

## 22 – Baptism Q&A

### Recap:

#### **Baptism**

= sign of admission into visible church

= sign and seal of redemption

#### **Basis for infant baptism? A summary...**

“Jesus is the fulfilment of the covenant with Abraham – which was made with believers and their children. This covenant has not been replaced. There is a unity between the church in the OT and in the NT. Children belong to the life of the church.”

Today... Q&A: “technical” questions... then “relational” questions

### “Technical” questions...

#### **Q1: Method – is there a danger in basic theology on inference rather than texts of Bible?**

(Doctrine/systematics... or just Bible texts?)

- WCF 1.6, “... expressly set down in Scripture, or by good & necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture.”
- Doctrine is unavoidable (“What does the Bible say about... the Gospel.. etc”)
- Doctrine is commanded (2 Tim. 1:15, “follow the pattern of the sound words...”)

#### **Q2: Were Adam and Eve under the covenant of grace?**

(What was their relationship to the Lord?)

- Creation: God’s desire to have fellowship with mere creatures... but no means of atonement in Gen 1-2
- Something *new* from Gen 3: God’s desire to forgive and have fellowship with *sinners*

#### **Q3: Were the children of Israel taught the Gospel? What Gospel?**

(Were OT believers saved in same way as NT believers? Did they have an understanding of the Gospel similar to ours? How “new”/different is the NT?)

- Galatians 3:8, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.””
- Romans 4:6-8, “just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.””
- OT believers: knew atonement (sacrifices, Ps. 22, Isa. 53)... and they knew God (e.g. Psalms)

#### **Q4. Was the covenant with Abraham unconditional and that with Moses conditional?**

(i.e. how similar or different are these parts of the one big covenant of grace?)

- Abraham:
  - Promises in Gen 12... covenant ceremony in Gen 15 (Abraham fast asleep!)... conditions in 17:7-11 (circumcision = sign of righteousness through faith. See Roman 4:11):
  - i.e. you need FAITH – not meritorious... but is necessary... and it’s the gift of God
- Moses:
  - View 1: only given to show that salvation by works is impossible
  - View 2: Mosaic covenant is same in essence as covenant with Abraham  
 Blessings & curses are same: paradise, people, God’s presence (Ex 23, Lev 26, Deut 28)  
 Gracious provision for forgiveness (e.g. Lev. 16)  
 Call to obedience no different to that of the NT: true faith always accompanied by good works  
 (compare Lev. 18:5 with James 2:21, Matthew 12:37, Romans 2:6-7)

**Q5. What was the status of women in the OT people of God?**

(Not circumcised – why no marker of covenant membership? Excluded in some way?)

- Gen 17:9-11. Cov of circ is made not only with the individual but the whole of God's people ("you" in v11 is plural). The whole nation visibly marked as belonging to God through the representation of some.
- One feature of new covenant = greater inclusivity – Gentile mission... women baptised

**Q6: Why is baptism such a big deal to the NT church if only 50% of Israel was circumcised?**

- OT circumcision (of men) was a big issue to women: it was a sign of belonging for *all* in the people of God
- The NT commands baptism! (Matthew 28)

**Q7: Why don't we circumcise *as well as* baptise?**

- NT teaches that circ belonged to old covenant, e.g. criticism of the "circumcision party" (Galatians 2:12, 5:2, Titus 1:10)

**Q8: Is there a connection between circumcision and baptism?**

- See Colossians 2:11-12. That which circumcision signified is now signified by baptism.

**Q9: Should we copy the example of Jesus re: dedication, baptism, etc?**

- Jesus' experience: circumcised... presented to the Lord... baptised by John to fulfil all righteousness (Luke 2:21-22, Matt. 3:15)
- Can we infer a model of infant dedication then adult baptism?
  - Jesus' presentation was obedience to OT law. Ongoing practice would be an inference from OT practice.
  - Jesus' baptism NOT like ours: we need forgiveness... he is sinless, yet identifies with us.

**Q10: Mode of baptism – isn't immersion essential?**

- Any viewpoint needs to be justified from Scripture and be open to challenge from Scripture
- "Scripture requires immersion": be aware of implications for fellowship among the people of God...

**"Relational" questions: how do we get along?!?!?**

**Why do we find this hard...**

**Our history at Immanuel...**

**Do all church members need to agree? No!**

**But we DO all need to (a) understand the formal position of the church; (b) understand one another; (c) think carefully about *how* you hold your views & relate with brethren you disagree with**

**Secondary matters do matter... but they're not primary**