

Timely topics; timeless truths

3

Secret baptism



Introduction

Jesus' institution of Baptism is quite simple. In English it consists of all of 26 words (Matthew 28:19¹). And yet, sometimes situations involving Baptism are anything but simple. What are some examples?

Explain the statement: God has bound us to the use of the means of grace. He hasn't bound himself.

The Situation

- A child has been born.
- The parents have not had the child baptized.
- The grandparents have spoken repeatedly to the parents about this.
- The parents still have no intention or desire to have the child baptized.

Can the Grandparents Baptize?

Matthew 28:19¹

1. In order to have a valid baptism, what is necessary in terms of . . .

the person baptizing?

the words spoken?

the earthly element used?

¹ Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (EHV)

2. Would a baptism by a grandparent without the parents' knowledge meet those requirements?
3. How does the example of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau add to this discussion (Genesis 25,27)?

1 Corinthians 14:33,39,40

God is not a God of disorder, but of peace. ... ³⁹ So, brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But let all things be done decently and in good order.

4. Just because someone has the ability to do something doesn't always mean that they should do it. What characteristic of God does Paul highlight when reminding the Corinthians of this?
5. How does this most commonly show itself in the way Baptism is administered?
6. Even though the right to baptize belongs to every Christian, name some of the blessings that come from having pastors baptize on behalf of the congregation.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God. The LORD is one! ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ These words that I am commanding you today are to be on your heart. ⁷ Teach them diligently to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as a sign on your wrists, and they will serve as symbols on your forehead. ⁹ Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

7. As a general rule, to whom has God primarily entrusted the spiritual care of children?

John 15:5-8

“I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. Such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this: that you continue to bear much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

8. In addition to being grafted into the vine at baptism, what else is necessary for the ongoing spiritual well-being of a child?

9. On the basis of these passages, what answer(s) can we give about the question above: Can the grandparents baptize?

10. List some potential, unintended consequences that could come up down the road if grandparents were to baptize a grandchild against the parents' will and without their knowledge.

What Can Grandparents Do?

1. Pray. Pray for the physical and spiritual well-being of the child; pray also that the parents would have a change of heart. Prayer is powerful. (See 1 Timothy 2:1-4².)

2. Let your light shine. Let the love of Jesus be evident to your grandchildren in all that you say and do. (See Matthew 5:48³.)

² First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all those who are in authority, in order that we might live a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

³ So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

3. Share Jesus. The gospel is able to work faith in the hearts of children even from a very early age. (See 2 Timothy 3:14,15⁴.)

But what if...

1. It is important to remember that there may be exceptions. For example,...

What if the parents are indifferent?

What if the grandparents have partial or complete guardianship?

What about in cases of an emergency?

2. What are some other situations when, even though a valid baptism *could* be performed, one probably *shouldn't* be?

⁴ As for you, continue in the things you have learned and about which you have become convinced. You know from whom you learned them ¹⁵ and that from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.