

Baptist Distinctives- Baptism + Regenerate Church Membership

What is Baptism?

Modes of Baptism?

Covenant

Is Baptism Necessary?

What is baptism?

- Baptism is the act of declaring one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as King.
- It is also a sign of being under the Covenant of Grace.
- The Greek word for Baptize, or Baptized, is found 63 times in the New Testament.
- "Baptism is...a two-way declaration. On the one hand, it is God's visible promise that all who are in His Son are new creations by virtue of their union with Christ in His death and resurrection. And on the other hand, it is the individual's profession of faith in those very promises." - Samuel Renihan

A Two Way Declaration

1) New Creation

- We are told in Romans 6:3-5 that those who are joined to Christ are joined to Him in His life and in His death. If we are joined to Christ in this way then we will share the resurrection that He Himself partook of.
- Baptism is a public declaration of someone being born again in Christ.
- Are all people who have been baptized saved? No. False professions do happen.

2) Individual Proclamation

- 1 Peter 3:21-22
- We are joined to Christ's promises through His resurrection.
- Baptism is a public display of faith in those promises.
- Baptism doesn't serve some magical purpose in which our sins are "washed away" by the water but rather an announcement that one has already been made clean by the finished work of Jesus.

Modes of baptism

1) Pouring or Sprinkling

- Many denominations such as Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Lutherans practice baptism by pouring or sprinkling.
- This is an act of a person having water poured or sprinkled on the top of their head rather than being fully immersed in water.

2) Immersion

- Baptists are unique among the Protestant churches due to their strict adherence to baptism by immersion only.
- The Greek word for Baptism is *Baptizo*.
- *Baptizo* means to dip, immerse, or sink.
- The original texts paint the picture that in order to properly baptize someone they should be completely immersed under the water.
- This also mirrors Christ's death and resurrection. (Going down and coming back up)

Paedobaptism

- Paedobaptism is the act of baptizing infants or small children whether they have made a profession of faith in Christ or not.
- Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, and others practice paedobaptism.

Credobaptism

- Credobaptism is the act of baptizing children or adults who have made professions of faith in Jesus not only as savior but also as Lord.
- While not unique to Baptists it is usually the Baptists that rigorously hold to this form of baptism.

Acts 2:38-38

- This passage is the battleground between Paedobaptists and Credobaptists.
- Peter is preaching at Pentecost and he wraps up the sermon by telling them that the promise of salvation through Christ is for all people.
- You and your children, for all who are far off, and everyone whom the Lord calls.
- Most Paedobaptists will stop with “you and your children” but the verse continues.
- The key here is “everyone whom the Lord calls”.
- God is sovereign over who His people are and He enters into covenant with them through Christ not familial relations.

Covenant

- God has made many different covenants throughout the Bible.
- Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Davidic, etc.
- The Old Testaments covenants fall under the covenant of works.
- They required perfect obedience in order to remain in good standing but we all know that did not happen nor was it even possible.
- The sign of the old covenant was circumcision.
- The removal of a male's foreskin was a visible sign that he was a part of the covenant people of God.
- The New Covenant is the covenant that God brought through Christ.
- Christ did not abolish the old covenant rather He fulfilled it and completed it.
- We now have a new covenant and that is one of grace.
- The work of Christ on our behalf is finished.
- The sign of this new covenant is baptism.
- Circumcision and baptism are often seen as two sides of the same coin but that is untrue.
- Circumcision allowed for people to trust in their lineage rather than the faith that God has appointed them.
- Baptism is a sign, not of an outward circumcision, but of an inward circumcision.
- Romans 2:29
- Ezekiel 36:26
- The act of baptism doesn't bring someone into the new covenant; rather it is a sign that they are born again by the Holy Spirit into the family of God.
- This family is called Israel, Spiritual Israel, or True Israel.

Is baptism necessary?

- If you're asking the question in regard to salvation then the answer is no.
- Baptism does not save.
- Only faith in the finished work and person of Jesus Christ saves.
- Baptism is the first commandment and expectation of a new believer so it is very important.
- If someone claims to be born again but has no desire for or will not be obedient to the command to be baptized then there is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Regenerate Church Membership

- As Baptists we believe that membership, or partnership, with a local body of believers is vital to one's spiritual growth as well as obedience to Scripture.
- Each member must be a born again believer in Christ with evidentiary spiritual fruit as well as having been baptized by immersion.