

**Galatians 3:19-29**

As we just read in **Gal 3**, it is essential that churches teach the law so that it can act as a schoolmaster or mentor to lead us to Christ. As we just read, **vv21-22** say: “if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. <sup>22</sup>But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

1. It is from the law that we see our sin & our need for Christ. That is what is meant by **v24**: “the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.”
2. Paul then moved-on to teach on the rich, beautiful sacrament of baptism. → **vv27-29**

sec 1. “Baptism is a sacrament of the NT, ordained by Jesus Christ, ... for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church;...”

A. When there is a baptism, there is solemn or serious act of devotion involved on the part of the believer who is being baptized as an adult or on the part of believing parents who bring their child to be baptized. It not to be taken lightly; solemn vows are taken during this sacrament.

B. It is through baptism that one is admitted into the visible church. **Gal 3:27** “all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

1. The OPC uses this as a proof text for baptism as admission into the visible church.
2. Being clothed with Christ speaks of the necessity of having been dressed in the robes of righteousness that only Christ can provide.
  - a. **Rev 7:14** speaks of saints who “have washed their robes & made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
  - b. Again, baptism does not save you but it is a sign or representation of what Christ has done to save us.<sup>1</sup>
  - c. Lest someone say the Westminster Standards teach baptismal regeneration, look at WSC 91: “How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?”  
Answer. “The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, & the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.”
    - 1) The many benefits of this sacrament are not automatically given to everyone who receives it.
    - 2) Key here is that there must be faith united to this sacrament. When we get to sec 4, I will explain how faith is intimately involved in the baptism of the infants of one or both believing parents.

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<sup>1</sup> See 1 Peter 3:21 & my sermon on WCF 27, sections 2-3 – “How Sacraments Extend Grace.”

Sec 1 continues to teach that for the one who has received this sacrament, baptism is “to be unto him a sign & seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, & of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.”

A. Perhaps you never thought so much rich meaning was loaded into this sacrament.

B. G.I. Williamson wrote about this in his commentary on the WCF.<sup>2</sup>

Sec 1 closes by saying, “Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His church until the end of the world.”

The appointment or institution of baptism comes from **Mat 28:19-20**: **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

1. In this passage, **“the end of the age”** is synonymous with “the end of the world” in sec 1 above.

2. We must interpret end of the world as “end of the world” as we know it when Christ returns. The mandate to baptize and carry out the Great Commission must continue until the end of this present world. Two passages must be put together to understand what will happen when Christ returns:

a. **2 Pet 3:7**: **“by His word the present heavens & earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment & destruction of ungodly men.”**

b. **Rev 21:1-2**: **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the 1st heaven & the 1<sup>st</sup> earth passed away, & there is no longer *any* sea. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”**

c. The church’s carrying out of the Great Commission including the sacrament of baptism must continue until these events com to pass.

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<sup>2</sup> Williamson, G.I. *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes*, p269.