

Means of Grace, Lesson #6

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 28

WCF

1. *Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also, to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life. Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world.*

Testimony

1. *All those who have received baptism are to be considered part of the covenant people of God.*

Baptism is a sacrament of the NT, ordained by Jesus Christ.

- Baptism is the outward sign of the new covenant just as circumcision was the external sign of the old covenant.
- There is continuity in substance between circumcision in the Old Testament and baptism in the New Testament
- The new covenant is a fulfillment of the promises God made to Abraham
- Since this is a “new” fulfillment of the promises of God, we see a new sign given to the people of God.
- New sign of baptism was instituted by Christ in Matt 28:19:
“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

John’s baptism is *not* the institution of New Testament baptism

- John’s baptism did not administer the sign of the new covenant.
- John’s baptism and baptism instituted by Jesus are not the same.
- Jesus’s baptism was marked by people’s entrance into fellowship and community with Him.
- John’s baptism was a cleansing rite in anticipation of the coming of the kingdom.
- Baptism as instituted by Christ, celebrates the beginning of the kingdom of God as it marks people’s entrance into this new covenant community, identifying them as part of the body of Jesus Christ.

Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church...

- Baptism signifies admission to the visible church

...to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace...

- The covenant of grace is God’s promise to all who believe that they will be redeemed and will receive all the benefits of being redeemed by Christ.
- How does one receive God’s promise in the covenant of grace? By Faith. This was true in the Old Testament, as well as the New.
- The sign of God’s promise does not guarantee the fulfillment of that promise.
- It guarantees God’s promise to all who believe by faith. Baptism is a sign and seal of God’s promise to the believer.

...Sign and seal of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life...

- In Baptism, we are united unto Christ. Baptism signifies our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Rom 6:3-6 “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”

Gal 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Col 2:11,12 “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

Baptism is a sign and seal of our regeneration

- Baptism is an external, visible sign of an internal, invisible work.
- God alone can raise me from spiritual death to newness of life in Christ and this new life is not caused by baptism but is *signified* by baptism.

Titus 3:4-5 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is a sign of remission of sins

- We are washed clean in the waters of baptism.

Baptism is a sign of a commitment to walk in newness of life.

- In baptism the entire scope of our redemption is signed and sealed in the promises of God.

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2. *The outward element to be used in this sacrament is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel, lawfully called thereunto.*

Testimony

2. *The church accepts as valid the baptism which has been administered in any true branch of the visible church.*