

Who May Be Baptized?

"There is one baptism" so wrote Paul as he set forth his "unity platform" (Eph. 4:5). This article examines who is the subject for baptism.

This was the essence of the Eunuch' question. Philip had preached to him Jesus and "as they went on their way they came unto a certain water and the Eunuch said See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 2:37). Philip's response, "If thou believest, thou mayest," both implies that not all can be baptized and that faith is essential if one is to be scripturally baptized. It is not uncommon to hear people speak of "Believers baptism."

The fact that Philip told the Eunuch he could be baptized if he believed reveals that neither infants nor other unbelievers are subjects of baptism. An infant is an unbeliever because he is not conscious of God or Christ. When the infant grows to a state of being able to rationally think, he then may become an unbeliever in that he rejects the concept either of an Eternal Being or, if he believes in an Eternal Being, he may reject Jesus as being God. It not only is necessary that one believe in an Eternal Being before he may be baptized; he must also believe Jesus is God. So the eunuch replied "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:38). There are at least two significant facts that prevent an infant from being a subject of baptism.

Baptism is an act of faith. In Colossians 2:12 we read "having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God." This fact seems to have been lost on a vast number of folk. Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians and others "baptize" their infants yet, while baptism is an act of faith, it cannot be an act of faith for the infant!

Infants have no sins to wash away. Every passage which deals with the purpose for baptism universally reveals that baptism is for (unto) the removal of sins (See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Since sin is transgression of law and infants have violated no law of God, they are not sinners (1 John. 3:4). Sin separates from God, yet Jesus said, "Except ye turn and become as a little child ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Isa. 59:1f; Mt. 18:3). Contrary to Calvin (and Catholics who taught the doctrine long before Calvin was born) children do not inherit sin from Adam (Ezek. 18:2). Read Ephesians 2:1f to see why men become sinners.

Infant baptism is an antiquated relic with the Methodists. There is neither rhyme nor reason for its continued practice among them, save that it has always been their practice. Methodists "borrowed" the doctrine of "inherited sin" from Catholics and until the early 1900s' their Discipline so stated. Thus they "baptized" their infants to "cleanse them from sin." But almost 100 years ago Methodists rejected that doctrine. Now their Discipline teaches an infant is born free from sin. So, why "baptize" the infant?

On the other hand, Lutherans and Presbyterians still cling to their doctrine of inherited sin and baptized their infants. What a parody! They baptize the infant to rid him of sins he does not have, but refuse to baptize the adult to rid him of sins he does have! Such is inconsistent of course, but then Satan never worries about either truth or consistency! "If thou believest, thou mayest." A penitent believer is the subject for Bible Baptism. None else is. (Acts 8:38; 2:38).

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