

MidWeek Study: Church Essentials: Baptism

Pastor Mike Ruel: Week 2 - History

REVIEW: Why Study History?

- Why Study Historical Theology? (HT)
 - “Understanding and obeying the Bible is to be done corporately by the church of Christ, and the church of Christ exists throughout the generations, therefore, the church of any one generation ought to listen to the church of previous generations so what we truly do understand together.” (I didn’t get the source...)
 - Protects us against rampant individualism in the church (we drift this way, esp. since the Enlightenment/Non-Denom/Eva explosion)
 - Shows us how doctrine has developed over time
 - _____ knowledge (Thus saith the Lord in the Bible) vs. _____ knowledge (from the study of ALL the Bible)
- Helps us with understanding what is essential. (Theological _____)
 - _____: 1st order issues: very clear in Scripture and very close to the gospel (closed hand: must divide fellowship)
 - Ex. Justification by faith, deity of Christ, Trinity, the resurrection
 - _____: 2nd order issues: less clear in Scripture, farther away from the gospel (semi-open hand with wisdom)
 - Ex. Eschatology interpretations
 - _____: 3rd order issues: least clear in Scripture and farthest away from the gospel. (Open hand with grace)
 - Ex. Church musical styles

History of Baptism

• Old Testament (OT)

- Time Period: Creation - Christ
- No “Christian” baptism because Christ had not yet come and done the work!
- However, almost every major religion includes _____ in some significant way
- Berkhoff “In the Gentile world, baptism was not something absolutely new in the days of Jesus. The Egyptians, the Persians, and the Hindus, all had their religious purifications. These were even more prominent in the Greek and Roman religions.”
- OT examples:
 - Creation - [Genesis 1:1-2]
 - Moses - Red Sea [Exodus 14:21-22]
 - Ceremonial washings in the Law for consecration and purity [Exodus 29:1-4; 30:17-21; many references in Leviticus and Numbers]

• New Testament (NT)

- Time Period: Christ’s life, death, resurrection ascension, and the early church
- NT uses of the word “Baptism/Baptized/Baptize”:
 - _____
 - John the Baptist - Matthew 3:1-5;
 - Not a Christian baptism, but calling Israel to prepare for the arrival of the Messiah through confession and repentance
 - Jesus’ disciples baptized this way as well - John 3:22, 4:2
 - _____ - Matthew 3:11-12 (also Luke 3:12ff)
 - Fulfillment of the _____ identity - Matthew 3:13-17 (also Luke 3:21)
 - _____ into God’s plan - Mark 10:35-40; Luke 12:50; 1 Cor 10:1-4
 - _____/Indwelling of the Holy Spirit - Acts 1:4-5, 2:37-38, 41; 8:12; 8:36; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:18-22
 - Entrance into the _____ - 1 Cor 12:13; Ephesians 4:4-5
 - _____ with Christ - Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:11-12
 - _____ to Christ as the church - Matthew 28:18-20

- **Early Church**

- 1st century (up to 100AD)- ~5th century AD (up to 400AD)
- New Testament
 - 1st century (00s-99AD) Nearly exclusively _____ (BB)
 - Why? BC people were believing in Jesus by the thousands. This is why we expect predominantly BB
 - Does it mean that there were no infant baptisms? Not necessarily...Why?
 - Weaker argument: "household baptisms" (Household in Greek = infants included)
 - Stronger arguments:
 - Scripture is silent. It doesn't say that infants were baptized or were not, nor does it clearly prohibit infant baptism
 - Jews being saved would have expected to have their children included in the sign of the NC (baptism) just like they were in the sign of the OC (circumcision)
 - Strongest argument: The early church very quickly started to include the baptism of infants and it became the majority practice of the church. Why did they?
 - Church Fathers ("The Disciples' Disciples")
 - 2nd century (100AD-199AD): First reference to _____ baptism by Origen, as established by the Apostles "The church has received a tradition from the apostles to give baptism even to little children." (HT, 619)
 - Bavinck "...from the early introduction of infant baptism, the general acknowledgment it was recorded from the start and Origen's witness from these follows the possibility, and even the probability that it already was an apostolic practice." (RD, 4.10, 529)
 - Irenaeus, 180AD "He came to save through means of himself all who through him are born again unto God, infants, little children, boys, and youths and old men."
 - Berkhoff comments "This passage, though it does not, explicitly mention baptism is generally regarded as the earliest reference to infant baptism, since the early fathers, so closely associated baptism with regeneration that they use the term regeneration for baptism."

- 3rd century: Cyprian noted that the church was regularly baptizing infants on the 8th day after birth, modeled on the OC sign of circumcision. (HT 619)
 - Synod of Carthage (252 AD) "decreed the children should be baptized as soon as possible on the second or third day after birth." (RD, Bavinck, 410, 536)
- 4th century: Augustine quotes Cyprian as a defining statement on baptism, though he had a dissenting view on the purpose of baptismal regeneration.
 - "What we are discussion concerns the obliteration of original sin in infants." (HT 619)
 - "Sacrament of regeneration" (WWS, 22)
 - Does this mean that baptism alone saves? No
 - Faith is required for salvation to become effective - thus infant baptism serves as a "sign and seal" of the covenant promise for God to save upon faith.
 - "The sacrament of baptism is one thing, the conversion of the heart, another, but that man's salvation is made complete through the two together." (WWS, 23)
 - This doctrine was morphed by the church into only being baptism that saved.
- 5th century: Infant baptism is the official church rite (and will be for over 1000 years) though with different understandings of the nature of baptism
- **Middle Ages (~5th - 15th Centuries AD)**
 - Infant Baptism dominates the church world
 - "Pre-Catholic" church
 - Thomas Aquinas believed both adults and infants should receive baptism (WWS, 33)
 - The link between OC circumcision and NT baptism is reinforced (WWS, 29)
 - BUT...The church is becoming increasingly corrupt and unbiblical - the stage is set for the Reformation
- **Reformation (~15th-17th Centuries AD)**
 - The Reformers begin to question the practices of the church, including baptism, yet they almost exclusively _____ infant baptism - it was the purpose/effect of it they were looking to reform
 - Yes, but did they deny baptismal regeneration? This is the big issue...
 - Luther, early 1500s, rejects Ex Opere Operata (WWS, 43), said that faith from the word preached must be present for it to take its full effect...yet it was confusing what Luther thought about the actual faith of the infant and he changes his view in history

- Zwingli, rejected EOO, at first rejected IB but then came to accept it (WWS, 62). Thought of it more as “pledge-oath” and planted the seeds for Anabaptists?
 - Anabaptists (Late 1400s) believed the Reformers weren’t going far enough, especially with baptism - they rejected IB and said only adults who had a ‘radical conversion experience’ are to be baptized. (Anabaptist = “re-baptizers”) (WWS, 65) Also denied the trinity, deity of Christ, Sabbath, pacifists...
 - Calvin, rejected EOO, but tied the sacraments to the preached word and signs and seals which only have full effect after FAITH
 - Reformed Confessions all affirm CB
- Confessions:
- WCF 28 (1646): I. Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, (Mat 28:19); not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, (1Co 12:13); but also, to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, (Rom 4:11; Col 2:11-12); of his ingrafting into Christ, (Gal 3:27; Rom 6:5); of regeneration, (Tts 3:5); of remission of sins, (Mar 1:4); and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life, (Rom 6:3-4). Which sacrament is, by Christ’s own appointment, to be continued in His Church until the end of the world, (Mat 28:19-20).
 - IV. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, (Mar 16:15-16; Act 8:37-38); but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized...
 - Heidelberg 73 (1563): Question 74. Are infants also to be baptized?
 - Answer: Yes: for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God;a and since redemption from sinb by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult;c they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the christian church; and be distinguished from the children of unbelieversd as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision,e instead of which baptism is institutedf in the new covenant.
 - Belgic Confession (1561): Therefore we detest the error of the Anabaptists, who are not content with the one only baptism they have once received, and moreover condemn the baptism of the infants of believers, whom we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant...

- **Modern Evangelical Church (17th-Today) - Predominantly BB**

- Baptist History

- English Separatists (separating from the Church of England, some were “Puritans”) embrace a modified Anabaptist position.
- Firmly convinced that _____ Baptism is the only biblical baptism and were persecuted for it
- “Calvinistic Baptists” (AKA ‘Reformed Baptists’)
- John Smyth led a group of followers fleeing to the Netherlands in 1608.
- He became convinced of BB and having no one else to baptize him, baptized himself and his followers in ~1609
- One of his followers, Thomas Helwys, went on to found the first baptist church in East London, England in 1612
- The first baptist church in America was founded in 1639 in Providence, RI by Roger Williams

- Modern Evangelical Church (17th-Today)

- Non-denominational/evangelical _____
- Started 1800s in response to denominational fights and RCC
- 20th century saw explosive growth with the Jesus Movement
- Non-denominational churches increased from 200,000 in 1990 to over 8 million by 2008 and today over 20 million
- Predominantly BB
- Meanwhile, modern Reformed Churches still practice _____ Baptism today.
 - Presbyterian, Christian Reformed, United Reformed, dual-view churches
- Point: as the Non-denominational evangelical church exploded in popularity, BB exploded with it
- Therefore, today BB is the predominant view in the American church
- But have most come to a Biblical _____ on this? What does Scripture say? ...