



**Acts 2:22-42**

**Whom Should We Baptize?**

**22 " Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know --**

**23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;**

**24 "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.**

**25 "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.**

**26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.**

**27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

**28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'**

**29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.**

**30 "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,**

**31 "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.**

**32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.**

**33 "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.**

**34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,**

**35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." ' "**

**36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."**

**37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"**

**38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

**39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."**

**40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."**

**41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.**

**42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

We've been talking about why we worship the way we do, and we're currently talking about Baptism, last week we discussed *how we baptize*, and today we are going to talk about *who we baptize*, which is equally important. Often when discussions of who should be baptized come up, two camps are usually identified Credobaptists and Paedobaptists. Now the term

“Credobaptist” comes from the words Credo which is Latin for “I Believe” and Baptist, and it implies that they believe only adult believers should be baptized on their profession of faith. Paedobaptist on the other hand comes from the Greek word for child and again the word Baptist, and it implies that they believe that children and particularly infants should be baptized. Now we can use these terms and say Southern Baptist are Credobaptists and Presbyterians are Paedobaptists, but the terms are somewhat misleading.

For instance, Presbyterians believe that when an adult comes to faith and seeks to join the church, if they haven’t already been baptized they should be baptized. We don’t say at that point *“oh, I’m so sorry we only baptize infants, and if you don’t fit within the crook of my arm I can’t baptize you.”* No, Paedobaptists baptize adults as well. Also, children are often baptized in Baptist churches on their profession of faith, so Credobaptists don’t only baptize people over the age of 18.

Additionally, the term Paedobaptist is overly broad. We do not baptize people simply because they are infants, we aren’t out looking for unbaptized babies to baptize. Neither do all paedobaptists believe the same things about baptism or who should be baptized. For instance, many Credobaptists assume that because both Roman Catholics and Presbyterians are both called Paedobaptists, that they believe the same things about Baptism. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Roman Catholic practice of baptism adds a number of symbols, rites, and elements to baptism that are not in the bible, additionally they believe that water of baptism in and of itself really washes away sin and regenerates the child baptized, so that the infant is really saved by baptism. Also they do not require that the child being baptized be the child of believing parents.

But if, when it comes to who should be baptized, we don't believe what Roman Catholics believe, and we don't believe what Credobaptists believe, what do we believe about baptism?

Well take a look at page 865 of your Trinity Hymnal again, I want to read section 4 on that page:

*IV. Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ,[11] but also the infants of one, or both, believing parents, are to be baptized.[12]*

Alright, so here we identify two categories of person we believe should be baptized. Adult converts, that is people from outside the church who join it by profession of faith, and the children of one or more believing parents.

Since the first category, adult converts isn't controversial at all, I'm going to concentrate on the second category. The children of believers.

Now why do we do that? Because we believe what Peter said in his sermon, that God made covenant promises to the members of the church and to their children. And that Baptism is the sign and seal of those promises. Let me try to explain.

As Peter was preaching on Pentecost, he didn't tell his fellow Jews, **"I have something brand new that you've never heard anything about to tell you!"** No throughout the sermon he's constantly pointing back to the Old Testament and to the prophecies that we contained in it. He's saying that everything that's happening is a fulfillment of what God has already said. God had promised Israel that He would send a Redeemer, to save them from their sins, that this Redeemer would be the Son of David, the anointed one the Christ, that He would also Lord, that is the Son of God, and that this Messiah would die, be buried and be resurrected. That Promised Messiah

whom David and the Prophets spoke of, the one whom all Israel has been waiting for, our Savior, was the same Jesus Christ whom you lately saw doing signs and wonders in your midst, healing the sick and raising the dead, HE'S THE ONE. And you took the Messiah and you put him to death! But God raised Him from the dead just as he promised, and that's why that garden tomb, the one that had the seal and the guards is EMPTY.

And why are they cut to the heart? Because their eyes are opened! The one whom we have been waiting for has come to us and we screamed Crucify! Crucify! And Release to us Barabbas! What are we going to do? How can we be saved now? And Peter replies, its not too late, Jesus came to save sinners, when you believe, you are united to Him and His blood washes away your sins. So repent and be baptized. Receive this sign of the inward washing of the Holy Spirit, receive the sign of the promise of salvation made by God to whoever believe on Him. And so they do, and about three thousand believe that day and are baptized.

But that promise of salvation that God made wasn't new, God had been making it since the Fall!

Gen. 3:15 *"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

He kept promising that the day would come when the Seed of the Woman, would crush the head of the serpent. He made that promise to Abraham telling him, that through His seed "all the families of the earth shall be blessed." And Abraham believe that promise and as Paul tell us, **"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."**

Now that Faith in God's promise of a Redeemer was enough to justify and save Abraham. The moment he believed He was united to Christ but God is

gracious, he knows we need visual things. Reminders. It's why as a people we have so many monuments. So he gave Abraham the sign and seal of Circumcision.

A seal is to quote James B. Chaney "something applied to an agreement or covenant to establish or confirm it." As the seal king applied to a treaty he had signed to confirm it. In this case it was a seal that God justified Abraham and regarded as righteous because of his faith, and gave him circumcision as a sign. Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant of grace. That he agreed to account someone as righteous because of their faith alone in His promises, and most particularly their faith in His promised redeemer, Jesus. As Jesus himself said "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*"

*Romans 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.*

Both Circumcision the Covenant Sign, and Passover the Covenant Meal ceased to be practiced in the New Testament, this was because both were replaced with substitutes by Christ. Circumcision was replaced by Baptism, and Passover, by the Lord's Supper. So those Gentiles who believed were also given a sign and seal of their faith, a sign, that as we said last week that like Circumcision symbolized the cleansing of the heart, the pouring out of the spirit and the washing and regenerating of their hearts, that sign is baptism. Paul expressly makes that connection.

*Colossians 2:11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,*

*12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

These were Greeks and yet they were circumcised, how? By Baptism

Now Circumcision wasn't a sign that was only given to Abraham, it was given to his children as well. They were also "Children of the Covenant" Children of God's promises. If they too had the faith of their father, Abraham then they would be justified as well. The children of Abraham therefore applied the sign of the covenant to all of their children, because the promises were for them as well. They also circumcised those who joined the covenant community from outside like the family of Rahab the Harlot. It visibly set them apart from the world. It marked them as God's people. I always laugh when we get to the scene in the "The Ten Commandments" when Pharaoh's daughter opens the basket and sees baby Moses and identifies him as a Jewish child by the cloth he's wrapped in. That's not how she knew, she could tell because he was circumcised!

God said in Malachi 2:15 that **"He seeks godly offspring"** not like the offspring of the world, set apart for him from birth. Externally part of the covenant community. And in the sense of "set apart by God" - Holy. Believers, that is what your children are, set apart for God, and therefore Holy, and I hope that is how you regard them. The child of a believing parent is holy. That isn't hyperbole from me. In *1 Cor. 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.*

There the clean and unclean makes reference to ceremonially unclean. The things of the unbelieving world, the things outside the camp were unclean, but the things of God, the things of the assembly are marked “Holiness to the Lord.” The children of believers are born within the camp, born in the visible church and so we apply to them the sign of that special status they have. Now please note, this is a privilege of the children of believing parents. Those who are born inside the camp, inside the visible church. They are the only children who should be baptized. Personally I’m GLAD I wasn’t baptized as a child – because I wasn’t fit candidate for it, my parents were not believers.

It is for those reasons that we believe that the NT church baptized the children of believers, we can see that by deduction: that would have been the natural understanding of the Apostles and the Jews who’d come to listen to Peter., think of it the New covenant isn’t less gracious than the Old Covenant its more gracious, suddenly we see this gospel explosion were it goes out to the four corners of the earth, but suddenly all the children of believers are cut off? In all the household baptisms we read of, we read of an entire family, a household, being baptized when the parents came to faith. Family implies children, and it stretches credibility to assume that Lydia’s family, the Phillipian Jailers family, and Cornelius’s family didn’t have any infant children or toddlers.

### **1) Exit Sign – the Sign Doesn’t Save! It points to what will save you**

Romans 2:28-29

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

We could just as easily say:



For he is not a Christian who is one outwardly, nor is baptism that which is outward by washing, but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; and baptism is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

**Q. 61. Are all they saved who hear the gospel, and live in the church?**

**A. All that hear the gospel, and live in the visible church, are not saved; but they only who are true members of the church invisible.[260]**

**P.865 - V. Although it is a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance,[13] yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated, or saved, without it:[14] or, that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.[15]**

We do not simply tell our children, you're the children of believers, you're in the church, you're baptized, you're ok. We do not teach or preach what is sometimes called "Covenant Succession" That is how to raise Pharisees!

***Matt. 3:9 'and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.***

Jacob and Esau were both circumcised, but Jacob was not saved until Bethel – You must be born again. Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine

Finally to the accusation that our practice encourages nominalism, nothing could be further from the truth. Many of our children would already have been baptized in Baptist churches and be coming to the table.

*Have YOU improved your baptism?*

