chose to follow man instead of Christ, and because it was much more convenient, and seemed more respectable.

Q. Do those who sprinkle for baptism know that immersion is the scriptural mode?

A. The real scholars among them know it; they know that, in all Greek literature, the Greek word baptizo (from which the English word baptize is formed) never meant to sprinkle or pour, but only to dip, immerse, or submerge. The perversion of the meaning of this word is one of the strongest proofs of the total, willful depravity of the human heart. The Roman Catholics invented sprinkling.

Q. Why was the church of Christ called Baptist and was it the original apostolic church?

A. Because, according to the commandment of Christ, they baptized none but those who gave evidence that they were true believers in Christ, just as the apostolic churches did. Believers' baptism distinguishes the apostolic and Baptist churches from all others.

Q. Do Pedo-Baptists sprinkle infants, knowing it to be unscriptural?

A. They know that there is not one plain command or example of it in the Bible. Faith is an indispensable prerequisite to scriptural baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:41; 8:12; 36-38; 10:47,48; 16:30-34).

Q. Do the Scriptures teach that baptism should be administered as soon as convenient after repentance, faith, and confession?

A. Certainly (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:37-41; 8:36-38; 16:29-33).

Q. How does baptism save the baptized?

A. Certainly not by saving them from an everlasting hell, for the blood of Christ alone does that; but by delivering them, at least to some considerable extent, from the vanities, delusions, and errors of the flesh, the world, and the Devil.

Q. What is the meaning of the Greek preposition "eis," rendered "for," in Acts 2:38, "for the remission of sins?"

A. "In regard to" (this is a translation of this word given by Liddell & Scott); "in regard to, or with reference to the remission of their sins," that is "because they had repented of their sins, and believed

that Jesus had shed His blood for the forgiveness of their sins," as plainly shown by the use of the very same Greek words by Christ himself in Matt. 26:28, and in Luke 24:47, and as also used in Luke 3:3 and Mark 1:4. The language of Christ in Matt. 26:28 and John 8:24, and that of John in John 1:29 and I John 1:7 and Rev. 1:5, and that of Paul in Rom. 3:24,25; Eph. 1: 7; and Heb. 1:3, 10:14 prove that the actual, procuring cause of the forgiveness of our sins was the shedding of the blood of Christ for us. If eis in Acts 2:38 means "in order to," as many think, then we know, according to the passages just cited, that, as in Acts 22:16, the meaning is "in order to the symbolical or ceremonial remission of sins" - that is, our baptism expresses our faith that Jesus has shed His blood for the remission of our sins.