

Key Thought: A proper understanding of the sign of baptism gives the believer a heart of humility and gratitude for the work done by Christ and the Spirit on their behalf

Question 77: Is then the outward baptism in water the washing away of sins?

Answer: It is not (a). The blood of Christ alone cleanses from all sin (b)

(a) Eph 5:25-26, 1 Pet 3:21

(b) 1 Cor 6:11; 1 John 1:7

1. The thing signified is not the same as the thing itself

- a. "Baptism is a certain sign of the remission of sin, and of everlasting life to them that believe" Zacharias Ursinus
- b. **Example:** Old Testament sacrifices cannot be labeled as an expiation (atonement) for sin.
 - i. Paul (Heb 10:4)
 - ii. 1 John 1:7
- c. Old Testament signs are fully revealed in the New Testament (Jonah - Matt 12:39, Matt 16:4, Luke 11:29)

2. Wash to be clean

- a. Washing with water (Baptism) is a sign illustrating the believer has a clean, pure, sin forgiven conscience because of Christ's death (shedding of blood), death, burial, and resurrection (1 Pe 3:21, 1 Co 6:11)
- b. Example of Christ's cleansing sanctification of His church through the washing of water by the Word (Eph 5:25-26)
- c. The sign is not meant to give glory to man, but to God
 - i. Focus is not on the minister or on the person being baptized (1 Cor 1:10-24, 31)
 - ii. The sign of baptism, when properly reflected upon:
 1. Reminds the believer of the work, wrought by God in their heart
 2. Points the believer to the finished work of the living Savior
 3. Is a way point to which the believer returns to reflect on the assurance of their own salvation

Question 78: Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of the new birth and forgiveness of sins?

Answer: God speaks so not without great cause, to this, not to teach us that s the filth of our body is purged by water, so our sins also are purged by the blood and Spirit of Christ (a), but much more to assure us by this divine token and pledge that we are as surely washed from our sins with the inward washing as we are washed by the outward and visible water (b).

(a) 1 Cor 6:11; Rev 1:5, 7:14

(b) Mark 16:16, Gal 3:27

3. The shed blood and the spirit

- a. The Spirit draws and sanctifies, i.e., sets apart (John 3:8, 1 Cor 6:11)
- b. The blood of Christ makes atonement (Rev 1:5)

4. The washing away of the old man and clothing the new (double imputation)

- a. Cleansed from all uncleanness and given new vesture (Rev 7:14, Rev 19:7-8)
- b. We put on Christ's righteousness (Gal 3:27)

Questions

1. What does your baptism mean to you?
2. Why is it important that believers be baptized?
3. What comfort do you get knowing that you are washed in the blood, and set apart by the Spirit?
4. Does reflecting on your baptism motivate you to live a holy life? Why? What does that mean?
5. Have you put on Christ?