

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

THE BAPTIST CATECHISM*

Q97 - What is baptism?

A97 - Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament instituted by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death, burial, and resurrection; of his being ingrafted into him; of remission of sins; and of his giving up himself unto God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life.

Q98 - To whom is baptism to be administered?

A98 - Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other.

* The Baptist Catechism is found in "Teaching Truth, Training Hearts" by Dr. Tom J. Nettles

THE DIDACHE (Church Manual from c. 50-100 AD*)

And concerning baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have not living water, baptize into other water; and if you can not in cold, in warm. But if you have not either, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whatever others can; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

* The Didache is not inspired, inerrant Scripture. Inclusion of the Didache is used for historical and informative purposes only.



- What is your experience with baptism?
- What are some of the ways that you have heard others talk about baptism (whether inside or outside of the Church)?
- What does witnessing a baptism do to you? Do you cry, smile, rejoice? Does watching a baptism make you think of anything?
- Do you think baptism is important? Why or why not?
- Are there any stories of baptism in Scripture that are particularly meaningful to you? Why is that?



SCRIPTURAL COMMAND, HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

EXPLORING THE BIBLE PASSAGES THAT INFORM THIS ORDINANCE

In order to best understand baptism, it is wise for Christians to know passages that inform this act of obedience. As a group, read the following passages.

Matthew 3:13-17

Matthew 28:18-20

Romans 6:1-4

After reading the aforementioned passages as a group, answer the following questions.

- Based on the above passages, why would you say baptism is important? *Reasons can [and should] include Jesus' example, Jesus' command, and it declares our union with Jesus.*
- How did the Father feel about Jesus' baptism? How do you know?
- In what way(s) was Jesus' baptism an act of submission to the Father?
- What impact does that make for us?

WHO AND WHY?

Understanding Baptism for Ourselves and for Our Church

- Who should be baptized in the church? Why do you say that?
Consider reading Luke 3:3, Acts 8:36-38, Galatians 3:27 for help with the answer.
What observations do you make regarding baptism after reading these verses?
- Does baptism save you? Why do you say that?
Consider reading Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, Titus 3:5 for help with the answer.
What observations do you make regarding baptism after reading these verses?
- Why does Legacy immerse people fully when baptizing?
We immerse because it symbolizes Jesus' literal death and resurrection and our spiritual death and resurrection. As a side-note the word 'baptism' in Greek means dip or immerse. Most agree that this is the way the earliest followers of Jesus practiced baptism. Considering reading Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:3-4 for help with the answer.
What observations do you make regarding baptism after reading these verses?
- Professor of Theological Studies, Dr. Michael Svigel states that the essential marks of a true church should include **Orthodoxy** (proclaiming central truths), **Order** (biblically qualified and appointed leaders), and **Ordinances** (the practices of baptism as initiation into the covenant community and the Lord's Supper as the rite of sustained fellowship). Furthermore, he asserts that baptism and the Lord's Supper are sanctifying practices, meaning they help us grow in our faith. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why is that?

CLOSING

Nika Spaulding, Theologian in Residence at St. Jude Oak Cliff, states that all people, especially Christians should know and engage theology. The problem is not knowing the impact that theology has on our lives. Because of this, she ends her classes by asking "So what?" So what difference does this topic have on my life? And that is the question I leave us to answer today. So what difference does baptism make on my day to day life? Discuss before closing in prayer.