

## Baptism Is Only Correctly Administered By Immersion

The words *baptize* and *baptism* mean *immersion*. Whenever the New Testament tells of someone who was baptized, the surrounding details (going down into and coming up out of water) only make sense of someone who was *immersed*. Baptism by immersion is the only way to clearly portray the symbolism of someone being buried and raised with Christ.

**Acts 8:36-39** “<sup>36</sup> And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” <sup>37</sup> [And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”] <sup>38</sup> And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup> And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing.”

## **Comparing The Catholic Church’s Teaching With What The Bible Says**

### Baptism Is Not A Sacrament That Saves But An Ordinance To Obey

There is absolutely no special or saving grace transmitted through the activity of baptism. Grace is given only to the person who trusts God to give it because of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. Those who do trust Christ for salvation should be baptized in obedience to Christ’s command *to show* that he or she *has* trusted Christ.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

### Baptism Does Not Remove Sin But Testifies That Sin Has Been Forgiven

Only Christ can forgive sin, and that forgiveness does not depend on submitting to a rite but by submitting to a

Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Acts 16:30-31** “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” <sup>31</sup> And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved”

### Baptism Follows Personal Faith, It Does Not Produce It

The Bible consistently testifies and commands that one must *first* repent of sin and trust Christ and *then* be baptized as a testimony of salvation.

**Matthew 28:19-20** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

### Baptism Should Not Be Administered To Infants

There is not one instance in the Bible of an infant being baptized. The only way infant baptism is “proven” is by assuming that in instances of “household” baptism infants were baptized. A simple reading of the context shows in every instance of “household” baptism that only *those who believed* were baptized. Infants are not capable of believing, and thus should not be baptized.

**Acts 18:8** “And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.”

Baptism cannot save you from the power and penalty of your sin. No matter how many good things you do, even things like going to church or giving money, they will never pay the full price sin requires. The only way you can be saved from an eternity in hell is by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ to save you.

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# A Close Look At What the Roman Catholic Church Teaches About Baptism



The Apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:15 that the church is “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” God has given His Word in the Bible so that you can learn what He expects of you. He has entrusted the church with the responsibility of teaching what the *Bible* says so that you can be saved from the consequences of your sin and live a life that is pleasing to Him. How you live now will have eternal consequences, and it all depends on what you are taught about the Bible.

But how can you know if what you are being taught in the Church is right or not? Should you just blindly believe her? You must follow the example of some people who lived almost two thousand years ago in a city called Berea: they examined “the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:12). The only authority the Bereans trusted was the Bible, not any human being or tradition. What does the Roman Catholic Church teach about baptism? What does the Bible teach about baptism? How does the Catholic Church measure up against the only authority, the Bible?

## What The Catholic Church Believes About Baptism

The best way to find out what the Catholic Church believes is to ask *her*, instead of asking someone else what *they* think she believes. Two sources will be quoted in order to find out what the Catholic Church believes about baptism. The first is the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, a council of the Catholic Church that met in 1563. The second source will be from the latest catechism of the Catholic Church, published in 1994, and will have a “§” to mark the section quoted from.

### Baptism is a Sacrament

In Catholic teaching the sacraments are rites that bring about real spiritual change (salvation) in someone. This change happens the minute the rite is performed—it happens because the rite is performed, not because of anything the person receiving the rite has done.

**Canon IV** “If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that, without them...men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification...let him be anathema.”

§1121 “The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders confer, in addition to grace, a sacramental character or “seal” by which the Christian shares in Christ’s priesthood and is made a member of the Church”

§1128-1129 “the sacraments act *ex opere operato* (literally: ‘by the very fact of the action’s being performed’)...the Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*.”

### Baptism Removes Sin

Though every person born into this world is sinful, the moment that baptism is administered all sin is forgiven. Baptism frees one from the power and penalty of sin.

§1263 “By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin...nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam’s sin nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.”

### Baptism is Essential to Salvation

Baptism is not merely something that is good for people to do *after* salvation—it comes before, accomplishes, and is absolutely essential *for* salvation. Just having faith alone in God’s promises is not good enough; one *must* be baptized.

**Canon V** “If any one saith, that baptism is free, that is, not necessary unto salvation: let him be anathema.”

§1277 “Baptism is birth into the new life in Christ. In accordance with the Lord’s will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism.”

§1216 “Having received in Baptism the Word...the person baptized...becomes a ‘son of light’”

§1257 “*God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism*”

§1265-66 “Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte ‘a new creature,’ an adopted son of God, who has become a ‘partaker of the divine nature,’ member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*: enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him... giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit...allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues. Thus the whole organisms of the Christian’s supernatural life has its roots in Baptism”

### Personal Faith is Not Necessary for Baptism to Bring Salvation

Salvation is brought to the person being baptized as a result of the action of baptism. The act of baptism forgives all sin and brings salvation before the person has faith. Faith is the result of baptism, not the prerequisite.

**Canon VIII** “If any one saith, that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace: let him be anathema.”

§1266 “The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*: enabling them to believe in God”

### Anyone, Even Infants, Can and Should be Baptized

As Baptism removes sin, is essential for salvation, and does not depend on anything in the person being baptized, infants can and should be baptized.

**Canon XIII** “If any one saith, that little children, for that they have not

actual faith, are not, after having received baptism, to be reckoned amongst the faithful; and that, for this cause, they are to be rebaptized when they have attained to years of discretion; or, that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted, than that, while not believing by their own act, they should be baptized in the faith alone of the Church: let him be anathema.”

§1250 “Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God...the Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth”

## What The Bible Teaches About Baptism

### Salvation From Sin Is Received Through Personal Faith Alone In Jesus Christ Alone

Forgiveness of and deliverance from sin is possible only through Jesus Christ. The only way anyone can be saved from the power and penalty of sin is by personally trusting in Jesus Christ. One is not saved by either doing something or having something done to him or her. A person can only be saved because of what *Jesus Christ* has done on his or her behalf.

**Galatians 3:16** “nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”

### Baptism Is Limited To Believers

There is no biblical evidence for baptizing infants. The Bible teaches that only those who have personally trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are to be baptized with water. The order in the New Testament is consistently the same: (1) belief, (2) baptism.

**Acts 2:41** <sup>41</sup> So then, those who had received his word were baptized”