

Unit Two

Section VI – Holy Baptism

Lesson 26 – First: What is Baptism?

EXCERPTS FROM THE ANCIENT CHURCH FATHERS ON BAPTISM

The Early Church Fathers believed that being baptized was being born again. They baptized both adults and infants and they used three methods; immersion, pouring and sprinkling.

The Didache

After the foregoing instructions, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living [*running*] water. If you have no living water, then baptize in other water, and if you are not able in cold, then in warm. If you have neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Before baptism, let the one baptizing and the one to be baptized fast, as also any others who are able. Command the one who is to be baptized to fast beforehand for one or two days (Didache 7:1 [*ca. A.D. 70*]).

Justin Martyr

As many as are persuaded and believe that what we Christians teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, and instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins, we pray and fast with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit [Matt. 28:19], they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, “Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (First Apology 61 [*A.D. 151*]).

Irenaeus (*How are we reborn from above?*)

Jesus came to save all through himself – all, I say, who through him are reborn in God: infants, and children, and youths, and old men. Therefore he passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, sanctifying infants; a child for children, sanctifying those who are of that age... so that he might be the perfect teacher in all things, perfect not only in respect to the setting forth of truth, perfect also in respect to relative age (Against Heresies 2:22:4 [*A.D. 189*]).

Tertullian

No one can attain salvation without baptism, especially in view of the declaration of the Lord, who says, “Unless a man shall be born of water, he shall not have life” (On Baptism 12:1 [A.D. 203]).

When we are about to enter the water — no, just a little before — In the church and under the hand of the pastor, we solemnly profess that we renounce the devil and his pomps and his angels. Thereupon we are immersed three times (The Crown 3:2 [A.D. 211]).

Hippolytus

Where there is no scarcity of water the stream shall flow through the baptismal font or pour into it from above; but if water is scarce, whether on a constant condition or on occasion, then use whatever water is available... Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them (The Apostolic Tradition 21:16 [A.D.215]).

Clement

You will perhaps say, 'What does the baptism of water contribute toward the worship of God?' In the first place, because that which has pleased God is fulfilled. In the second place, because when you are regenerated and born from above of water and of God, the frailty of your former birth, which you have through men, is cut off, and so... you shall be able to attain salvation; but otherwise it is impossible. For thus has Jesus testified to us with an oath: “Verily, I say to you, that unless a man is born again of water... he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Recognitions of Clement 6:9 [A.D. 221]).

Origen

The Church received from the apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants. The apostles, to whom were committed the mysteries of divine sacraments, knew there is in everyone innate strains of original sin, which must be washed away through water and the Spirit (Commentaries on Romans 5:9 [A.D. 248]).

Cornelius I

As the heretic Novatian seemed about to die, he received baptism in the bed where he lay, by pouring... (Letter to Fabius of Antioch 6:43 [A.D. 251]).

Cyprian

It behooves those to be baptized... so that they are prepared, in the lawful and true and only baptism of the holy Church, by divine regeneration, for the kingdom of God... because it is written “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Epistles 72 [73]: 21 [A.D. 252]).

As to what pertains to the case of infants: You Fidus said that they ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, that the old Law of circumcision must be taken into consideration, and that you did not think that one should be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day after his birth. In our council it seemed to us far otherwise. No one agreed to the course which you thought should be taken. Rather, we all judge that the mercy and grace of God ought to be denied to no man born.” (Letters 64:2 [A.D. 253]).

In the saving sacraments, when necessity compels and when God bestows his pardon, divine benefits are bestowed fully upon believers, nor ought anyone be disturbed because the sick are poured upon or sprinkled when they receive the Lord's grace.” (Letter to a Certain Magnus 69(76):12 [A.D. 254]).

Ambrose

The Church was redeemed at the price of Christ's blood. Jew or Greek, it makes no difference; but if he has believed, he must circumcise himself from his sins in holy baptism (Col. 2:11-12)] so that he can be saved... for no one ascends into the kingdom of heaven except through the sacrament of baptism... “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (On Abraham 2:11:79-84 [A.D. 387]).

Augustine

It is this one Spirit who makes it possible for an infant to be regenerated... when that infant is brought to baptism; and it is through this one Spirit that the infant so presented is reborn. For it is not written, “Unless a man be born again by the will of his parents” or “by the faith of those presenting him or ministering to him,” but, “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit.” The water, therefore, manifesting exteriorly the sacrament of grace, and the Spirit effecting interiorly the benefit of grace, both regenerate in one Christ that man who was generated in Adam (Letters 98:2 [A.D. 408]).

Of Infant Baptism.

47] Here a question occurs by which the devil, through his sects, confuses the world, namely, Of Infant Baptism, whether children also believe, and are justly baptized. Concerning this we say briefly: 48] Let the simple dismiss this question from their minds, and refer it to the learned. But if you wish to answer, 49] then answer thus:

The Baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ is sufficiently proved from His own work, namely, that God sanctifies many of them who have been thus baptized, and has given them the Holy Ghost; and that there are yet many even to-day in whom we perceive that they have the Holy Ghost both because of their doctrine and life; as it is also given to us by the grace of God that we can explain the Scriptures and come to the knowledge of Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Ghost.

50] But if God did not accept the baptism of infants, He would not give the Holy Ghost nor any of His gifts to any of them; in short, during this long time unto this day no man upon earth could have been a Christian. Now, since God confirms Baptism by the gifts of His Holy Ghost, as is plainly perceptible in some of the church fathers, as St. Bernard, Gerson, John Hus, and others, who were baptized in infancy, and since the holy Christian Church cannot perish until the end of the world, they must acknowledge that such infant baptism is pleasing to God. For He can never be opposed to Himself, or support falsehood and wickedness, or for its promotion impart His grace and Spirit.

51] This is indeed the best and strongest proof for the simple-minded and unlearned. For they shall not take from us or overthrow this article: I believe a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.

52] Further, we say that we are not so much concerned to know whether the person baptized believes or not; for on that account Baptism does not become invalid; but everything depends upon the Word and command of God.

53] This now is perhaps somewhat acute, but it rests entirely upon what I have said, that 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.

What does the word baptism mean? _____

What is Holy Baptism? _____

Which is the right way to perform Holy Baptism?

- ✓ Immersion – meaning dunking someone fully under water.
- ✓ Pouring – Pouring water over someone.
- ✓ Sprinkling – Dripping water on someone.

Many denominations teach Baptism is just something people made up as a way to become a member of a congregation. What does the Bible say about baptism?

Acts 10:44-48 _____

Acts 22:12-16 _____

Romans 6:1-4 _____

1 Peter 3:21-22 _____

Ephesians 4:4-7 _____

Matthew 28:16-20 _____

According to **Psalm 51:5** what is our condition in God's eyes when we are born? _____

According to **Acts 22:16** what does Holy Baptism do to us? _____

In Holy Baptism who is doing then work? God Man Both

What kind of water is required for Holy Baptism? _____

Where do we get the water? _____

What makes Holy Baptism any different than any other time you put water on your head?

What do we get out of Holy Baptism? _____

Is that true for babies too? _____

So would there ever be a good reason not to baptize a child brought to the church by the parents? _____

Why? _____

What happens to a baby who dies before being baptized? _____

What if you are baptized in one denomination and later become a member of the LCMS? Do you have to be re-baptized? _____

Who can perform Holy Baptism? _____

Can parents baptize their own children in their home? _____

Should parents baptize their own children in their home? _____

Why? _____

Holy Baptism is one of the three Means of Grace in the Holy Christian Church.

What is a Means of Grace? _____

Why is Baptism a Means of Grace? _____

What are the other two Means of Grace? _____

What is a Sacrament? _____

A Sacrament requires three things.

They are: _____

There is one other thing that might be called a Sacrament. What could that be? _____

Why could this also be a Sacrament, and a Means of Grace? _____
