

## **Say What?**

Consider this: what does the mind hear, as opposed to what the eyes read? In all cases of life, how the mind filters what the eyes reveal to the mind is often in conflict with reality, especially when reading.

Generally, individuals believe the first story they hear, i.e., when a child comes home from school and relates that they were the victim in some conflict with another student and/or teacher, when actually they were the instigator. Or maybe you read about a world event and anything else you might hear about the event is tainted by the earlier rendition. Whatever the scenario, most everyone has experienced the moment when the dangers of the scenario take place with “what is written” (Luke 10:26).

In reference to baptism: in your first introduction to the gospel of Christ, you heard that baptism was an “outward sign of an inward grace.” What does that mean? Depends on who said it:

### **Augustine**

“St. Augustine, in the 5th century described a sacrament as ‘an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.’ It sounds like a very simple answer, but to understand the depth of what that means, we need to probe rather more deeply” (Diocese of Westminster).

### **Protestant View**

“Many Protestant denominations view baptism not as a means of grace but as an ordinance—a symbolic act obeyed in response to Christ’s command. For these groups, baptism does not confer grace but is an outward sign of an inward grace already received through faith in Jesus Christ” (crosstalk.ai).

It is easy to see that the phrase is defined differently by different individuals, but either way, it had its origin with “Saint (used accommodatively, ret) Augustine” in the 5<sup>th</sup> century: not with the apostles in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Scriptural View of Baptism**

Let’s start with a scriptural fact. The apostle Paul wrote to the brethren in Ephesus, saying, “if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive

my understanding in the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:2-4). Say What? “when you read you can perceive my understanding.” God gave you a brain, use it!

### **What do the Scriptures Say about Baptism?**

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5). Jesus ought to know.

Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19-20). Commanded by the Lord.

Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mk. 16:15-16). Has eternal consequences.

“And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). A divine commentary on what Jesus commanded the apostle to do.

“And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:5-6). “And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink” (Acts 9:8-9). “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). Saul heard, believed, and repented but retained his sins. Until, “he arose and was baptized” (Acts 9:18).

“God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with *him* in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:2-5). “United with

him in the likeness of His death”: when did that happen? When “we were buried therefore with him through baptism into death.” It’s not rocket science.

“For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). When do individuals become “sons of God”? According to the apostle Paul, when they are “baptized into Christ” (and) “put on Christ.”

“in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience” (1 Pet. 3:20-21). Thayer defines this appeal as “earnestly seeking.” An individual cannot have a good conscience toward God until they have obeyed God’s command regarding baptism.

Say What? Peter said, “Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:47-48). The one baptism, common to all Christians (Ephesians 4:5), is water, commanded by the Lord and obeyed by those who hear, believe, and repent. ret