

Gal 3.27—Baptism Received, Believed, and Applied

Baptism is a Sacrament to be Received

- I. Baptism is a sacrament, which means two things.
 - A. It's a holy ordinance instituted by Christ for His Church as a means of grace (Mt 28.19).
 1. Baptism is a sacrament received from Christ and administered by the church in obedience to Christ.
 - B. It involves a sensible sign which represents, seals, and applies Christ and all His benefits to believers.
 1. In a sacrament, there's the unique, Spiritual union of a visible sign and the thing which it signifies.
 2. Thus, a sacrament *points* to the work of Christ for His people, *assures* us of the work, and is a means by which God *applies* it to all who believe, Acts 2.38; 22.16.
 3. Since a sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace, in Tit 3.5 and Heb 10.22 language of the visible sign is used to describe the invisible grace.

Baptism is a Doctrine to be Believed

- I. Our baptism signifies to us that we're united to or ingrafted into Christ, 1Cor 12.13; Gal 3.27.
- II. Our baptism signifies to us that we're *partakers* of all the benefits of Christ's saving work for sinners, a reality that naturally flows out of our being ingrafted into Christ. For if we're grafted into Him as a branch to a vine, then we cannot but enjoy the full benefit of His life-giving sap. *For example:*
 - A. The forgiveness of our sins, Acts 2.38.
 - B. Being dead to sin. The presence of sin remains, but we're no longer a slave to it, Rom 6.1-3.
 - C. Being alive to righteousness. Righteousness is natural to us as lovers of God and His Law, Rom 6.4.
 - D. Adoption as sons of God. Christ has reconciled us to God as His children, Gal 3.26-27; Eph 1.5-6.
- III. *These* are the sort of saving realities that God would have us believe with the help of our baptism. Our baptism points our faith in Christ for salvation to these realities found in Him.
 - A. Our baptism therefore acts as a seal from God to certify and testify of the reality of what He's done to us and for us in Christ, 1Pet 3.21; 1Cor 6.11.

Baptism is an Obligation to be Applied

- I. There's both an indicative and an imperative side to baptism, Rom 6.1-3. The indicative refers to what God's done to unite us to Christ and the imperative refers to what we must now do as those in union with Christ.
 - A. We're to walk as those who have the name of the Lord upon them, Eph 4.1.
 - B. We're to turn out of the ways of sin and into the ways of righteousness, Eph 5.7-8.
 - C. We're to put sin to death and live to God as His children, Col 3.5-10.
- II. Our baptism should remind us of who we are, whose we are, and how we're to live.
 - A. If you're a covenant child, your baptism obligates you to believe on the Lord Jesus for salvation. In fact, your baptism is your greatest motivation and reason to believe.
 - B. If you've already professed your faith in Christ, your baptism obligates you to live a faithful and consistent Christian life.

Two Concluding Questions

- I. Are you living as one who's dead to sin and alive to God?
 - A. In times of temptation, recall your baptism, which calls you away from sin.
 - B. At the baptism of another, recall your baptismal vows and your commitment to righteousness.
- II. Do you draw sufficient comfort from your baptism?
 - A. Your baptism is to serve as a visible sermon that preaches peace to your sin-burdened soul. It preaches good news to you:
 1. When you're cast down by your sins.
 2. When you're assailed by doubts.
 3. When you're tempted to doubt God's love.
 4. When you're overwhelmed with the fear of death and judgment.
 - B. Yet, you must never rest on the sacrament itself. It's a *means* that God uses to bring us to Christ. Rest, therefore, in the benefit which you get *from Christ* by your baptism.