

SRC / WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING WATER BAPTISM

Chapter 29 From The 1689 London Baptist Confession

Of Baptism

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

Rom 6:3-5; Col 2:12; Gal 3:27; Mar 1:4; Act 22:16; Rom 6:4

2 Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance.

Mar 16:16; Act 8:36-37; 2:41; 8:12; 18:8

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

Mat 28:19-20; Act 8:38

4 Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance.

Mat 3:16; John 3:23

From “An Orthodox Catechism” by Hercules Collins

Q. 68. What is baptism?

A. Immersion or dipping of the person in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by such who are duly qualified by Christ (a). (a) Matt. 3: 16; 28: 19-20; John 3: 23; Acts 8: 38-39; Rom. 6: 4.

Q. 69. Who are the proper subjects of this ordinance?

A. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, and faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ (a). (a) Acts 2: 38; 8: 36-37.

Q. 70. Are infants to be baptized? A. None by no means, for we have neither precept nor example for that practice in all the book of God.

Q. 71. Do the Scriptures anywhere expressly forbid the baptism of infants?

A. It is sufficient that the divine oracle commands the baptizing of believers (a), unless we will make ourselves wiser than what is written. Nadab and Abihu were not forbidden to offer strange

fire, yet for so doing they incurred God's wrath, because they were commanded to take fire from the altar (b). (a) Matt. 28: 18-19; Mark 16: 16. (b) Lev. 9: 24; 10: 1-3.

Q. 72. May the infant seed of believers under the gospel be baptized just as the infant seed of Abraham under the law was circumcised?

A. No. Abraham had a command then from God to circumcise his infant seed, but believers have no command to baptize their infant seed under the gospel. (a) Gen. 17: 9-12.

Q. 73. Since some say that the infants of believers are in the covenant of grace with their parents, why may they not be baptized under the gospel, just as Abraham's infant seed was circumcised under the law?

A. By asserting that the infants of believers are in the covenant of grace, they must either mean of the covenant of grace absolutely considered, and if so, then there is no total and final apostasy of any infant seed of believers from the covenant, but all must be saved then

(a). (a) Jer. 32: 38-40; John 10: 28. Or, they must mean conditionally, that when they come to years of maturity, they by true faith, love, and holiness of life, taking hold of God's covenant of grace, shall have the privileges of it. If this is their meaning, then what spiritual privilege does the infant seed of believers have more than the infant seed of unbelievers, if they live also to years of maturity, and by true faith and love take hold God's covenant? Furthermore, would not the seal of the covenant belong as much to the children of unbelievers as to the children of believers? Yes, since the infant seed of the unbeliever sometimes comes to embrace God's covenant, and the infant seed of the believer does not; as often this is seen to the sorrow of many godly parents (b).

(b) Isa. 56: 3-8; John 3: 16; Acts 10: 34-35. Suppose all the infant seed of believers are absolutely in the covenant of grace; yet believers under the gospel ought no more to baptize their infant seed than Lot to circumcise himself or his infant seed, if he had males as well as females, although he was related to Abraham, a believer, and in the covenant of grace, since circumcision was limited to Abraham and his immediate family. If the infant seed of believers are absolutely in the covenant of grace, we may bring infants to the Lord's Table because the same qualifications are required to the due performance of baptism as for the Lord's Supper

(c). (c) Acts 2: 41-42. The covenant made with Abraham had two parts: First, a spiritual component, which consisted in God's promising to be a God to Abraham and all his spiritual seed in a peculiar manner (d), whether they were circumcised or uncircumcised, who believed as Abraham the father of the faithful did (e). And this was signified in God's accepting such as His people which were not of Abraham's seed, but bought with his money, and this promise was sealed to Abraham by circumcision, that through Jesus Christ (whom Isaac typified) the Gentiles, the uncircumcision which believed (f), should have their faith counted for righteousness, as Abraham's was before he was circumcised (g). (d) Gen. 17: 19, 21; 21: 10; Gal. 4: 30. (e) Acts 2: 39; Rom. 9: 7-8. (f) Gal. 3: 16, 28-29. (g) Rom. 4: 9-14.

Second, this promise consisted of a temporal component. Thus, God promised Abraham's seed should enjoy the land of Canaan, and have plenty of outward blessings (h), so He sealed this promise by circumcision (i). Circumcision also distinguished the Jews as being God's people from all the nations of the Gentiles, which as yet were not the seed of Abraham. But when the Gentiles came to believe and by faith became the people of God as well as the Jews, then circumcision, that distinguishing mark, ceased. The distinguishing mark of being the children of God now is faith in Christ and circumcision of the heart (j). Therefore, whatever pretence there may be to baptize the infants of believers avails nothing, whether their being the seed of believers, their being in the covenant, or that the infant seed of Abraham, a believer, was circumcised. Circumcision was limited also to the family of Abraham, all others, though believers, being excluded. Circumcision was limited also to the eighth day, and whatever pretence might be made, it was not to be done before nor after. It was limited to males, which if baptism came in the room of circumcision and is the seal of the covenant under the gospel, as circumcision was under the law, none but males must be baptized. Just as under the law circumcision had peculiar regulations, so it is under the gospel concerning baptism. These regulations concerning baptism depend purely upon the will of the Lawgiver, that Prophet to whom we would do well to listen (k). He determines upon whom, when, and how baptism is to be administered. (h) Gen. 12: 6-7; 13: 15-17; 15: 16, 18. (i) Gen. 17: 8-11. (j) John 1: 12; Rom. 2: 28-29; Gal. 3: 26-28; Phil. 3: 3. (k) Acts 3: 22.

Q. 74. How are you admonished and assured in baptism that you are a partaker of the only sacrifice of Christ?

A. Because Christ commanded the outward washing of water (a), joining this promise to it, that I am no less assuredly washed by His blood and Spirit from all uncleanness of my soul, that is, from all my sins (b), than I am washed outwardly from the filthiness of the body with water. (a) Matt. 28: 19; Acts 2: 38. (b) Matt. 3: 11; Mark 1: 4; 16: 16; Luke 3: 3; Rom. 6: 3.

Q. 75. What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

A. It is to receive of God forgiveness of sins freely, for the blood of Christ which He shed for us in His sacrifice upon the cross (a) and also to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and through His sanctifying of us to become members of Christ, that we may more and more die to sin, and live holy and without blame (b). (a) Ezek. 36: 25; Zech. 13: 1; Heb. 12: 24; 1 Pet. 1: 2; Rev. 1: 5. (b) John 1: 33; 3: 5; Rom. 6: 4; 1 Cor. 6: 11; 12: 13; Col. 2: 12.

Q. 76. Where does Christ promise us that He will as certainly wash us with His blood and Spirit as we are washed with the water of baptism?

A. In the institution of baptism, the words of which are these, go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (a); he that shall believe, and be baptized, shall be saved, but he that will not believe shall be damned (b). This promise is repeated again when the Scripture calls baptism the washing of the new birth (c), and forgiveness of sins (d). (a) Matt. 28: 19. (b) Mark 16: 16. (c) Titus 3: 5. (d) Acts 22: 16.

Q. 77. Is then the outward baptism in water the washing away of sins?

A. It is not (a). The blood of Christ alone cleanses us from all sin (b). (a) Eph. 5: 25-26; 1 Pet. 3: 21. (b) 1 Cor. 6: 11; 1 John 1: 7.

Q. 78. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of the new birth and forgiveness of sins?

A. God speaks so not without great cause, to this, not only to teach us that as the filth of our body is purged by water, so our sins also are purged by the blood and Spirit of Christ (a), but much more to assure us by this divine token and pledge that we are as surely washed from our sins with the inward washing as we are washed by the outward and visible water (b). (a) 1 Cor. 6: 11; Rev. 1: 5; 7: 14. (b) Mark 16: 16; Gal. 3: 27.

Collins, Hercules (2014-06-20). An Orthodox Catechism