Baptism: An Indelible Mark

Jigsaw Activity

Sacraments
General Guidelines

The following question is based on the accompanying documents. Some of the documents have been edited for the purpose of this project. The project is designed to test your ability to work with historical, philosophical, and theological documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account the source of the document, the author or evangelist’s point of view, the context of each document and any other point of view that may be presented in the document. Be sure to:

- Fill out the Prewriting assignment with everything you know about the subject.
- Now read your assigned document carefully, highlighting key phrases and words that might address the document based question. You may also wish to use the margin to make brief notes. I will be looking for notes and highlighting marks for a completion grade.
- Complete the Expert report template and prepare to teach your document to the other members of your group.
- Complete the task as a group

CONTENTS AND DOCUMENTS:

Pre-writing (Assigned to everyone) 4. Summa Theologica
2. Cyril of Jerusalem Expert Report Template
3. Protestant Response

PROJECT DIRECTIONS

Objective/Question: Study the Sacrament of Baptism in terms of Sacramental Causality. Does Baptism really effect something? Does it confer an indelible mark/character, and is it necessary for salvation?

Prepare a skit based on the following scenario: You are a Catholic priest and must explain to a Baptized Christian who wants to come into the Church why he does not need to be rebaptized to become Catholic.
1. How would you go about answering this question if you did not have any research?

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3
I. New Testament Selections

Matthew 28:16-20

The Great Commission

16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

John 3

The New Birth

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

9 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. 12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

Romans 6

Believers Are Dead to Sin, Alive to God

6 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
2. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechetical Lectures 3:10, 12 [A.D. 350]).

10. If any man receive not Baptism, he has not salvation; except only Martyrs, who even without the water receive the kingdom. For when the Savior, in redeeming the world by His Cross, was pierced in the side, He shed forth blood and water; that men, living in times of peace, might be baptized in water, and, in times of persecution, in their own blood. For martyrdom also the Savior is wont to call a baptism, saying, Can you drink the cup which I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with Mark 10:38? And the Martyrs confess, by being made a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels, and to men 1 Corinthians 4:9; and you will soon confess:—but it is not yet the time for you to hear of this.

11. Jesus sanctified Baptism by being Himself baptized. If the Son of God was baptized, what godly man is he that despises Baptism? But He was baptized not that He might receive remission of sins, for He was sinless; but being sinless, He was baptized, that He might give to them that are baptized a divine and excellent grace. For since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same Hebrews 2:14, that having been made partakers of His presence in the flesh we might be made partakers also of His Divine grace: thus Jesus was baptized, that thereby we again by our participation might receive both salvation and honor. According to Job, there was in the waters the dragon that draws up Jordan into his mouth. Job 40:23 Since, therefore, it was necessary to break the heads of the dragon in pieces, He went down and bound the strong one in the waters, that we might receive power to tread upon serpents and scorpions. Luke 10:19 The beast was great and terrible. No fishing-vessel was able to carry one scale of his tail: destruction ran before him, ravaging all that met him. The Life encountered him, that the mouth of Death might henceforth be stopped, and all we that are saved might say, O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory 1 Corinthians 15:55? The sting of death is drawn by Baptism.

12. For you go down into the water, bearing your sins, but the invocation of grace, having sealed your soul, suffers you not afterwards to be swallowed up by the terrible dragon. Having gone down dead in sins, you come up quickened in righteousness. For if you have been united with the likeness of the Savior's death Romans 6:5, you shall also be deemed worthy of His Resurrection. For as Jesus took upon Him the sins of the world, and died, that by putting sin to death He might rise again in righteousness; so thou by going down into the water, and being in a manner buried in the waters, as He was in the rock, art raised again walking in newness of life.
3. The Pagan Servitude of the Church, Luther, Martin 1483-1546.

The first point about baptism is the divine promise, which says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" [Mark 16:16]. This promise is far superior to all the outer show of works, vows, orders, and whatever else men have introduced. Our entire salvation depends on this promise, and we must be watchful to keep our faith in it knowing without any dubiety of mind that, once we have been baptized, we are saved. Unless faith is present, or comes to life in baptism, the ceremony is of no avail; indeed it is a stumbling-block not only at the moment we receive baptism but for all our life thereafter. For that kind of unbelief is equivalent to accusing God of promises that cannot be trusted, and that is the greatest of all sins. When we first try to exercise faith in God's baptismal promises we shall immediately find how difficult it is to believe. Human nature in its infirmity and its consciousness of sin, finds it a most difficult thing to believe in the possibility of salvation. Yet, without believing it, men cannot be saved; and this just because they do not believe in the divine promise of salvation.

The people ought to have been taught this message, and this promise should have been assiduously repeated; baptism ought to have been constantly brought to mind, and faith should have been constantly aroused and cultivated. Once the divine promise has been accepted by us, its truth lasts till death; and similarly our faith in it must never falter, but must grow ever stronger until death, in abiding remembrance of the promise made to us in our baptism. Therefore, when we regain our faith, or repent of our sins, we are only returning to the strength and faith of baptism from which we fell when sin made us deserters. For the truth of this promise, once made, abides forever, ready with outstretched arms to receive us when we return. And that, if I mistake not, is what they mean who say, but not clearly, that baptism is the prime sacrament, the foundation of them all, and without it none of the others can be received.

SCHLEITHEIM CONFESSION OF THE SWISS BRETHREN (Anabaptists) Michael Sattler

Note: The Seven Articles of Schleitheim were written with Michael Sattler of Stauffen, Germany, as the chief author. Sattler was originally a Roman Catholic priest. He became a leader of the Swiss Brethren, who believed in adult baptism, separation of the elect from society and refusal to accept the authority of the state over saved Christians.

First. Observe concerning baptism: Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him, and to all those who with this significance request it [baptism] of us and demand it for themselves. This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the pope. In this you have the foundation and testimony of the apostles. Mt. 28, Mk. 16, Acts 2, 8, 16, 19. This we wish to hold simply, yet firmly and with assurance.

Second. On the Ban [Excommunication]. We are agreed as follows The ban shall be employed with all those who have given themselves to the Lord, to walk in His commandments, and with all those who are baptized into the one body of Christ and who are called brethren or sisters, and yet who slip sometimes and fall into error and sin, being inadvertently overtaken. The same shall be admonished twice in secret and the third time openly disciplined or banned according to the command of Christ. Mt. 18. But this shall be done according to the regulation of the Spirit (Mt. 5) before the breaking of bread, so that we may break and eat one bread, with one mind and in one love, and may drink of one cup.

Fourth. On separation of the saved: A separation shall be made from the evil and from the wickedness which the devil planted in the world; in this manner, simply that we shall not have fellowship with them [the wicked] and not run with them in the multitude of their abominations. This is the way it is: Since all who do not walk in the obedience of faith, and have not united themselves with God so that they wish to do His will, are a great abomination before God, it is not possible for anything to grow or issue from them except abominable things.
4. Saint Tomas Aquinas: Summa Theolgica

Article 9. Whether Baptism may be reiterated?

**Objection 1.** It seems that Baptism may be reiterated. For Baptism was instituted, seemingly, in order to wash away sins. But sins are reiterated. Therefore much more should Baptism be reiterated: because Christ's mercy surpasses man's guilt.

**Objection 5.** Further, the Eucharist is a more perfect sacrament than Baptism, as stated above (Question 65, Article 3). But the sacrament of the Eucharist is reiterated. Much more reason, therefore, is there for Baptism to be reiterated.

**On the contrary,** It is written, (Ephesians 4:5): "One faith, one Baptism."

**I answer that,** Baptism cannot be reiterated.

First, because Baptism is a spiritual regeneration; inasmuch as a man dies to the old life, and begins to lead the new life. Whence it is written (John 3:5): "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, He cannot see [Vulgate: 'enter into'] the kingdom of God." Now one man can be begotten but once. Wherefore Baptism cannot be reiterated, just as neither can carnal generation. Hence Augustine says on John 3:4: "'Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again': So thou," says he, "must understand the birth of the Spirit, as Nicodemus understood the birth of the flesh . . . . As there is no return to the womb, so neither is there to Baptism."

Secondly, because "we are baptized in Christ's death," by which we die unto sin and rise again unto "newness of life" (cf. Romans 6:3-4). Now "Christ died" but "once" (Romans 6:10). Wherefore neither should Baptism be reiterated. For this reason (Hebrews 6:6) is it said against some who wished to be baptized again: "Crucifying again to themselves the Son of God"; on which the gloss observes: "Christ's one death hallowed the one Baptism."

Thirdly, because Baptism imprints a character, which is indelible, and is conferred with a certain consecration. Wherefore, just as other consecrations are not reiterated in the Church, so neither is Baptism. This is the view expressed by Augustine, who says (Contra Epist. Parmen. ii) that "the military character is not renewed": and that "the sacrament of Christ is not less enduring than this bodily mark, since we see that not even apostates are deprived of Baptism, since when they repent and return they are not baptized anew."

Fourthly, because Baptism is conferred principally as a remedy against original sin. Wherefore, just as original sin is not renewed, so neither is Baptism reiterated, for as it is written (Romans 5:18), "as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation, so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life."

**Reply to Objection 1.** Baptism derives its efficacy from Christ's Passion, as stated above (2, ad 1). Wherefore, just as subsequent sins do not cancel the virtue of Christ's Passion, so neither do they cancel Baptism, so as to call for its repetition. on the other hand the sin which hindered the effect of Baptism is blotted out on being submitted to Penance.

**Reply to Objection 5.** Both sacraments, viz. Baptism and the Eucharist, are a representation of our Lord's death and Passion, but not in the same way. For Baptism is a commemoration of Christ's death in so far as man dies with Christ, that he may be born again into a new life. But the Eucharist is a commemoration of Christ's death, in so far as the suffering Christ Himself is offered to us as the Paschal banquet, according to 1 Corinthians 5:7-8: "Christ our pasch is sacrificed; therefore let us feast." And forasmuch as man is born once, whereas he eats many times, so is Baptism given once, but the Eucharist frequently.
5. Catechism of the Catholic Church

1215  This sacrament is also called "the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit," for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one “can enter the kingdom of God.” *(1257)*

1226  From the very day of Pentecost the Church has celebrated and administered holy Baptism. Indeed St. Peter declares to the crowd astounded by his preaching: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” *(26)* The apostles and their collaborators offer Baptism to anyone who believed in Jesus: Jews, the God-fearing, pagans. *(27)* Always, Baptism is seen as connected with faith: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household,” St. Paul declared to his jailer in Philippi. And the narrative continues, the jailer “was baptized at once, with all his family.” *(849)*

1227  According to the Apostle Paul, the believer enters through Baptism into communion with Christ’s death, is buried with him, and rises with him: *(790)*

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. *(25)*

The baptized have “put on Christ.” *(30)* Through the Holy Spirit, Baptism is a bath that purifies, justifies, and sanctifies. *(31)*

1229  Hence Baptism is a bath of water in which the “imperishable seed” of the Word of God produces its life-giving effect. *(33)*

1228  From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion.

1257  The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. *(60)* He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. *(61)* Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. *(64)* The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are “reborn of water and the Spirit.” *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*

1272  Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. *(35)* Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.

1273  Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship. *(34)* The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity. *(35)*

1274  The Holy Spirit has marked us with the *seal of the Lord* ("Dominicus character") “for the day of redemption.” *(66)* “Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life.” *(65)* The faithful Christian who has “kept the seal” until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life “marked with the sign of faith,” *(68)* with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God—the consummation of faith—and in the hope of resurrection.
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