

Bible Doctrine

Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith

Lesson 44: Baptism

Chapter 27

November 4, 2023

I. Definition: “To dip repeatedly; to immerse; to cleanse by dipping or submerging; to overwhelm.”

“Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him: as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.”
Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 27.1

II. Early forms of baptism

A. Baptism of converts to Judaism.

“During the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament, a practice emerged among the Jews called ‘proselyte baptism.’ This was a purification rite for Gentiles, a bathing that symbolized the cleansing of people considered to be unclean. If a Gentile wanted to become a Jew, he was required to do three things. He had to make a profession of faith in Judaism. Then, if he was a male, he had to undergo circumcision. Finally, he had to undergo the purification rite of proselyte baptism because he was considered ceremonially unclean.” R.C. Sproul

B. John’s baptism of repentance.

Matthew 3:4-6, 11 - *Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him ⁶ and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. ... I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

Mark 1:4 - *John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Acts 13:24 - *after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.*

III. The importance of baptism

A. Baptism is commanded in Scripture.

Matthew 28:19-20 - *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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Acts 2:37-38 - *Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*

³⁸ *Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 10:47-48 - *“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

B. Baptism is a picture of our being risen with Christ.

Romans 6:3-5 - *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,*

Colossians 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.*

C. Baptism is a picture of being washed from our sins.

Acts 22:16 - *And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Titus 3:5 - *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,*

Hebrews 10:22 - *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

D. Baptism is a picture of our new life in Christ.

Romans 6:4 - *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.*

Galatians 3:27 - *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

E. Baptism unites us in Christ.

Galatians 3:26-29 - *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

1 Corinthians 12:13-14 - *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.*

London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689), Chapter 29.1

“Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him;¹ of remission of sins;² and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.”

¹ Rom. 6:3–5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27

² Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16

³ Rom. 6:4