

## Questions for members of Reformed Paedobaptist Denominations and Documentation of Reformed Baptismal Salvation Heresy

- 1.) Do you believe that the infant of a believer, who grows up and lives a moral and religious life, needs to come to a particular point where he sees himself as a lost, hell-bound and hell-worthy sinner, after which time he must consciously recognize his condition as lost in sin, repent for the very first time, and believe the gospel for the very first time?
- 2.) Do you agree with the Westminster Confession when it states that God's saving covenant extends to the children of believers, or do you agree with the Bible truth that each must come to Christ on his own?
- 3.) Is there salvation outside of the visible church?
- 4.) If justification is by faith alone, not by membership in the church, then was John Calvin a heretic for teaching that there was no salvation outside the visible church?
- 5.) Do you baptize infants because they are already believers?
- 6.) Are you willing to separate from all who teach a false gospel, including all who make a connection between baptism and salvation, including those who believe what the Westminster Confession says about salvation in connection with infants?
- 7.) Is baptism a seal and a vehicle of conveying saving grace?

If the Reformed paedobaptist person gives true answers on all of the above, he should be showed the truth of believer's immersion on the authority of one of the Lord's congregationally governed churches, and called to separate from Presbyterianism or whatever other Reformed group he is part of to become a Baptist. If he gives incorrect answers, then he should have the gospel preached to him. If he denies that the Westminster Confession and catechisms, Calvin, and other Reformed people taught/teach a false gospel, he should be directed to the relevant sections of their writings. Extensive quotations proving that the Reformers and Reformed Confessions connected baptism and salvation are found on my essay on the subject, "Were the Reformers Heretics?" available at <http://faithalonesaves.googlepages.com/salvation> (note no www). A thorough refutation of all forms of baptismal salvation is available at the same website in the online book, *Heaven Only for the Baptized? The Gospel of Christ vs. Pardon Through Baptism*.

There are two main views of baptismal salvation taken by members of Reformed baby-"baptizing" groups:

a.) Baptism is the “outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption,” so that “ sacraments . . . are made effectual to the elect for salvation . . . sacraments become effectual means of salvation,” to quote the Westminster Shorter Catechism. However, unlike Catholicism and Lutheranism, it was allowed that the unbaptized infants of believers who had not had the opportunity to have the sacrament administered might be saved, since God was able to regenerate them even without the ordinance (Calvin made no such exception for the children of unbelievers, nor did he offer certainty for the dying infants of all believers—nor even for the children of believers who had not worked hard enough to get their infants baptized). Furthermore, the saving grace given through baptism might not regenerate at the very moment the sacrament was administered. God might, in connection with baptism, regenerate the infant before, during, or at any point after the sacrament was administered. The sacrament might act like a terrorist sleeper cell and explode into action years after it was administered. Furthermore, to non-elect infants, the sacrament did not convey saving grace.

b.) Reformed people who do not like this first view often argue that baptism is given to infants because they were already believers, presumptively having been regenerated in the womb as John the Baptist and Jeremiah were (?????). Therefore Reformed young people who had been baptized in infancy never need to come to a point where they repent and believe the gospel. To quote the words of modern Protestant Reformed writers, it is a “sin against God’s covenant . . . that covenant, baptized, Reformed young people are made the objects of an ‘evangelism’ that treats them as unsaved sinners who must be saved by accepting Christ. If this is what is meant by the conversion of the child, Reformed parents and the Reformed church reject it in the name of the covenant of God sealed to their children in infancy” (pg. 21-22, *The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers*, David J. Engelsma, South Holland, IL: Evangelism Committee, Protestant Reformed Church, n. d.). “[I]t is intolerable cruelty to demand of people a dramatic conversion experience before they can be assured of their salvation. Such obstacles may not be placed before believers who grew up in the church, who were taught to pray on their mother’s knee, who were catechized and who therefore do not know of a time when they did not believe in Jesus Christ. To demand of such that they describe a dramatic conversion experience before they are allowed to confess their faith [take the Lord’s Supper, etc.] is to grieve Christ’s little ones. . . . This is the Reformed doctrine of conversion as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord’s Day 33)” (“The Notion of Preparatory Grace in the Puritans,” Martin McGeown, pgs. 83-84, *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, November 2007 (Vol. 41, #1).

Brief documentation of the Reformed doctrine of baptismal salvation:

“God, regenerating us in baptism, ingrafts us into the fellowship of his Church, and makes us his by adoption . . . whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified . . . forgiveness, which at our first regeneration we receive by baptism alone . . . forgiveness has reference to baptism. . . . In baptism, the Lord promises forgiveness of sins. (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:17:1, 4:15:3, 4, 15.)

“We assert that the whole guilt of sin is taken away in baptism, so that the remains of sin still existing are not imputed. That this may be more clear, let my readers call to mind that there is a twofold grace in baptism, for therein both remission of sins and regeneration are offered to us. We teach that full remission is made, but that regeneration is only begun and goes on making progress during the whole of life. Accordingly, sin truly remains in us, and is not instantly in one day extinguished by baptism, but as the guilt is effaced it is null in regard to imputation. Nothing is plainer than this doctrine.” (John Calvin, 1547 Antidote to the Council of Trent, Reply to the 1st Decree of the 5th Session)

“We, too [as do the Catholics], acknowledge that the use of baptism is necessary—that no one may omit it from either neglect or contempt. In this way we by no means make it free (optional). And not only do we strictly bind the faithful to the observance of it, but we also maintain that it is the ordinary instrument of God in washing and renewing us; in short, in communicating to us salvation. The only exception we make is, that the hand of God must not be tied down to the instrument. He may of himself accomplish salvation. For when an opportunity for baptism is wanting, the promise of God alone is amply sufficient.” (John Calvin, 1547 Antidote to the Council of Trent, Antidote to the Canons of Baptism, Canon #5.)

“[T]o be baptized in the name of Christ is to be enrolled, entered, and received into the covenant and family, and so into the inheritance of the sons of God . . . to be cleansed also from the filthiness of sins . . . God . . . adopts us to be his sons, and by a holy covenant joins us to himself . . . all these things are assured by baptism. . . . We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that newborn infants of the faithful are to be baptized” (Article 20, 2nd Heidelberg Confession)

“[B]aptism . . . is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of [one’s] ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins . . . by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost” (Westminster Confession, Article 28)

The Westminster Shorter Catechism likewise states that “outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are . . . sacraments . . . which are made effectual to the elect for salvation . . . sacraments become effectual means of salvation . . . a sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied unto believers. . . . The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord’s supper. . . . Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord’s. . . . infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized.” (Questions 88, 91-95)

The Westminster Larger Catechism affirms that “the sacraments become effectual means of salvation. . . . A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation. . . . Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord’s. . . . infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized. . . . The needful but much neglected duty of improving our Baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long . . . by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace . . . as those that have therein given up their names to Christ . . . as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.”

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8-9)