

What Is Biblical Baptism?

A Biblical Examination of Water Baptism

By: Matthew D. Dyer

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Introduction:

This small book has not been written to give an exhaustive Scriptural study into every aspect of water baptism, as it would take many large volumes to address everything there is to say concerning water baptism, its history in the last 2000 years, and to address the multitude of different views and objections. This book's main purpose is to lay out a brief argument concerning the "mode" of baptism, when a believer should be baptized, why a believer should be baptized, all from the perspective of the *Louisiana Christian-Israel Fellowship & Christian America Ministries*. Whether you agree or disagree with what is presented in this book, I pray that at the very least it will encourage further study.

In Service to King Jesus,
Pastor Matthew Dyer

Chapter 1:

What is the Biblical Mode of Baptism?

Among different denominations you will find several modes of water “baptism” practiced by professing Christians. You will find full immersion, sprinkling, or pouring of water over the body all identified as Biblical baptism. In some cases, you may even meet someone that doesn’t believe in water baptism at all, rather believes only in a spiritual baptism, or that one must “immerse themselves” in God’s Word which they believe is a direct replacement of water baptism. What does the Bible teach though? Surely one can read the Bible and discover the truth of what God intended as Biblical baptism. In order to discover what the Biblical mode of water baptism is, we will start out by looking at the Greek word translated into English as baptize. The word “baptize” is rendered from the Greek word baptizō. Below are some theologians’ definitions of baptizō:

James Strong in his *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* defines this Greek word baptizō as:

“To immerse, submerge; to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet)”



Joseph Henry Thayer in his *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines baptizō as:

“To dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge... to wash, to make clean with water.”

E.W. Bullinger in his *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament* defines baptizō as:

“To make a thing dipped or dyed. To immerse for a religious purpose”





William E. Vine in his *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines baptizō as:

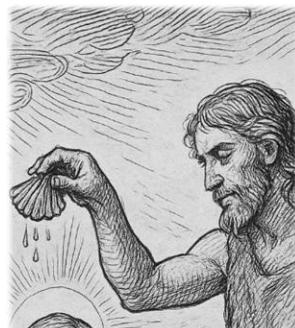
“"baptism," consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence (from *bapto*, "to dip")...”

The English translators of the Bible created the word “baptize” and “baptism” by transliterating the words instead of translating the Greek baptizō and baptisma. Transliteration is when someone transfers the letters of a word from one language to another language instead of bringing the actual meaning of the word over into the new language. This error has allowed different denominations to redefine baptism as they see fit.

The Greek word baptizō first appears in the New Testament in Matthew 3:6 where it says, **“And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.”** In this passage John is at the Jordan river baptizing people in water. If John was fully immersing in water, as the meaning of the Greek word implies, it would make sense that he would have to do it at a river where there was plenty of water, rather than the commonly portrayed image of John sprinkling a little water on Jesus’ head with a seashell. Albert Barnes in his commentary on Matthew 3:6 stated this:

“The word “baptize” βαπτίζω baptizo signifies originally to tinge, to dye, to stain, as those who dye clothes. It here means to cleanse or wash anything by the application of water.”

I am a professional leather craftsman by trade, and when I dye a holster, knife sheath, or belt, I must completely cover or immerse the piece in dye. If a client of mine was expecting an all-brown holster, and yet I only sprinkled the dye on it, I would imagine they



would be very dissatisfied with my work. The same example could be applied to dying a piece of clothing, you don't mist it with a sprayer, you don't sprinkle it with a few drops, the clothing has to be fully immersed where it is completely covered with dye. We find further evidence in the Book of Acts, chapter 8, where Philip when he is baptizing the eunuch he goes down into the water and they came up out of the water together, something that is not necessary if all you needed was a canteen or a bucket from a well to perform the act.

Acts 8:34-39 states:

“And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto 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? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”

In the Gospel of John, it states that John the Baptist was baptizing in Aenon near Salim because there was much water there, once again why would he need to baptize where there was much water if baptism was sprinkling or pouring.

John 3:23 states:

“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.”



John Gill, in his commentary on John 3:23 agrees that this passage is speaking of a place with much water for the purpose of baptizing by immersion.

“...because there was much water there; or “many waters”; not little purling streams, and rivulets; but, as Nonnus renders it, abundance of water; or a multitude of it, as in the Arabic version; see Rev 1:15 and the Septuagint in Psa 78:16, and what was sufficient to immerse the whole body in...”

In the Gospel of Matthew, concerning our Lord’s baptism, we see Jesus being described as coming straightway out of the water which would be necessary if baptism was by immersion.

Matthew 3:16 states:

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him”

For more evidence that this Greek word baptizō means to immerse something, we can look to the Greek Septuagint, which is the Greek Old Testament translated around 200 years before Christ, to see how this Greek word baptizō is being used at that time.

2nd Kings 5:14 (Brenton Septuagint Translation) states:

“So Naiman went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the word of Elisaie: and his flesh returned to him as the flesh of a little child, and he was cleansed.”

2nd Kings 5:14 (The Apostolic Bible Polyglot) states:

“And Naaman went down, and he immersed in the Jordan seven times, according to the word of the man of God. And his flesh returned as *the* flesh of a small boy, and he was cleansed.”

The Greek word baptizō is the English word “dipped” in the Brenton translation and immersed in the Apostolic Bible Polyglot translation in this passage. Is the reader to believe that Naiman sprinkled himself in the river seven times? I think it is clear from the context he went and “dunked” or immersed himself seven times. We see another example of this word being used in the Book of Isaiah

Isaiah 21:4 (Brenton Septuagint Translation) states:

“My heart wanders, and transgression overwhelms me; my soul is occupied with fear.”

Isaiah 21:4 (The Apostolic Bible Polyglot) states:

“My heart wanders, and lawlessness immerses me; my soul attends to fear.”

The Greek word baptizō is the English word “overwhelms” in the Brenton translation and immerses in the Apostolic Bible Polyglot translation in this passage. Another example of how this Greek word was used for immersion before the time of the New Testament writers, is in the Apocryphal book of Judith. I do not believe the Apocrypha is inspired Scripture, but it does give us a witness to how this Greek word baptizō was being used in literature and how the people would have used it in the 2nd century B.C. up to the 1st century A.D.

Judith 12:7-8 (Brenton Septuagint Translation) states:

“Then Holofernes commanded his guard that they should not stay her: thus she abode in the camp three days, and went out in the night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself in a fountain of water by the camp. And when she came out, she besought the Lord God of Israel to direct her way to the raising up of the children of her people.”

The English word “washed” is the Greek word baptizō, and as you read in verse eight, she came up out of the water. This would not be necessary if she was just sprinkling herself with water.

New Covenant baptism in the New Testament is described as being symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus which I believe hints to baptism being immersion in water. Because we all know that when a man is dead you completely cover him with dirt or completely immerse him in the Earth.

Romans 6:3-4 states:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Colossians 2:11-12 states:

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Now if baptism is a symbol of death and resurrection, how can sprinkling or pouring water symbolize that? When a person is dead you don't take the body and sprinkle a little dirt on it, rather you immerse them in the ground. It is true that Jesus was not buried in the ground in the traditional way, but His body was completely immersed within the earth/ground when He was placed in the tomb.



There are some records of early Christians practicing pouring and sprinkling as a baptism in the 2nd Century, but it was not the norm, and it was not what we find prescribed in the Bible. For an example of this

we can read *The Didache*, which is an early Christian document thought to have been written around the end of the 1st century or early 2nd century written by an anonymous Christian which says the following about baptism:

“Concerning baptism, baptise thus: Having first rehearsed all these things, “baptise, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,” in running water; 2. But if thou hast no running water, baptise in other water, and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. 3. But if thou hast neither, pour water three times on the head “in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.””

Notice how this document is saying that baptism by immersion is the norm, by contrasting it with pouring. The document does go on to say that immersion can be replaced with pouring and still be considered biblical baptism, even though baptism means immersion. I believe this is the author adding early tradition in his writings, or perhaps his own opinion. Because we don't find anywhere in Scripture where this is prescribed, as well as a prescription for the type of water that needs to be used, such as running water like a river versus in a baptistry. But we can still add this document along with the other witnesses that Biblical baptism is by immersion in water.

It is my belief that if the Greek word *baptizō* and *baptisma* were both translated into the English as immersed and immersion, rather than transliterated, there would be much less confusion concerning what Biblical baptism truly is. Bible translations such as *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot* translates these words correctly, and below are a few examples:

Matthew 3:6 (The Apostolic Bible Polyglot) states:

“And they were immersed in the Jordan by him, acknowledging their sins.”

Acts 2:38 (The Apostolic Bible Polyglot) states:

“And Peter said to them, Repent, and be immersed each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for a release of sins! and you shall receive the present of the holy spirit.”

Acts 8:36 (The Apostolic Bible Polyglot) states:

“And as they were going along the way, they came upon some water. And the eunuch says, Behold, water, what prevents me to be immersed?”

Acts 18:8 (The Apostolic Bible Polyglot) states:

“But Crispus, the chief of the synagogue trusted in the Lord with his entire house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were immersed.”



My father (far right) and the late Pastor Peter J. Peters (far left) baptizing a man in West Harrison, IN in 2000.



I baptizing a believer in a stock tank when the rivers were up after a flood.

Chapter 2: Is Infant-Baptism Biblical?

After the mode of Biblical baptism is identified, one must ask the question who and when is someone to be baptized, and this often leads to the subject of infant baptism. The debate on whether infants should be baptized (immersed), poured, or sprinkled has existed since at least the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. I don't expect the next few pages to convince everyone that is on the fence of this issue, but I do hope and pray that I will at least make the reader stop and study into this matter in more detail and look at it biblically, if they haven't done so already.

First off, very rarely does any church perform actual infant baptism, as in immersion in water. It is normally sprinkling or pouring of water over the infant which they identify as baptism. Infant baptism in theological terms is called paedobaptism. The word *paedo* is the Latin word for child. This belief is contrasted with what is known as credobaptism. The word *credo* is the Latin word for "I believe" and is where we get our English word *creed* from. So, credobaptism is the baptism of someone who can and does believe. Churches such as the Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians all practice forms of paedobaptism. In most Churches this act is performed by a bishop or pastor on the eighth day of the baby's life and is believed to be a direct New Covenant replacement for Old Testament circumcision regardless if the infant is male or female. Below is an example of what the 1647 *Westminster Confession of Faith* says concerning baptism, which is primarily used in Reformed Presbyterian churches today:



German reformer Philipp Melanchthon immersing an infant

“3. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person. 4. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents, are to be baptized.”

Right away you should notice that this confession denies that biblical baptism is by water immersion, which I addressed in the previous chapter. This is unfortunate. Concerning those who should be “baptized,” the confession states that not only adults who can profess faith, but also infants should be “baptized.” The first issue with this point of view is that there is **NOT ONE** example in all of Scripture of infant baptism taking place, being taught, or hinted at, yet there are many examples of credobaptism. The chart below is taken out of Rev. James Mountain’s book *My Baptism, And What Led to It*, and displays the reality of infant baptism in the Scriptures.

INFANT-BAPTISM WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES OF SCRIPTURE.				
Name of Book.	Commands for Infant-Baptism.	Instances of Infant-Baptism.		Allusions to church, position of baptized infants and to the manner of their subsequent admission as full members.
St. Matthew	None	None		None.
St. Mark.....	None	None		None.
St. Luke	None	None		None.
St. John	None	None		None.
Acts.....	None	None		None.
Romans	None	None		None.
1 Corinthians ...	None	None		None.
2 Corinthians.....	None	None		None.
Galatians	None	None		None.
Ephesians	None	None		None.
Philippians.....	None	None		None.
Colossians	None	None		None.
1 Thessalonians...	None	None		None.
2 Thessalonians...	None	None		None.
1 Timothy	Ncne	None		None.
2 Timothy	None	None		None.
Titus	None	None		None.
Philemon	None	None		None.
Hebrews.....	None	None		None.
James	None	None		None.
1 Peter	None	None		None.
2 Peter	None	None		None.
1 John.....	None	None		None.
2 John	None	None		None.
3 John	None	None		None.
Jude.....	None	None		None.
Revelation	None	None		None.

The following Scriptures display how the one being baptized has to be able to believe and repent of their sins, something an 8-day old infant simply cannot do.

Acts 2:37-38 states:

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

The people listening to Peter preach on the day of Pentecost were convicted by what they had heard, the New Testament describes it as they were “**pricked in their heart**” and then they believed and had faith to ask Peter what shall they do. Then Peter commanded them to repent (this means to change or turn away) and be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. Verse 41 confirms that they “**received his words**” and obeyed, which an infant cannot do.

A common objection to this passage from paedobaptist is that verse 39 of this chapter speaks of children, and they assume this must mean infants who are eight days old, and the promise is baptism.

Act 2:39 states:

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Please remember that not all children are eight days old, or even infants. For someone to say that Peter is referring to paedobaptism is a big assumption. The promise spoken about in this passage is for believers to repent and be baptized and then they will receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Infants cannot believe, cannot be convicted of their sins and repent, and therefore cannot do what Peter is speaking about in verse 38. So, the promise is for their children when they are able to do these things.

Acts 8:12-13 states:

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.”

In this passage we have men and women who believed the Gospel and were baptized. Now we do not know if there were children present in this passage, but if they were it would have been a good place to have “and children” to settle the paedobaptist position once and for all. But the Scripture does not say that.

Acts 8:18 states:

“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

Acts 19:5 states:

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

In both of these passages we have adult believers hearing the Gospel and acting on what they had heard through their faith and belief. This is something an infant cannot do.

Acts 16:14-15 states:

“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.”

In this passage we have a woman named Lydia who heard the preaching of the Gospel, and it says that the Lord opened her heart to receive what she had heard, and when she did, she was baptized along with her household. Many assume that her household was in attendance to Paul's preaching, or perhaps Lydia shared the Gospel with them at a later time. This passage is often used by adherents of paedobaptism as a proof text for infant baptism, because they assume there must have been at least one infant in her household. This is a weak argument, and an argument from silence. I recently preached a sermon on baptism and brought up this verse and how it is used for advocating infant baptism, and in the audience while I was preaching there were several "households" in attendance and the only household that currently had an infant was my own. So, assuming Lydia's household must have had an infant is not a sound argument.

Acts 22:16 states:

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

In this passage we have the believer being commanded to arise and be baptized, implying this is an act of obedience. It is true that when one is baptized, it is something that is done to them when they are immersed in water, but it is that person who decided to arise and go be baptized in the first place. When an infant is baptized, they don't know what is happening to them, and when they are an adult won't remember it. This verse also speaks of the believer calling on the name of the Lord. Obviously, an infant, even if they could understand and believe, cannot do this either.

We also find in Acts 22:16 a command not to wait to be baptized. If you believe the Gospel, have faith in our Lord Jesus, then you are to be baptized in water as soon as possible just like the Christians did in the Book of Acts. There is no need to wait till next month when your Church can schedule a bunch of baptisms for one day and have a party or wait until things are not as busy in your life, or whatever excuses

you can come up with. As a minister, I have had many people reach out to me and ask if I could baptize them, and I have always done everything in my ability to schedule it and make it happen ASAP. I have scouted out creeks or rivers nearby to the person's home who is wanting to be baptized, rented a hotel room on more than one occasion to use their swimming pool, and even used a stock tank a few times. It saddens me though when people reach out to me, and I make myself available, and then I am given every lame excuse in the world on why they can't be baptized now. I read the Scriptures to them, answer questions to the best of my ability, but I never pressure them into baptism, because it is between them and the Lord, not them and myself.

Many reformed Christians, myself included, hold to the “**Five Solas**,”¹ which are a set of foundational Christian theological principles held by Reformed Christians today, and have their roots in the Protestant Reformation, and ultimately in Scripture. The five solas are: **Solo Christo** (Christ alone), **Soli Deo Gloria** (glory to God alone), **Sola Fide** (by faith alone), **Sola Gratia** (by grace alone), and **Sola Scriptura** (by Scripture alone). **Sola Scriptura** is the belief that we as Christians are to only receive doctrine from Scripture² alone, and that any doctrine or teaching that has its foundation outside of that is a tradition of man. Since the doctrine of paedobaptism cannot be found anywhere in Scripture, I believe that this doctrine must be placed into this category of a tradition and treated as such. Jesus warned us many times in the Gospel's of traditions that make the Word of God of none effect, or in other words cancels it out. When the Bible clearly teaches that baptism is by immersion in water of a believer in Christ, who can have faith, repent of their sins, and someone else comes along and says different, it is a tradition.

Jesus said in Matthew 15:3 these words:

“But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”

¹ Sola is the Latin word for “alone.”

² The 66 books of the Protestant Bible.

Jesus said in Mark 7:7 these words:

“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.”

Jesus said in Mark 7:13 these words:

“Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”



I baptizing my sister.



*My Great-Uncle and Cousin,
Pastor George Dyer and Pastor Larry
Dyer baptizing a couple.*



*My father and I, after my baptism on
a cold December day in Kentucky.*



*My father and I baptizing my
grandmother, Louisa Dyer.*

Chapter 3: Forsake Not The Little Children

Paedobaptist will argue the reason Christians must baptize their infants is because if you do not baptize them you are forsaking them from the New Covenant. They will often accuse credobaptist as disobeying the command of Jesus that we find in the event of when the group of parents brought their infant children to Jesus for Him to blessing them.

Luke 18:15 states:

“And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”

If Jesus was giving a lesson on why you as a parent should baptize your infants in this instance, you would think He would have said something like “Suffer not the little children and forbid them not to be baptized.” That is not what He said though. There are no instructions anywhere in the Bible on infant baptism. In this passage Jesus is teaching His Apostles, who were irritated that these parents were bringing their children to Jesus, that the building blocks of the Kingdom of God on Earth were children of faithful families. The same is the case today. Christian parents need to have children and raise them up in a Godly manner for the sake of advancing the Kingdom. This does not mean that every child that is raised in a Christian home, whether baptized as an infant or not, is going to grow to adulthood and profess belief and faith in Christ and be a Christian, even though that is the prayer and hope of every Christian parent that they do.

God chose His elect for salvation at the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5), and there is nothing we as man can do to change that. There is nothing we can do by action or inaction to “pluck” any of

the elect out the hand of God. We can't baptize anyone in water and make them part of the elect by that action, the same way we can't withhold baptism from an infant and pluck them from being a part of the elect. If we believe that than we are saying we are choosing people for salvation, not God.

John 10:28-29 states:

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”

Paedobaptist will often say that New Covenant baptism is a direct replacement for Old Covenant circumcision, and by excluding a child from being baptized on the eighth day is like an ancient Israelite father who would have excluded their son from the Old Covenant if they did not circumcise him on the eighth day of life. They get this idea from misunderstanding Paul's words in the Epistle to the Colossians.

Colossians 2:10-13 states:

“And ye are complete in him [Christ], which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Paedobaptist will take this as their foundation for baptizing eight day old infants, male or female, and they teach that the **“circumcision made without hands”** is water baptism. The issue with this understanding is whether or not you call pouring, sprinkling, or full immersion baptism, all of these are done with the hands of man in some

capacity. When a Pastor sprinkles or pours water over a babies head, this is done using his hands. Or even when someone immerse someone in water often the baptizer is supporting the person being baptized with his hands. This is not what the Apostle Paul is speaking about though. He is speaking of a circumcision of the heart that is made without the hands of man, rather by God within. We call this regeneration, when a person is regenerated to newness of life to live for Christ (Born again/from above). The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans says that the beginning of this walk in newness of life begins at our baptism.

Romans 6:3-4 states:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

We read about the circumcision of the heart that is to take place in Christians in the New Covenant in the following passages:

Deuteronomy 30:6 states:

“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

Jeremiah 4:4 states:

“Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.”

Jeremiah 31:31-33 states:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah... But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of

Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Jeremiah 32:38-39 states:

“And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.”

Ezekiel 11:19-21 states:

“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.”

Romans 2:28-29 states:

“For he is not a Jew [Judahite], which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew [Judahite], which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

This circumcision made without hands that Paul is speaking about in Colossians is not infant baptism or adult baptism, it is what takes place in the heart of a person when God regenerates them to live in newness of life that gives them the desire to want to live a life for God, and want to be baptized, and as we see in the Book of Acts leads them to ask as the Ethiopian Eunuch did: “**“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”** and as Philip said so shall the we “**“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”**

Chapter 4: Is There a Biblical Age of Adulthood?

If infant baptism is biblically incorrect, then the question arises when should a child that is raised in a Christian household be baptized. Some believe as soon as the child can truly believe, profess faith in Christ, and know and understand what sin is so they can repent of it, than they should be baptized. This is certainly more biblical than infant baptism. Some Anabaptists believe a child should be baptized at 12 years old, some Baptist believe the age to be eight or nine years old, and other churches borrow from Talmudic Judaism's Bar Mitzvah and perform baptism at the ages of 12 for boys and 13 for girls.

The Scriptures are not 100% clear on when a child should be baptized, but I do believe the Bible is very clear on when a child becomes an adult in the eyes of God, which is 20 years of age. This is when our local congregation has chosen to baptize our children, that way the child better understands what baptism truly means between them and God, and the importance of the public declaration for Christ that takes place with baptism. This isn't to say that I believe a baptism that takes place when someone is 19½ years old or 12 years old isn't valid in the eyes of God, that ultimately is between that person and God.

In the Book of Deuteronomy the Israelite adults, because of their sin and rebellion, were not permitted to enter the promise land, except for Caleb and Joshua. The Israelites that entered the promise land with these two men were described as "**children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil.**"

Deuteronomy 1:34-39 states:

"And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to

him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. **But** Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.”

In the Brenton Septuagint it renders Deuteronomy 1:39 this way describing them as young children:

“And every young child who this day knows not good or evil, they shall enter therein, and to them I will give it, and they shall inherit it.”

The Book of Deuteronomy does not list the age of these children, which would leave the Bible reader to interpret what they think a child is in their own mind. But if we read in the Book of Numbers, it identifies what the maximum age of all the children that entered into the promise land was.

Numbers 32:11 states:

“Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me.”

Numbers 32:11 (Brenton Septuagint Translation) states:

“Surely these men who came up out of Egypt from twenty years old and upward, who know good and evil, shall not see the land which I sware to give to Abraam and Isaac and Jacob, for they have not closely followed after me.”

We also find within God's Law, an Israelite man could not go to war unless he was at least twenty years of age, unlike in America today where we will send men and women off to war at eighteen years of age.

Numbers 1:2 states:

“From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.”

Numbers 26:2 states:

“Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.”

2nd Chronicles 25:5 states:

“Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of *their* fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield.”

It is my conviction, as well as the congregation of the Louisiana Christian-Israel Fellowship, that a person is not an adult in the eyes of God until they are 20 years of age, so this is a suitable time for them to be baptized. By waiting until they are a biblical adult, it gives them time to reflect on the importance of the sacrament of baptism, rather than being baptized several times between childhood and adulthood that is often seen in Christian congregations today.³

³ None of this is to say a baptism that takes place before the age of 20 is not valid in the eyes of God. That is between that person and God. I know plenty of good Christians that were baptized before the age of 20 and truly understood and meant what they were doing.

Now some may wonder what if a child was to die before their baptism, what happens to them then? I have read several books that promoted infant baptism and taught to not baptize them would put the child in spiritual danger of some kind. Scripturally though, it is not the physical act of water baptism that saves a person, but rather the finished work of Christ within them. If a child were to die before their baptism, and they are one of the elect of God then they will partake of the Resurrection of the Dead the same as all the other elect of God.

John 5:25-2- states:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Chapter 5: Notable Quotes Concerning Credobaptism

The Schleitheim Confession of Faith was adopted by The Swiss Brethren Conference in 1527. It was written by Michael Sattler, who along with his wife was executed by the Catholic Church in the city of Rottenburg for his denial of infant baptism as Biblical, as well as denying other false doctrines of the Catholic Church. His sentence for execution read:



"Michael Sattler shall be committed to the executioner. The latter shall take him to the square and there first cut out his tongue, and then forge him fast to a wagon and there with glowing iron tongs twice tear pieces from his body, then on the way to the site of execution five times more as above and then burn his body to powder as an arch-heretic."⁴

The Schleitheim Confession of Faith states the following concerning baptism:

"Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him, and to all those who with this significance request it [baptism] of us and demand it for themselves. This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the pope. In this you have the foundation and testimony of the apostles. Mt. 28, Mk. 16, Acts 2, 8, 16, 19. This we wish to hold simply, yet firmly and with assurance."

⁴ *The Anabaptist Story*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960, p. 57.



Balthasar Hubmaier, who was a converted Catholic who joined the Anabaptist⁵ Movement. He was arrested for his denial of infant baptism along with his wife, and while in prison wrote “**I may err – I am a man, but a heretic I cannot be, because I ask constantly for instruction in the word of God.**” He was sentenced to death after being tortured on the rack. On 10 March 1528, he was taken to the public square and burned alive. Three days later his wife was executed by having a stone tied around her neck and thrown in the River Danube. Hubmaier wrote the following in his book *The Christian Baptism of Believers* in 1525:

“From this every pious Christian sees and grasps that the one who wants to be baptized with water must beforehand have the certain knowledge of a good conscience toward God through the Word of God. That is, that he is certain and sure to have a gracious and favorable God through the resurrection of Christ... Then water baptism follows. Not that the same cleanses the souls, but rather the ‘yes’ of a good conscience toward God which preceded inwardly in faith.”

Menno Simons, a converted Catholic priest who became a prominent leader in the Anabaptist Movement. His followers became known as Mennonites. Simons wrote the following regarding infant baptism:



“Since we have not a single command in the Scriptures that infants are to be baptized, or that the apostles did practice it; we modestly confess, with a good conscience, that infant baptism is but human invention; a selfish notion; a perversion of the ordinance of Christ; a manifest abomination, standing in the holy place, where it ought, properly, not to be, Matt. 24:15.”⁶

⁵ The term Anabaptist means to “re-baptize.” It comes from Latin word *anabaptista*, which has its origins from the Greek word ἀνά which means “re-” and βαπτίζμός for “baptism.”

⁶ *The Complete Works of Menno Simons* (published by John F. Funk; Elkhart, Ind., 1871)

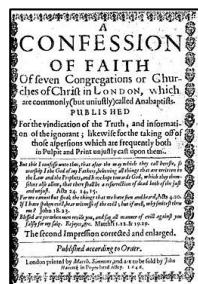


Thomas Helwys, who was a permanent Baptist minister and founder of the First Baptist Church in England. He died in prison as a consequence of the persecution of Puritans under King James I. Helwys wrote the following in his book *A Declaration of Faith of English People* concerning baptism:

“That every Church is to receive in all their members by Baptism upon the Confession of their faith and sins wrought by the preaching of the Gospel, according to the primitive Institution (Matthew 28:19) and practice (Acts 2:41).”

John Smyth, an English Puritan minister and theologian, wrote the following in his *Short Confession of Faith* in 1609 concerning baptism:

“The Holy Baptism is given unto these in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which hear, believe, and with penitent heart receive the doctrines of the Holy Gospel. For such bath the Lord Jesus commanded to be baptized, and no unspeaking children.”



The 1644 Baptist Confession of Faith (London) states concerning baptism:

“That Baptism is an Ordinance of the new Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed only upon persons professing faith, or that are Disciples... who upon a profession of faith, ought to be baptized.”

John Clarke, who was a Baptist minister, and co-founder of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, wrote the following in his book *Ill Newes from New England* concerning baptism:



"Baptism or dipping in water is one of the commandments of this Lord Jesus Christ, and that a visible believer, or disciple of Christ Jesus... is the only person that is to be baptized."



John Gill, who was a Baptist minister and Bible scholar wrote the following on baptism in his book *A Body of Doctrinal & Practical Divinity*:

"...there is no precedent for the baptism of infants in the word of God. Among the vast numbers who flocked to John's baptism from all parts, we read of no infants that were brought with them for that purpose, or that were baptized by him. And though more were baptized by Christ than by John, that is, the apostles of Christ, at his order, yet no mention of any infant baptized by them; and though three thousand persons were baptized at once, yet not an infant among them: and in all the accounts of baptism in the Acts of the Apostles in different parts of the world, not a single instance of infant baptism is given. There is, indeed, mention made of households, or families, baptized; and which the "paedobaptist" endeavor to avail themselves of; but they ought to be sure there were infants in these families, and that they were baptized, or else they must baptize them on a very precarious foundation; since there are families who have no infants in them, and how can they be sure there were any in these the scriptures speak of? and it lies upon them to prove there were infants in them, and that these infants were baptized; or the allegation of these instances is to no purpose. We are able to prove there are many things in the account of these families, which are inconsistent with infants, and which make it at least probable there were none in them, and which also make it certain that those who were baptized were adult persons and believers in Christ... There being then neither precept nor precedent in the word of God for infant baptism, it may be justly condemned as unscriptural and unwarrantable."

Charles Spurgeon, was a well-known English Baptist minister, who wrote the following concerning paedobaptism in his Autobiography:



“I knew that my father and my grandfather took little children in their arms, put a few drops of water on their faces, and said they were baptized; but I could not see anything in my Bible about babes being baptized.”⁷

“If I thought it wrong to be a Baptist... I should give it up, and become what I believed to be right... If we could find infant baptism in the Word of God, we should adopt it.”⁸

Spurgeon preached the following in a sermon titled, *Christian Baptism*, in 1861:

“...the very great majority of Christian people think infant children fit and proper subjects for this ordinance; we, on the other hand, believe that none are fit and proper subjects for the ordinance of baptism, excepting such as really believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and their King... What is a sacrament? I suppose it is an oath. Now would you administer an oath to an infant child? Is there common sense in such a procedure as that? You would provoke laughter if you were to take your infant child before a Justice of the Peace and there administer to it an oath to the effect that he should to the end of his days be a faithful subject and servant of the queen; and is there anything more rational than this, when you take an infant child to a minister of God’s word that to that child an oath may be administered by which it shall swear fealty to the Captain of our Salvation? But you say it is not to the infant that the oath is administered at all; it is to the sponsors. Well then, I want to know to whom the sacrament is administered. The oath is administered to the sponsors; the

⁷ Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography*, 1:145.

⁸ Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography*, 1:152.

baptism is then administered to the sponsors, for the baptism and the oath are one. But it would seem as though the ordinance were divided. The water is administered to the child, and the oath is administered to the sponsors. There is something rather like confusion here. If baptism be a sacrament and a sacrament an oath, then in administering baptism to a child, you are administering an oath to a child. But surely every oath ought to be administered to such, and such only as understand the nature of an oath, and also give a solemn assent to the propositions that are embodied in it. And thus if the word sacrament is to be applied to baptism at all, I accept it then, and I submit that it protests, and protests most strongly, against the administration of this ordinance to any except to those who understand and assent to the principles which are connected with it.”



James Mountain, who was a Baptist minister, left the Church of England over the doctrine of infant baptism. In his book, *My Baptism, and What Led to It*, he wrote the following:

“During the course of the lesson, one of the teachers was evidently impressed with the fact that while the inspired record informs us that believing “men and women” were baptized, it makes no mention of infants. He therefore asked, “What do you think, sir, about infant-baptism?” “What I think, or, indeed, what any other, minister may think about infant-baptism, is of very little importance,” I replied. “The question is, what did the inspired writers of influential; the New Testament think? No church, however ancient; no council, however representative; no synod, however no custom or usage, however venerable may over-ride the teaching and practice of Jesus Christ and His apostles, as recorded upon its sacred pages. What saith the Scriptures? must be our enquiry.”⁹

⁹ Mountain, *My Baptism, and What Led to It*, p. 43

Chapter 6: Why Should a Believer Get Baptized?

The simplest answer to this question is a believer in Christ should want to be baptized because Christ commanded them to be baptized, and if we read in the Book of Acts that is exactly what we see Christians doing. They heard the Gospel, believed it, had faith, and then were baptized in water. The command of baptism is given at what is known as the Great Commission in Matthew chapter 28 by Jesus.

Matthew 28:19 (The Apostolic Bible Polyglot) states:

“Going then, disciple all the nations! Immersing (baptizing) them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy spirit.”

Acts 2:38 states:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 2:41 states:

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

Acts 8:12 states:

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Acts 8:36 states:

“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 9:18 states:

“And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.”

Acts 10:47-48 states:

“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

Acts 16:15 states:

“And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained *us*.”

Acts 16:33 states:

“And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”

Acts 18:8 states:

“And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

Acts 19:5 states:

“When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Acts 22:16 states:

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Anyone who would deny that Christians are commanded to be baptized is denying the Scriptures and the testimony of all the Christians in the Book of Acts.

Debates on Baptism Worth Watching for Further Study:

The Baptism Debate: James White vs Gregg Strawbridge

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXSPKjypoO8&t=7162s

Infant Baptism Debate: Pastor Keith Foskey vs Redeemed Zoomer

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZP4vKo6Gw4&t=1s

The Baptism Debate: James White vs Bill Shishko

www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoVXoH585gw&t=853s

Matthew Everhard vs. Keith Foskey - Mode of Baptism

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQAkqKp4_iI

About The Author:



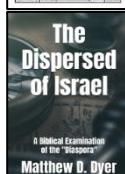
Matthew Dyer is a Pastor, head of Christian America Ministries, and host of a weekly shortwave radio show and online podcast. Dyer is a student of both the Bible and history. He and his wife, Cassie, are the parents of four children.

Other books written by Matthew Dyer:



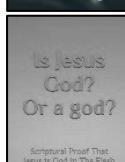
Anglo-Israel Messengers:

A History of Those Who Have Believed and Taught That the Anglo-Saxon and Kindred People Are Israel



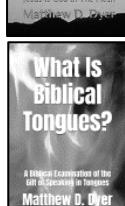
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A Biblical Examination of the “Diaspora”



Is Jesus God? Or a god?

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