Section: Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q111. What is baptism?**

Baptism is a holy, New Covenant ordinance from our Lord Jesus, whereby a professing believer in Jesus Christ testifies of his/her faith in Christ alone for salvation and his/her union with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection by the public testimony of immersion in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is to be done once and in no way contributes to one’s salvation.

Let’s pray…

In the typical catechism form, I want to walk us through our answer to Q111 and take each part of the answer in smaller chunks to unpack it further for you to really understand what Baptism is.

Beginning with: “Baptism is a **holy**, **New Covenant ordinance**”

**Matthew 28:18-20** **And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

We see the ordinance of baptism clearly commanded by Jesus in the Matthew passage, but when did Jesus give this command?

This took place during His time bodily here on Earth, in this case after His death burial and resurrection. Therefore, we know this command was given to us in the New Covenant. This is the Covenant that remains now, that we have the blessing of being in. Anyone who lives after Christ was resurrected and is given faith in Him, should enjoy and must obey this ordinance.

Like in previous convents, the Triune God (who sets the covenant terms and is the only lawgiver), has issued positive laws for those in the New Covenant.

Positive Law is law and commands based on the will of God for a particular people, a particular purpose, and a particular time.

For The Covenant of Grace, the law is not a burden to earn covenant rewards, rather, it is a part of the covenant rewards. It is a blessing to have the Law (to KNOW GOD’S WILL for us) and to have God working obedience in us (CAUSING US TO DO GOOD WORKS FOR HIS GLORY AND THE GOOD OF OTHERS AND OURSELVES). What a blessing!

So, Baptism is a New Covenant positive law— “a holy, New Covenant ordinance.”

The 1689 2LBC states:

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution. They are appointed by the Lord Jesus the only lawgiver and are to be continued in his church to the end of the age.

Our answer continues, “**from our Lord Jesus**”

We see this clear command from Jesus in the great commission passage we read when we began the lecture. We also saw this truth declared in the 1689 Baptist confession. The command Jesus gave was to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...” Clearly Jesus institutes baptism through this command to all believers then and who came after this command was given. It is right and proper that God the Son, the Lord Jesus himself, would communicate this ordnance to us, for He is the King of the eternal Kingdom we are a part of and enjoy as Christians. The King has spoken, this was instituted by the Lord Jesus during His bodily time on earth after His death and resurrection from the grave. This was done by Jesus for the New Covenant, clearly making this ordinance something to be done from then-onward in this first creation. Those living before the New Covenant was formally established were not commanded by Jesus to be baptized. But now, we have the law, this ordinance, as a blessing to us—as good and perfect instruction *from Jesus* for His glory and our good.

Our answer continues “**whereby a professing believer in Jesus Christ testifies of his/her faith in Christ alone for salvation”**

Baptism is a joyful celebration of a once condemned sinner proclaiming to the church family the amazing saving grace given to them by God. It is symbolic in nature to show that the person being baptized has been given new birth and was buried with Christ Jesus in His death and raised to new life in Jesus’s glorious resurrection. This is a great testimony from the person to the church and the world around them that they have been saved by grace alone through faith in Christ Jesus.

God’s word clearly commands what is commonly referred to as believer’s baptism or credo baptism. This means the ordinance of baptism should be administered to anyone who cannot make a credible proclamation of faith. If baptism is a testimony of the salvation that God has given to the one being baptized and of his or her union to Christ as our answer states, it would make no sense to baptize someone who cannot or does not have a credible proclamation of faith. More than what makes sense, the Bible is clear: baptism is for professing believers in Jesus Christ. Baptism is dependent upon personal testimony of a person’s faith in Christ alone.

Now, because the commandment that Jesus gave was so clear, **all who** and **only those who** profess faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, in a credible way, should be baptized. To be clear, there is not a minimum or maximum age, rather we believe this should be done on a case-by-case basis.

If you live under the New Covenant and you have been saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, then you have been commanded to be baptized. So, everyone who has been given new life and faith should be baptized.

So how do we know if someone has truly been saved? Since we cannot see a person’s heart (their spiritual reality), there is no 100% way for us to do this, however we use our discretion, according to Scripture, as well as we can before we perform baptisms. For example, if a youth student comes to me wanting to be baptized I must have a conversation with him/her to see if he/she understands what grace is, what faith is, and what baptism is.

If he/she is indeed able to express to me what saving faith is and why/how it is important and done and that he/she is credibly professing that faith and is ready to proclaim his/her faith via baptism to our church family, then I would say it’s ok to move forward with this.

We do take this caution because we do not want to just baptize a bunch of people who later would say “I didn’t really understand the gospel and salvation when this happened. Or, I wasn’t honestly making a profession of faith.” It is loving to help flush these things out for younger professors (those professing faith) or newer folks to Christianity in order to lead them well into this ordinance. On the other side of this coin we do not want to withhold this ordinance from someone who truly is professing faith simply because of age.

This is why when we consider baptizing someone who is seeking that out, we consider their profession of faith and walk through these details with them. We do this so that to the best of our ability, we are able to confirm that the person being baptized understands the claim each is making about saving faith.

To be clear, not everyone who gets baptized is a genuine believer. There are many people who do not believe but thought they did at some point and were baptized, so this is not fail proof. Our aim is simply to perform our due diligence out of reverence to God and love for those who truly desire to be baptized.

Continuing with our answer whereby a professing believer in Jesus Christ testifies of his/her faith in Christ alone for salvation “**and their union with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection by the public testimony**”

The 1689 2LBCF declares:

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. To those baptized it is a sign of their fellowship with him in his death and resurrection, of their being grafted into him, of remission of sins, and of submitting themselves to God through Jesus Christ to live and walk in newness of life.

One reason the ordinance of baptism has been given to us as believers for the purpose of proclaiming to those around us that God has saved us by Jesus’ work alone and given us faith in Christ Jesus as our Lord and savior.

It is a gift to us, the believers, as a means of grace, meaning that it is a great reminder and lifter of our souls to physically display or see someone else display what has happened spiritually.

The ordinance of baptism gives us a greater understanding of what we are proclaiming to believe.

ILL: Let me explain what I mean. We all have different ways of learning. Are there any teachers in here? What are the different ways people learn? Right, hearing, feeling, seeing, touching, and tasting. Some of us learn well when we read, others retain more when we listen. You guys get my point, right?

When the believer is baptized it not only puts on display for the church and world a physically visual symbolism of Jesus’ work for His beloved, it also gives the professor a literal physical experience through sight and feeling to remind us that it cost Jesus his life and because of his work we are raised to new life in Him!!

The visual display is so very clear, the person getting baptized is declaring his/her faith in the death burial and resurrection of their Savior. When I got baptized I was declaring that because Christ died for me, I too in Him am dying to myself and burying my old life with or in and through Christ’s death and burial. My old self died with Christ (being dunked under the water represents Christ’s death and burial) and God rose me to new life as Christ was raised to new life (being raised up from the water as Christ was raised from the grave).

This a representation to the spiritual reality that has happened before baptism by the Holy Spirit’s work of causing new birth by grace alone. New life is **in** Christ, we are eternally united to Christ. The reason I have been raised is because I am in Christ now.

The whole visual picture of baptism so amazingly displays the spiritual truth that has taken place in the heart of a sinner who has been regenerated. Because Christ died, was buried, and rose defeating sin and death for all who are his, when the Holy Spirit causes the elect person to be “born again” and gives each one faith, He is applying Jesus’ death and victorious resurrection to the believer.

This regeneration is outside of our human ability to see, so we count it as a blessing that we’ve been given the commandment of baptism because it helps give us a visual representation of what happened in our hearts **before** the baptism to declare and celebrate the faith that God has previously given to the believer. This is why it is a public testimony!

This public testimony is also a way for the believer and the church to come together, to make a commitment to each other to hold each other to what we are proclaiming and build each other up in our faith. How good is it to have your church family loving and building and growing together with you?! Do you see how gracious this ordinance is?!

Let’s keep going, our answer goes on, Baptism is “**of immersion in water**”

Immersion is the proper, biblical method. There are a few reasons why we do not sprinkle people for baptism.

If baptism is meant to put on display Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection then it is proper to submerge the one being baptized as when Christ died he was placed in the earth.

Additionally, when we read the baptism examples the Lord ordained for us in Scripture, we see that each and every case is by *immersion* in water. God’s word is the standard.

And, in line with this, the historic confession declares this as well:

Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary for this ordinance to be administered properly.

People who sprinkle water for baptism are connecting this ordinance to the old covenant system of animal sacrifice, but there is not any biblical evidence of that. Again, the examples given in the New Testament are examples of submersion…There’s no example of sprinkling or splashing, so this is our effort to follow what scripture teaches. Jesus himself was fully submerged when baptized.

Next in the answer, Baptism is done “**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**”. If baptism represents the work of God in our salvation then we must see the clarity that we are to be baptized in the name of our triune God!

Our historic confession also aligns with this:

The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, in which the individual is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Based on God having one eternal will, each of the three Persons carries out the same plan of salvation and judgment. God the Father chose the elect before the foundation of the world, Jesus died exclusively for those elect people, and the Holy Spirit only regenerates those same elect people.

The elect chosen people of God is who Christ came to die for, remember our teaching on particular redemption. Christ’s work did not simply make salvation possible, it assured salvation, it made certain the salvation of all the elect of God. There will not be one drop of our Savior’s blood that was shed in vain! Praise God!!

The Holy Spirit acting in unison with the Father and the Son causes regeneration or new birth in the elect man or woman of God. Salvation was decided, accomplished, and applied by our triune God so therefore we express God’s work and get baptized in the name of The Father, in the name of The Son, and in the name of The Holy Spirit! Christian, praise God for His work of salvation! This is why we baptize in the name of our triune God-- we acknowledge the role of each member of the trinity and praise God for His work to save us!

Notice another beautiful part of this is the unity and purpose of the God head. The persons of the triune God are always in complete unison! The Father elects us, the Son pays our debt and protects us, the Spirit resurrects us and this beautiful picture is what we testify to when we get baptized!!!

Finally our answer states, “**Baptism is to be done once and in no way contributes to one’s salvation.**”

I want to make the first part of this point clear and concise because we need to spend some time showing you that baptism in no way contributes to salvation.

We are to be baptized once; It make sense that if baptism is done to testify of Gods work in our hearts then this work is done once and remains. I am not saved then lost then saved again.

Just as my salvation was a onetime act of God (though it’s evidenced in ongoing faith) my testimony of this through the ordinance of baptism is only done once as a true believer.

So what about those who were said to be baptized under a superficial faith claim or otherwise a lack of saving faith, such as in a false religion or as a baby or young child before a true testimony of faith?

If the action was done *prior to* genuine, personal profession of faith in Christ alone, then the action was not an actual biblical/Christian baptism. In that case you should be baptized—not again, but for the first time.

If you’re unclear here, Talk to the elders, and discuss what happened so a determination can be made and, if needed, baptism can happen! Leadership would love nothing more than to come along side of you and clear up any confusion you may have over this! Please if you have questions, reach out!

Moving to our last part of the answer; ***Baptism in no way contributes to one’s salvation.***

False religions or many misguided say wrongly that baptism saves you, that there is a literal salvific work in the physical act of baptism…or that baptism is needed to be saved (such as faith PLUS baptism).

In fact, the scriptures may seem to speak about baptism in such a way that if you do not understand how to interpret or exegete the passages properly you could make the same mistake. Let’s consider this for a second:

**1 Peter 3:21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,**

**Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

**Romans 6:1What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**

**5For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7For one who has died has been set free from sin.**

On the surface it really seems as if these passages are claiming that baptism is what saves you, or at the very least faith + baptism. So how do we know that this cannot be the meaning behind these texts? We must consider these verses in light of all scripture! The constant theme and clear teaching all throughout the entire bible is that you are truly saved by God through gifted faith alone. Not baptism, not works, not your own will…

We have made this truth known well here at Disciples Church so I won’t spend much time defending this statement. Let’s look at 1 passage in John’s 1st epistle.

**1st John 4:7-10 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves *has been born of God* and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, *not that we have loved God but that he loved us* and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

You see in order for us to love God, He had to love us first. And whoever loves “has been born of God”. See the past tense! If you love the brothers (fellow Christians) and God, it is only because you had been born again. New birth produces faith and love for God!

New birth did not happen because we got baptized, rather we believers got baptized because we were first given new birth—born again—by God and then repented of sin and trusted in Christ.

So when we see scripture that seems to say that the action of baptism saves you, you must weigh it in light of all scripture.

Here is some more proof that baptism does not save:

**Luke 23:39-43 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

There is zero evidence that the thief on the cross was ever baptized, but what is evident is that he believed in Christ and his kingdom and Jesus declared him to be saved. The constant theme throughout scripture is that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone.

So what do we do with the earlier passages? Let’s walk through them quickly:

**1 Peter 3:21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,**

Here is a snippet from John Piper about this passage and how it relates to salvation: “Peter seems very aware that his words are open to dangerous misuse. This is why, as soon as they are out of his mouth, as it were, he qualifies them lest we take them the wrong way. In verse 21 he does say, "Baptism now saves you" - that sounds like the water has a saving effect in and of itself apart from faith. He knows that is what it sounds like and so he adds immediately, "Not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

But the point seems to be this: When I speak of baptism saving, Peter says, I don't mean that the water, immersing the body and cleansing the flesh, is of any saving effect; what I mean is that, insofar as baptism is "an appeal to God for a good conscience," (or is "a pledge of a good conscience toward God"), it saves.

Paul said in Romans 10:13, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord - everyone who appeals to the Lord - will be saved." Paul does not mean that faith alone fails to save. He means that faith calls on God. That's what faith does. Now Peter is saying, "Baptism is the God-ordained, symbolic expression of that call to God. It is an appeal to God - either in the form of repentance or in the form of commitment.””

So what about Mark 16:16?

**Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

The answer is again very similar to our last quote from Piper. Mark is not saying that baptism saves, he is saying that faith produces an appeal to God and the commanded appeal to God is baptism, so whoever believes will be saved and will express their belief through baptism.

Now we will talk more in a minute about baptizing people who do not claim to have faith but for now let’s look at the Romans passage:

**Romans 6:1-7 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**

**For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.**

**We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.**

This passage in Romans is Paul doing what Paul does best. Paul is trying to give us a mental picture of how things relate to each other. The baptism here in verse 3 is not an action that saved us, Paul is speaking to people who have already received the grace of God. Unfortunately they are applying the principle of grace in an incorrect way, that’s why he starts the section with the phrase, **“Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”** You see here Paul is talking to those who are already believers (we who died to sin) but who are abusing or misunderstanding grace.

Then as he continues he’s showing us how our baptism relates to the saving work of Christ which has already happened. He is not talking about how this could happen and save you. Paul is saying the baptism that you did (after and because of your faith) represents this literal death that Christ died and if you have died with Christ to sin then why do you think that grace would permit you to continue in sin! That’s the whole point of this part of the letter. Paul would go on to say again “shall we sin since we are under grace and not the law?” His heavy and clear answer is NO!

Paul’s use of baptism here is descriptive of what happened when God saved you, it is not prescriptive to tell you how to be saved. If Paul meant that baptism saved he would have said “shall we go on sinning all the more so we can continue getting baptized?”

We have to see here that this passage actually reinforces the earlier section where I told you what baptism was. In fact this is an amazing description of what baptism represents. These verses are the typical case of description not prescription.

Let me explain this concept for you. Verses that describe what the life of a believer looks like, are different than verses that tell you what must happen for you to be a believer. I’ll try to sum this up with two sentences:

**Descriptive** literature is that which describes what happened.

**Prescriptive** literature commands the reader to a course of action.

So is Paul describing what happened to us and how baptism relates to this work of Jesus, or is Paul telling us to get baptized because baptism is what applies this work of Jesus to us? A careful look at this passage will show us that he is already talking to people that are believers, he then describes what happens to a believer and how the baptism a believer participates in relates to the work Jesus did in order to save that person.

It is not hard to see how people can be confused about baptism when it comes to these passages but we must always read scripture in light of its entire revelation so that we do not take pieces here and there and misunderstand what the author meant.

So I’ve explained what baptism is and I’ve explained how it does not save. Now I want to focus on a big controversy when it comes to baptism. The neat part about addressing this controversy is that it should actually leave you with a more solid foundation for the things I have already taught tonight.

**Credobaptism or Paedobaptism:**

If you were paying attention earlier, you would have heard me say that baptism is only for those who make a credible profession of faith.

Paedobaptists believe that baptism was given to those who are a part of the new covenant ***and to their children***.

Paedobaptists give various reasons they perform infant baptism. For example, they assume that when scripture testifies of someone’s household being baptized that there must have been babies in that household.

Ultimately, their covenant theology views enforce their belief that children of believing parents should get at least one covenant sign, namely baptism. Their reasoning is since the Old Covenant included covenant signs for the kids, so does the New Covenant. **But Scripture nowhere teaches that.**

This where I believe the big miss lies in the hands of the Paedobaptists. Instead, when you take a right understanding of the New Covenant people of God and add to it that fact that there are zero references to infant baptism, zero occurrences of infant baptism, and zero commandments on the New Covenant people to baptize infants the clarity of scripture rings through.

One other point that’s helpful is this, every clear example of New Covenant baptism in the New Testament was done after the person had faith. If the early church, Jesus’ own apostles, and the scriptures give zero evidence that this was practiced then it is clear that infant baptism is not a biblical idea.

Again the 1689 rightly declares:

Those who personally profess repentance toward God and faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.

The biblical evidence is overwhelming, none for infant baptism vs. every clear account of baptism having being done to believers. If baptism is a sign commanded for the New Covenant people and the true New Covenant people are all the truly saved (unlike the Old Covenant) then only people who belong to that covenant should partake, just like we warn those who do not believe to not partake in communion, why would we baptize those who could not possibly profess faith.

Since infants cannot make a credible profession of faith, and we see in Scripture a profession must come first in order to get baptized, we do not baptize infants. The biblical command and the evidence of the New Testament point solely to believers alone being baptized.

For example: **Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.**

Notice how clearly faith precedes baptism here. When they believed THEN they were baptized. Careful looking at scripture would reveal that this is the case throughout the New Testament: faith precedes (it comes before) baptism.

There are other verses that are used to attempt to show that an entire family was baptized and the argument is surely there must have been infants in those families. Unfortunately, this is just conjecture and in those passages they will speak about faith not just families being baptized. Let me walk through a few of them now.

**Acts 16:14-15 14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.**

Notice here that the Lord opened her heart, this is the clear effectual calling of God that we saw in the Acts passage. She was given saving faith, she was saved. The passage goes on to say after faith she was baptized and her family as well. This does not mean she had infants that were baptized or that unbelievers in her home were baptized even though they did not believe.

To make that leap is simply guessing—reading something into the text of Scripture that is not said. Again the scriptures do not say, in this passage or anywhere else, that infants were ever baptized. Notice how faith precedes baptism in this passage, God opened her heart then she was baptized, her and her house. Let’s look at our next passage:

**Acts 16:31-34 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them.**

**And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.**

This passage is a great example of what we mean when we say faith precedes baptism. The passage begins with BELIEVE “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” So how will their household be saved? They and their household will be saved through faith, through belief. And faith of who, just one person? Is that how we are saved….one person in the family believes so all are saved. No, Scripture elsewhere is extra clear, each person must believe personally to be saved. So, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” Does not mean, if one person believes then all are saved.

After this command he follows with: 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

Similarly, “he and all his family” being baptized means each person would have had the testimony of belief we just talked about.

The entire house was spoken to, all of them heard the gospel. This would imply that those who were there were of an age to understand what Paul was telling them. Assuming that this household included infants is just that, it’s an assumption and not a good one—it’s reading something into the text of Scripture that is not said. We’ve got to be careful when we make these leaps if you base your doxology on possibilities that are not properly taken from Scripture I do believe it can lead to false understandings and practices.

Now I want to clarify something, though we disagree with Paedobaptism (infant baptism) if those who support it rightly believe baptism doesn’t save or play a role in salvation, only faith in Christ alone saves, but baptize some wrongly, then they are in error on the baptism matter, but still brothers in Christ. I can have brothers in Christ who get this wrong and in fact I have many that I study and glean from who do indeed get this point wrong.

It is our duty as teachers to present to you what scripture shows us and there is simply no sign of infants or unbelievers being baptized in the scriptures. Now notice how this passage ends: Acts 16:34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

They rejoiced in God, in the reality of faith, in the gospel! The entire household rejoiced! This simply solidifies the fact that those who were baptized were believers.

Here is one more account where faith clearly precedes baptism:

**Acts 10:44-48 44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, 47 “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.**

In this passage, Peter proclaims can anyone withhold baptism from these people “who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” As soon as Peter realizes what has happened, that God has given them the Holy Spirit Peter immediately says lets baptize them! You cannot make an argument for baptism to precede faith here it is very clear that baptism is for those who have received the Holy Spirit or better said those who have been born again by the Spirit and given faith.

Perhaps these quick views of some passages leave you wanting more teaching and Bible study. If that’s the case, or in general, let me recommend that you go back to Pastor Matt’s Covenant Theology teaching series from early 2020.

That whole series will help you have a greater depth on these things and speaks specifically to this topic after the foundation has been laid. In that you’ll hear Matt also teach that **“in Scripture, there are no commands to baptize infants, there are no clear examples of infants being baptized, and there is no other clear evidence for infant baptism in the Bible.” Rather, “Scripture puts forth (by command and example and evidence and by the Covenant Theology of the Bible rightly known) that only those personally claiming to be disciples of Christ are to receive and partake in the signs of His covenant.”**

So, you may have missed that, or forgotten that, or otherwise was distracted by the early Covid-19 happenings (as some of his lessons happened right when we went to video only for Midweek for a bit), if so please check out the audio at the link in your notes.

Covenant Theology – A Baptist View: https://discipleschurch.com/bct/

So let’s start to wrap this up by looking again at our questions and answer again.

**Q111. What is *baptism*?**

Baptism is a holy, New Covenant ordinance from our Lord Jesus, whereby a professing believer in Jesus Christ testifies of his/her faith in Christ alone for salvation and his/her union with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection by the public testimony of immersion in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is to be done once and in no way contributes to one’s salvation.

Baptism is a holy, New Covenant ordinance from our Lord Jesus. This is made clear in his final charge to the Apostles before he ascended back into heaven, the charge to go and make disciples and baptize them. Our answer continues “whereby a professing believer in Jesus Christ testifies of their faith in Christ alone for salvation and their union with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection by the public testimony of immersion in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” again baptism is a testimony to the church an outward physical expression of what the triune God has done in our hearts. What a unique and beautiful display of the gospel given to us “who are believing” to testify of the work God has done in us! Baptism is done by submersion as evidenced and modeled by Scripture.

It is to be done once and in no way contributes to one’s salvation.” We do not baptize every time we sin, our skin probably couldn’t handle constantly being in water. Can you imagine how pruned you’d be if this was the case. But why do we only get baptized once? It is clear in scripture that you get baptized to testify to your faith, faith that is genuine doesn’t go away, and therefore, there is no reason to be baptized twice.

Baptism does not contribute to your salvation, if it did the thief on the cross could not have been saved. In fact, none of the saints in the Old Testament could have been saved just think about the logic of that. Baptism is a beautiful ordinance given to those who are a part of the New Covenant. Members of the New Covenant (and all the elect believers throughout the history of man) have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus alone! I really think we will be shocked at how we just don’t get the depth and beauty of God’s grace to give us something like baptism to celebrate and glorify the treasure of our hearts our God! It is a gracious gift given to us and our goal is to rightly handle it in our desire to rightly honor our Lord!

So for those of you who have not been baptized but are a believer, let’s talk. Grab a leader and let’s celebrate this gracious gift! For those of you who may be confused about your past experience please, please grab a leader or myself and let’s grab a coffee or lunch and let’s talk about it. Our aim is that you would glorify God through your enjoyment of and delightful obedience to His word. God is so good amen?!

Let’s pray