

## Baptism

Are you a Christian? Have you been born again and are your sins forgiven?

As a Catholic you may answer: "Yes, I am a Christian because I received the sacrament of Baptism. My parents baptized me as an infant, and therefore I became a new creature and was cleansed from original sin."

Let us see what the Bible teaches about baptism. Our Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to preach the Gospel and baptize those who believed (Mark 16:16). There is no command or example of infant baptism in the New Testament.

Without exception, every case of water baptism in the New Testament follows the personal response to the Gospel. By personal response I mean repentance, faith, and calling on the name of the Lord.

The apostles baptized a person only after he believed the Gospel. The believer is already a new creature and forgiven because the Bible teaches that sins are forgiven through faith in Christ, and that whoever believes in Christ is born of God. The biblical sequence is like this...

1 Gospel > 2 Personal response > 3 Salvation > 4 Baptism

Therefore baptism is not the cause, but the sign of salvation. A person is not married simply because he wears a ring. The ring is significant only after he is married. Similarly, a person is not a Christian simply because he is baptized. Baptism is significant only if he is a believer, and if he is saved by faith in Christ.

Let me ask you again: Are you a Christian? Are your sins forgiven and are you born again? You can answer "yes" only if you are trusting completely in Jesus Christ:

"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (John 5:1).

"To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).