

Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: Key Protestant
Reformation Doctrines - Sacraments

The Heights Church July 1, 2018

Divisions over Baptism

- We will consider four basic questions regarding baptism.
 1. Does Baptism save? Is it necessary for salvation?
 2. How should baptism be performed?
 3. What does baptism symbolize?
 4. Should we baptize babies or believers?

Baptism- Does baptism save? Is baptism necessary for salvation?

- The Roman Catholic perspective is that **baptism is necessary for salvation** and that the act of **baptizing causes regeneration** (“born again”). Stated differently, baptism is a means whereby the church bestows saving grace on people.
- However, we can be confident that baptism does not save and is not necessary for salvation because of the thief on the cross. And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:33)
 - The thief could not have been baptized on the cross.
 - The thief was not saved under the Old Covenant because Jesus died before the thief and when Jesus died the New Covenant began.
 - The thief was going to heaven with Jesus so he must have been regenerated.
- Mark 16:16 is often quoted to prove baptism is necessary for salvation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but **whoever does not believe will be condemned.** (Mark 16:16)
 - Mark 16:9 – 20 is not included in the earliest most reliable manuscripts.
 - Condemnation **results from unbelief** not from not being baptized!

Baptism- Protestant Divisions: Immersion, Pouring or Sprinkling?

- In the NT the mode of baptism was by immersion.
- *Baptizō* in Greek means to plunge, dip or immerse something in water. (In Hebrew it is referred to as a MIKVEH - an immersion.)
 - And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being **baptized** by him **in** the river Jordan, confessing their sins. (Mark 1:5)
 - And when he came **up out** of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. (Mark 1:10)
 - John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, **because water was plentiful there**, and people were coming and being baptized (John 3:23)
 - And as they were going along the road they came to **some water**, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36)

Baptism - Protestant Divisions: What Does Baptism Symbolize?

- Baptism symbolizes the recipient's union with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
- When the candidate goes down into the water it is a picture of being buried in a grave. Coming out of the water is a picture of being raised with Jesus to newness of life. In other words the candidate's old way of life has died and they have been raised to a new way of life.
 - Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**? We were buried therefore with him by **baptism into death**, in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.** (Romans 6:3-4)
 - having been **buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also **raised with him through faith** in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

Baptism- Protestant Divisions: What Does Baptism Symbolize?

- Some Protestants think baptism mainly symbolizes purification and cleansing from sin since water is a symbol of washing.
 - And now why do you wait? Rise and **be baptized and wash away your sins**, calling on his name.’ (Acts 22:16)
 - But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit**, whom he **poured out on us** richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-6)
- Both death and resurrection as well as washing are represented by baptism but both Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12 link death and resurrection with baptism.

Baptism- Does baptism save? The Lutheran View

- Luther's view of baptism is explained by the following excerpts from his Large Catechism.
- Baptism is nothing else than water and the Word of God **in and with** each other, that is when the Word is **added** to the water, Baptism is valid, even though faith be wanting. For **my faith** does not make Baptism, but **receives it**. Now, Baptism does not become invalid even though it be wrongly received or employed; since it is not bound (as stated) to our faith, but to the Word.
- Thus we do also in infant baptism. We bring the child in the **conviction and hope that it believes, and we pray that God may grant it faith**; but we do not baptize it upon that, but solely upon the command of God.
- Therefore, if you live in repentance, you walk in Baptism, which not only signifies such a new life, but also produces, begins, and exercises it. For therein are given grace, the Spirit, and power to suppress the old man, so that the new man may come forth and become strong.

Baptism- Does baptism save? The Lutheran View

- Therefore our Baptism abides forever; and even though some one should fall from it and sin, nevertheless we always have access thereto, that we may again subdue the old man. But we need not again be **sprinkled** with water; for though we were **put under the water** a hundred times, it would nevertheless be only one Baptism, although the operation and signification continue and remain. Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism, that we repeat and practice what we began before, but abandoned.

There is **one body and one Spirit** - just as you were called to the **one hope** that belongs to your call - **one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.** (Ephesians 4:4 – 6)

For in **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body** - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

- Thus it appears what a great, excellent thing Baptism is, which **delivers us from the jaws of the devil** and **makes us God's own**, **suppresses and takes away sin**, and then **daily strengthens the new man**, and is and **remains ever efficacious** until we pass from this estate of misery to eternal glory.

Baptism- Does baptism save? The Missouri Synod View

- The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod says:
 1. Lutherans believe that the Bible teaches that a person is saved by God's grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 2. The Bible tells us that such "faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10:17). Jesus Himself commands Baptism and tells us that Baptism is water used together with the Word of God (Matt. 28:19-20). **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**
 3. We believe this because the Bible says that infants can believe **(Matt. 18:6)** **And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven...but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Matthew 18:2-4, 6**

Baptism- Does baptism save? The Missouri Synod View

and that new birth (regeneration) happens in Baptism (John 3:5-7; Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Titus 3:5-6). he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

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The infant's faith cannot yet, of course, be verbally expressed or articulated by the child, yet it is real and present all the same. Acts 2:38-39; **And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God **calls** to himself."** Luke 1:15; **for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 2Timothy 3:15 and how from **childhood** you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**

Baptism- Does baptism save? The Missouri Synod View

4. Lutherans do not believe that only those baptized as infants receive faith. Faith **can also** be created in a person's heart by the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's (written or spoken) Word.
5. Baptism should then soon follow conversion (cf. Acts 8:37) for the purpose of confirming and strengthening faith in accordance with God's command and promise. Depending on the situation, therefore, Lutherans baptize people of all ages from infancy to adulthood.
6. The LCMS does not believe that Baptism is ABSOLUTELY necessary for salvation. All true believers in the Old Testament era were saved without baptism. Mark 16:16 implies that it is not the absence of Baptism that condemns a person but the absence of faith, and there are clearly other ways of coming to faith by the power of the Holy Spirit (reading or hearing the Word of God).
7. Still, Baptism dare not be despised or willfully neglected, since it is explicitly commanded by God and has His precious promises attached to it. It is not a mere "ritual" or "symbol," but a powerful means of grace by which God grants faith and the forgiveness of sins.