



# Baptism



**Do you  
trust in  
God?**



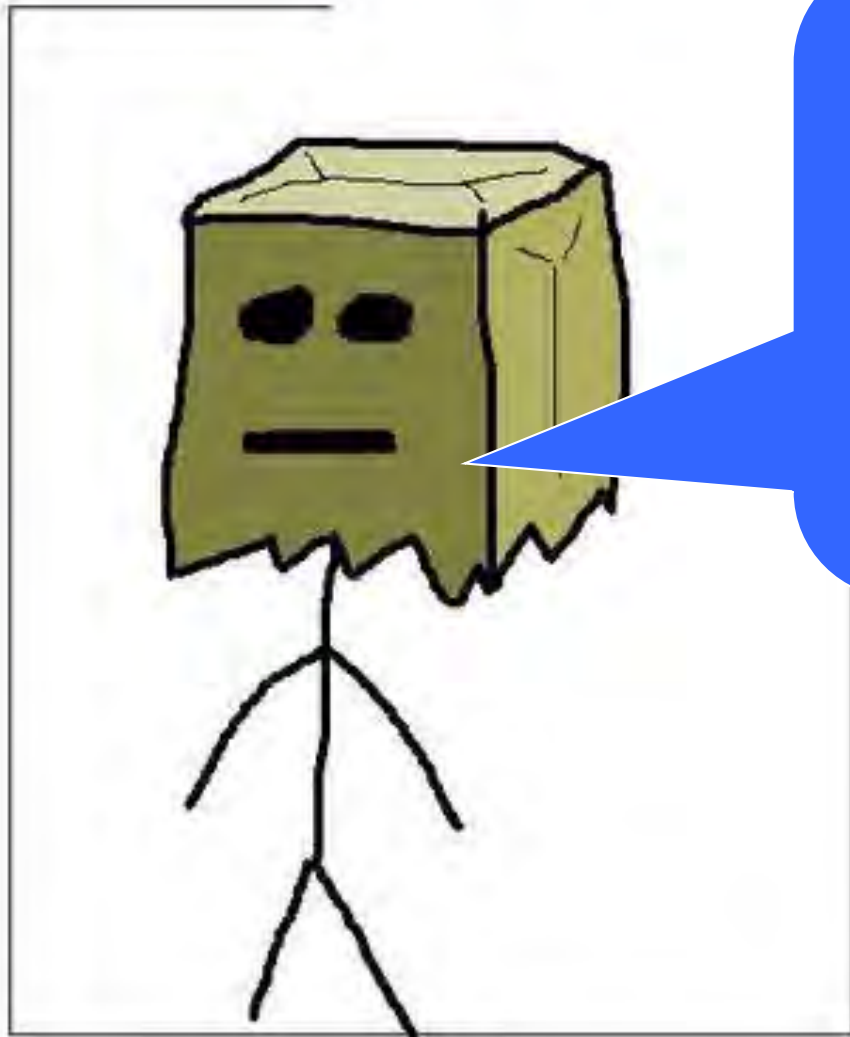
**Do we trust in God?**



**Does your trust in God  
embarrass you?**



# A Cause for Shame?



**"Who, me?  
Well, no, I'm  
not actually a  
Christian..."**

# Paul Had No Shame

**16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

**17** For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

# Defining Terms:

- Sacrament: ritual as a means of grace
- Ordinance: practice ordained by Christ
- Foot washing

# Christian Ordinances

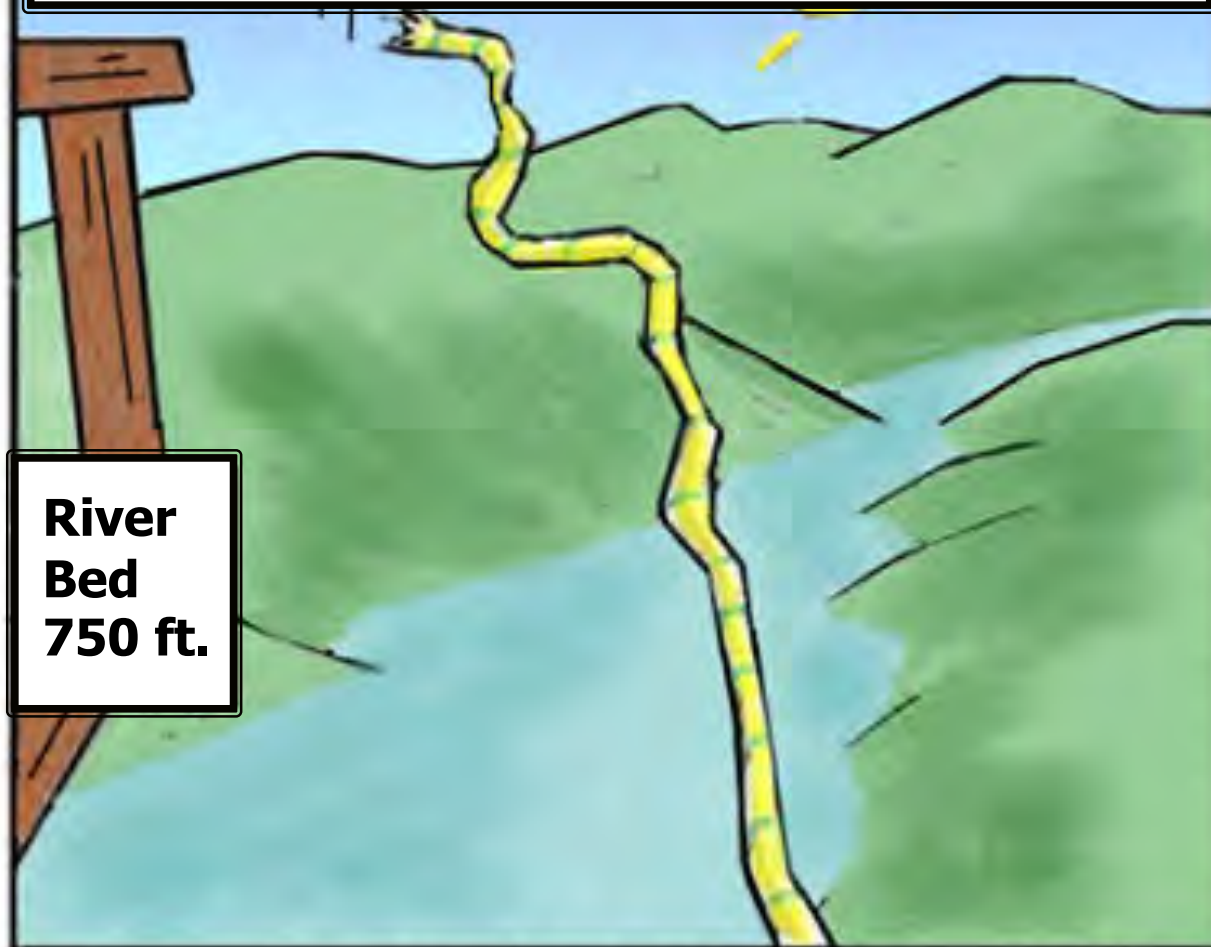
- Lord's Supper

- Baptism

**Seven Questions**

THE BACK PEW - *JEFF LARSON*

**In the name of the Father, Son,  
and the Holy Gh... 'whoopsie'**



**Bungee Jumping Baptists... Xtreme  
faith**



**Ask your neighbor...**

- 1. Have you been baptized?**
- 2. Why or why not?**



**Lutheran  
Infant  
Sprinkling**

**Baptist**

**Anglican Presbyterian**

**Believer's  
Immersion**

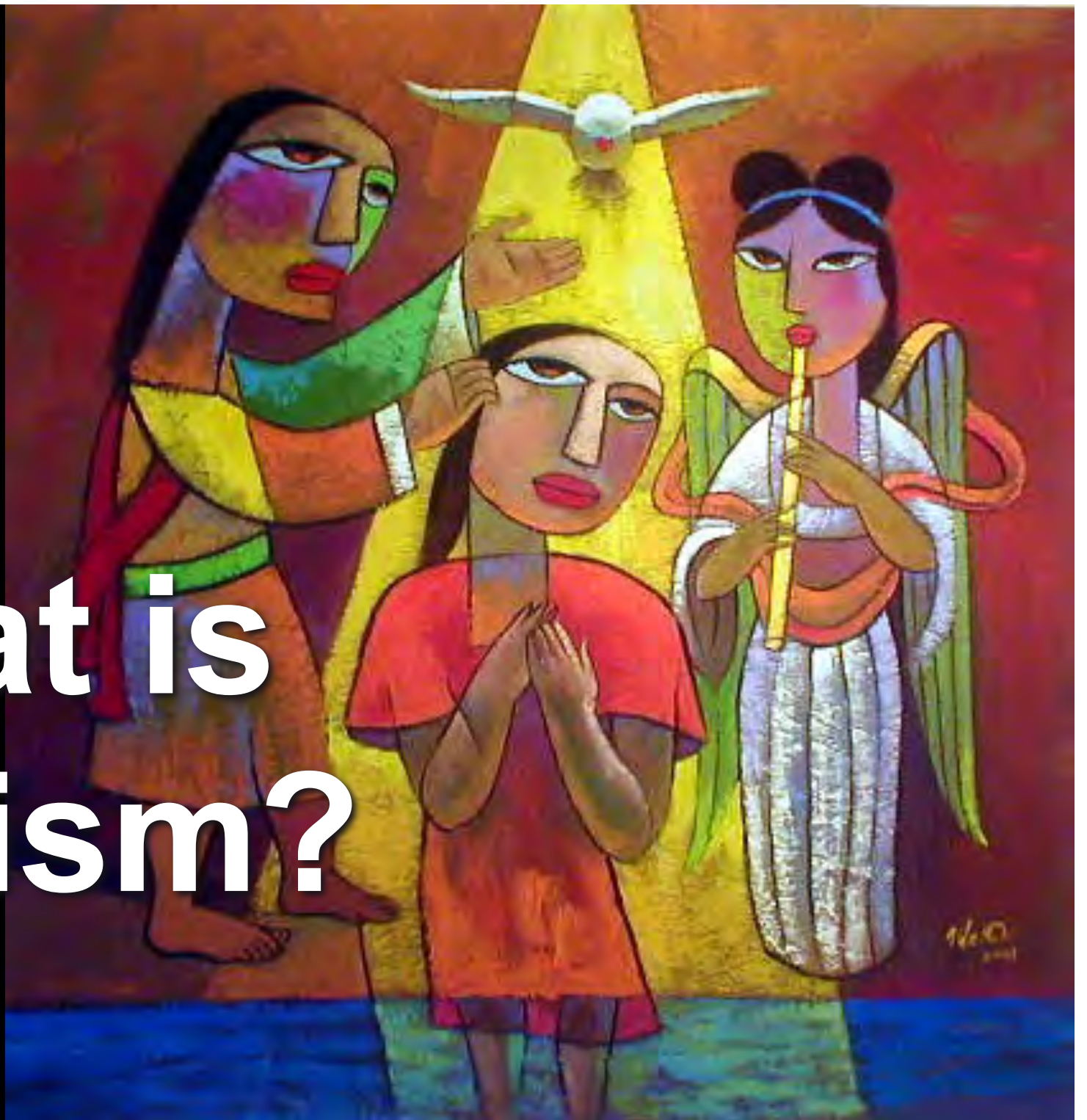
**Bible-Presbyterian**

**Brethren**

**Methodist**

**Independent**

# What is Baptism?



# Meaning of Baptism:

## Identification

- OT: Not practiced
- Intertestament: Gentiles **identified** with Jews
- John: Unrepentant **identified** with repentant
- Church: Unbelievers **identified** with believers

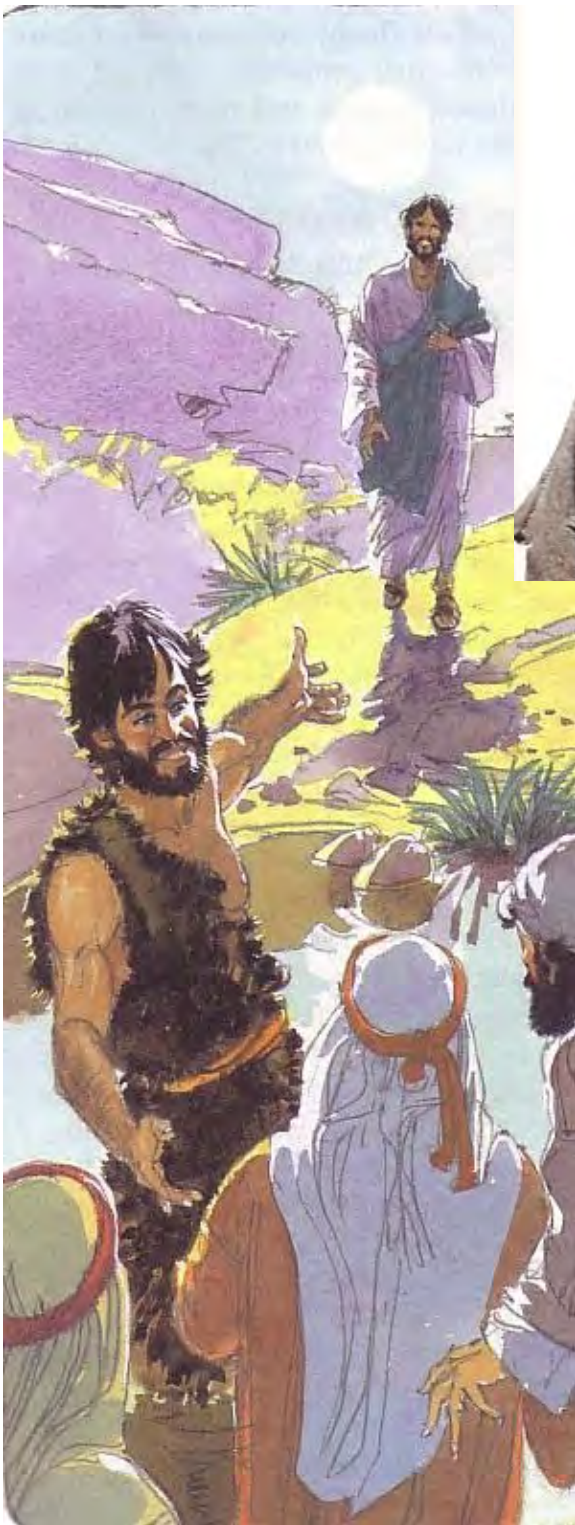
# How is Christian Baptism Unique?

# Intertestamental Baptism

- **For Proselytes (Gentiles who left their pagan life to identify with Israel)**
- **Self-immersion**
- **Probably especially for women as they could not be circumcised**

# John's Baptism

- John as agent of immersion
- Repentance



# Summary of Early Church Baptism vs. Baptisms Preceding It

<b>Contrasts</b> (Preceding vs. NT/Christian)	<b>Comparisons</b> (Points in Common)
No formula vs. "Father, Son, & Holy Spirit"	Signified identification with a religious community
Self-immersion vs. performed by another	Practised only on believers
Circumcision prerequisite vs. none	Immersion only in both cases (BC & 1st century)
To Judaism/John vs. to Christianity	Common in both instances
Immersion vs. mode varied (in 3rd century)	Water used

# Why Be Baptized?



# Is baptism needed for salvation?




**"...whoever  
believes in Him  
has eternal life"  
(John 3:16)**

**Absolutely  
not!**

# Is baptism needed for salvation?



**"HA HA! TOO LATE!"**



**Robert J. Smith  
St. Joseph's Church  
Downingtown, PA  
6 June 2006**

**We celebrate each baby's birth**



**Infant  
baptism is  
actually a  
child &  
parent  
dedication**

**"And who is going to be  
the Godfather?"**

# **Why Be Baptized?**

**Baptism fulfills the command of Christ**

**Matthew 28:19-20**

# The Great Commission

## Matthew 28:18-20

**18** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore **go** and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and **teaching** them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

# **Why Be Baptized?**

**Baptism shows that you want to live under God's authority like Jesus showed when he was baptized.**



**Christ was  
baptized by  
John**



**"To fulfill all  
righteousness"**

# **Why Be Baptized?**

**Baptism is a sign that God has saved you from your sin (Rom. 6:1-2)**





*The cup (not baptism) is  
the new covenant sign*

*... This cup is the  
NEW COVENANT  
in my blood, which is  
POURED OUT  
for you.*

**LUKE 22:20**

# Why Be Baptized?

**Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus, and identifies you with Christ (Rom. 6:3-7)**



Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3)

# **Why Be Baptized?**

**Baptism portrays your new life or  
rebirth given through the Holy Spirit  
(Romans 6:4)**



# **Why Be Baptized?**

**Baptism symbolizes the washing away and cleansing of a life of sin, into the purity of holiness acceptable to God (Acts 2:38).**

# "Because of..."

"Repent and be baptized,  
every one of you, in the  
name of Jesus Christ  
[because of] the  
forgiveness of your  
sins."

Acts 2:38



Adam Hart-Davis/DHD Photogallery

# **Why Be Baptized?**

**Baptism incorporates you into the  
body of the church**

**(Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-22)**



## Galatians 3:26-29

**You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for **all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**



**WHO  
should be  
baptized?**

# First Century Christian Baptism



**For Believers Only  
By Immersion Only**

# Recipients

**Theoretically, all people  
should be saved and  
baptized**

**Practically, baptism is open  
to all who earnestly  
repent of their sins and  
who, having believed in  
Christ, seek to follow him**



# Recipients

**Naturally, this includes  
repentant adults.  
But...**



Adam Hart-Davis/DHD Photogallery

# *What About the Children?*

(Paedobaptism)



# "Believed...then Baptized" in Acts

**Peter: "Repent...3000 baptized" (2:38, 41)**

**Samaritans "believed...baptized" (8:12)**

**Eunuch "believed...baptized" (8:36-38)**

**Paul believed...baptized (9:18)**

**Cornelius "believed...baptized" (10:47)**

**Jailer "believed...baptized" (16:14-15, 33)**

**Crispus "believed...baptized" (18:8)**

**John's disciples "believed...baptized" (19:5)**

# Recipients

(Paedobaptism)



The baptism of infants is recorded no earlier than the 3rd century A.D.

# Recipients

(Paedobaptism)



Proponents claim that the "household baptisms" mentioned in Scripture included infants

# Recipients

(Paedobaptism)

Catholics believe that baptism itself is "the means of grace which brings regeneration. Baptism is the first step of the way of salvation."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dorman, *A Faith For All Seasons: Historic Christian Beliefs*, 317.



# Recipients

(Paedobaptism)

If baptism saves,  
then it is better to  
baptize a human as  
soon as possible!



# Recipients



Luther felt that faith was necessary for baptism, but he believed that *the faith of parents and the church to be sufficient* for the infant.

# Recipients

Two additional points:



**Paedobaptism is said to show that God loved and chose his children before they chose Him (John 15:16)**

# Recipients

**Two additional points:**

**Infant baptism advocates believe Col. 2:11-12 says that baptism is a sign of the new covenant that corresponds to circumcision in the Old Testament.**

**Jews were circumcised at 8 days old, sooo....**



Recipients should not  
be infants because...

**Circumcision doesn't parallel baptism**

Males

Physical life

Any age

8th day of life

NT parallel = heart  
circumcision



All

Spiritual life

Conscious faith

Right after belief

New covenant sign  
= Lord's supper

# Recipients should not be infants because...

- **Baptism testifies to what has already taken place in the life of the believer**



# Why is immersion the proper mode?



What does "baptize" mean?

■ ***Baptizo*** (βαπτίζω)

*means* "dip, immerse...

wash, plunge, sink,

drench, overwhelm....

soak" (BAGD 131c)

The place is not so significant...



**YMCA  
Pool**

**Immersion doesn't take a  
baptistery**



If they can do it, you can too!



**Japanese  
Orthodox**

# Greek

has separate words  
for:

- sprinkling
- pouring &
- immersion



***Only the Greek word for immersion  
is ever used for baptism in the Bible.***

# In Other Words...

There are other Greek words which mean other than immersion.

- *Louo* means "to wash" or "to bathe."
- *Nipto* means "to wash the extremities," as in the washing of hands or feet.
- *Rantizo* means "to sprinkle."
- *Keo* means "to pour."



The Greek was fully able to indicate which "mode" of baptism the church was to practice.

# "Baptize" is a Transliteration

- Translate βαπτίζω = "immerse"
- Transliterate βαπτίζω = "baptize"



Βαπτίζω

# Inventing a Term



**Baptismus**

**translate**

**transliterate**



**English:** *immerse*  
**Latin:** *immergo*  
**German:** *tauchen*



*baptize*  
*baptizo*  
*taufen*

**Other translations**

# Mode of Baptism: Immersion

**The verb "to baptize" means "to immerse"!**



**Immersion was the *only* mode of baptism in the New Testament.**

**Immersion continued as the regular mode until the 13th century!**

# What about the clothes?





**Do you want to  
dip this baby in  
water?**



# Infant Immersion!

# Immersion best signifies...

- identification with Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12)

in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death



# Immersion best signifies...

- identification with Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12)
- subjection to Christ's authority (Matt. 28:18-20)

*"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me... therefore go and make disciples...baptizing..."*



# Immersion best signifies...

- identification with Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12)
- subjection to Christ's authority (Matt. 28:18-20)
- obedience and a good conscience before God (1 Pet. 3:21)



**So where  
did  
sprinkling  
and pouring  
come from?**



# When was sprinkling invented?

- *The first recorded case of sprinkling was in AD 257 to someone on a **sick-bed**. It was then an exception to the rule and brought about fierce **opposition** from the whole church.*
- *Not until AD 757 did the church **accept** sprinkling in such **sick-bed cases** of necessity.*
- *It wasn't until AD 1311, when the Catholic council of Ravenna, declared that sprinkling was an **acceptable substitute** for immersion and from that time forward sprinkling replaced immersion in the Roman Catholic church.*

# Mode of Baptism

## Sprinkling



**Some believe it represents the sprinkling of the blood of Christ**

Exodus 24:6-8

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Ezekiel 36:24-27

Numbers 8:7

Hebrews 9:13-14

NIV Hebrews 10:22

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our **hearts sprinkled** to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our **bodies washed with pure water.**

## Sprinkling?

- **Exod. 24:6-8?**
- **Num. 8:7?**
- **Ezek. 36:24-26?**
- **Heb. 9:13-14?**
- **Heb. 10:22?**



# Modes of Baptism:

## Pouring

**Some believe it  
portrays the  
outpouring of the  
Holy Spirit on the  
believer**



# Pouring?

- 1 Cor. 6:11?
- Eph. 5:26?
- Heb. 9:10?
- Heb. 10:22?
- Tit. 3:5?

NIV 1 Corinthians 6:11 <sup>107</sup>

NIV Hebrews 10:22

NIV Ephesians 5:26

to make her holy,

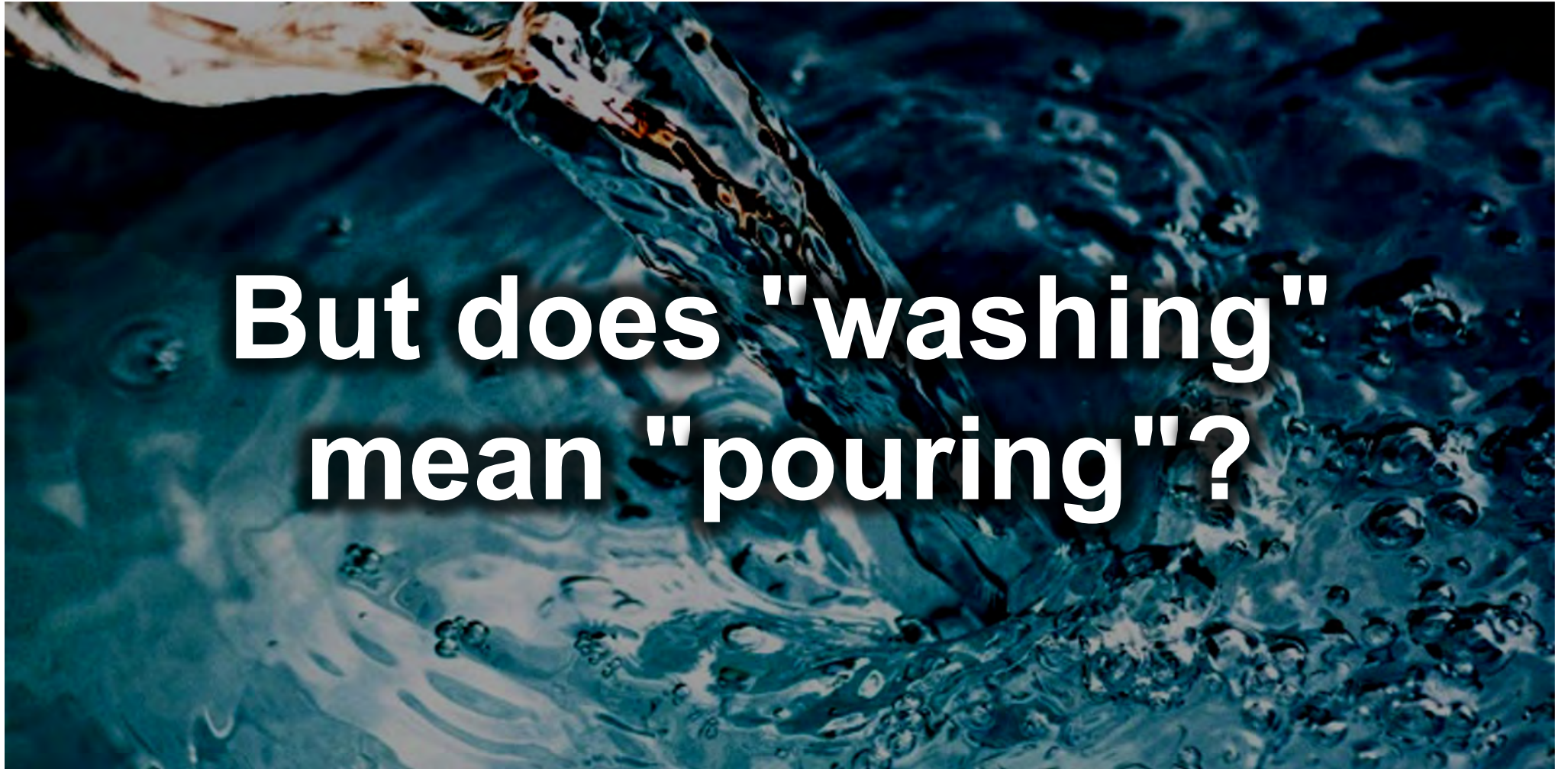
NIV Hebrews 9:10

NIV Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the **washing of rebirth** and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

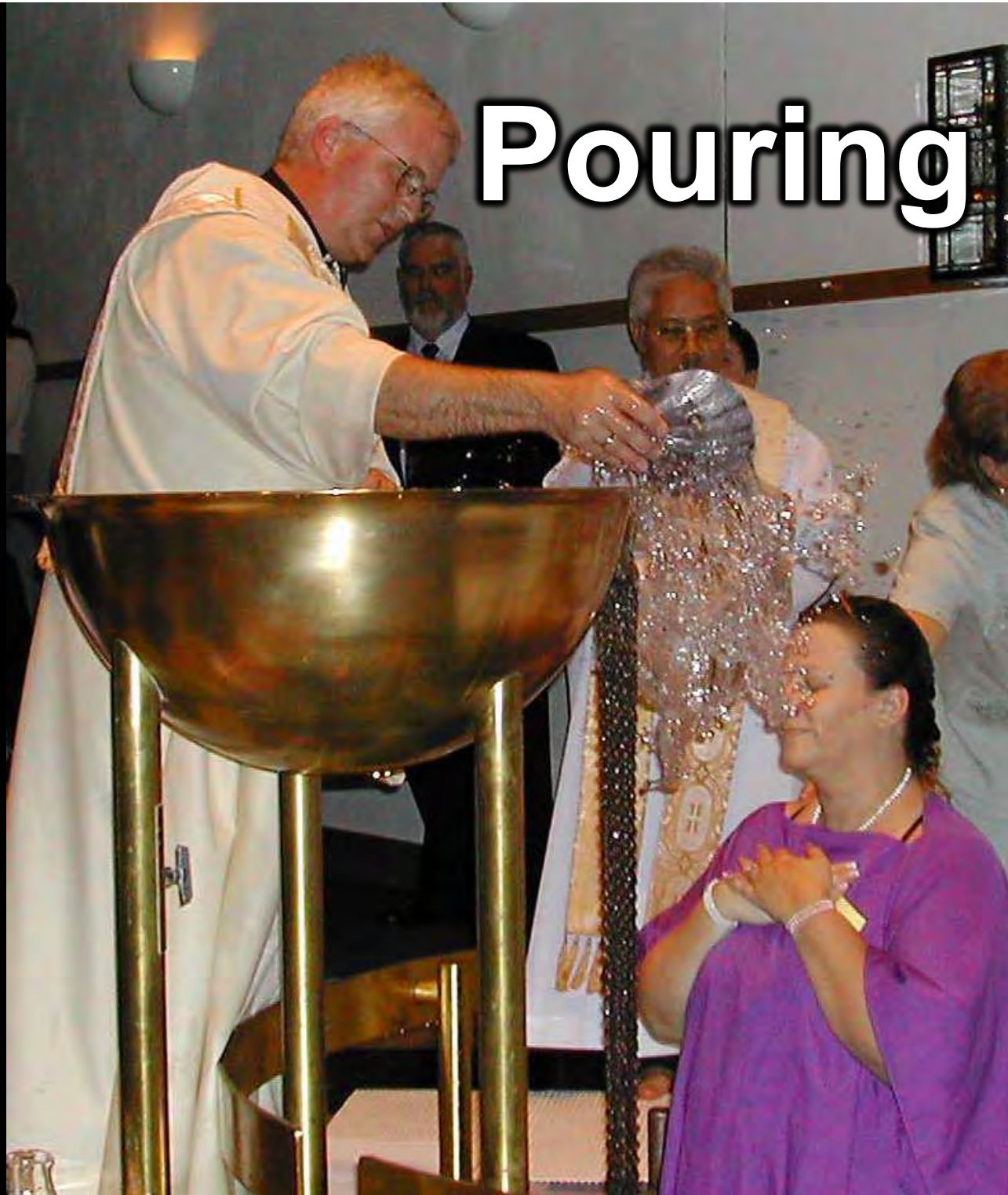


## Modes of Baptism: Sprinkling and Pouring



**Zwingli and most of the Reformers agreed that the central sign was washing, not death and resurrection. Pouring then became the norm.**

# Pouring



**When it rains, it pours!**



## **Modes of Baptism: Sprinkling and Pouring**

**Did the apostles baptize 3000 at the Temple at Pentecost by immersion?**

- *120 disciples each baptize 100 persons an hour = 12,000 baptized*
- *12 disciples each baptize 100 persons an hour = 1200 baptized/hour for 3 hours*

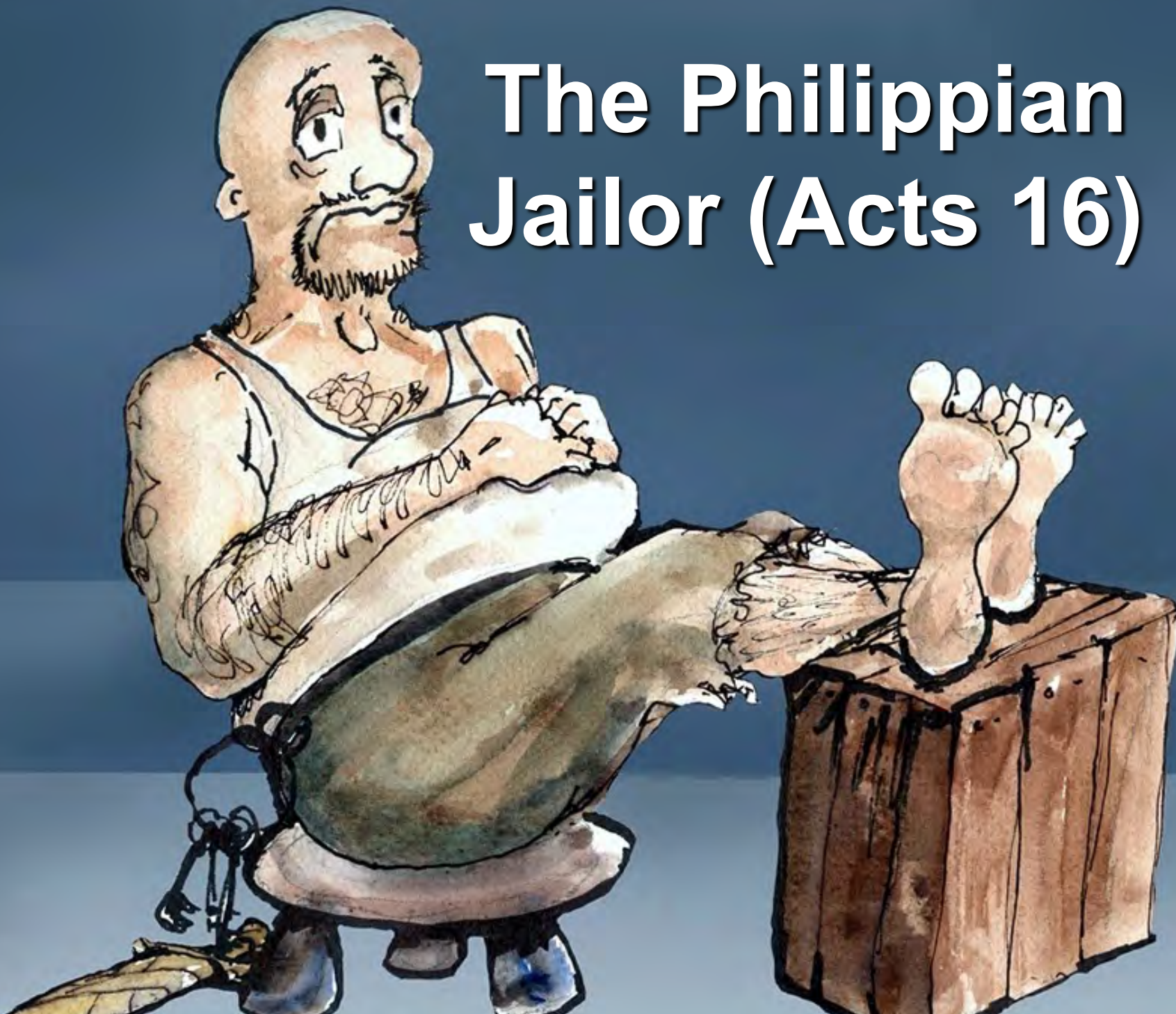
**Was immersion possible?**

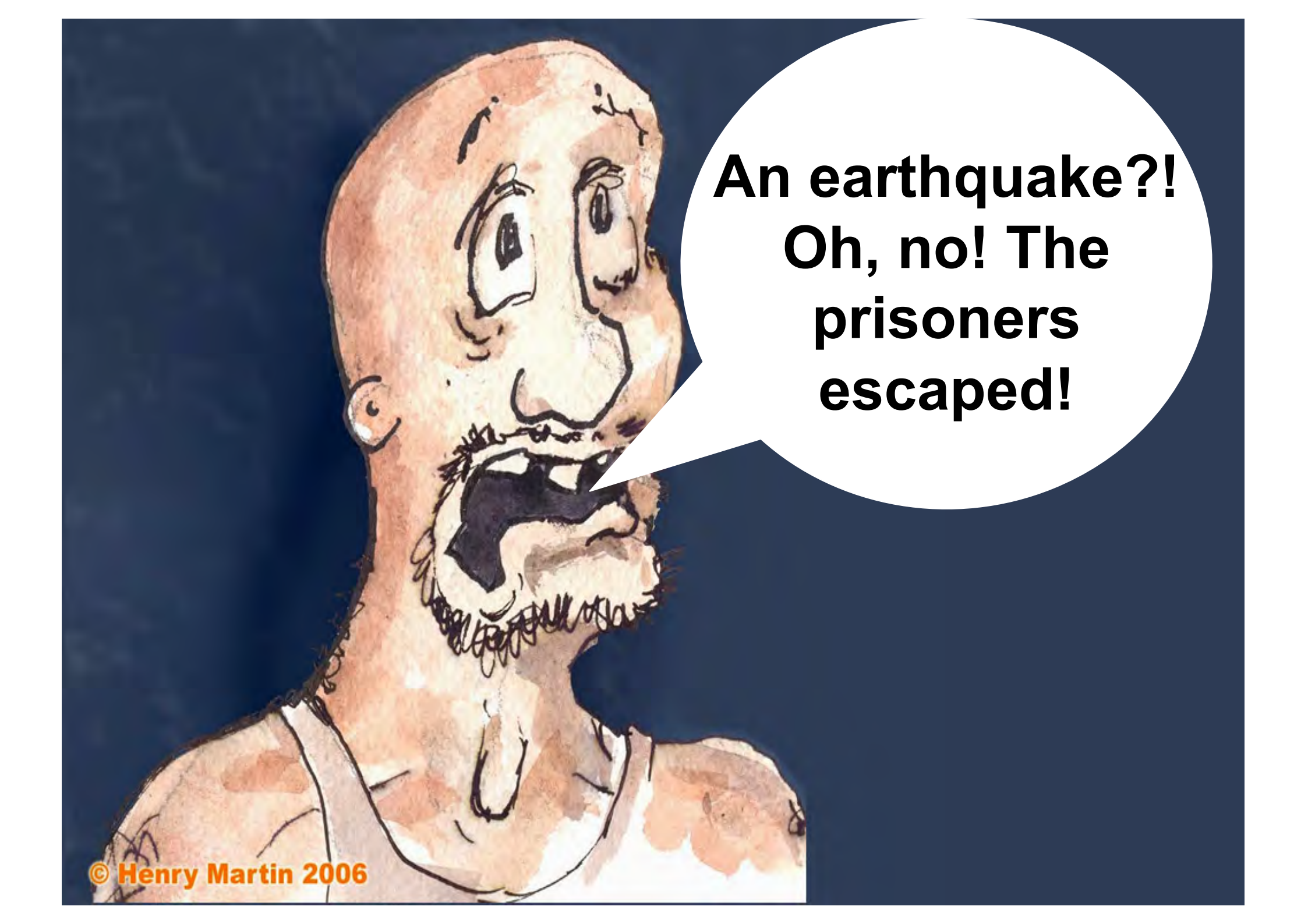
## **Modes of Baptism: Sprinkling and Pouring**

**"Did the bleeding Paul and Silas troop through the streets with the Philippian jailer and his family, when they already had water nearby to pour on them?"**

**Baptism at Philippi (Acts 16)**

# The Philippian Jailor (Acts 16)



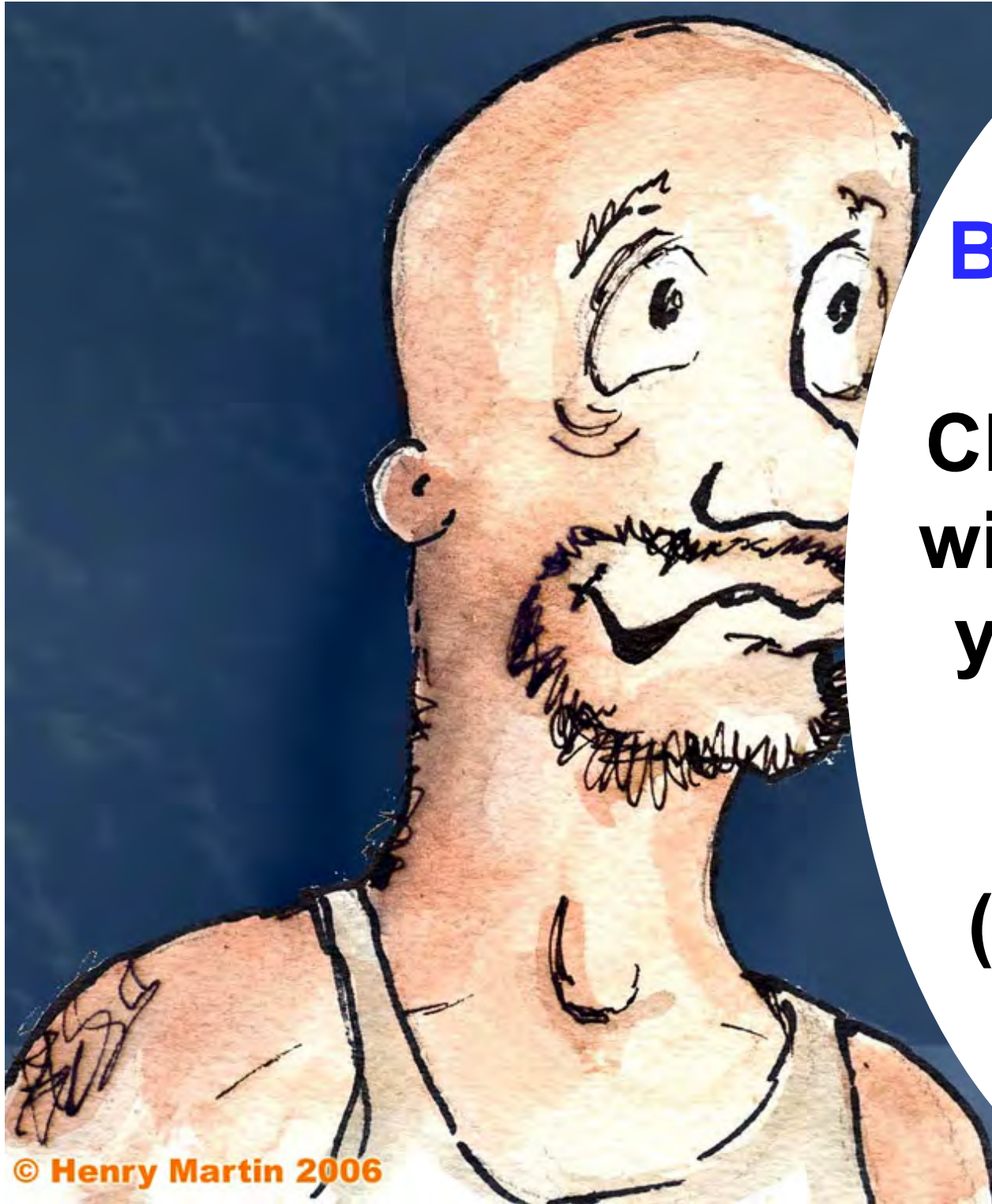


**An earthquake?!  
Oh, no! The  
prisoners  
escaped!**





**What must I **do**  
to be saved?**



**Believe** in the  
Lord Jesus  
Christ and you  
will be saved—  
you and your  
entire  
household!  
(Acts 16:31).





# Why is immersion the proper mode?

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**"plenty of water"**  
(John 3:23)

**"coming up out of the water"** (Mark 1:10)

**"went down into the water"**  
(Acts 8:38)





Remember  
the  
Ethiopian  
eunuch  
(Acts 8:26-  
40)?



*How did  
Philip  
baptize the  
Ethiopian  
eunuch?*

**As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" (Acts 8:36)**

# Baptism Requirements



- **Three years instruction**
- **Procedure up to Sunday Baptism**
  - **Thursday: Bath**
  - **Friday: Fasting**
  - **Saturday: Laying on of hands, exorcism**
  - **Saturday night: vigil with instruction**
  - **Sunday: prayed for, anointed with oil, asked three questions, baptized naked (first children, then men, then women)**

# The First Church Building



- At Dura-Europos on the Euphrates River
- AD 240
- Had a small room set apart as a baptistry!

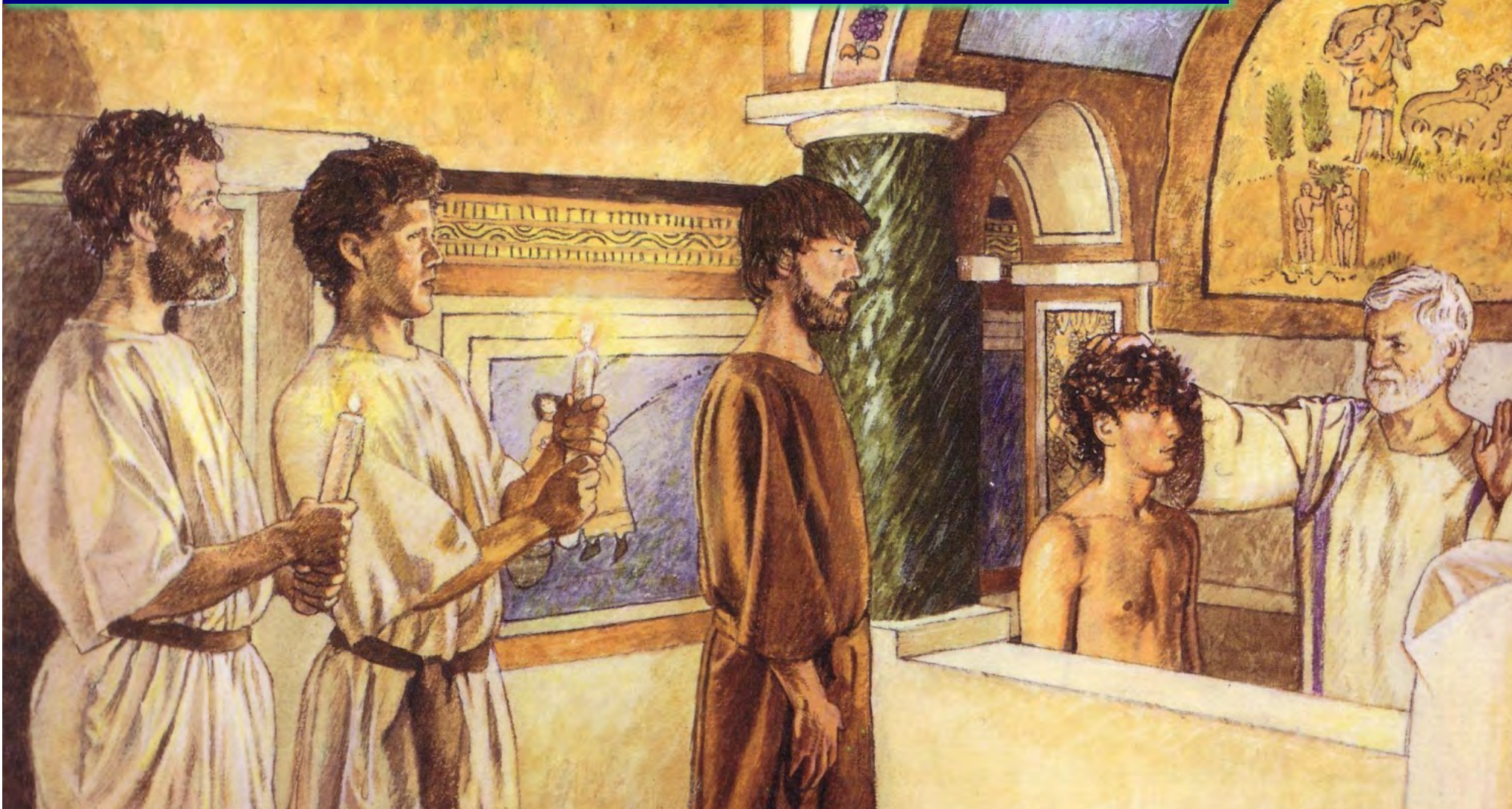
# Attitudes Toward the Unbaptized

- Treated almost as if non-Christians
- Not actively sought to be baptized
- Must leave the church service before the Lord's Supper administered

David F. Wright, "The Baptismal Community," *Bib Sac* 160 (Jan-Mar 2003): 3-12



# First Century Christian Baptism



**For Believers Only  
By Immersion Only**

# **Why not immerse?**

**There is little reason to be baptized in any other manner but by immersion**

**Exceptions include physical, logistic, and economic considerations**

If I have been sprinkled before,  
should I now be immersed?



- Let's see how Paul helped 12 previously immersed disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19:1-7...

If I have been sprinkled before,<sup>117</sup>  
should I now be immersed?

**Acts 19:1-7 (NLT):** While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. <sup>2</sup>"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" he asked them. "No," they replied, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

<sup>3</sup>"Then what baptism did you experience?" he asked. And they replied, "The baptism of John."

If I have been sprinkled before,<sup>117</sup>  
should I now be immersed?

<sup>4</sup>Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus."

<sup>5</sup>As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied.

<sup>7</sup>There were about twelve men in all.



UNITED STATES ARMY

# Certificate of Baptism

This certifies

that Richard James Griffith, a son  
of Harold Francis Griffith and his wife  
Joyce Newberg Griffith born on the third day of  
January 1958 at Tokyo, Japan was

**BAPTIZED** in the Name of the Father  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit  
on the eighteenth day of May in the year of our Lord 1958

Witnesses

Barbara Metzger

James Metzger



Charles D. Burgeen

CHAPLAIN, UNITED STATES ARMY

## The Main Idea

**Every Christian  
should show his or  
her love for Christ  
through immersion**



**Who will follow  
Christ's example in  
baptism?**

# Simon Peter's Enthusiasm

**"Jesus answered,  
'Unless I wash you, you  
have no part with me.'**

**'Then, Lord,' Simon  
Peter replied, 'not just  
my feet but my hands  
and my head as well!'"  
(John 13:8b-9)**



# Don't Be Deprived of the Full Experience!



'baptizo'  
to immerse,  
submerge;  
to become  
overwhelmed

# Questions about Baptism?

- Required before Lord's Supper?
- Required if sprinkled as infant?
- Required if sprinkled as adult?
- Required if immersed in unbiblical church?



# Baptism Summary

244c



## Infant

## Believer's

### Adherents

Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist, some Evangelical Free Church

Baptist, Bible, Brethren, Mennonite, Pentecostal, some Evangelical Free Church, most independent churches

### Purpose

#### Three Views:

- 1 Catholic: Means of saving grace apart from the faith of the baptized (baptismal regeneration)
- 2 Lutheran: Means of saving grace by assuming faith in infants baptized (baptismal regeneration)
- 3 Others: Not a means of saving grace but a seal and sign of the covenant

#### Unified View:

Baptism is a symbol of salvation: an outward sign of the inward reality of justification received in Christ with no external efficacy.

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Support for Their Purpose

Baptismal regeneration is taught in many verses (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 3:21).

Baptism and salvation are linked, but baptism does not cause salvation. Salvation is by faith alone (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9). NT baptism was often at one's conversion. This close association between salvation and baptism was seen as a single event, yet baptism was not always commanded with conversion (Acts 3:19; 16:31).

Baptismal regeneration is refuted by Ronald K. Y. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT, 173-74

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

**View of  
Colossians  
2:11-12**

**"In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, <sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:11-12 NIV).**

**Baptism is the sign of the covenant  
(Col 2:12).**

**It thus signifies the recipient's initiation  
into the community of God.**

**The new covenant sign is  
not baptism but the Lord's  
Supper (1 Cor 11:25).**

**Colossians 2:11-12  
parallels baptism not with  
physical circumcision but  
with "spiritual"  
circumcision, or salvation.**

**The NT never connects  
baptism with a covenant  
(e.g., the Abrahamic  
Covenant).**

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Seal of the Covenant

Baptism is the seal of the covenant (Acts 15:1; 21:21; Gal 2:3-5).

The verses at the left show only that circumcision is not required in the present age; they say nothing about baptism. The seal of the new covenant is not baptism but the Spirit (Eph 1:13-14).

### Key Idea

The central idea associated with baptism is purification from sin (Col 2:11-12).

Baptism signifies forgiveness of sin but also identification with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom 6:1-7).

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Priority

Assigning to baptism only a symbolic purpose shows a *low* view of baptism considering the many NT references.

To baptize only Christians shows a *high* view of baptism—especially since it is so often associated with salvation. The statement at the left assumes that a symbol cannot be important, but this is exactly what we have in the Lord's Supper.

### Thief on the Cross

This thief had no opportunity to be baptized so is not a good example since Christ may have made an exception in his case.

Christ promised the repentant thief on the cross salvation without baptism (Luke 23:40-43). This refutes Catholic and Lutheran views requiring baptism for salvation.

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Subjects

Infants who have no personal faith in Christ can be baptized.

Believers alone should be baptized—this excludes infants and the unsaved.

### Support for Above Stated Subjects

Baptism is parallel to circumcision; circumcision was done to infants; therefore, baptism should be performed on infants as well.

The logic at the left fails in its first premise—that baptism and circumcision are parallel (see above on Col 2:11-12). Also, only boys can be circumcised.



## Infant

## Believer's

### Illustration of God's Grace

Infant baptism more powerfully illustrates the grace of God. "How can the new covenant, which supersedes the old, exclude children when they are included in the old? Even animals are included in God's covenant of redemption (Gen 9:10), let alone children, who are definitely more precious to Him!"

How is God's grace towards a baby who has never consciously sinned greater than towards one who has repeatedly sinned? Grace towards adults is the greater marvel. Children of the old covenant were not saved by circumcision but by faith (Gen 15:6). Likewise, all in the new covenant are accepted by faith—not by baptism (Rom 4:1-25). Besides, how does denying infant baptism give priority to animals over humans? Animals are not baptized, so no comparison exists.

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Household Baptisms

Entire households were baptized in the NT, which almost certainly included infants (Acts 10:47-48; 16:15; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16).

Each of the household texts declare that the households believed before baptism; that infants were baptized is an assumption that is counter to the stated fact that people believed before baptism.

### Baptism in Church History

Infant baptism has been practiced throughout the history of the church from earliest times.

The earliest non-scriptural baptism instructions (early 2nd cent.) requires fasting 1-2 days before baptism, so it implies only adult baptism (Didache 7:4 in J.B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 153)

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Jesus & Children

Christ blessed children— probably even infants (Mark 10:13-16), which shows His approval to baptize them.

Blessing children and baptizing them are wholly different. The argument at the left is valid only if the NT shows Christ baptizing children, which it does not.

### NT Silence

Infant baptism is not prohibited in the NT and therefore is allowed.

Silence does not argue for approval (e.g., we cannot argue for baptism of the dead simply because the NT does not prohibit it). NT support for believer's baptism automatically prohibits infant baptism since infants cannot believe.

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## Infant

## Believer's

**Matthew  
28:19-20**

The text does not give a sequence for baptism: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (NIV).

The Great Commission command is to make disciples—the only imperative in the verses. Going and baptizing and teaching are all participles, in this order. The "going" refers to leading people to faith, so we should baptize only believers, which excludes infants.

**Romans  
6:1-11**

"Whether the mode of baptism by immersion be alluded to in this verse, as a kind of symbolical burial and resurrection, does not seem to us of much consequence" (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *A Commentary*, 1871, Accordance electronic ed. on Rom 6:4).

Being "buried with him in baptism" points to immersion only. Baptism also points back to the believer's becoming united with Christ in His death. This cannot be said of infants who have yet to believe.

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Spiritual State of Those Baptized

Baptism is the means of saving infants (Catholic view), means of infants expressing faith in Christ (Lutheran view), or means of bringing infants "into the covenant" (Presbyterian view).

All NT subjects of baptism are clearly believers; one must have very good reason to deviate from this norm. Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47; 16:14-15, 33; 18:8; 19:5 show that repentance preceded baptism in this order: "hearing...believing...being baptized."

### Mode

Scripture does not specify any mode of baptism, thus allowing both sprinkling and pouring. It is not method that counts, but the sincerity of the one baptized.

The only scriptural mode is immersion, so how can we say mode is unimportant? While it is true that mode is less important than heart attitude, this does not then imply that mode is irrelevant.

# Baptism Summary

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## Infant

## Believer's

### Pouring in Church History

Baptism by pouring has been practiced throughout the history of the church from earliest times.

Pouring is first stated in the early second century—and only as an exception when immersion in running water or cold water could not or should not be used (Didache 7:1-3 in J. B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, 153).

### Pouring in the NT

Baptism by pouring is mentioned often in the NT (1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:26; Heb 9:10; 10:22; Tit 3:5).

None of these verses refer to baptism and none refer to pouring. They refer in each case to spiritual cleansing from sin by faith in Christ ("washing") or to Jewish ceremonial washings which were performed numerous times on the same persons (cf. Heb 9:10). Hebrews 10:22 refers not to baptism but to "having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."

# Baptism Summary

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## Believer's

### Pouring Symbolism

Pouring best represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers (Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:3).

Similarities are only implied between pouring water and the outpouring of the Spirit, but the explicit NT symbolism is that baptism shows the believer dying to his old life and rising to a new one (Rom 6:1-4). Thus, immersion is the explicit NT mode and pouring is argued only by implication.

### Sprinkling in the NT

Baptism by sprinkling is mentioned often in the Bible (Exod 24:6-8; Num 8:7; Ezek 36:24-26; Heb 9:13-14; 10:22).

These verses refer not to baptism but to purifying priests with sprinkled water (Num 8:7), sprinkling vessels with blood (Exod 24:6-8; Heb 9:13-14), or the Spirit's saving work (Ezek 36:24-26; Heb 10:22).

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## Believer's

### Pentecost Baptism (Acts 2)

Practically speaking, Peter could not have immersed 3000 in a single day on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). This baptism must have been by sprinkling or by pouring. See Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, 1871, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1996), paragraph 19660.

Could Peter have sprinkled or poured on that many either? The text doesn't say Peter did the baptizing. If one could immerse 100 people per hour (very possible), the 120 disciples (Acts 1:15) could have immersed 12,000 in a single hour! Even if only the 12 baptized it would take less than three hours to baptize the 3000 (12 x 100 = 1200/hr.).

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### Philippi Baptism (Acts 16)

The Philippian jailer would not have left his post for immersion but could have momentarily for pouring or sprinkling (Acts 16:33b).

### Lexical Meanings

Lexical meanings are not sufficient to establish theology.

## Believer's

The jailer listened to Paul's preaching (v. 32) and washed Paul and Silas' wounds (v. 33a), which may have taken just as long. He left his post to invite Paul and Silas to his home for a midnight meal (v. 34). Baptism takes less time than eating a full meal. The argument at the left also assumes that he guarded the jail alone rather than delegating his jobs to others.

The only NT word for baptism (βαπτίζω) means "dip, immerse...wash, plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm...soak" (BAGD 131c). Other literal uses include "to dip" (Luke 16:24; cf. LXX Jud 2:14; Josh 3:15; Lev 4:6; 11:32) and "to dye" (Rev 19:13), both indicating immersion. Also, baptism is likened to the Flood (1 Pet 3:21). From the lexical data even Luther and Calvin both admitted immersion as the biblical mode.

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### John the Baptist Mode

Since sprinkling was practiced in the OT, John the Baptist probably sprinkled as well—especially since he was a Levite (Luke 1:5).

John the Baptist performed his baptisms in the Jordan River. Would sprinkling require people to walk into the water with John? Besides, the type of baptism immediately preceding John's historically was Jewish proselyte immersion.

### Pre-NT Immersion

Baptisms preceding Christianity do not absolutely establish that Christian baptism followed the same pattern.

Immersion (βαπτίζω) described not only NT baptism, but also Jewish ritual washings (Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38) by immersion (e.g., Qumran). Both pagan religious washings and Jewish proselyte baptism preceded Christian baptism, the later being by self-immersion (A. Oepke, "*bapto, baptizo...*" *TDNTabr.*, 92-93).

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### Biblical Parallels to Sprinkling & Pouring

Sprinkling and pouring  
also have OT and NT  
parallels.

No so-called parallel relates to baptism.

Immersion best signifies:

- identification with Christ's death and resurrection by going under the water and out again (Rom 6:3-5; Col 2:12)
- subjection to Christ's authority (Matt 28:18-19; Acts 19:3-5; 22:16)
- obedience and a good conscience before God (1 Pet 3:21).

### NT Start of Immersion

Baptism preceded the writing of Romans, so the immersion of Romans 6 could have been new. No evidence prior to Romans indicates that baptism signified Christ's death and resurrection.

Arguments from silence such as the one at the left hold little weight. Only six NT books preceded Romans, so Romans was among the first NT books written (AD 56-57). Among these letters is 1 Corinthians where Paul mentions baptism (1:13-17). He indicated immersion there by using the normal word for immersion (βαπτίζω).

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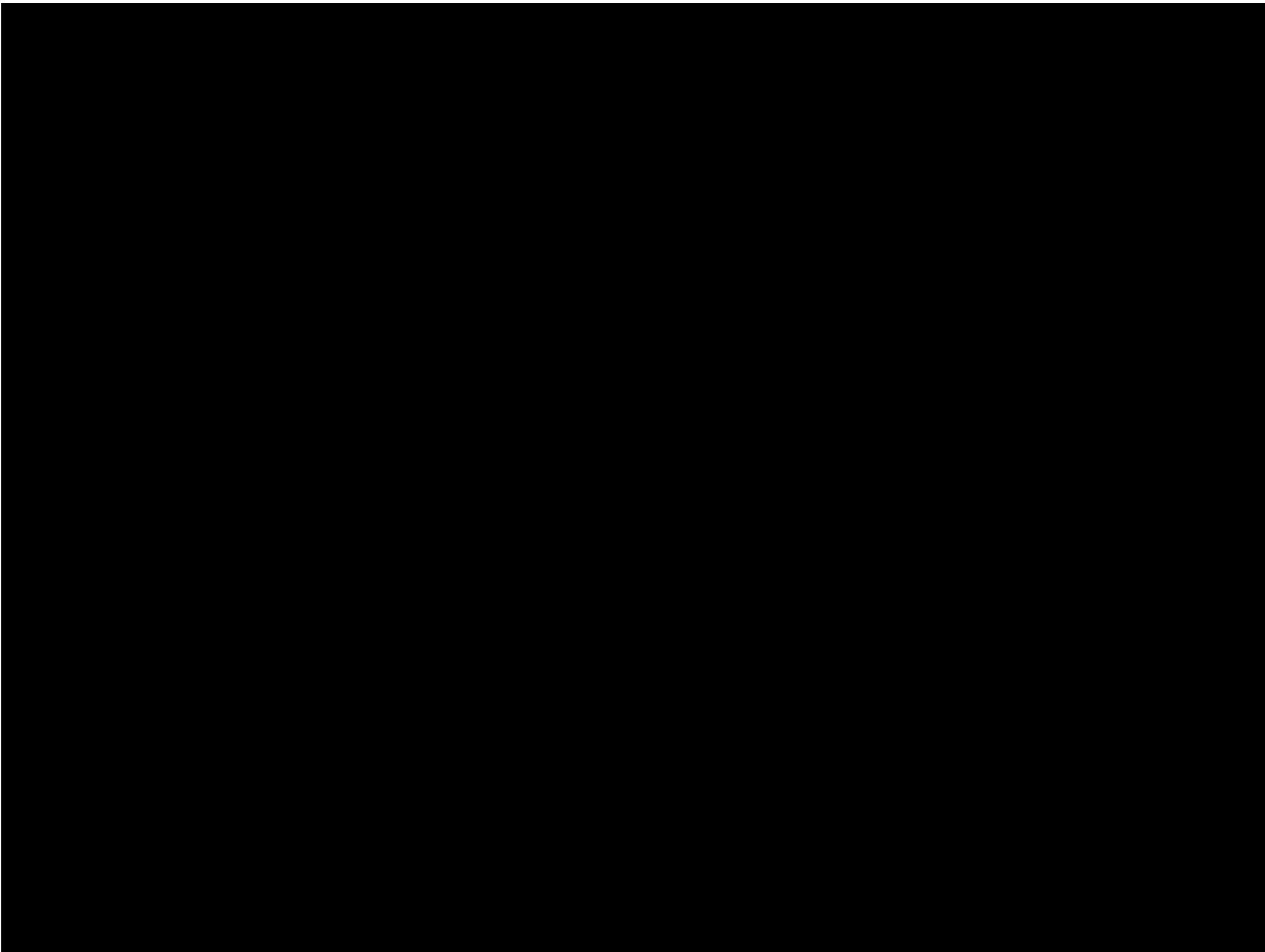
## Infant

## Believer's

### Amount of Water in Baptism

The passages at the right argue only that baptism took place in water, but this still could have been by pouring or sprinkling while standing in the water.

All NT baptisms best allow for immersion: "plenty of water" (John 3:23), "coming up out of the water" (Mark 1:10), and "went down into the water" (Acts 8:38). This last case concerns the Ethiopian eunuch who could have easily been baptized by pouring or sprinkling anywhere along the journey by using water in the caravan.



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