

## Biblical Theology

### Unit 7: Doctrine of the Church – Lesson 6: Ordinances of the Church I

#### Baptism

- Baptism is a physical representation of an inward reality.
  1. **Baptism was instituted by Christ as a command to all who believe.**
    - **Mark 16:16** - *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.*
    - **Acts 10:48** - *[Peter] commanded them [Gentiles] to be baptized.*
  2. **Baptism is tied to one's public profession of faith.**
    - **Romans 6:3-4** - *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*
    - **Acts 8:12** - *they were baptized, both men and women.*
    - **Luke 3:3** - *proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*
    - **Luke 3:7** - *He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him.*
    - Our walk with Christ is deeply personal but it is not private.
  3. **Baptism symbolizes one's union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.**
    - **Romans 6:3-4** - *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*
    - **Colossians 2:11-12** - *In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised w/ him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*
  4. **Baptism symbolizes washing away of sins.**
    - **Titus 3:5** by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,
    - **Acts 22:16** - *Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins*
  5. **Baptism symbolizes passing through judgment safely and rising with Christ.**
    - Water is often times used to symbolize judgement in the scriptures
      - Flood in Genesis 6
      - Red Sea in Exodus 14
    - **Romans 8:1** - *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
  6. **Baptism symbolizes rebirth and regeneration.**
    - **John 3:5-6** - *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

#### Other Disputes and Considerations Regarding Baptism

- **Can unbelievers be baptized?**
  - The purpose of baptism is to affirm one's faith in Jesus (Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4). Therefore, it does not make sense for an unbeliever to be baptized.
- **Who can baptize?**
  - The Scriptures do not specify who is authorized to baptize, though, the biblical pattern is that it is done by those overseeing the body of Christ.
- **Does someone have to be fully immersed in order to be truly baptized?**
  - The Scriptures do not explicitly state that immersion is necessary, though the biblical pattern is one of full immersion (Mark 1:5,10; Acts 8:36-39). Furthermore, the symbolism of union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection seems to require baptism by immersion (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

- **Should we baptize infants?**
  - Catholics and some Protestant doctrines teach that infants should be baptized so that they may be regenerated. Regeneration, however, cannot occur via the means of works (baptism) or the means of someone else decision (ie, parents / priests).
- **Is baptism a requirement to get into heaven?**
  - Some claim Mark 16:16 makes baptism a requirement to get into heaven.
    - Jesus says those who don't believe are condemned, not those who aren't baptized.
  - Criminal on the cross in Luke 23:43 is not baptized and is promised salvation.
  - Salvation is by faith alone, not works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23; Galatians 3:10).
  - 2 Peter 3:19-22 describes baptism as a pledge to God, not God's pledge to man.

## Communion

- Communion is a tangible reminder of a transcendent reality.
  - 1. Communion was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper as a reminder of his death.**
    - **Matthew 26:26-29** - *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the[a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*
    - **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** - *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*
      - Bread = Body, Wine = Blood / Covenant
  - 2. Communion is a transcendent reminder of God's faithfulness.**
    - **Past:** Passover
      - **Luke 22:14-15** - *And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."*
    - **Present:** New Covenant
      - **Luke 22:20** - *"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."*
    - **Future:** Marriage Feast of the Lamb
      - **Luke 22:18** - *For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.*
  - 3. Communion symbolizes the receiving of benefits through Christ.**
    - **Matthew 26:26** - *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."*
  - 4. Communion symbolizes spiritual nourishment.**
    - **John 6:53-57** - *whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.*
  - 5. Communion reaffirms unity within the body of Christ.**
    - **1 Corinthians 10:7** - *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*
  - 6. Communion is a personal affirmation of our faith in Christ.**
    - **1 Corinthians 11:26** - *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

### **Other Disputes and Considerations Regarding Communion**

- ***Does the bible support transubstantiation?***
  - Catholic dogma maintains the teaching that Christ is repeatedly crucified every time the Lord's Supper takes place and that the bread and wine actually turn into the flesh and blood of Jesus.
  - Transubstantiation fails to recognize symbolism of Jesus' statement in John 6:53-57 (John 15:1; 10:9; 6:41).
  - Transubstantiation fails to recognize the New Testament teaching on the finality of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary (Hebrews 9:25-28; John 19:30; Hebrews 1:3).
- ***Who should take communion?***
  - The bible never prohibits an unbeliever from participating in the Lord's Supper, though Christ purposed the remembrance for those under the New Covenant.
  - While 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 seems to teach on exclusive nature of communion, it should be observed as a teaching on the examination of one's motives when taking communion.
- ***Who should administer communion?***
  - The Scriptures do not specify a role for administer communion.
- ***How often should communion be taken?***
  - As often as we do it, remember... (1 Corinthians 11:26).
  - The purpose of communion is edification, remembrance, and examination. Frequency is not the point.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How would you respond to someone who asks you, "Why do Christians baptize?"
2. Should you urge a new believer to be baptized? Explain?
3. Suppose someone you know is grieved because their loved one died before being baptized and they are concerned that they are now in hell as a result. How would you use the word of God to bring comfort and clarity to this individual?
4. How would you respond to someone who asks you, "Why do Christians take communion?"
5. How do you guard from allowing communion to become ritualistic?

### **Reading Assignment**

*Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 51: Worship.*