



"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone  
who asks you for a reason for your hope"  
1 Peter 3:15

# The Sacrament of Baptism

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- Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*), 4 and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: “Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word.”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wv5GyWJaQ-Q>

# What is the Sacrament Called

- In the Greek baptizein meaning to plunge or immerse.
- The washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit
- The bath of “Enlightenment”

# Baptism Prefigured In The OT

- Blessing of the baptismal waters at Easter Vigil
- Water is the source of life and fruitfulness
- Noah saved by the waters of the flood
- Water springing forth from the earth
- Crossing of the Red Sea
- Crossing of the Jordan River

# Baptism in Prophecy

- **Ezekiel 36:25** - “I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.”

# Christ's Baptism

- Old Covenant pre-figurations fulfilled in Christ Jesus
- Jesus submits himself to the baptism of St. John the Baptist
- In the Passover Christ opened to all men the fountain of Baptism

# Protestant Objections About Baptism

- “Baptism is just an outward sign of our inward faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior”
- “Baptism is not necessary for Salvation”
- “Since Catholics Baptize babies – their Baptism is not valid and those converting to Protestantism must be “RE-Baptized”.

# The Necessity of Baptism

- **Mark 16:16** - **Whoever believes *and is baptized* will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.**
- **John 3:5** - Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you, ***no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit***.
- **Acts 2:38** - Peter said to them, “Repent and **be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ ***for the forgiveness of your sins***; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.
- **1 Peter 3:21** - **This prefigured baptism, which saves you now**. It is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

# Baptism Compared to Circumcision

- **Romans 2:29** - The real Jew is the one who is inwardly a Jew, and real circumcision is in the heart, a thing not of the letter but of the spirit. He may not be praised by any human being, but he will be praised by God.
- **Col. 12-15** - **You were buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. **And even when you were dead in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought you to life along with him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions; obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims, which was opposed to us, he also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross; despoiling the principalities and the powers, he made a public spectacle of them, leading them away in triumph by it.

# Protestant Objections To Infant Baptism

- Infants are not of the “age of reason”
- Infants can’t repent
- Infants can’t speak for themselves

What about circumcision? Did the infants speak for themselves?

Jewish Parents spoke for the infants and raised them in the Covenant with God.

In the same way, the Catholic parent speaks for the child and raises the child in Christ and His Church.

# Infant Baptism

- **Matt 19:14, Luke 18:16** - *“Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”*
- **Acts 16:30-33** - Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and **you and your household will be saved.**”

So they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. He took them in at that hour of the night and bathed their wounds; then he and **all his family were baptized at once.**

# Infant Baptism (*cont'd*)

- **1 Cor. 16:15-18** - I urge you, brothers—you know that **the household of Stephanas is the firstfruits of Achaia** and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the holy ones—be subordinate to such people and to everyone who works and toils with them.
- **Acts 11:13-14** - He (Cornelius) told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which **you and all your household will be saved.**’

# Early Church Fathers on Infant Baptism

The Early Church Fathers testified to the efficacy and the *necessity* of Infant Baptism. They stated plainly that it was handed down to them by the Apostles themselves. It wasn't until the so-called Protestant "Reformation" some 1500 years later that this practice was brought into question and abandoned as "unbiblical".

The following pages contain excerpts of some of their writings concerning the Apostolic truth behind Infant Baptism . . .

## Irenaeus

“He [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]).

## Hippolytus

***“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]).

## Origen

“Every soul that is born into flesh is soiled by the filth of wickedness and sin. . . . In the Church, baptism is given for the remission of sins, and, according to the usage of the Church, **baptism is given even to infants.** ***If there were nothing in infants which required the remission of sins and nothing in them pertinent to forgiveness, the grace of baptism would seem superfluous”*** (*Homilies on Leviticus* 8:3 [A.D. 248]).

## Origen

**“The Church received from the apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants.** The apostles, to whom were committed the secrets of the divine sacraments, knew there are 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]).

## Cyprian of Carthage

**“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]).

“If, in the case of the worst sinners and those who formerly sinned much against God, when afterwards they believe, the remission of their sins is granted and **no one is held back from baptism and grace, how much more, then, should an infant not be held back,** who, having but recently been born, has done no sin, except that, born of the flesh according to Adam, he has contracted the contagion of that old death from his first being born. For this very reason does he [an infant] approach more easily to receive the remission of sins: because the sins forgiven him are not his own but those of another” (*ibid.*, 64:5).

## Gregory of Nazianz

**“Do you have an infant child? Allow sin no opportunity; rather, let the infant be sanctified from childhood. From his most tender age let him be consecrated by the Spirit. Do you fear the seal [of baptism] because of the weakness of nature? Oh, what a pusillanimous mother and of how little faith!”** (*Oration on Holy Baptism* 40:7 [A.D. 388]).

“‘Well enough,’ some will say, ‘for those who ask for baptism, **but what do you have to say about those who are still children, and aware neither of loss nor of grace? Shall we baptize them too?**’ **Certainly [I respond]**, if there is any pressing danger. Better that they be sanctified unaware, than that they depart unsealed and uninitiated” (ibid., 40:28).

## John Chrysostom

“You see how many are the benefits of baptism, and some think its heavenly grace consists only in the remission of sins, but we have enumerated ten honors [it bestows]! **For this reason we baptize even infants**, though they are not defiled by [personal] sins, so that there may be given to them holiness, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, brotherhood with Christ, and that they may be his [Christ’s] members” (*Baptismal Catecheses in Augustine, Against Julian* 1:6:21 [A.D. 388]).

## Augustine

“What the universal Church holds, not as instituted [invented] by councils but as something always held, is most correctly believed to have been handed down by apostolic authority.

**Since others respond for children, so that the celebration of the sacrament may be complete for them, it is certainly availing to them for their consecration, because they themselves are not able to respond”** (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists* 4:24:31 [A.D. 400]).

**“The custom of Mother Church in baptizing infants is certainly not to be scorned, nor is it to be regarded in any way as superfluous, nor is it to be believed that its tradition is anything except apostolic”** (*The Literal Interpretation of Genesis* 10:23:39 [A.D. 408]).

**“By this grace baptized infants too are ingrafted into his [Christ’s] body, infants who certainly are not yet able to imitate anyone. Christ, in whom all are made alive . . . gives also the most hidden grace of his Spirit to believers, grace which he secretly infuses even into infants. . . .** It is an excellent thing that the Punic [North African] Christians call baptism salvation and the sacrament of Christ’s Body nothing else than life. Whence does this derive, except from an ancient and, as I suppose, apostolic tradition, by which the churches of Christ hold inherently that without baptism and participation at the table of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and life eternal? This is the witness of Scripture, too. . . . If anyone wonders why children born of the baptized should themselves be baptized, let him attend briefly to this. . . . The sacrament of baptism is most assuredly the sacrament of regeneration” (*Forgiveness and the Just Deserts of Sin, and the Baptism of Infants* 1:9:10; 1:24:34; 2:27:43 [A.D. 412]).

## **Council of Carthage V**

*“Item:* It seemed good that whenever there were not found reliable witnesses who could testify that without any doubt they [abandoned children] were baptized and when the children themselves were not, on account of their tender age, able to answer concerning the giving of the sacraments to them, ***all such children should be baptized without scruple, lest a hesitation should deprive them of the cleansing of the sacraments.*** This was urged by the [North African] legates, our brethren, since they redeem many such [abandoned children] from the barbarians” (Canon 7 [A.D. 401]).

## **Council of Mileum II**

**“Whoever says that infants fresh from their mothers’ wombs ought not to be baptized, or say that they are indeed baptized unto the remission of sins, but that they draw nothing of the original sin of Adam, which is expiated in the bath of regeneration . . . let him be anathema [excommunicated].** Since what the apostle [Paul] says, ‘Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so passed to all men, in whom all have sinned’ [Rom. 5:12], must not be understood otherwise than the Catholic Church spread everywhere has always understood it. For on account of this rule of faith even infants, who in themselves thus far have not been able to commit any sin, are therefore truly baptized unto the remission of sins, so that that which they have contracted from generation may be cleansed in them by regeneration” (Canon 3 [A.D. 416]).

# Early Church Fathers on the Sacrament of Baptism

## **Hermas**

“‘I have heard, sir,’ said I [to the Shepherd], ‘from some teacher, that there is no other repentance except that which took place when we went down into the water and obtained the remission of our former sins.’ He said to me, ‘You have heard rightly, for so it is’” (*The Shepherd* 4:3:1–2 [A.D. 80]).

## **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 . . . 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 Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, ‘Except you be born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ [John 3:3]” (*First Apology* 61 [A.D. 151]).

## **Tertullian**

“Happy is our sacrament of water, in that, by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life. . . . (*Baptism* 1 [A.D. 203]).

“Without baptism, salvation is attainable by none” (ibid., 12).

“We have, indeed, a second [baptismal] font which is one with the former [water baptism]: namely, that of blood, of which the Lord says: ‘I am to be baptized with a baptism’ [Luke 12:50], when he had already been baptized. He had come through water and blood, as John wrote [1 John 5:6], so that he might be baptized with water and glorified with blood. . . . This is the baptism which replaces that of the fountain, when it has not been received, and restores it when it has been lost” (ibid., 16).

## **Hippolytus**

“Perhaps someone will ask, ‘What does it conduce unto piety to be baptized?’ In the first place, that you may do what has seemed good to God; in the next place, being born again by water unto God so that you change your first birth, which was from concupiscence, and are able to attain salvation, which would otherwise be impossible. For thus the [prophet] has sworn to us: ‘Amen, I say to you, unless you are born again with living water, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Therefore, fly to the water, for this alone can extinguish the fire. He who will not come to the water still carries around with him the spirit of insanity for the sake of which he will not come to the living water for his own salvation” (*Homilies* 11:26 [A.D. 217]).

## **Origen**

“It is not possible to receive forgiveness of sins without baptism” (*Exhortation to the Martyrs* 30 [A.D. 235]).

## **Cyprian of Carthage**

“The baptism of public witness and of blood cannot profit a heretic unto salvation, because there is no salvation outside the Church.” (*Letters* 72[73]:21 [A.D. 253]).

“[Catechumens who suffer martyrdom] are not deprived of the sacrament of baptism. Rather, they are baptized with the most glorious and greatest baptism of blood, concerning which the Lord said that he had another baptism with which he himself was to be baptized [Luke 12:50]” (*ibid.*, 72[73]:22).

## **Cyril of Jerusalem**

“If any man does not receive baptism, he does not have salvation. The only exception is the martyrs, who even without water will receive the kingdom.  
. . . For the Savior calls martyrdom a baptism, saying, ‘Can you drink the cup which I drink and be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized [Mark 10:38]?’ Indeed, the martyrs too confess, by being made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men [1 Cor. 4:9]” (*Catechetical Lectures* 3:10 [A.D. 350]).

### **Gregory Nazianz**

“[Besides the baptisms associated with Moses, John, and Jesus] I know also a fourth baptism, that by martyrdom and blood, by which also Christ himself was baptized. This one is far more august than the others, since it cannot be defiled by later sins” (*Oration on the Holy Lights* 39:17 [A.D. 381]).

### **Pope Siricius**

“It would tend to the ruin of our souls if, from our refusal of the saving font of baptism to those who seek it, any of them should depart this life and lose the kingdom and eternal life” (*Letter to Himerius* 3 [A.D. 385]).

### **John Chrysostom**

“Do not be surprised that I call martyrdom a baptism, for here too the Spirit comes in great haste and there is the taking away of sins and a wonderful and marvelous cleansing of the soul, and just as those being baptized are washed in water, so too those being martyred are washed in their own blood” (*Panegyric on St. Lucian* 2 [A.D. 387]).

### **Ambrose of Milan**

“But I hear you lamenting because he [the Emperor Valentinian] had not received the sacraments of baptism. Tell me, what else could we have, except the will to it, the asking for it? He too had just now this desire, and after he came into Italy it was begun, and a short time ago he signified that he wished to be baptized by me. Did he, then, not have the grace which he desired? Did he not have what he eagerly sought? Certainly, because he sought it, he received it. What else does it mean: ‘Whatever just man shall be overtaken by death, his soul shall be at rest [Wis. 4:7]’?” (*Sympathy at the Death of Valentinian* [A.D. 392]).

## Augustine

“There are three ways in which sins are forgiven: in baptism, in prayer, and in the greater humility of penance; yet God does not forgive sins except to the baptized” (*Sermons to Catechumens on the Creed* 7:15 [A.D. 395]).

“That the place of baptism is sometimes supplied by suffering is supported by a substantial argument which the same blessed Cyprian draws from the circumstance of the thief, to whom, although not baptized, it was said, ‘Today you shall be with me in paradise’ [Luke 23:43]. Considering this over and over again, I find that not only suffering for the name of Christ can supply for that which is lacking by way of baptism, but even faith and conversion of heart [i.e., baptism of desire] if, perhaps, because of the circumstances of the time, recourse cannot be had to the celebration of the mystery of baptism” (ibid., 4:22:29).

“When we speak of within and without in relation to the Church, it is the position of the heart that we must consider, not that of the body. . . . All who are within [the Church] in heart are saved in the unity of the ark [by baptism of desire]” (ibid., 5:28:39).

“[According to] apostolic tradition . . . the churches of Christ hold inherently that without baptism and participation at the table of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and life eternal. This is the witness of Scripture too” (*Forgiveness and the Just Deserts of Sin, and the Baptism of Infants* 1:24:34 [A.D. 412]).

### **Augustine (cont'd)**

“Those who, though they have not received the washing of regeneration, die for the confession of Christ—it avails them just as much for the forgiveness of their sins as if they had been washed in the sacred font of baptism. For he that said, ‘If anyone is not reborn of water and the Spirit, he will not enter the kingdom of heaven’ [John 3:5], made an exception for them in that other statement in which he says no less generally, ‘Whoever confesses me before men, I too will confess him before my Father, who is in heaven’ [Matt. 10:32]” (*The City of God* 13:7 [A.D. 419]).

### **Pope Leo I**

“And because of the transgression of the first man, the whole stock of the human race was tainted; no one can be set free from the state of the old Adam save through Christ’s sacrament of baptism, in which there are no distinctions between the reborn, as the apostle [Paul] says, ‘For as many of you as were baptized in Christ did put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Greek . . .’ [Gal. 3:27–28]” (*Letters* 15:10[11] [A.D. 445]).

### **Fulgentius of Ruspe**

“From that time at which our Savior said, ‘If anyone is not reborn of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven’ [John 3:5], no one can, without the sacrament of baptism, except those who, in the Catholic Church, without baptism, pour out their blood for Christ, receive the kingdom of heaven and life eternal” (*The Rule of Faith* 43 [A.D. 524]).