

## **The Subject of Baptism (1st)**

(Today we begin considering who is the proper subject or candidate for baptism. In this study, we find that a major difference between Baptists and Reformers is that the Reformers include infants whereas Baptists do not. This podcast covers how the Greek words for baptism are used in connection with the rite of baptism in the gospels.)

Today we desire to take up the *subject* of baptism. Here again there is a distinction between the Baptists and the protestants. This is shown by quoting from the standard articles of faith from the two groups. Article four of the “Westminster Confession of Faith,” says, “Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.” The “1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith” states in Article 2, “Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.” Both agree that those who profess faith in Christ and are living in obedience to Him (i.e., Christ) are to be baptized. The difference lies in the statement that “infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.” The reformers affirm that certain infants are fit subjects for baptism while Baptists deny this. Many volumes have been written over the years (and continues to be written) regarding this issue. However, as we have stated from the beginning, we need to see what saith the Scriptures? Thus far, we have tried to the best of our abilities, to give a high level view of the differences between Baptists and Protestants and not to be laborious with too many details. As we attempt to show that the subject for baptism only includes those who “actually profess repentance towards God, faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ,” I do not know how to do this any better than by looking at the particular passages in the Scriptures relating to baptism. I pray the Lord will bless me to do this without being too detailed and that the continuity of the subject will not be lost.

Our first passage is the third chapter of Matthew. (This will include the parallel passages as found in the other gospels.) [Read the chapter.] From this chapter we find the following: 1) They that were baptized by John confessed their sins, verse 6; 2) John required fruits of repentance before baptism, verses 8, 11. Obviously the baptism of Jesus (Who had no sin and could not sin) did not require repentance or confession of sin. Therefore, from the clear language of this passage there is not the slightest hint that infants were included here.

In the next chronological order in the gospels where we find baptism discussed is in Luke chapter seven. In verses 29 and 30 we read, “And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.” We are only looking at this passage at this time with regard to the subject of baptism. The text tells us that those who were baptized “heard” John. This cannot be referring to infants because they do not hear or comprehend intelligent conversation. We also find another group and they are those who were not baptized because they “rejected the counsel of God.” Infants are not mentally mature enough to reject intelligent words that are collected together to convey concepts and ideas.

As we come to the end of the gospels, we find two other passages that relate to our study. They are Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16. They read as follows:

Matthew 28:18-20, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Mark 16:15-16, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Who is it that our Lord commanded to be baptized in these passages? In Matthew, those who were to be baptized were first to be taught. In Mark, it was those to whom the gospel was preached and believed that were baptized. Again we see that these passages do not indicate that infants are proper subjects for baptism.

Thus far, we have looked at all the passages in the gospels that use the Greek words for baptism and their connection with the ordinance of baptism and we do not see any reason for concluding that “infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.” I am aware that there are other passages in the gospels which the reformers used to infer the baptism of infants and small children, and we plan to discuss those in future studies. Currently we are limiting our study to those passages where the Greek words that are used for the rite of baptism to see if infants are included. So far we only find repentant believers who are living in obedience to the Lord as proper candidates or subjects for baptism.

The Lord willing, we will continue this study in our next podcast by considering the book of Acts.