

BLESSEDNESS OF THE TRUTH: THE SIGN OF BAPTISM

Intro: - Because baptism is a means God has instituted in his church, as a picture of salvation in Jesus Christ, it is important!

I. AN INSTITUTED SIGN.

- A. The necessity of being instituted.
 1. A certain rite or ceremony in order to be a sacrament **MUST BE DIVINELY INSTITUTED.**
 2. Bread, Wine, and water are by their nature symbols of *nourishment* and *purification*.
 3. But this does not constitute them as sacraments (ex. marriage is a symbol of our union with Christ).
 4. These symbols and rites must be divinely appointed or ordained and instituted in the church.
 5. Then they must be observed by the **whole church**.
- B. OT washings and purification:
 1. These were instituted by divine law, a foreshadowing of the sacrament of baptism.
 2. Symbolized was a spiritual purification. But they were not a sacrament observed by the whole church.
 3. Just special cases: a woman after child-birth, contact with a dead body, eating something that had died of itself.
 4. There was the baptism of proselytes: a sign along with circumcision of inclusion into the Jewish nation.
 5. The baptism of John: God himself sent John to baptize (Jn.1:33). What a shock, he baptized not proselytes, but Israelites.
 6. It was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Even Jesus is baptized as the head of his guilty people!
- C. Baptism formally instituted by Christ at his glorification and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 1. Then the disciples are commanded to go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father, Son, Holy Spirit (Matt.28)
 2. The sign is given in Matt 28, the seal is given in Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."
 3. Therefore baptism is a sacrament instituted by Christ, to be observed by the church, and administered by the church.
 4. This is a means of grace along with the preaching of the Gospel.
 5. Jesus instituted the sacrament of baptism to teach us our need for him to have covenant fellowship with God.
 6. Jesus instituted baptism to teach us that we enter this covenant relationship with God only through Jesus Christ by faith.
 - a. This is needed because of our sin.
 - b. We need union with Christ by faith, as is clear from Mark 16:16.

II. A MEANINGFUL SIGN.

- A. The formula of baptism: inclusion into, made one with.
 1. Means ***incorporation into the fellowship of God triune*** in Christ Jesus. (Therefore is done only once).
 2. Baptized into the name of God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit does not mean "by the authority of", but "into the fellowship of".
 3. Noah and his family were all in the Ark, one in the Ark which is Christ.
 4. So the Israelites at the Red Sea were baptized unto Moses, a type of Christ (I Cor.10:1,2).
- B. The mode of baptism:
 1. There are those who insist that immersion is the only correct mode, even as there are those who insist on sprinkling alone!
 2. We acknowledge that both ways are acceptable, the complete sign of baptism is represented by immersion (Rom.6).
 3. Sprinkling is sufficient, for salvation is not in the water or the amount. It is merely a symbol (John 13:4-10).
 4. There are plenty of indications in Scripture that sprinkling was used: the 3000, Cornelius and Phillippine jailor, Hebr.10:22.
- C. A sign of remission of sins:
 1. The sprinkling with water is a sign of the real baptism, which is the washing away of our sins in the blood of Jesus Christ.
 2. The washing of water is the sign of baptism. Why water? (I Peter 3:20,21)
 3. As water washes externally the body, so surely the blood of Jesus washes away our sins. There is forgiveness of sins.
 4. Our need for Christ's blood is pointed out in the account of Jesus' own baptism. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness.
- D. A sign of regeneration, purification, renewal:
 1. The sacrament of baptism signifies much more than just the washing away of sin. This is evident from Rom. 6:3-6.
 2. This is also evident in the two great OT types: Food and Red Sea: separation from the wicked and new life.
 3. This is the point of John the Baptism: the two baptisms are similar, but Christ's is greater: he baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
 4. The Holy Spirit incorporates us into Christ, gives new life. This is the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5).
 5. The fruit of this washing is sanctification: we live a new godly life.

III. A BLESSED SIGN.

- A. The blessing of baptism is only for the elect people of God, who are true believers, and their spiritual seed
 1. The waters of the flood were a blessing for Noah and his family, not for the wicked world which was immersed, not saved.
 2. The waters of the Red Sea were a blessing for believing Israel, not for wicked Pharaoh and his host who drowned.
 3. This is true because this all takes place by faith; not out of custom or superstition that the water itself saves! (Hebr. 11:29)
 4. So God works in baptism the same way he does in the preaching, the chief means of grace (Matt. 3:12).
 5. A blessing to those who believe, it adds to the condemnation of those who walk in disobedience and rebellion!
- B. The blessing for the child of God is so great!
 1. The sign of baptism is given so that we are strengthened in our faith in Jesus Christ!
 2. But we are also renewed in taking up our obligations towards God.
 3. It is a sign of the covenant (Rom.4:11): a sign of our church membership, separation from the world, our part in the cov.
- C. Baptism serves to declare more fully and seal the promise of the gospel.
 1. More fully: not of course, than the Word, but more fully with the Word.
 2. The Word is always the chief means of grace: and without the Word, the sacraments mean nothing.
 3. Baptism supplements the Word by its sign and seal of the promise.
 4. Sealed are not the persons baptized, but the promise of the gospel, a promise that concerns the elect alone.
 5. An unconditional promise that can never fail to be realized: A sign and seal of God's promise.