



RS.CP8 Christian Disagreements About Baptism: Infant and Believers Practice

AQA 8062 · Calculators not allowed · about 45 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

- 1** Which one of the following best describes the term 'believers' baptism' in the context of Christian practice studied here?

- ☐ A. Baptism given to an infant to welcome them into a family covenant
- ☐ B. Baptism practised only by pouring a small amount of water on the head
- ☐ C. Baptism given after a person has personally declared faith, often by immersion
- ☐ D. A private prayer of dedication without any water

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Give two theological reasons why Roman Catholics and Anglicans defend infant baptism, in the context of disagreements about baptismal practice in Christianity.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** Give two theological reasons why Baptist and Pentecostal Christians argue for believers' baptism rather than infant baptism, in the context of the disagreement over who should be baptised.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

- 4** Explain two theological reasons Anglicans and Roman Catholics use to justify infant baptism, focusing on the reasoning behind covenant and original sin teachings.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5** Explain two theological reasons Baptists and Pentecostals give for reserving baptism for believers who make a personal profession of faith, focusing on New Testament and discipleship arguments.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

- 6** Explain two contrasting Christian interpretations of the evidence of household baptisms in Acts and other New Testament passages, and include a scriptural reference to support each interpretation.

(Total for Question 6 is 5 marks)

- 7** Give three theological differences between the infant baptism position and the believers' baptism position, stated as concise points in the context of Christian disagreement over who should be baptised.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

- 8** Explain two pastoral reasons given by churches that practice infant baptism for why the practice is beneficial for families and the church community.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

- 9** Explain two reasons why proponents of believers' baptism appeal to Jesus's Great Commission and New Testament practice, and include a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 9 is 5 marks)

- 10** Evaluate the view that only those who can express personal faith should be baptised. In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to Christian arguments, and reach a justified conclusion.

(Total for Question 10 is 12 marks)

- 11** Evaluate the view that infant baptism is a valid and necessary expression of covenant inclusion in the Church. In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to Christian arguments, and reach a justified conclusion.

(Total for Question 11 is 12 marks)

- 12** State what is meant by the term 'covenant' as it is used in Christian arguments about infant baptism, in the context of disagreements over baptismal practice.

(Total for Question 12 is 1 mark)

Mark scheme · RS.CP8 Christian Disagreements About Baptism: Infant and Believers Practice

Question 1

- **B1** identifies C, believers' baptism given after a person has personally declared faith, often by immersion
- **Answer: C**

Question 2

- **B1** it is seen as incorporation into the covenant community, like circumcision in the Old Testament, oe
- **B1** it is believed to apply cleansing of original sin and brings the child into the life of the Church, oe
- **Answer: E.g. inclusion into the covenant community; cleansing or removal of original sin and incorporation into the Church.**

Question 3

- **B1** baptism should follow a personal profession of faith, showing the candidate has consciously chosen Christ, oe
- **B1** it emphasises discipleship and obedience to Jesus's example and commands, often linked to adult commitment, oe
- **Answer: E.g. follows a personal profession of faith; emphasises discipleship and obedience to Jesus's example.**

Question 4

- **B1** point 1: infant baptism is justified by the idea of covenant continuity, where baptism replaces circumcision as a sign of inclusion into God's people, oe
- **B1** development: this links to the belief that children of believers share the covenant promises and should be initiated early, oe
- **B1** point 2: infant baptism is justified by the doctrine of original sin and the need for grace, oe
- **B1** development: baptising infants is seen as bringing them into the life of grace and the church's care from the start, not withholding the sacrament until personal understanding develops, oe
- **Answer: E.g. covenant continuity with circumcision, so children of believers are included; concern to bring infants into grace and remove original sin, beginning Christian life early.**

Question 5

- **B1** point 1: baptism should follow a conscious decision to follow Jesus, because it publicly shows a person's faith, oe
- **B1** development: proponents appeal to New Testament examples of adult confession followed by baptism, such as the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), oe
- **B1** point 2: baptism is linked to discipleship and symbolises a believer's death to sin and new life, which presupposes personal repentance, oe
- **B1** development: full immersion is used by many as a clear sign of that death and resurrection motif, and as an act of obedience to Jesus's commission, oe
- **Answer: E.g. follows a conscious decision and public profession of faith, as seen in New Testament examples; linked to discipleship and symbolic dying and rising that presupposes repentance and faith.**

Question 6

- **B1** interpretation 1: some Christians argue Acts 16:15 and Acts 16:33 show whole households were baptised, supporting infant baptism as households may have included children, oe
- **B1** development: Acts 16:15, 'she and her household were baptised', is used to argue continuity with covenant inclusion, oe
- **B1** interpretation 2: other Christians argue household baptisms do not prove infants were baptised because the texts do not explicitly say children or infants were present, so these baptisms support believers' baptism when household members were believers, oe
- **B1** development: Acts 16:33, where the jailer and his household were baptised after he believed, is read as showing faith preceded baptism, oe
- **B1** for the 1-mark scriptural reference: each interpretation should be supported by a specific citation such as Acts 16:15 or Acts 16:33, with the reference explicitly named, oe
- **Answer: E.g. pro-infant view: Acts 16:15 'she and her household were baptised' suggests children included; pro-believers view: Acts 16:33 shows belief before baptism so household baptisms may indicate all who believed were**

Question 7

- **B1** one difference: whether baptism is a covenant sign applied to children or a personal testimony after conversion, oe
- **B1** one difference: whether baptism is understood primarily as a sacrament conveying grace (infant view) or primarily a public declaration of faith and obedience (believers' view), oe
- **B1** one difference: the role of parental or godparental promises in infant baptism versus the emphasis on individual profession in believers' baptism, oe
- **Answer: Any three: covenant sign vs personal testimony; sacrament conveying grace vs public declaration of faith; parental/godparent role vs individual profession.**

Question 8

- **B1** point 1: it integrates children into the life and care of the church community early, giving the family support and prayer from the congregation, oe
- **B1** development: this can encourage the child's Christian upbringing and provide spiritual and practical support to parents, oe
- **B1** point 2: it reassures parents that their child is included in the promises of the faith and under the church's pastoral care, oe
- **B1** development: this can bring comfort and a sense of belonging, and allow the church to mark and support key stages as the child grows, oe
- **Answer: E.g. early integration into church life giving family and child support; reassurance to parents that their child is included in the church's care and promises.**

Question 9

- **B1** reason 1: supporters refer to Matthew 28:19-20 as a command to make disciples and baptise those who have become disciples, implying a faith-first sequence, oe
- **B1** development: Matthew 28:19, 'go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them', is used to argue discipleship and baptism follow conversion, oe
- **B1** reason 2: supporters point to New Testament narratives of belief preceding baptism, for example the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, as a pattern to follow, oe
- **B1** development: Acts 8:36-38 shows the eunuch asking to be baptised after professing belief, cited as a model for believer baptism, oe
- **B1** reference to a source of wisdom and authority is made accurately, by naming Matthew 28:19-20 or Acts 8:36-38, oe
- **Answer: E.g. Matthew 28:19-20 used to argue that discipleship and faith precede baptism; Acts 8:36-38 cited where belief is expressed before baptism, supporting believers' baptism.**

Question 10

- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic statements about whether only those who can express personal faith should be baptised, with little or no development and minimal reference to Christian belief.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some developed arguments on both sides, showing understanding of Christian reasons for believers' baptism and some counter-arguments, with limited use of scripture or tradition.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Clear and relevant arguments for and against the view, well supported by Christian teaching, New Testament examples and doctrinal reasons; some synthesis and a tentative conclusion.
- **Level 4** (10-12): A balanced, well-structured evaluation that gives detailed religious arguments on both sides, refers accurately to Christian sources of authority and practice, and reaches a justified and thoughtful conclusion.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Arguments supporting the view: believers' baptism respects personal conscience and requires a conscious decision to follow Christ, reflecting the example in Acts such as the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-38).
 - Arguments supporting the view: it emphasises discipleship and obedience to Jesus's commission, and avoids baptising those without understanding, which some see as meaningless until faith is present.
 - Arguments against the view: infant baptism reflects covenant theology, where children of believers are included in the community of faith as circumcision once included children, and Acts household passages are used to support this, oe.
 - Arguments against the view: infant baptism is seen by Anglicans and Roman Catholics as a means of grace and a pastoral practice that brings families into the church's care, supporting lifelong nurture in the faith.
 - Religious evidence: supporters of believers' baptism cite Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts narratives; supporters of infant baptism cite covenant continuity and household baptisms such as Acts 16:15 and Colossians 2:11-12 as a theological parallel to circumcision.
 - Consideration of pastoral consequences: community inclusion, parental responsibility, the role of godparents, and the risk of excluding children if baptism were delayed until personal profession.
 - A reasoned conclusion could weigh scripture, theology and pastoral outcomes, and might judge that either practice can be legitimate within differing theological frameworks, or that believers' baptism is preferable to ensure personal commitment, depending on the candidate's argued priorities.

Question 11

- **Level 1** (1-3): Limited statements for or against infant baptism as covenant inclusion, few links to Christian teaching and little development.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some clear arguments supporting infant baptism as covenant inclusion and some counter-arguments, with some reference to scripture or tradition.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Developed arguments on both sides that show understanding of covenant theology, sacramental theology and New Testament material, and a partially justified conclusion.
- **Level 4** (10-12): A thorough evaluation presenting detailed Christian theological arguments for and against infant baptism as covenant inclusion, drawing on scripture, tradition and pastoral reasoning, and arriving at a well-justified conclusion.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Arguments for: infant baptism continues the Old Testament practice of marking children into the covenant community, and Colossians 2:11-12 is used to argue baptism replaces circumcision as the covenant sign.
 - Arguments for: it is an act of prevenient grace and church responsibility to raise children in the faith, so covenant inclusion via baptism is pastorally and theologically appropriate for Anglicans and Roman Catholics.
 - Arguments against: Baptists and Pentecostals argue covenant promises require a personal response, so including infants who cannot yet believe undermines the requirement of faith and discipleship exemplified in Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts examples.
 - Arguments against: historical and New Testament patterns of adult belief prior to baptism are emphasised, and the integrity of baptism as a believer's testimony is defended.
 - Consideration of authority: weigh the role of scripture, church tradition and reason in forming doctrine; examine practical effects on church life and family faith formation.
 - A reasoned conclusion might accept infant baptism within a covenantal sacramental theology, while recognising the validity of believers' baptism within an alternative theological framework, or might argue for one practice as preferable, depending on the priorities established by the candidate.

Question 12

- **B1** a solemn agreement between God and his people, often seen as including promises and signs such as circumcision or baptism, or
- **Answer: A solemn agreement between God and his people, including promises and signs such as circumcision or baptism.**