

# **IS CATHOLIC BAPTISM NECESSARY FOR SALVATION??**

*The Catholic Blog - Helping people find answers to the most common questions about Catholicism with answers from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible.*

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## **“Is Catholic baptism necessary for salvation?” - Important Passages of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Consider:**

- “Those who belong to Christ through faith and Baptism must confess their baptismal faith before men” (CCC 14)
- “All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ.” (CCC 818)
- “Baptism, the gate by which we enter into the Church.” (CCC 950)
- **“Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn” (CCC 980)**
- “communicating forgiveness of sins in Baptism” (CCC 981)
- “The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us ‘ the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ and through Baptism” (CCC 1987)
- **“Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith” (CCC 1992)**
- **“Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ” (CCC 977)**
- “The faithful are **born anew** by Baptism” (CCC 1212)
- “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit” (CCC 1213)
- “Through Baptism we are **freed from sin and reborn** as sons of God” (CCC 1213)
- “Baptism is the sacrament of **regeneration** through water in the word” (CCC 1213)
- “This sacrament is also called the ‘washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit’ for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one ‘can enter the Kingdom of God’” (CCC 1215)
- “exorcisms are pronounced over the candidate” (CCC 1237)
- “the baptismal water is consecrated by a prayer” (CCC 1238)
- “Baptism...signifies and actually brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity through configuration to the Paschal mystery of Christ” (CCC 1239)
- “Baptism is performed in the most expressive way by triple immersion in the baptismal water. However from ancient times it has also been able to be conferred by pouring the water over the candidate’s head” (CCC 1239)
- “The newly baptized is now, in the only Son, a child of God, entitled to say the prayer of the children of God: ‘Our Father’” (CCC 1243)
- “Baptism is the source of that new life in Christ from which the entire Christian life springs forth” (CCC 1254)
- **“The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation” (CCC 1257)**
- “Baptism is necessary for salvation for those whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who had the possibility of asking for this sacrament” (CCC 1257)
- **“God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments” (CCC 1257)**
- “For catechumens who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament” (CCC 1259)

- **“By baptism all sins are forgiven” (CCC 1263)**
- **“Justified by faith in Baptism” (CCC 1271)**
- “Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ.” (CCC 1272)

## **ARE INFANTS SAVED BY BAPTISM?**

- “Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the Children of God” (CCC 1250)
- **“The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth” (CCC 1250)**
- “As regards children who have died with Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. ...**allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism**” (CCC 1261)
- **“with respect to children who have died without Baptism, the liturgy of the Church invites us to trust in God’s mercy and to pray for their salvation” (CCC 1283)**

## **WHY IS EVERY CATHOLIC EXORCISED AT BAPTISM?**

- “When the Church asks publicly and authoritatively in the name of Jesus Christ that a person or object be protected against the power of the Evil One and withdrawn from his dominion, it is called exorcism” (CCC 1673)
- “Jesus performed exorcisms and from him the Church has received the power and office of exorcizing. In a simple form, **exorcism is performed at the celebration of Baptism.**” (CCC 1673)
- “The solemn exorcism, called a ‘major exorcism,’ can be performed only by a priest and with the permission of the bishop. The priest must proceed with prudence, strictly observing the rules established by the Church.” (1673)
- “Exorcism is directed at the expulsion of demons or to the liberation from demonic possession through the spiritual authority which Jesus entrusted to his Church.” (1673)

### **“Is Catholic baptism necessary for salvation?” - Important Scriptures to Consider:**

- **Titus 3:5 “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (ESV)**
- John 3:5 “Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” (ESV)
- Ezekiel 36:25–27 “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. [26] And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.” (ESV)
- Romans 6:3–4 “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (ESV)
- 1 John 2:29 “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.” (ESV)
- 1 John 3:9 “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.” (ESV)

- 1 John 4:7 “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.” (ESV)
- 1 John 5:1 “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.” (ESV)
- 1 John 5:4 “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” (ESV)
- 1 Corinthians 1:14 “I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius”
- 1 Corinthians 1:17 “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:1–8 “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. [3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. [6] Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. [8] Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.” (ESV)
- 2 Samuel 12:21-23 “His servants asked him, “Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!” 22 He answered, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, ‘Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.’ 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? **I will go to him, but he will not return to me.**”
- Ecclesiastes 6:3-5 “I say that a stillborn child is better off than he.” (ESV)
- Deuteronomy 1:39 “And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.” (ESV)
- Titus 2:11–12 “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] **training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions**, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age” (ESV)
- Zechariah 3:2 “And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?” (ESV)
- Jude 9–10 “But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “**The Lord rebuke you.**” [10] But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.” (ESV)
- More scriptures on the death of babies and children: [www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-the-death-of-babies-children](http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-the-death-of-babies-children)
- More scriptures on baptism: [www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-baptism](http://www.trustworthyword.com/what-does-the-bible-say-about-baptism)
- An Ante-Nicene (early church fathers’) historical approaches to spiritual warfare and exorcism: [www.trustworthyword.com/sw-church-history](http://www.trustworthyword.com/sw-church-history) (NOTE: very different from the much later (1614) Catholic Church’s *Rituale Romanum* approach to the demonic)

**“Is Catholic baptism necessary for salvation?” - Important Questions to Consider:**

- Why is Baptism such a big deal for Catholic doctrine? **What does it mean that Baptism isn't completed without penance, catechism, and the Eucharist? Is that seen in the Bible?**
- Is the “born of water” a reference to baptism in John 3:5? Or a reference to Ezekiel 36:25-27?
- Do the passages in 1 John speak about being born again by baptism? Or through belief? Love? Personal and relational knowledge of God? Evidenced by a changed life? In faith?
- Does Romans 6:3–4 describe being baptized into a church?
- **Why is the process of getting baptized & going through Catechism in the Catholic Church so lengthy compared to the instantaneous belief and baptisms seen in Acts 2:41, 8:36, 9:18, 16:33, 18:8, 19:5?**
- Is the consecration (blessing) of baptismal water in the Bible?
- Where is triple immersion in the Bible? Where is pouring over/infusion in the Bible?
- **Where does the Bible advocate for praying for someone's salvation after they already died?**
- **If baptism is necessary for salvation, why would Paul say he was thankful that he only baptized two people at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14)?**
- If baptism is necessary for salvation, why would Paul say “Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17)?
- Why Paul outlines the gospel in 1 Cor 15:1-8 why does he not mention baptism? What is his focus?
- What do these passages imply about the salvation of babies & children who die? 2 Samuel 12:21-23, Deuteronomy 1:39, Job 3:11-17, Ecclesiastes 6:3-5, & Jeremiah 19:4.
- Are baptismal exorcisms (casting out of Satan/demons) in the Bible? Why is exorcism performed as part of every Catholic Baptism?
- When exorcisms happen in the Bible what rules exist? Or is it a simple command in the authority and name of Jesus?
- Why does the Roman Catholic Church has such extensive rules and procedures for exorcism as encapsulated in *Rituale Romanum*?

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## 6 Tough Passages on Baptism to Consider

The below passages are tough to understand and seem, on their own, to advocate for baptismal regeneration (that baptism saves). If we look more closely at them individual, we can see them more clearly and how they can be reconciled with the many Scriptures that explain that salvation comes through faith alone as a free gift of God's loving grace.

### 1) Does Acts 2:38 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?

Acts 2:38, "And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

- Could the best translation for "for" in this context be either "because of" or "in regard to" and not "in order to get"?
- Another important note is how some of the verbs and pronouns are different: some are singular and some are plural. Could this mean that "when you take into account the change in person and plurality, essentially what you have is 'You (plural) repent for the forgiveness of your (plural) sins, and let each one (singular) of you be baptized (singular).' Or, to put it in a more distinct way: 'You all repent for the forgiveness of all of your sins, and let each one of you be baptized.'" (for more see: [www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Acts-2-38.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Acts-2-38.html) )

### 2) Does Mark 16:16 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?

Mark 16:16 "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

- An important translation note: "There is some question as to whether these verses were originally part of the Gospel of Mark or whether they were added later by a scribe. As a result, it is best not to base a key doctrine on anything from Mark 16:9-20, such as snake handling, unless it is also supported by other passages of Scripture."
- If this verse it to be included in Scripture, does it even describe the eternal status of those who "believe and have not been baptized"? We cannot for certain the opposite is true.
- What is the evidence of condemnation in this verse? Is it even connected to baptism?
- Does the Bible ever say that if one is not baptized they are not saved? What about the man on the cross next to Jesus who is never baptized, never goes to church, never takes Eucharist, and is never confirmed?
- What is required for salvation? Belief.
- More at: [www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Mark-16-16.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Mark-16-16.html)

### 3) Does 1 Peter 3:21 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?

1 Peter 3:21 "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (ESV)

- When Peter connects baptism to salvation, what is the root cause of the salvation? What does baptism represent? What does an "appeal to God" mean?
- Why does the Peter refer to the mechanical act of baptism ("removal of dirt")? Is he pointing out that it isn't about the act itself, but about the inward appeal of belief and repentances?
- How did the waters of the flood "save" Noah and his family? How are the ark and baptism connected here (1 Peter 3:20)?
- Was Noah saved by his wisdom, obedience, skill, and hard work to build the ark? Or was he saved by his inward trust and love of the Lord so that the God provided a rescue from the waters of judgment? Who shut the door of the ark (Genesis 7:16)?
- Are we saved by our wisdom, obedience, and diligence to get baptized? Or are we saved by our inward trust and love of the Lord in how He provided a rescue from the judgment of sin through His death and resurrection on the cross?
- See [www.gotquestions.org/baptism-1Peter-3-21.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-1Peter-3-21.html) for more helpful thoughts.

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4) *Does John 3:5 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?*

John 3:5 “Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (ESV)

- Why is the word “baptism” not explicitly used here but is used later in the chapter (John 3:22-30) at a different time and place?
- Why is water the symbol of cleansing throughout the Bible? (for examples see: Psalm 51:2,7; Ezekiel 36:25, John 13:10; 15:3; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:22; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5)
- How might this connect to the “living water” Jesus speaks to later in John? (John 4:10 & 7:37-39)
- How does this “water” cleanse us internally and eternally? (see Ezekiel 36:25-27 & Titus 3:5)
- Why is water used often to symbolize the Spirit’s work in us? (see Isaiah 44:3 & John 7:38-39)
- Was Nicodemus being rebuked for not understanding baptism or for not understanding these passages: Ezekiel 36:25-27 and Jeremiah 31:33.
- More insights here: [www.gotquestions.org/baptism-John-3-5.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-John-3-5.html)

5) *Does Acts 22:16 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?*

Acts 22:16 “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.” (ESV)

- Did Paul believe before his baptism (Galatians 1:11-12)?
- Did Paul receive the Holy Spirit before his baptism? (Acts 9:17-18)
- A helpful translation note: “The Greek aorist participle, epikalesamenos, translated “calling on His name” refers either to action that is simultaneous with or before that of the main verb, “be baptized.” Here Paul’s calling on Christ’s name for salvation preceded his water baptism. The participle may be translated “having called on His name” which makes more sense, as it would clearly indicate the order of the events.”
- How does baptism externally portray the inward washing away of sin that happens at salvation? (1 Corinthians 6:11 and 1 Peter 3:21).
- When Paul shares his testimony of conversion with King Agrippa (Acts 26:12-18), why does He focus on meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus and not on his encounter with Ananias (Acts 9:10-17) and baptism?
- For further study, checkout: [www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Acts-22-16.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Acts-22-16.html)

6) *Does Galatians 3:27 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?*

Galatians 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (ESV)

- Why is Paul writing this letter to the Galatians according to Galatians 1:6-10?
- What does he mean that we are “not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Christ” (Galatians 2:16) and that “you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26)?
- Is this passage even talking about baptism into water? Or is it talking about union with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the point of faith? What does Romans 8:9 say is the principal difference between believers and non-believers?
- How is Jesus the one “who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33-34)?
- What does it mean to be “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13-14)?
- More info on this passage here: [www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Galatians-3-27.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/baptism-Galatians-3-27.html)