

But I've Already Been Baptized! (2)

Scripture: "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" (Colossians 2:12-13 NKJV).

Yesterday's devotional exhorted everyone to recognize and to act upon the importance of being baptized as the New Testament teaches. Many respond to such a plea with the assurance that "I've already been baptized." Most professing "Christian" religions practice some kind of baptism. Unfortunately, not all of these match the "one baptism" that is valid today (Ephesians 4:5).

Americans usually think of "infant baptism" in terms of sprinkling or pouring, but the Greek Orthodox church understands the meaning of the New Testament words baptisma (immersion) and baptizo (immerse). Along with other branches of the Orthodox Catholic Church, it actually immerses infants. Biblical baptism is a burial in water (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4), which matches perfectly with immersion. The writers of the New Testament had perfectly good words available for sprinkle (rhantizo) and pour (cheo), but they did not use them in regard to baptism.

Proper subjects for baptism, however, are people who need to have their sins washed away (Acts 22:16). They are people who have believed the gospel and confessed their faith in Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 8:37). Infants are not guilty of sin, besides which they lack the capacity to believe in Jesus or confess faith in Him. Thus, infant "baptism," whether actual immersion or some other, cannot be the "one baptism" God seeks from us.

Over forty years ago I first learned the gospel. Several years prior to that, my parents had me sprinkled ("baptized") as a baby by a denominational pastor. Not for a moment would I question the love or sincerity of anyone involved. Once I understood what the Bible teaches about baptism, however, I had to decide whether it was more important to go along with what my parents believed or to obey God. I sympathize with those today facing a similar choice, and urge you to trust and obey the Lord. You are not condemning your parents; you are simply complying with the word of God.

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