

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Baptismal Regeneration

### Baptismal Regeneration - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/14 13:35

It's always been my view that water baptism is symbolic and does not actually save us. A man I've talked to recently holds the position that baptism is what brings salvation. I've seen some logical inconsistency in his arguments. The penitent woman (Luke 7:37-50), the paralytic man (Matthew 9:2), the publican (Luke 18:13-14), and the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43) all experienced forgiveness of sins apart from baptism. Paul said Jesus sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:17). He quotes the church fathers, which I do not hold as authoritative. Anything the church fathers say must be subordinated to scripture.

I value the ordinances (water baptism and the Lord's supper) but I see them as physical symbols only. The view that the ordinances are efficacious in themselves is heretical. I believe that what the apostles taught is a man is saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8,9), and that faith must be in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

I would rather ask someone about their personal experience i.e. do you have assurance of sins forgiven, do you know God, how is your prayer life, do you have supernatural love, peace and joy rather than argue about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin or what color the virgin Mary's eyes were. So much of theological debate falls into this latter category.

### Re: Baptismal Regeneration - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2020/8/14 13:41

Quote:

-----The view that the ordinances are efficacious in themselves is heretical  
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Dear brother,

I believe you are hitting the nail squarely on the head with your statement above. In of "themselves" they are not efficacious at all. Water baptism is to be done upon confession and believe and it is clear to me that it goes beyond only a symbol in that it is a "command" of Christ, and it is as important as Spirit Baptism.

It is like saying to a believer just "believe" but do not live in "practical holiness" at all. All things are important that are in Scripture and the Lord's Supper carries with it a warning of the Lord's judgement if done improperly. So we must reverence all the ways of God but you are correct that it is FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ that saves us, no outward action other than confession and belief.

Many early anabaptist believers died martyrs deaths for the right and importance to baptize believers, it was not enough for them to just say "confess".

### Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/14 14:12

So here's a question: I was baptized when I was 7 in an Anglican church and again of my own volition when I was 19 (just a friend and I). I didn't have assurance of sins forgiven until only a few years ago (I'm 34). I don't feel the need to be baptized again.

Does anyone here think I should?

**Re: - posted by davidkeel (), on: 2020/8/18 7:32**

I never had confirmation of sins forgiven from the Lord until I genuinely repented. That was after being a spirit filled believer for two decades.

I was also baptized as a believer twenty years before I began to walk in a life of repentance. I haven't experienced the Lord asking me to get baptized again though. That's only my experience.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/18 7:53**

David, that's my experience as well. I see baptism as an outward sign of inward grace. True, God commands it, and I want to be obedient to everything he tells me to do; however I feel no need to be baptized again.

It seems to me that the more formal a church or denomination gets, the more they emphasize the sacraments as a way of salvation rather than symbols.

**Re: - posted by davidkeel (), on: 2020/8/18 8:56**

Yes as Greg said it is commanded.

I was staying with friends in London who baptized me in a public place. The Lord confirmed to me afterwards of its importance at what had taken place.

**Re: Baptismal Regeneration - posted by mynameisMark, on: 2020/8/18 12:35**

Nigel and David

Can you help me understand a bit more about what you mean by the phrase "confirmation of sins forgiven?"

I have struggled and continue to struggle hugely with assurance of my own salvation. Are you saying that I must be lost because I haven't had a particular experience?

Mark

**Re: - posted by davidkeel (), on: 2020/8/18 13:55**

I would say for me it was more of a confirmation of eternal life not of sins forgiven both now and in the future.

I had previously had people telling me I was saved, and I did have the Holy Spirit working in my life. I hadn't been promised the confirmation of eternal life by the Lord though. Does the Lord use that uncertainty as a kind of Holy fear to keep us following Christ I wonder? I don't know.

I'm glad you seem to be an honest person.

It was after I truly began to repent and be determined to change ... that I heard the Lord speaking to my heart about eternal life with Him.

Before this happened I did experience feelings of condemnation from the Holy Spirit. But these feelings happened when I wasn't walking in forgiveness toward others. So a Bible verse that would agree with this is: "condemn not and you will not be condemned". I was condemning others in my heart. But didn't know it until I had come out of that life and looked back on how I was behaving .. Maybe it was a feeling from the Lord just as a warning to me to turn my life around? I'm not sure.

But it used to scare me that God would project those feelings to me.

Paul said we are "being saved". I think that means that we are still being saved out of the corruption of this present evil age.... both by the working of the Holy Spirit and also our willingness to follow the leading of the Lord to listen and obey Him.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/18 15:17**

Hi Mark. Knowing your sins are forgiven and that you have peace with God is definitely biblical and goes far beyond an emotional experience.

First we must believe by faith that Jesus forgives us of our sins, because He says "Whoever comes to me I will never turn away." (John 6:37) and "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Secondly, God will confirm by His Spirit that you are His child with supernatural peace in your spirit: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1) and "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:15,16) and "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isaiah 32:17).

If you don't have this, ask Jesus for it. I can tell you from experience, He is good to His word.

**Re: Baptismal Regeneration - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2020/8/18 19:45**

Nigel,

I'm not a proponent of baptismal regeneration but I'm curious how you read this verse, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16)

Also, what is it that the one who believes and is baptized is actually saved from? Hell? The World?

In Christ,

**Re: - posted by mynameisMark, on: 2020/8/18 20:38**

David & Nigel - thanks for your thoughtful replies.

"If you don't have this, ask Jesus for it. I can tell you from experience, He is good to His word."

I ask almost daily, but don't feel I have this peace. I will keep asking till I receive, though.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/18 20:44**

God bless you Mark. Remember Jesus said whoever asks receives.  
I'll be praying for you.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/18 20:50**

Ron, my position is that baptism is a sign that you are repenting and submitting to Christ. You could also paraphrase that verse "He that believes and repents shall be saved."

I think believers are saved from being enslaved to sin, from serving the devil, and from going to hell when they die.

**Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2020/8/19 18:35**

Nigel,

Thanks for your reply. I believe that believing and repenting are two sides of the same coin but I don't think we have the authority to change that verse to say anything other than "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved..."

One other thought, I find it significant that Jews, Muslims, and Hindu's don't really have a problem with someone believing in their heart; but once they are baptized the persecution begins.

In Christ,

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/8/19 19:53**

In the very early church there was no gap between believing and being baptizedâ€”so much so that they were practically synonymous- as in Mark 16:16.

In other words, it was unheard of that a believer would not also be baptized (except in extreme circumstances like the thief on the cross). That is a modern day problem.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/19 23:07**

Just to clarify, according to the Bible a believer should be baptized if he or she can. I believe that. I also take communion. I value the two ordinances set out in the New Testament.

After the time of the apostles, formalism crept into the church. Priests and theologians twisted the scriptures, and salvation according to them was nothing more than eating a wafer and drinking juice, or being dunked in water. Augustine said that even if a drunken heretic baptized a baby it would be saved from hell (he believed if babies weren't baptized they went to hell, or purgatory) because of the faith of the church. (I'm not knocking Augustine, but come on.)

Just talk to your average church member and see if I'm lying. They've been baptized, taken communion etc. but talk to them about knowing God and they think you are speaking another language.

How about the first part of that verse (Mark 16:16)? People always stress the baptism part, but do they truly believe?

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/8/20 7:41**

I agree that belief is a prerequisite for baptism. Why would an unbeliever want to be baptized? I guess lots of reasons- peer pressure, "fire insurance" etc.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.â€”  
Acts 2:41

Did Peter and the disciples do in depth interviews to determine if the 3000 truly accepted the message before baptizing them? We don't know- we aren't told that but I doubt it.

Their profession of faith and willingness to be baptized was all that was needed.

Baptism alone cannot save anyone. But any person who is truly saved and accepts Jesus as Lord will want to follow his commands and therefore should want to be baptized. It seems like in the days of the early church it was easier- if you got saved you got baptized in about .2 seconds. Now there might be months before a church has their next baptism service.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2020/8/20 16:29**

The way I see it, any christian can baptize a new convert.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2020/8/20 17:04**

Yes indeed!

**Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiss (), on: 2020/8/20 23:34**

After I gave my life to the Lord, I pondered whether or not I needed to be re-baptized. As a youth, I was baptized before I was even truly believed in God (but went through with it because my mom wanted me to).

The week after I was saved, I had already read the entire Bible. The idea of baptism seemed important. Initially, I baptized myself in the bathtub. I was concerned that it wouldn't really count (since it wasn't "public"). So, I later was baptized outdoors by a man of God.

I did have questions about why God would choose something like baptism. I questioned why ordinances would be important in the first place. As others pointed out, you come to Christ before you are ever dunked in water.

When John the Baptist initially questioned the need to baptize Jesus, our Lord replied that he was doing it to "fulfill all righteousness."

Ordinances are interesting things. Most churches adhere to baptism and communion. As earthly beings who sometimes think that we know the mind of the Lord, we see things as "cause and effect" or "if" and "then."

However, there were ordinances that go back to the Old Covenant. For instance, the idea of a blood sacrifice doesn't seem to make a lot of sense -- especially when understand the omnipotent and omniscient nature of God.

Yet, the very first sacrifice on Earth was carried out by God himself -- when the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve to clothe them (Genesis 3:21). Prior to this, they had attempted to cover their nakedness by fastening an outfit by sewing fig leaves together (Genesis 3:7).

Apparently, the fig leaf clothes weren't enough. They told the LORD that they hid from him because they were "naked" (Genesis 3:10-11). So, God covered them -- and He used the skin of animals to do it.

I wonder if all ordinances are also a type and shadow. Baptism hearkens to the flood. Communion hearkens to the last Passover that our Lord celebrated with the disciples -- which, in turn, hearkens back to being saved from the final plague of death in Egypt.

**Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/8/21 22:55**

Hi Christopher,

Quote:  
----- When John the Baptist initially questioned the need to baptize Jesus, our Lord replied that he was doing it to "fulfill all righteousness."  
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Following is an extract from the book *John the Baptist* by F. B. Meyer (1847-1929).

Quote:  
----- There was probably a deeper reason still. That Jordan water, flowing downwards to the Dead Sea, was symbolical. In the purity of its origin, amid the snows of Hermon, and in the beauty of its earlier course, it was an emblem of man's original constitution, when the Creator made him in His own image and pronounced him very good; but in these sullied and troubled waters hurrying on to the Sea of Death -- waters in which thousands of sinners had confessed their sins, with tears and sighs -- how apt an emblem was there of the history of our race, contaminated by the evil that is in the world through lust, and meriting the wages of sin -- death! With that race, in its sin and degradation, our Lord now formally identified Himself. His baptism was his formal identification with our fallen and sinful race, though He knew no sin for Himself, and could challenge the minutest inspection of his enemies: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

Was He baptized because He needed to repent, or to confess his sins? Nay, verily! He was as pure as the bosom of God, from which He came; as pure as the fire that shone above them in the orb of day; as pure as the snows on Mount Hermon, rearing itself like a vision of clouds on the horizon: but He needed to be made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. When the paschal lamb had been chosen by the head of a Jewish household, it was customary to take it, three days before it would be offered, to the priest, to have it sealed with the Temple seal; so our Lord, three years before his death, must be set apart and sealed by the direct act of the Holy Spirit, through the mediation of John the Baptist. "Him hath God the Father sealed."

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A friend suggests that the Lord Jesus was here referring to the sublime prophecy of Daniel ix. 24. That He might make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness, it was essential that the Lamb of God should confess the sins of the people as his own (see Psa. lxi. 5). This was his first step on his journey to the Cross, every step of which was in fulfilment of all righteousness, in order that He might bring in everlasting righteousness.

Any thoughts on the above article?

Blessings

**Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2020/8/22 1:09**

Hi Jade,

Thanks for this article. It is very interesting -- and a great thing to ponder!

I'll add something else: I've often wondered about communion. In many churches (especially those of high church traditions), communion is something of a rite or ceremonial ritual. In other churches, it is a formal symbol or sacrament.

In any case, I've often wondered whether or not it was intended to be a symbol via a Passover celebration.

I attended one congregation that had communion just once per year -- and it was a relaxed meal that culminated in the breaking of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. It was similar to the Passover Seder (in which the type and shadow of Christ as the sacrificial lamb who gives his body and blood for us is very evident).

In most modern churches, communion is celebrated weekly or monthly.

I was going to write a question here on SermonIndex about this way back when I was in college. At the time, I would attend the Passover Seder with other Messianic believers. I have always been interested in how other believers celebrate this -- and whether or not they see it as an ordinance or something else.

**Re: Communion - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/8/23 11:58**

Hi Christopher,

Quote:  
----- I've often wondered about communion. In many churches (especially those of high church traditions), communion is something of a rite or ceremonial ritual. In other churches, it is a formal symbol or sacrament.  
-----

I do not see the communion as a ritual or symbol.

Our Lord Jesus said of the communion: "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24-25).

DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

How we forget Him!

We forget that grace and truth has come through Jesus Christ and OUT OF HIS FULLNESS we receive GRACE upon GRACE (John 1:16-17).

We forget the New Covenant.

Heb. 10:14-18 "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

"This is the covenant that I will make with them

After those days, says the LORD:

I will put My laws upon their heart,

And on their mind I will write them,"

He then says,

"And their sins and their lawless deeds

I will remember no more."

Ezek. 36:27 â€

I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

We forget that that we are in Him and He in us (John 14:20) and apart from Him we can do nothing.

John 6:56 â€

He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

John 15:4-5 â€

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

We forget the glory of Christ in us (Col. 1:27).

We forget that His steadfast love is great to the heavens and His faithfulness to the clouds (Ps.57:10) and we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loves us.

Rom. 8:35-36 â€

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? â€â€ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

In difficult times, we see the giants of our cares, or troubles, or sins, or sorrows and see ourselves helpless as grasshoppers and forget that He is our Mighty Saviour, our Strength, our Rock, our Fortress, our Deliverer, our Refuge, our Shield, our Stronghold, our Peace, our Rest.

And how often in our prosperity we become proud and forget the Lord and go astray and cease to abide in Him.

Quote:

----- I attended one congregation that had communion just once per year -- and it was a relaxed meal that culminated in the breaking of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. It was similar to the Passover Seder (in which the type and shadow of Christ as the sacrificial lamb who gives his body and blood for us is very evident).

In most modern churches, communion is celebrated weekly or monthly.

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The communion may be held as often as we like (1 Cor. 11:26).

Also, just as Christâ€™s one offering far, far, surpasses all OT animal sacrifices, so I see Christâ€™s incomparable banquet hall far, far surpassing all OT feasts. His riches are unsearchable.

Last thought:

Ps. 51:6 â€

Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,  
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

May the Lord not say to us:

Isa. 1:11-17 â€

“What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?”  
Says the LORD.  
“I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams  
And the fat of fed cattle;  
And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.  
“When you come to appear before Me,  
Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?  
“Bring your worthless offerings no longer,  
Incense is an abomination to Me.  
New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies  
I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.  
“I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts,  
They have become a burden to Me;  
I am weary of bearing them.  
“So when you spread out your hands in prayer,  
I will hide My eyes from you;  
Yes, even though you multiply prayers,  
I will not listen.  
Your hands are covered with blood.  
“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;  
Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight.”

Micah 6:6-8  
With what shall I come to the LORD  
And bow myself before the God on high?  
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,  
With yearling calves?  
Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,  
In ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts,  
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?  
He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

Blessings

**Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiss (), on: 2020/8/23 12:48**

Hi Jade,

Thanks for the great points! I agree that communion shouldn't be a ritual. It should be, well, communion with our Lord. Unfortunately, there are so many churches that turn it into a ritual -- a "form."

This is why I am always interested in the various ways in which churches partake in this.

Thank you for the great reminders from Scripture.



**Re: - posted by cryinthenite, on: 2020/11/11 14:15**

Regeneration is to be born from above, a gift from the Father that is heavenly. A mystery. The new babe in Christ must now acknowledge this world and the old man is under judgement and make public the spiritual fact that he has died with Christ and will be raised with him. This is salvation. It is possible for the babe to disobey and miss the first resurrection. Thus lose that salvation, but not regeneration. Most mix all this together, but they are mistaken.