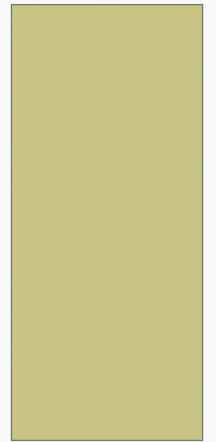


DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

JUNE - AUGUST 2014



LESSON 7

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

REFERENCES TO BAPTISM

- 118 occurrences of term in NT
- +20 occurrences in Greek OT
- Types, shadows, allusions, etc.
- WCF ch. 27 (the Sacraments) and ch. 28 (Baptism)
- LC 154, 161-167 [8 Q/A]
- SC 88, 91-95 [6 Q/A]

REFERENCES TO BAPTISM

- Too much to cover in 1 lesson!
- Focus on the significance of baptism for “the doctrine of the church”
- These two topics are inseparable

REFERENCES TO BAPTISM

- Our doctrine of baptism determines (to a large extent) our doctrine of the church
- If our doctrine of baptism is wrong/weak, so will be our doctrine of the church
- They're mutually formative

DEFINING TERMS

- West, Sacraments (*sacramentum*)
- Tertullian (c. 200)
- Military oath; oath of allegiance
- East, Mysteries (*mysterion*) – actions with a hidden meaning
- Rites, Ordinances, Ceremonies

WSC

Q. 92. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

WSC

Q. 93. Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.

THE SACRAMENTS

- Sacraments are holy ordinances instituted by Christ
- In NT, there are two: Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- Only permanent rites.
 - Baptism – “till the end of the age”
 - Lord's Supper – “till he comes”

THE SACRAMENTS

- A sacrament has two parts
 - Outward, visible sign
 - Spiritual grace signified
- We may distinguish between parts but may not separate them
- Through the sign, the reality is represented & presented
- Not an empty, bare sign

THE SACRAMENTS

- Not a sign of something absent but something present and given
- The signs truly communicate or confer what they signify

WLC

Q. 163. What are the parts of a sacrament?

A. The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

WCF 27.2

There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified: whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

The Scottish Confession (1560):

We utterly condemn the vanity of those that affirm sacraments to be nothing else but naked and bare signs. No, we assuredly believe that by baptism we are engrafted into Christ Jesus to be made partakers of his righteousness by which our sins are covered and remitted.

THE SACRAMENTS

- Two questions to ask about a sacrament:
 - What is the sign?
 - What is being signified by the sign?
- What is the sign of baptism?
- What is being signified by that sign?

THE SACRAMENTS

- The sign of baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- The reality signified by that sign is ultimately Christ, and all the benefits of the new covenant

THE SACRAMENTS

- What benefits are highlighted?
- Union with Christ
- Forgiveness of sins
- Regeneration by the Spirit
- Adoption
- Resurrection and eternal life

WLC

Q. 165. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life....

SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

- In scripture, God often attaches signs to his promises
 - Noah (Genesis 9)
 - Abraham (Genesis 17)
- To confirm, guarantee, seal those promises
- The sacraments are confirmatory signs attached to divine promises

Gen 9:16-17

“When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth. ... This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Gen 17:7-8

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

Gen 17:10-11

This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.

SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

- God establishes his covenant with Abraham
- God promises him blessings
- God gives him the sign of circumcision as a seal of those covenant promises
- It is a guarantee that God will fulfill his promises

SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

- Baptism is a sign of the new covenant
- It is attached to the promises of the covenant as a seal
- As such, it is a confirmation, a guarantee that God will fulfil his promises

SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

- Baptism is a sign:
 - Not of something in us (or presumed to be in us) – i.e. faith
 - But of something promised to us
- It's a sign of God's promise not of our faith in that promise

SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

- The sign of bap^t. is attached to the promises given to all who belong to the covenant
- The sign is administered to all who belong to the covenant
- Covenant membership determines who receives the sign

Gen 17:7-8

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

Gen 17:10-11

This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.

Acts 2.38

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

SIGNS OF THE COVENANT

- The sign testifies that the promise has been given and presented by God
- It does not testify that the promise has been believed
- Baptism is not a testimony of our faith

THE ROLE OF FAITH

- So what about faith?
- Don't we have to believe in order receive the promises?
- Yes!!!
- Christ & the benefits of the new covt. can only be received through faith alone.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

- Baptism only confirms that the promises have been made, offered, presented by God
- NOT that they have been appropriated by the one baptized

THE ROLE OF FAITH

- E.g. forgiveness of sins
- A promise of the new covenant
- Sealed/confirmed by the sign of baptism
- Is everyone who is baptized forgiven of his sins?

THE ROLE OF FAITH

- No. Only those who believe in Christ are forgiven.
- Baptism doesn't testify that he has believed God's promise of forgiveness
- But that that promise has been given to him because he belongs to the covenant

THE ROLE OF FAITH

- For the believer, the sign and what is signified by the sign go hand in hand
- By faith, we receive what is represented and presented by the sign ... the spiritual grace it signifies

MEANS OF GRACE

- The WCF also refers to the sacraments as means of grace/salvation
- God employs them as means/instruments through which Christ and his saving benefits are applied to us

WSC

Q. 88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption are his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all of which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.

WSC

Q. 91. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

MEANS OF GRACE

- The sacraments are effectual means of salvation:
 - Only for the elect
 - Only through faith
- This distinguishes the Reformed position from ceremonialism

MEANS OF GRACE

- **Bapt. is an effectual means of salvation:**
 - *Cer.* For all who receive it
 - *Ref.* For the elect alone
 - *Cer.* Coincides w/ its administration
 - *Ref.* Need not coincide w/ its admin.
 - *Cer.* Independent of faith
 - *Ref.* Only through faith

WCF 28.6

The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited, and conferred, by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

MEANS OF GRACE

- The NT doesn't always mention faith when discussing baptism, but faith is assumed
- The NT sets forth the significance of bap. when faith is present (even when faith isn't mentioned)

MEANS OF GRACE

- E.g. Paul teaches we are united to Christ by faith
- Paul teaches we are united to Christ by baptism (e.g. Rom 6)
- What he ascribes to baptism in one place, he ascribes in another place to faith

MEANS OF GRACE

- Likewise, forgiveness of sins is received through faith
- Forgiveness of sins is received through baptism
- Point – it's not baptism apart from faith but baptism considered when faith is present

FORGIVENESS, CLEANSING

- Baptism is attached to the promise of forgiveness and cleansing from the guilt and defilement of sin
- The washing of water signifies the washing away of our sins by the blood of Christ

FORGIVENESS, CLEANSING

- OT purification rites; types of baptism
- Ceremonial washings to remove impurity/defilement
- Water used; or blood; or both
- Proselyte baptism; pagans; "new birth"

FORGIVENESS, CLEANSING

- Priestly cleansing/consecration
- Bapt. Consecrates us to the priestly service of prayer and praise
- It sets us apart to serve the living and true God

Act 2:38

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." [Repentance/faith accompanied the rite of baptism]

Luke 3.3

And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 22.16

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

Eze 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. 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. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. [Promise of NC; sealed by bap.]

Psalm 51.2-7

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin! ... Purge
me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than
snow.

John 3.23-26

John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized ... Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness-- look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him."

Heb 10.19-22

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain ... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

End of Lesson Seven