

# **Baptism: A position paper on the purpose, practice, and mode of baptism in the Church.**

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## **Introduction: *The Basic Problem***

The problem with Baptism is the **assumptions**. Wherever one might stand on this issue we have to make some assumptions. The reason this is true is that there is not enough information in the scriptures to completely secure one's position.

### *Sacrament*

We call Baptism a sacrament for the following reasons:

- 1) It is instituted by Christ
- 2) It is for every believer to participate
- 3) There is a physical element (water) involved
- 4) We participate by faith in God's grace

### *The Beginnings of Baptism from the New Testament*

John the Baptist according to scriptures is the first to **practice Baptism for the masses**. We don't know where his ministry derived or by what prior scripture from the Old Testament he based his practice on. This doesn't mean that Baptisms were not **spoken about or anticipated or for that matter understood in some way as a type**.

First example as **a type**, when the Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea according to scripture they were baptized with Moses. Listen to I Cor. 10: 1, 2,

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, **all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses** in the cloud and in the sea,”

This is a unique understanding by Paul. He was saying for all that passed through the Red Sea including men, women and children, and infants were baptized into Moses. Did they all believe? Were they all saved? In one way certainly they all believed God through Moses and indeed they were all saved from slavery and captivity by the Egyptians again. They were saved to serve God under the Old Covenant. Yet, if we remain honest, the infants and children too young to understand would have been included in this baptism. This then would represent entire households being baptized leaning strongly towards the principle called the **Covenant for the Family**.

A second example would be baptism **being anticipated**: The priests could not serve in the Temple unless they were obedient to follow prescribed details of preparation. One of which was a complete washing:

Ex 29:4 “And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall **wash them with water**.”

Ex 30:20, "When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die.”

This washing represented cleansing from sin. Baptism taught from the New Testament included this understanding as well,

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.”

## *The Meanings of Baptism*

As we begin to understand Baptism and its meaning we must also see its foreshowing or connections from the past. This is important because **Baptism represents salvation and salvation has a history.** The next step is to try to define what Baptism is and includes.

Baptism is seen as a **washing**. Water is used to cleanse and people have a sin problem needing to be cleansed from. To have our sins washed away is the only solution to being acceptable to a Holy God.

Baptism also is understood to be **inclusion**. This inclusion is complete, full, whole, not in part. It is in a sense “*selling out*” from one life to another. It is changing one’s purpose from one way of being to another. This change is seen as dying to self and living to a new life.

Along with inclusion is the sense of being “**marked.**” By faith we are marked until the day of redemption to be a faithful follower.

In the Old Testament it was God’s requirement **for the people to be consecrated and separated** from the nations as a nation of priests before the Lord.

Ex 19:6 “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

From this understanding we see that Baptism was **not just an individual thing** it included the covenant **for the nation;**

however, **most have taken the meaning for baptism as very much an individual decision for believers in the New Testament**, why?

Salvation History helps explain this. God's salvation plan doesn't just mean individuals it also means peoples, nations, tribes, and households. God is in it for the salvation of the human race not just persons. Is this a contradiction? No. God intended from Adam and Eve that heaven on earth would exist for **ALL** generations. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again it was for **ALL** who believe not just for some. God is not willing that **ANY** should perish but that all should come to repentance and be saved. We strongly believe that God wants to save everyone including **ALL** of our children (The idea that some are predestined to Hell is not consistent with our understanding of God's salvation plan).

2Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Gen. 22:18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

We get this great sense that God is not after one or two but all. He didn't come to save a few (although as Jesus taught that the road to heaven is a straight and narrow one and few will find it as compared to the many that will not), he came to save **ALL**.

So Baptism means we are included into the **BODY of Christ**, inclusion into the covenant meant for **ALL**. This is what is meant by **ONE** baptism it is the inclusion into one kingdom, one body, under one Lord of us all. This meant one in purpose, one in covenant, and one in destiny and one of the same Spirit...as opposed to one in number. For the truth is that there are a **half a dozen baptisms** recorded or implied in scripture—more on that to come.

1Co 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were **all baptized into one body**—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

The emphasis in the Old Testament is on the whole and not a part (or on nations not individuals); however, it manifests differently in the New Testament. As Moses lamented, “I wish that ALL God’s people were prophets” this pointed to the day all would be. God blesses as a whole **and** as individuals. **God saves nations by saving individuals.** God doesn’t just dwell in the camp around us he dwells in the soul inside of us. So Baptism is both corporate and individual. It points to salvation for all while saving the one. The assumption is that for many, since the New Covenant, that God deals directly with individuals *alone*. This is not true. The case for corporate blessing is still very much the same. God is pleased with individuals when they become one in Spirit—being a part of the whole. A congregation for example receives the blessing as each individual does its part to build up the whole. We must not lose this understanding when it comes to grasping the significance of Baptism.

Baptism is not an individual thing. Baptism is meant to be public and it takes someone else to baptize a believer. Baptism takes on community meanings in very important ways. It is inclusion into the Body of Christ as a whole.

Baptism also has the meaning of being **raised from the dead**. As inclusion points to changing one’s allegiance and one’s commitment, it also goes to the extent of losing completely the life left behind. One is dying to the old way and living to the new; this points to our ultimate hope which is victory over death itself. That when the resurrection occurs and we put on immortality, when we put on the new body, in the same likeness of Christ, we will have passed from death to life. Baptism represents this future hope.

## **Baptism then has these meanings:**

- 1) **Washings, cleansings** (Acts. 22:16)
- 2) **Complete change of life purpose** (Gal. 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”)
- 3) **Marking (Seal) for God** (Eph. 1:13; Rom. 6:3 “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”)
- 4) **Inclusion into the Body** (I Cor. 12:13)
- 5) **Promise of the resurrection** (1 Cor. 15:29 “Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?”)
- 6) **Corporate and individual covenant** (I Cor. 10:2)

## ***The Different Baptisms Contained in Scripture!***

There are different Baptisms recorded in scripture but they all pertain to the One Baptism of the new covenant:

- 1) The Baptism of inclusion with Moses through the Red Sea
- 2) The priesthood baptism for service in the Temple
- 3) John’s Baptism of repentance
- 4) Believer’s Baptism
- 5) Entire households were baptized—leaving open child or infant baptism (Acts 11:14; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:33; Acts 18:8; I Cor. 1:16)
- 6) Baptism of fire, trial, faith, obedience (Luke 12:50 “But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!”)

What is typically asserted by some is that there is only one way to be baptized and that is believer's baptism as this verse strongly established.

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

The Bible is clear that those who become believers (as children or adults capable to making that decision) are to be baptized. This is taken as the only formula found in scripture; but that formula **is not consistent**.

What about John's baptism? If one must repent, believe, becoming a Christian (as in being born again), then be baptized; then John's baptism was useless. Those who were baptized by John's baptism of repentance would need to **be re-baptized** (This is what we see in Acts 19:15) to follow the right order of events which is "believe and be baptized." Believer's baptism means salvation first, then baptism; however Jesus declared John the Baptist's ministry valid:

Acts 11:16 "Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Jesus justifies the order of John's Baptism but it is different from believer's baptism. Could it be that since Jesus had not been glorified, and the Holy Spirit could not be sent into anyone's heart, that John's baptism was only for that time? After Jesus is raised from the dead and the Holy Spirit sent into believer's hearts then the order is switched?

Even from Peter's sermon of the Day of Pentecost (Which is after the resurrection and the Holy Spirit is sent) **there is something different about the order listen to it**. Peter said first to repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus, and you shall receive

the gift of the Holy Spirit—in that order. Believer’s baptism would be repent, receive the Holy Spirit, being born again, and then be baptized, right?

Ac 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.**"

In Acts 19 we have another situation:

Acts 19:3-6 “And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John’s baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. **When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

Here, even after they had been baptized in John’s baptism of repentance, they were *re-baptized* in the name of Jesus. After which Paul laid hands on them and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy. When did they get saved? When were they born again? Certainly after the Holy Spirit came upon them, after they were re-baptized. In this case we have **two baptisms both before they were saved.**

Is this the scripture? Is this in the Bible? For anyone to dogmatically say that only believer’s baptism is legitimate claiming there is no biblical basis for any other is to miss something.

## *I Have Addressed Two So Far*

So far then we have two baptisms: John's baptism of repentance and believer's baptism.

### *What About Infant Baptism?*

What about infant baptism? There is no example in the Bible that shows us infant baptism as practiced in the church. **The argument against infant baptism** is based mainly in the idea of believer's baptism being the only one. The contributing aspects of believer's baptism form a strong basis *against* infant baptism. Believer's baptism requires first that someone to be a believer. Second, that someone would be cognizant, able to understand the choice and the meaning of baptism. Finally, that baptism as an adult or child old enough to understand has great meaning, an experience to remember, a spiritual event to embrace, for which infants cannot appreciate.

### *Misunderstanding of the Purpose of Infant Baptism*

There is of course the misunderstanding taught that infant **baptism secures their salvation**. In the Roman Catholic Church the teaching is so strong that they call it a "*Christening*" not baptism. The teaching goes to the extent that any baby that dies without being "*Christened*" would be damned. This teaching is carried on to adulthood feeling that their spiritual condition is "taken care of" by their infant baptism. In other words, they are sealed for heaven and need not worry about being born again. This is not what the Bible teaches; baptism **points to this seal** of the Holy Spirit but is not that seal in **itself**. Jesus said,

John 3:3 “Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

There is no mention of baptism.

We also believe that any child or baby that dies before they come to the age of accountability goes directly to heaven, whether or not they are baptized, dedicated, or christened. Even for adults one can be saved and not be baptized and still make it. The thief on the cross next to Jesus died without being baptized; yet, Jesus said to him in the discourse “Today, you will be with me in paradise.” Baptism doesn’t save it points to the person, to the event that does save—Jesus saves, not water.

So what is the case for infant Baptism other than the Church’s tradition of performing them? Since we desire to be Biblical in all areas it **is important that we found whatever we practice on Biblical principles**. Is there a case for infant baptism based on Biblical principles? I believe there is...however before I go on I want to share a great short story. Mark Train was once asked about this controversy over infant baptism. “Sir,” he was asked, “do you believe in infant baptism?” Mark Train responded, “Believe in them? Why young man, I’ve seen them!” This of course is not what we want to base our practice of infant baptism on.

## *The Covenant for the Family*

Let me begin by saying that infant baptism is Biblically based in **one major theme** throughout scripture that is the **Covenant for the Family**. This covenant means that parents have been given great responsibility **and authority** over the training, teaching, raising, and pointing of their children for and on behalf

of God (Psalm 127). This covenant means that parents have access to God on behalf of their children like no one else. What this means is that God considers the parents and the children as one. They are all under the same contract, agreement, and covenant. As one believing mate sanctifies the whole household,

1Co 7:14 “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, **but now they are holy.**”

**How is this possible if there is nothing beyond the individual?** God sees dominion far beyond one person—Adam. His dominion with Eve included all of creation, including the animal kingdom, nature, the universe, and everything the creeps upon the earth. When Adam fell so did everything under him. Certainly his children would be included. The fall was individual but because of dominion it was also corporate!

### *The List of Scriptures*

I want to provide a list of scriptures and some observations about them in regards to this **Covenant for the Family**. This is a good thing, something to be grasped and used...

1) Heb 2:11 “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Jesus’ death sanctifies all of us. We are under his umbrella of salvation. This **covenant extends to everyone** who surrenders to Christ. This sanctification makes us all one. The **covenant includes** those under his dominion which are the saints.

2) Gen. 7:1 “Then the LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, **you and all your household**, because I have seen *that you are* righteous before Me in this generation.”

Noah’s promise wasn’t just to himself **but to all his household**. This included his wife, three sons and their wives. The agreement, contract, covenant passed on to his family.

3) Gen. 18:19 “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

The promise to Abraham **included those under his care and charge**. God expected him to command his children to keep the way of the Lord. When God saw Abraham he saw his family too.

4) Joshua 6:25 “And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.”

Rahab was commanded to bring her father’s household into her house or they would not be spared. The covenant included Rahab **and her loved ones**.

5) Ex 12:3 “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth *day* of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household.”

A lamb for a household meant that the offering made by the father would include and **cover his entire house.**

6) Lev 16:17 "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy *Place*, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, **for his household**, and for all the assembly of Israel."

The once a year atonement in the holy of Holies was accomplished by the High Priest on **behalf of himself, his household and the assembly.** Again the covenant, agreement, atonement was not for just one but for many.

7) Deut 6:22 "and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and **his entire household.**"

Here the issue is in reverse. Instead of the covenant being a blessing for protection it becomes a negative because **the judgment on Pharaoh also comes down upon his household.**

8) Deut. 15:20 "**You and your household** shall eat *it* before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses."

I include this verse because it has to do with the Passover which meant when they participated in this ordinance originally that the death angel would **pass over them, the household, if the angel saw the blood.** Now they were to remember this by practicing the sacrificing of the lamb from year to year **with their household.**

9) Deut. 22:8 "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it."

Blood guiltiness could fall on the one responsible, being the father, **and to his household.**

10) Joshua 7:14 "In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be *that* the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man."

Here is another case where an **entire household was punished by the sinfulness of the father.** If you read the account we find that God judges the one man with his household.

11) 2Sa 6:11 "The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household."

Because the ark of the Lord remained in the house **all his household was blessed** not just the head of the house.

12) Matt. 10:13 "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you."

Jesus told the disciples as he sent them out two by two, to either bless the household or withhold from the household their peace. **Jesus substantiates the understanding of the covenant for the family.**

13) Acts 16:31 “So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

The apostle Paul and Silas are singing in the jail at midnight when the earthquake frees them. The Jailer wanted to kill himself because he knew if anyone escaped it meant not only his death but also the death of his entire household according to Roman practice. Paul then gives this man **a promise that also includes his household**.

14) Eph 2:19 “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”

We are members of the household of God. Jesus is the head; we are under His protection and dominion.

15) Heb 11:7 “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

Noah’s family and household are saved *by faith* even according to New Testament standards (not born again but saved from destruction).

### ***What Does This Mean or How is it Applied in Infant Baptism?***

There is therefore quite a bit of Biblical basis for interpreting, understanding, **and running with this covenant for the family**. Parenthood includes authority to represent our children

before the Lord in blessing. Parenthood also includes their destruction, even by God, for evil practiced by parents according to the law.

Therefore, with the Covenant for the Family being presented what does that mean for believers? It means that the covenant is still in effect. It means that we are still responsible and have authority on our children's behalf to train, teach, guide, point, and include in the household of faith. **If the covenant is true; then our children are included.** If they are included that inclusion is not in part, but complete. As parents then we can present our children before the Lord **as those slated to inherit the kingdom.**

Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go,  
And when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Some interpret this scripture by adding the notion that our children will depart for a time but come back to the faith. That is not what it says. It is saying train them up right and they will not depart all the days of their lives. The training our children are to receive is twofold: One is pointing them in the direction of their life's work, skill, vocation and talent; the other is salvation in Jesus Christ. This is a promise to parents that God will fulfill.

### *As Parents Under the Covenant We Have a Choice*

**As parents then we have a choice.** We can present our children by dedication that some day they will choose for his/her self to become a Christian, be baptized, and serve the Lord. With this approach there is this idea that they are **not** completely included. **We are waiting for them** to be completely included by salvation—being born again. Under the covenant for the family, **they are already included completely.** We all believe that if they should die before the age of accountability they would go to

heaven (under both plans just mentioned). Under the covenant for the family, parents have the choice to exercise their authority in **to present their children as completely included**. This approach means that we are not waiting in any way for them to choose to be included (as in coming into the faith). We are not saying in some unspoken way that they are *outside* the covenant until they choose Christ for him/her self. We are saying because they are included and because parents have the authority to represent their children, **we baptize believing they are marked (sealed) by faith**. This means that when they ultimately choose to follow the Lord they are choosing **to remain—completing, fulfilling the covenant offered on their behalf**. When children who were baptized as infants come of age they can accept what was done through this same covenant. They are being confirmed in their faith as one **choosing to stay**.

It is very subtle the difference between “Christening” and practicing the Covenant for the Family idea (but the difference is huge). It sounds as if we are saying the same things that our children are completely included and saved. This is true until the day of accountability which only the Holy Spirit would know. On this day, each individual stands to make their own choice for salvation. Under the covenant for the family the choice is a matter of positioning. In this position they are completely included because of what their parents have done for them according to grace. In this position, they are choosing to remain or choosing to leave. This may not be a moment of truth event; it may be the gradual departing from the faith by way of their lifestyle and choices.

### ***Scriptural Loopholes for Infant Baptism***

There is a second part to validating this principle. One cannot dogmatically say that infants or children were **not** baptized in scripture; read these following verses:

1) Acts 11:14, “who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.”

We don't know what the ages of this household were. If they were infants and babies, does this promise extend to when they are old enough to get saved? Or shall we decide that the household must have all been of age to be saved then and there?

2) Acts 16:15 “And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.”

**Were there no infants, babies, or children involved here?** We don't know. What we do know is that the covenant—agreement, included the entire household.

3) Acts 16:33 “And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized.”

Were there no infants, babies, or children involved here? We don't know. **What we do know is that the covenant—agreement, included the entire household.**

4) Acts 18:8 “Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”

Again Crispus and his household believed on the Lord...this would imply children capable of believing. A ruler of the synagogue would not be a young man. What is evident is that the household is included. There could have been some young children we just don't know.

5) I Cor. 1:16 “Yes, **I also baptized the household** of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.”

The household of Stephanas does not explain ages. It definitely implies the covenant for the household. Did Paul the apostle baptize children? **We don't know.** Was there an infant among his household? We don't know.

### *Does Infant Baptism Take Away From Its Meaning?*

**Baptism has these meanings:**

**1) Washings, cleansings** (Acts. 22:16)

**2) Complete change of life purpose** (Gal. 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”)

**3) Marking for God** (Rom. 6:3 “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”)

**4) Inclusion into the Body** (I Cor. 12:13)

**5) Promise of the resurrection** (1Cor. 15:29 “Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?”)

**6) Corporate and individual covenant** (I Cor. 10:2)

As we review the meanings for baptism infant baptism only conflicts with the second one. **Baptism still means washings, cleansings, being marked by God, inclusion into the body of Christ, the promise of the resurrection, and being a part of the corporate covenant.**

The conflict in the second one only arises temporarily because the new life in Christ will only manifest as the child grows up. As far as celebrations are concerned there is a great hope and expectation being offered by the parents. We can stand with them, celebrate the event, mark it, and believe along with them on behalf of their children. Any child once confirmed in their faith can either embrace what was done on their behalf and claim its promise through the covenant **or choose to be re-baptized as an adult.** Can someone be baptized more than once? I already showed you from scripture that the believers in Acts 19 had been baptized under John's baptism and then were re-baptized in the name of Jesus. A person can accept their infant baptism or decide to have a baptismal renewal. Like marriage renewal vows stimulate a renewal of their commitment to each other so can someone who has recently been saved renew their baptism to affirm their "completed" faith.

### ***This Brings Us to the Mode of Baptism***

There are three modes recognized by the Protestant mainline Churches: immersion, sprinkling, and pouring. There is controversy over these as well and that is understandable; however, I still believe the root problems are the assumptions. When we look into scripture to see what was done nowhere does it actually say what mode was used. In one place it mentions Jesus coming up out of the water implying immersion but this would also be true if he'd been poured upon by John the Baptist. People assume that immersion was always done but it doesn't say. There is room for

other possibilities. There is the scripture that describes baptism as a burial and being raised from it.

Col. 2:12 “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

No one is partially buried. No one is sprinkled with dirt and considered buried. Most burials are completely covered; however there is burial at sea, cremation, and Jesus was buried in a tomb with an entrance of a large stone. Even so, one can definitely argue that baptism therefore should be immersion because burial generally means burial under ground.

**Is there no other connection?** Burial with Christ isn't the only meaning baptism offers. **It is the one being put forth in this verse.** When we look at the verses where baptisms took place for instance like on the Day of Pentecost when three thousand were saved. Is it possible that on that day as thousands entered the water to be baptized that for practicality sake they may have been asked to kneel in the water or stand up to their waist in the water while the apostles took their hands cupped them and poured water over their heads? I'm not saying they were not all immersed; **I'm saying that we don't know and the passage doesn't describe it.**

We can become pretty dogmatic insisting on immersion from this passage above and others similar in meaning. However, like with Holy Communion do we actually know what should be served? Is it to be fermented wine or grape juice? It is to be any form of bread (wheat, rye, grained, white, etc.) or just plain oven baked bread and how big are the pieces? We have issues with how frequent should we celebrate Holy Communion and who can serve it? **Those who are convinced that believer's baptism with full immersion is the strongest position should continue to practice it. Shouldn't there be respect for others who might see it**

**differently who fully embrace the covenant for the family and include their children and infants with baptism?** Both infant baptism and believer's baptism have biblical foundations.

Our Church's course will lean towards any child or adult who has become a believer to be baptized encouraging full immersion. If a parent (or parents) wants to baptize their child or infant, after counseling with the pastor as to the purpose, practice, and meaning (The parents understand the covenant for the family and are born again), we can do so entering into faith with them with a strong biblical base too.

### *Accepting Baptism From Other Situations*

**Will we accept baptisms from other denominations?** I believe it is right and proper to do so. We are not going to be dogmatic about this but take on the meaning of the Augustine motto: ***“In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.”*** What is essential is salvation in Jesus Christ. What is essential is faith in the Word of God. How one is baptized, when, where, or even how often, are not essentials. We will give freedom without compromising the core meaning of the sacrament because biblically there is room. We don't need to be contentious but give place for other opinions **as long as those opinions fall within the pages of scripture.**