

- **November 26th: Eighth Annual “Evening of Thanksgiving.”** Bring a favorite snack and items to share for a time of giving thanks to God.
- PRAY
- READ Matthew 3

Theme: “Behold your King is coming to you” (Zech.9:9; Mt.21:4-5)

CHARTING THE COURSE FOR THIS EVENING:

- John’s Baptism Versus Christian Baptism
- Is Christian baptism into the Triune Name of God? If so, then why are there instances of baptism into the “name of the Lord Jesus”? (see Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5)

JOHN’S BAPTISM VERSUS “CHRISTIAN” BAPTISM

A. Background to the question of John’s Baptism and Christian Baptism

1. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, there was a debate about whether John’s baptism was equivalent with Christian baptism.
2. The Council of Trent decided, “If any one should say that the baptism of John had the same effect with the baptism of Christ; let him be anathema.”
3. What is the Council of Trent?
 - a. Trent marked the birth of the modern Catholic Church and its agenda was set for the next 400 years as opposing Protestantism (this era is called post-Tredentine).
 - b. Only after Vatican II (1962-1965), did Catholicism change from its official “anti-Protestant” mission. Catholicism has a different agenda now – a more inclusive program which explains why many Protestant denominations are making amends with Rome.
4. “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” (ECT)

Q.33 (cf. Q.70 of the L.C.)

What is justification?

Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, (Rom. 3:24–25, Rom. 4:6–8) and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, (2 Cor. 5:19,21) only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, (Rom. 5:17–19) and received by faith alone. (Gal. 2:16, Phil. 3:9)

What should we think about an alliance between Rome and Protestantism against the social ills of our day: abortion, pornography, and the general decline in moral values?

WCF 11:2

Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: (John 1:12, Rom. 3:28, Rom. 5:1) yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love. (James 2:17,22,26, Gal. 5:6)

Martin Luther said, “We can not pin our hope on anything that we are, think, say or do ... nor can our satisfaction be uncertain, for it consists not of the dubious sinful works which we do, but of the sufferings and blood of the innocent Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Elsewhere he wrote that justification by faith alone (*sola fide*) is “the article of the standing or falling church.”

B. John Calvin was the first to write against the decisions of the Council of Trent. He and several other Protestant Reformers, like Ulrich Zwingli, took the opposite view of Trent on the meaning of John's baptism.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN JOHN'S AND CHRISTIAN BAPTISM (see Calvin's Institutes Book IV:15,vii):

1. Both baptized for repentance from sins indicating a radical change of life (Mt.3:7,8; Mk.1:4; Lk.3:3; Lk.1:1-17; Jn.1:20-30).
2. Both baptized for forgiveness of sins.
3. Both into the name of Christ (this is derived from John 1:29).
4. Both were instituted by God Himself (Mt.21:25; Jn.1:33).
5. Both employed the use of water.
6. There is no record of the 11 disciples being baptized again.
7. "But if anyone should seek a difference between them from God's Word he will find no other difference than that John baptized in him who was to come; but the apostles, in him who had already revealed himself [Luke 3:16; Acts 19:4]" (Calvin's Institutes Book IV:15,vii).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JOHN AND CHRISTIAN BAPTISM (Hodge, Geerhardus Vos, Robert Dabney, Kuyper, Berkouwer, Morton Smith)

1. John belonged to the Old and not to the NT dispensation (Mt.11:11). He came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Lk.1:17).
2. His baptism was for repentance but not to the faith and obedience of Christ.
3. His baptism was done in the Jordan, evoking images of the Old Covenant entry into the Promised Land. Christian baptism does not need to be done in the Jordan.
4. His baptism did not signify ingrafting into Christ, for the old dispensation still subsisted, and those who received the rite were already in the church of that dispensation, whereas Christ's was not yet opened, and therefore could not receive formal adherents (Dabney; Topical Lectures on Scripture).
5. It was not administered in the name of the Trinity. Those who were baptized by John were most likely baptized by Paul (**Acts 18:24-19:7**).
6. It is not clear that John baptized people *into* the name of Christ or into the Triune Name (Matthew 28:18-20).
7. Geerhardus Vos wrote, "we shall have to say that John's baptism, together with all the OT rites, had real grace connected with it, but only the OT measure and quality of grace. What it had not was the Spirit in the specific Christian conception; for the bestowal of that, and its connection with baptism, are dependent on the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit" (*Biblical Theology* p.317).

BAPTISM INTO THE NAME OF GOD

Survey and introduction to the problem

Who is Jesus?

In the Incarnation, what did Jesus become that He was not?

After Jesus rose again from the dead, what did Jesus become that He was not?

1. With the resurrection of Jesus there was a conferring of a _____ on Him that He did not previously possess as the God-Man.

2. After His resurrection, Jesus became a _____ - _____ (1 Corinthians 15:45).

- ❖ When the Gospel is proclaimed in the New Testament it takes into account both the pre-resurrection life of Jesus and His post-resurrection life.
- ❖ The church has done a great job in describing what Jesus became in the Incarnation, but we tend to forget what Jesus became after His resurrection (Romans 1:3-4).

Why the above survey is important for our understanding of the formula of baptism.

Is Christian baptism into the triune Name of God; and if so, why are there instances of baptism into the “name of the Lord Jesus”? (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5)

- ✓ Mt.28:18-20 is the *only* time in the New Testament where baptism is mentioned as being in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ✓ The book of Acts records baptism as being in the Name of Jesus (Acts 2:38 [Trinity in vv.38-39]; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5).

Is the book of Acts giving us a formula for baptism? Or is Matthew 28:18-20?

- ✓ The baptismal examples in Acts are _____ and not *prescriptive*.
- ✓ The form(ula) of baptism in Matthew 28:19 is *prescriptive* and not _____.

This leaves us with the question, “Why are the descriptions of Acts different from the prescription of Matthew 28:19?”

- ✓ The Gospel emphasis is not only on what Jesus *became* in His Incarnation, but what He *became after* His _____.
- ✓ The resurrection of Jesus was the declaration of His Lordship and authority in heaven and on earth (Mt.28:18; Romans 1:3-4).
- ✓ Jesus was God *before* His resurrection, but He became the _____ of the Spirit *after* His resurrection (**John 20:22 with Genesis 2:7; 1 Cor.15:45** [one sentence commentary on Pentecost]; **2 Cor.3:17**; cf. Matthew 3:11).
- ✓ The descriptions of baptism in Acts are not concerned so much with who Jesus was before His resurrection, but what He became after the resurrection (see Romans 1:3-4).
- ✓ The book of Acts does not give a formula for baptism. If it did, then the formulas conflict (see Acts 2:36-38 with Acts 8:16).

Summary and Application

What is the emphasis of the Pentecostal and charismatic movement?

What accounts for the change in the Apostle's lives after Pentecost?

IT WAS THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH MARKED THE TRANSITION BETWEEN JOHN THE BAPTIZER AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN POWER (Acts 1:5).

What does John mean by, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire?" (v.12)

FOR NEXT WEEK: REREAD MATTHEW 3

What was John's opinion about the Pharisees and Sadducees? (v.7)

Do you find it puzzling that many of them (Mt.3:7) went to the Jordan River to be baptized?

What other famous person in the NT was a Pharisee?