

Baptism

I. How some Protestants view Baptism

- a. "Water baptism is clearly a FIGURE or TYPE of something which already took place in the heart of the believer the moment he/she was saved (1 Pet. 3:21)... Water baptism then, is a picture of spiritual baptism as defined in Rom. 6:3-5 and 1 Corinthians 12:13. It is the outward testimony of the believer's inward faith. A sinner is saved the moment he places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is a visible testimony to that faith."
- b. "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 10: 32-33)
- c. Many Protestants view it as an act of obedience. "Water baptism then, is NOT salvation, but obedience to a command by God concerning discipleship."

II. Catholic Baptism

- a. **1262** The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. Thus the two principal effects are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵
- b. **1267** Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore . . . we are members one of another."⁷² Baptism incorporates us *into the Church*. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."⁷³

III. Bible passages in support of the Catholic view of Baptism

- a. John 3:3 "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God'"
- b. John 3:5 "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'"
- c. Acts 2:38 "And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'"
- d. 1 Peter 3:20-21 "...in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience"
- e. Ezekiel 36: 25-27
- f. Titus 3: 5 "He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit"
- g. Romans 6: 3-4 "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, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life"

IV. Original Sin

- a. “We do know by Revelation that Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature. By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. And that is why original sin is called ‘sin’ only in an analogical sense: it is a sin ‘contracted’ and not ‘committed’ - a state and not an act” (Catechism paragraph 404)
- b. Romans 5: 12, 19
- c. “Although it is proper to each individual,²⁹⁵ original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called concupiscence". Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.” (Catechism paragraph 405)

V. Baptism of Infants

- a. Circumcision was performed on infants on the 8th day after their birthday. Baptism, being the new Circumcision (Col 2: 11-12)
- b. Psalm 51 “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me”

Other “Baptisms”

1257 The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation.⁶⁰ He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them.⁶¹ Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament.⁶² The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are “reborn of water and the Spirit.” *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*

1258 The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This *Baptism of blood*, like the *desire for Baptism*, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.

1259 For *catechumens* who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament.

1260 “Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery.”⁶³ Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have *desired Baptism explicitly* if they had known its necessity.

1261 As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,”⁶⁴ allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.

*All numbers preceding paragraphs indicate that the paragraph is taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church which can be found in its entirety at <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>