

HC 71-73 – Christian Baptism: Assurance and Abuse!

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: **What is God's role in your baptism?** Baptism is God's water mark on you showing you that you are in covenant with him— a covenant which you enter by faith in Jesus Christ- by your personal faith or the faith of your parents. Because you could not keep the covenant God could only let you enter the covenant by virtue of what he promised to Abraham and fulfilled in Christ Jesus. In your baptism Jesus Christ binds himself to his promises (your adoption, redemption, and sanctification) and he binds himself to you. He gave you his Word will all the terms of the covenant. By baptism God places you and your children in a special place. You are have a special relationship with your covenant God.

What is your role in your baptism? As an adult you are bound to follow through on God's promises to you and show your faith in Christ. You do this by your covenant faithfulness. As a child, you are bound to claim God's promises, to cash that check God gave you at your baptism. Without your agreement, you were condemned in your parents by their sins, and now through your parents' faith, God brings you back to his covenant promises. But you must personally hold on to his promises.

Today you will hear from God's Words fuller details regarding your assurances in baptism and common abuses of baptism.

Our headings are: **Don't Underestimate**低估**Assurance of Baptism,** and **Don't Overestimate**高估**the Assurance of Baptism,**

Our goals are: That **you are refreshed of the covenant mark of baptism that God put on you, that you embrace the assurances you get in your soul, and you do this so you can get the full benefits of your baptism.**

Don't Underestimate the Assurance of Baptism

71 Q. WHERE DOES CHRIST PROMISE THAT WE ARE WASHED WITH HIS BLOOD AND SPIRIT AS SURELY AS WE ARE WASHED WITH THE WATER OF BAPTISM?

A. In the institution of baptism where he says: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." **"He who believes and is baptized** will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned." This promise is repeated when Scripture calls baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins.

72 Q. DOES THIS OUTWARD WASHING WITH WATER ITSELF WASH AWAY SINS?

A. No, only Jesus **Christ's blood and the Holy Spirit cleanse us** from all sins.

73 Q. WHY THEN DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT CALL BAPTISM THE WASHING OF REBIRTH AND THE WASHING AWAY OF SINS?

A. God has good reason for these words. He wants to teach us that **the blood and Spirit of Christ** wash away our sins just as water washes away dirt from our bodies. But more important, **he wants to assure us, by this divine pledge and sign** 神圣的保证和标号, that the washing away of our sins spiritually is as real as physical washing with water.

1. The Bible teaches that "just as" water washes away dirt from your body...."just so" Christ's blood and Spirit wash away your sins. It is a means of grace-real refreshing sustaining reassuring grace.

Baptism is a sign with a Christ-promise attached to it. When you are sprinkled you think of you soul being washed!

2. God showed this assurance by tying together baptism and salvation closely together-one of his final acts on earth.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

In other words, those who **believed Jesus Christ kept the covenant for them** are to be baptized.

Further, the Apostle Paul used very strong language to explain the relationship between salvation and baptism.

Titus 3:5 **not by works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the **washing of regeneration** and **renewing of the Holy Spirit,**

He deliberately **tyed the baptism and regeneration together to make the assurance stronger**...It is tied so strongly that he calls baptism the "washing of regeneration." **He did this to assure you in a special way that just as you are 100% sure that water washes away dirt from the body, so you can be 100% sure, that Christ blood washes away all your sins.** Does baptism wash away sins? Of course not. True faith is requisite for必要and tied to baptism. In fact, **Apostle Paul made it clear that you are saved by the inward washing**...something the Holy Spirit alone does. He silences those who teach that you are saved by your covenant faithfulness. Your faith is seen in obedience. For you and your children to be baptized is obedience. You can say that the rite of your baptism assures you of the wonder of your baptism.

3. While God assured believers and their children (Gen 17, Ex 4) of his promises at their circumcision, but he also warned that anyone who rejected the sign of the covenant upon himself or his children was under the condemnation 谴责 of God and was subjected to death. God is angry with those who rob their children of the covenant sign and the assurance that it brings. He was going to kill Moses because he had failed to circumcise his son, so this law was in place long before Sinai. God did these things with Abraham and Moses to impress the importance of the covenant sign. See why it is an act of defiance against God for those who refuse to baptize their children. God does not change. He wanted the sign upon children then, and he wants it now.

Don't Overestimate the Assurance of Baptism

1. Some (like Roman Catholics) teach that baptism washes away sins for children and parents. This is a lie. This gives false assurances. This is sometimes called "sacramentalism." To Roman Catholics and such, this is a great doctrine because a man can then become lazy and not fulfill his responsibility to be faithful to the covenant in his own heart and in his family. **Furthermore, as covenant Christians we are sometimes falsely accused of teaching the baptismal regeneration.** That is wrong of course, for baptism does not wash away sins. Rather, we teach that the blood of Jesus Christ washes us from all sins. The outward action, baptism, shows the inward reality (having been washed in the blood of the lamb). Baptism doesn't cause the inward reality. Baptism is the result of that inward reality. You are washed, sanctified, and justified by the Lord's work by his Holy Spirit, **not by your baptism.** 1Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Specifically, you were washed in Christ's blood. This is not a literal washing, of course, but it is definitely taught throughout the Bible.

1John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and **washed us from our sins in His own blood,**

Revelation 7:14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation 大患难 and **washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

Peter taught that you were saved by being united with Jesus Christ in his life, death, burial, and resurrection.

1Peter 3:21 There is also an antitype 预表 which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the **answer of a good conscience toward God**), **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were **buried with Him** through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Baptism does not wash away the sins of parents **nor the sins of children.**

2. Some say that children can't be saved because children don't have faith! But we believe, based on God's Word, that we need not worry about the salvation of children dying in infancy. Children surely can be saved. **The promise is to you and your children!** **So on what basis are children saved?** Children may be saved by virtue of their parents' faith. Some find this quite objectionable. **But did not God condemn the children for the sins of their first parents?** Weren't children condemned in Adam without their consent...not having committed a single sin? Doesn't God say that children are sinful from the time they are in their mother's wombs? Of course they are. Logically then, why couldn't God similarly save children on account of their parents' faith? **Those who argue against God possibly saving children are horribly limiting of God's hand.** (Some of those who believe that children can't be saved by virtue of their parents' faith still believe that young children will go to heaven when they die because they are innocent. That is perverse 悖谬. That is denying total depravity 全然堕落.) There is only one way to be saved.

3. Some say that they don't want to baptize their children because they believe that a child may reject God later in life. But even adults who are baptized may reject God and yet they are baptized. You know of others who were baptized and rejected the faith. **If children reject God's covenant later, then they incur 招致 a severer judgment.** They will have to take full responsibility for their sins. Furthermore, **don't mistake covenant for salvation.** Let me illustrate: There are those who do make all kinds of fuss about the fact that Israel (God's covenant people) will have to return to Palestine and take possession of it. That is not biblical at all. **The Jews rejected the covenant and God rejected them.** That's what is taught throughout the Revelation of Jesus Christ. They can only come to God through faith in Jesus Christ. **So if a child rejects the covenant God will reject him.** Parents must teach their children to make their "calling and election sure." **Teach them to show that they believe. Teach them to tarry in the Word of God, bruise their knees**

in prayer, and tire their lips with speaking of God's truth. Teach them to be dedicated to the Lord, mortify their flesh, and lead God-fearing lives. Baptism does not save, **but baptism ensures that all in that household know that the Lord saves** and promises to save and that they are bound to serve him. Baptism is not a saving ordinance 条例

4. **Some believe that baptism may help as part of your salvation. But based on the Word of God, baptism does not even help to wash away your sins; baptism is not part of your salvation.**

a. **To prove this, let us look at 1st passage** that is often misused to show this.

Mark 16:16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

Does this verse mean that you must be baptized to be saved-that baptism is part of your salvation? You will only make that **mistake if you ignore the 2nd part of the verse...or if you ignore the clear teachings that you are saved by faith alone**... Look at the verse: The one who is condemned is the one who does not believe...not the one who is not baptized. The Jews were all covenant people, but many Jews were not saved. Ishmael and then Esau were covenant people, but they were not saved either. On the contrary, they would be judged more severely for God placing them in his covenant and their consequent rejection of it.

b. **Consider 2 other verses** that are misused to teach that baptism saves or at least helps to save.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 22:16 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

- i. Peter was giving directions about how Christian could become a member of the church and the Apostle Paul was already converted and needed to show that he was converted. Baptism does not make you a Christian, but neither does **repentance makes you a Christian**.
- ii. Baptism and repentance are responses to regeneration which God's Holy Spirit does first.
- iii. Did Jesus not save those who were not baptized...the thief on the cross...converts in prisons...
- iv. Linguistically, baptism is not salvic. Consider: "Go home and eat." Which is the command? Similarly, baptism does have to be taken as salvic. Clear passages teach that one is only saved by faith...without tying salvation to baptism.

Conclusion:

What a wonderful assurance 确据 baptism is for you. As surely as water washes away dirt from your body, so Christ's blood through his Holy Spirit wash away all your sins. Don't underestimate your baptism. But what a waste that such a beautiful assurance is abused by those who teach sacramentalism...that you are saved from all your sins by the sprinkling of immersion into water, or that you are partially saved by baptism.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: 1. **I hope you are refreshed today with what the Lord did at your baptism:** He gave you an assurance in your heart that your sins were washed away. 2. I pray you also **will have received some answers to answer the false charges** against those who have erroneous views of baptism. 3. **Talk about your baptism and the one who baptized you** – not the minister – but God. Tell the world that you were united with Christ in his life, death, and resurrection, and you were then marked by him for eternal life. This is how you bring glory to him. 4. Because you realize the greatness of Christ work for you and his promise for you, **you must also be ready to face insults for him**.

Finally: If you are not yet a believer in Jesus Christ, ask God to work a work in your heart that will make your mouth drop-that you will be stunned 错愕 by what God does in your heart. Ask him to take away your sins because of Christ's death on the cross so that he will no longer be angry with you, but that he will delight in you.