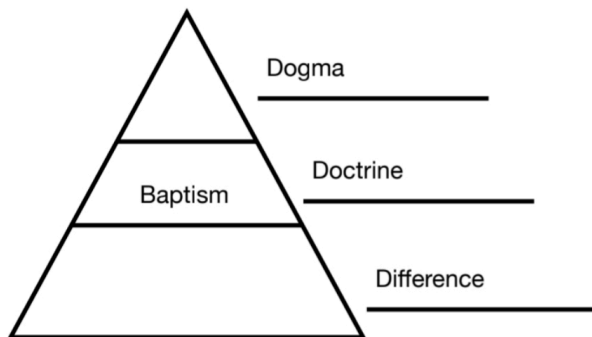


Sunday, March 10, 2024

Handout - Lesson #2

Biblical Theology: Baptism as New Creation Chapter 8 of Word, Water, and Spirit

- Theological Triage



- Our Goal

— Helopoulos: “I pray that you will see the blessings of the sacrament of baptism and the goodness our God has shown by gifting it to his people.”

— Fesko: “The overall goal . . . is to validate the exegetical and theological conclusions of the Westminster Confession of Faith on baptism. . . . A biblical doctrine of baptism is crucial for the edification of the church and the glory of the triune God.”

- Historical Theology—helpful but not determinative / sufficient

Doctrine ultimately cannot rest on historical analysis alone.

- All doctrine stands or falls on its conformity to the biblical text
- Doctrine cannot be based on the New Testament alone but must be founded on the canon of Scripture.

Biblical Theology: Baptism as—

- New Creation
- Covenant Judgment
- Eschatological Judgment

Possible Origins of Baptism

- 1st Century (Inter-testamental) Judaism
 - Jewish proselyte baptism
 - Qumran community cleansing rituals (Jewish sect/Dead Sea)
- Old Testament
 - Levitical purification ceremonies (lustrations)
 - OT prophets
 - The above connect water, forgiveness of sins, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. However, a greater underlying theme unites all of these practices and relevant passages—new creation, which comes through water and Spirit.

Theologians from across the spectrum have historically made the connection between baptism and:

- Genesis 1:2 (Creation)
- The Flood
- The Red Sea Crossing

Baptism as New Creation

Creation (Genesis 1:2) and The Flood

The Red Sea Crossing

The Baptism of Jesus and New Creation

The Baptism of the Church and New Creation

Paul and Baptism as New Creation

BAPTISM AS NEW CREATION:

CREATION (Genesis 1:2) AND THE FLOOD

Peter establishes a redemptive-historical relationship between baptism and the flood

1 Peter 3:20-21

... when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. **21** Baptism, **which corresponds to this**, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

which corresponds to this—antitype—

—a person or thing that is foreshadowed or represented by a type or symbol, especially a character or event in the NT prefigured in the OT

The Flood is a **new creation or (re)creation event**

God was not merely judging the earth but re-creating it.

Genesis 7:11-12

The fountains of the deep

The windows of heaven

Rain

God returned the creation to its chaotic state of Genesis 1:2

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the **Spirit** of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

The key elements of **water** and **Spirit** that were present in the initial creation were also present in the subsequent flood re-creation.

Compare Genesis 1:2 with Genesis 8:1

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a **wind** blow over the earth, and the waters subsided.

Same Hebrew word for Spirit/wind (ruah)

Both place a wind over the waters and the new creation emerges.

Imagery also connects the two events

Noah tested the waters with a dove (NT symbol of Holy Spirit)

Holy Spirit **hovered** over the creation

A formula clearly emerges from the correlation of these three passages—

1 Peter 3:21, Genesis 1:2, Genesis 7-8.

New creation comes about through water and Spirit, and thus Gen 1:2 and chs 7-8 are typical of the waters of baptism, which is the antitype according to Peter.

BAPTISM AS NEW CREATION: THE RED SEA CROSSING

Paul calls this event a baptism: 1 Cor 10:1-4

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Two manifestations of God's divine presence with Israel during the exodus

Glory Cloud and Messenger

Exodus 14:19– Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them

OT evidence >

Angel= pre-incarnate Christ

Cloud = Holy Spirit

Four passages confirm the glory cloud-Spirit connection:

Haggai 2:4-5, Nehemiah 9:19-20, Deuteronomy 32:11, **Isaiah 63:11-14**

Meredith Kline: Isaiah 63, reflecting on Deuteronomy 32 (which depicts God's leading of Israel in terms of the Glory hovering over creation at the beginning), mentions the Angel of the Glory-Presence as the one who bore Israel (v.9) and variously denotes the divine Presence as the Holy Spirit or Spirit of the Lord (vv.10, 11, 14) or as his arm of Glory (v. 12, cf. v. 15). And the prophet attributes to the Glory-Spirit the guidance of Israel through the depths of the sea (v. 13; cf. Deut. 32:10; Gen 1:2) on to the Sabbath-rest in the land of their inheritance: "The Spirit of the Lord brought him to rest" (v. 14); cf. Deut 12:9). In effect, the prophet says that in the exodus re-creation there was recapitulation of the role of the Glory-Spirit in creation from Genesis 1:2 to Genesis 2:2.

When Paul says the Israelites were all baptized into the cloud, he was saying they were baptized into the Holy Spirit.

Other New Creation elements in the Exodus narrative:

Calendar restarts with the exodus, representing a new beginning for Israel (Exo 12:2)

Tabernacle-Creation Parallels

DAY CREATION

- 1 Heavens are stretched out like a curtain (Ps 104:2)
 - 2 Firmament (Gen 1:2)
 - 3 Waters below
 - 4 Lights (Gen 1:14)
 - 5 Birds (Gen 1:20)
 - 6 Man (Gen 1:28)
 - 7 Cessation (Gen 2:1)
- Blessing (Gen 2:3) Completion (Gen 2:2)

TABERNACLE

- Tent (Ex 26.7)
- Temple veil (Ex 26:33)
- Temple laver or bronze sea (Ex 30:18)
- Lampstand (Ex 25:31)
- Winged cherubim (Ex 25:20)
- Aaron the high priest (Ex 28:1)
- Cessation (Ex 39:32)
- Mosaic Blessing, Completion (Ex 39:43)

The tabernacle, which was a temple, was a microcosmic reproduction of God's cosmic temple, the creation. The tabernacle-creation parallels means that, among other things, the events surrounding the exodus were considered to be a new creation of sorts.

All of these typical images find their fulfillment in the baptism of Christ.

BAPTISM AS NEW CREATION: THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST AND NEW CREATION

John the Baptist—The Prophetic Witness

Why was John baptizing at the Jordan?

The answer comes from the OT and the echoes of the baptism-new creation theme.

Mark 1:4-5

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Two issues that merit attention

The significance of the Jordan River

The gate to the Promised Land

The place where Israel re-enacted the Red Sea crossing

Israelites crossed the River on dry ground

Holy Spirit led Israel through the Red Sea in the glory cloud—The ark of the Lord led Israel through the Jordan on dry ground to the Land of Promise. Given the parallels, John's baptizing in the Jordan was connected not only to the idea of a cleansing ritual, but also to the redemptive-historical significance of the Jordan. It appears John was re-enacting Israel's post-exodus entry to the Promised Land.

The repentance of sins

Given Israel's sinfulness, John was calling the nation to repentance.

Israel needed to prepare for the second (or eschatological) exodus that would come by the ministry of Christ.

John's unique ministry—forerunner/preparing the way

[for the eschatological exodus]

Mark 1:8— I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

This statement is reported right after the "thesis statement" of the Gospel of Mark (quote of Isaiah 40:3), Mark 1: The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

God drove Israel into exile, but He promised in the book of Isaiah that they would return to the land in a second exodus, the exodus from Babylon. However, the ultimate goal of the typical second exodus was the final exodus led by the Anointed of the Lord. It was the Servant of the Lord on whom God would put His Spirit. This Servant would lead Israel on the final exodus, and John explained that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

BAPTISM AS NEW CREATION: THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The baptism of Jesus is one of the key culminations of redemptive history, one of the critical events to which the surveyed OT types point.

Connections with OT (see Table 1, p217)

Jesus rose from the water

The heavens were rent

The Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove

God declared that Jesus was His beloved Son

Rend the heavens—Isaiah 64:1—Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,

At the baptism of Jesus, God rent the heavens and poured His Holy Spirit on the Messiah, as Isaiah had prophesied he would do—Isaiah 11:2

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...

Jesus' anointing with the Holy Spirit was the mark of the beginning of the age of the Spirit—the beginning of the new heaven and earth, the new creation!

An intimate connection between baptism, Spirit, and new creation.

These ideas also come together in:

THE BAPTISM OF THE CHURCH AND NEW CREATION

Jesus and Nicodemus

John 3:5—Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

A person must be part of the new creation in order to enter the Kingdom of God. In this sense, to be born of water and the Spirit points to baptism, not that the waters of baptism accomplish the begetting, but that they point to the life-giving work of the Spirit, the power of the age to come, the One who applies the work of Christ to the individual and cleanses the sinner of his unrighteousness. In this way, then, one must be born of water and the Spirit.

The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost

Jesus poured out the promised Spirit on the Church and baptized her.

Joel 2:28 prophecy—And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;

Peter, Acts 2:17—And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,

Peter places the fulfillment of the prophecy clearly in the last days. In other words, this is the long-awaited and promised eschatological baptism of the Spirit. Pentecost is the baptism in the Spirit....accompanied by water baptism.

Acts 2:37-39

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” **38** And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

Just as repentance was an element in John’s baptism, it is a regular part of NT baptism. Beyond this, those who place their faith in Christ belong to the Spirit-baptized community of the last days. In other words, those who receive the baptism of the Spirit of Christ receive water baptism and are marked as those belonging to the covenant community, the church.

Those marked by water and Spirit baptism are therefore part of the eschatological humanity, the new creation, the new heaven and earth.

PAUL AND BAPTISM AS NEW CREATION

Romans 6:1-4

baptism of the Holy Spirit leads to the age to come, the new heaven and earth, the new creation. Water baptism is a sign/pointer of this.

Titus 3:5

The renewal of the Holy Spirit is connected to His eschatological work, and the one who receives baptism—the sacramental counterpart to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the acknowledgment of the presence of faith—becomes part of the new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Hence, even in the writings of Paul there is the intimate connection between baptism and new creation.