How Did We Get Here

Lesson 6 Baptism Student Notes

Follow each section with the presentation. Record key distinctions, questions, and supporting Scripture in the ruled space.

Slide 1 Baptism

The central question is not whether baptism matters, but what it accomplishes. Christians agree that Jesus commanded baptism, while differing over its relation to grace, faith, forgiveness, and church membership.

Scripture and sources Opening question: What does baptism accomplish?

Notes

Slide 2 The Command and Practice of Baptism

Jesus includes baptism in making disciples, and Acts presents it as the expected response to the gospel. Baptism is therefore neither an optional extra nor a private preference.

Scripture and sources Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 8:36-38

Notes

Slide 3 Baptism and Salvation

The New Testament uses strong language that joins baptism with forgiveness, union with Christ, and new life. The debate concerns how the outward act relates to the saving reality God gives.

Scripture and sources Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27

Notes

Slide 4 Does the Outward Act Save

Israel shared a covenantal deliverance and was described as baptized into Moses, yet many fell under God's displeasure. The passage warns against presuming that participation in an outward covenant event guarantees final approval.

Scripture and sources 1 Corinthians 10:1-5

Notes

Slide 5 What Does Peter Mean by Baptism Saves

Peter denies that mere removal of dirt is the point. Baptism saves through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and is connected with an appeal or pledge of a good conscience; the meaning of the Greek term is debated.

Scripture and sources 1 Peter 3:18-22, especially verse 21

Notes

Slide 6 Baptism and the Work of the Spirit

Cornelius receives the Holy Spirit before water baptism, and Paul distinguishes preaching the gospel from baptizing. Baptism remains Christ's commanded sign, while the saving power belongs to God.

Scripture and sources Acts 10:44-48; 1 Corinthians 1:14-17; Romans 6:3-4

Notes

Slide 7 What Does Baptism Signify

Baptism signifies union with Christ, participation in his death and resurrection, cleansing and forgiveness, entrance into the visible church, and public identification with Christ and his people.

Scripture and sources Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Acts 22:16

Notes

Slide 8 Who Should Be Baptized

Credobaptists emphasize repentance and faith before baptism and see no unambiguous infant baptism in the New Testament. Paedobaptists emphasize covenant continuity, household texts, and the inclusion of believers' children. Both call for faith and discipleship.

Scripture and sources Acts 2:38-39; Acts 16; 1 Corinthians 7:14; Colossians 2:11-12

Notes

Slide 9 Baptism and the Covenant

The disagreement turns partly on continuity between the old and new covenants. Colossians links spiritual circumcision, burial and resurrection with Christ, and baptism, but does not explicitly say that baptism simply replaces circumcision.

Scripture and sources Colossians 2:11-12

Notes

Slide 10 How Should Baptism Be Administered

Christians have baptized by immersion, pouring, and sprinkling. The Didache prefers running water but permits other water and threefold pouring when sufficient water is unavailable, showing early flexibility in method.

Scripture and sources Didache 7

Notes

Slide 11 Baptism in the Early Church

The Didache, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen connect baptism closely with cleansing, forgiveness, and new birth. Evidence for baptizing children appears early, but the surviving sources do not show one uniform practice from the beginning.

Scripture and sources Didache 7; Justin, First Apology 61; Tertullian, On Baptism; Origen

Notes

Slide 12 Augustine and the Medieval Church

Augustine connected infant baptism with original sin and divine grace. In the medieval West, infant baptism became ordinary and sacramental efficacy was systematized, though Augustine did not invent either child baptism or baptismal-regeneration language.

Scripture and sources Augustine, On Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, Book I

Notes

Slide 13 The Reformation Divides

Luther treated baptism as a means of grace; Zwingli stressed covenant sign and public pledge; Calvin called it a sign and seal without making it mechanical; Anabaptists restricted baptism to those professing repentance and faith.

Scripture and sources Augsburg Confession IX; Schleitheim Confession I; Reformed confessions

Notes

Slide 14 What Christians Believe Today

Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, and Baptist traditions all treat baptism as important, but differ over recipients, mode, and whether baptism conveys grace, seals grace, or testifies to grace already received.

Scripture and sources Compare each tradition's official catechism or confession.

Notes

Slide 15 Tertullian and John Stott

Tertullian counseled delay in some cases, especially for little children, which shows that child baptism was already practiced or proposed. John Stott distinguished water baptism from Spirit baptism while locating the gift of the Spirit in Christian initiation, not a later experience for only some believers.

Scripture and sources Tertullian, On Baptism 18; John Stott, Baptism and Fullness

Notes

Slide 16 What Does Scripture Require Us to Believe

Baptism is commanded, Christ-centered, and closely associated with union, cleansing, forgiveness, and belonging to the church. Scripture does not permit us to trust the outward act apart from repentance, faith, and the Spirit's regenerating work.

Scripture and sources Review Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21

Notes

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