

BAPTISM

Even if one has never read the New Testament through, he must acknowledge the importance of baptism because so many religious groups believe in and practice some form of it. Since the New Testament mentions the subject many times, it behooves each of us to give consideration to it. Jesus Christ, when he was about 30 years of age, was baptized; and not long before he ascended back to heaven, he gave instructions to his disciples to go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we cannot discount the importance of it.

The English noun “baptism” is transliterated, i.e., anglicized from the Greek word βαπτισμος, which is defined as “an act of dipping or immersion; a baptism, Heb.6.2; an ablution, Mark 7:4,8; Heb. 9:10; N.T.” (The Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 65). The verb “baptize” is also a transliterated word (βαπτίζω), meaning the letters in Greek are carried over into the English. Alexander Campbell stated, “ARGUMENT 2. - Greek lexicographers, with one consent, in their definitions, as well as Greek philosophers, historians, orators, and poets, in their use of this term BAPTIZO, render it dip, plunge, immerse: never as indicating sprinkling, pouring, or scattering anything” (CHRISTIAN BAPTISM: WITH ITS ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENTS, p. 122).

The Baptists, through the American Bible Union, published in 1910, a revised translation in which whenever the word “baptize” or any form of it was found, changed it to “immerse” or some form of “baptize.” The only exception was when the translators came to the expression “John the Baptist.” Then, they left it as it was because they realized that if they changed it to “John the Immerser,” it would remove their denominational name. Of course, the expression “the Baptist,” indicates John’s work, not his name. His name was “John” (Luke 1:60-63). Perhaps, due to criticism for their inconsistency in translating “baptize” in all of its various forms, in their 1924 Centenary Translation, the revisers went back to anglicizing the word. Thus, “immerse” is not used in the later edition.

Candidates of baptism are individuals who have been taught. Jesus said, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations...” (Matt. 28:19). He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). “To be saved” implies that one is lost. Infants and children are not lost, but they are in a safe condition (Matt. 18:3; 19:14). Teaching implies the capability on the part of the student to comprehend. One who cannot understand the gospel is not subject to it. One must believe the gospel.

One must also repent of his sins. On the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ, the devout Jews were told by Peter, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). One who has no sins (as a little child) or one who refuses to repent is not a subject of baptism. What good would it do to “baptize” an infidel? Would you baptize a man if he admitted to you that he is an infidel?

In order to be a candidate for baptism one must confess Christ before men. Paul wrote, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32). Though the confession of which Jesus here spoke is much broader than simply the confession made before baptism, surely it must include it. The Ethiopian eunuch was told, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37).

Baptism to the penitent believer is for the remission, or forgiveness, of sins. Immersion alone does not save; it must have been preceded by the blood of Christ, faith in him, repentance of sins, and confession of faith. Notice that wherever baptism and salvation are found in the same verse, baptism always comes before salvation. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Luke by inspiration records, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). To the saints at Rome Paul wrote, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4). Peter wrote, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21).

Baptism looks in two directions. It looks back to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. When one is baptized, he obeys from the heart “that form of doctrine” which was delivered in the first century (Rom. 6:17). Just as Jesus died, was buried and raised from the dead, so in baptism one dies, is buried, and is raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4). In baptism one contacts the blood of Christ. He shed his blood in his death (Matt. 26:28; John 19:32-34). One is baptized into Jesus’ death (Rom. 6:3). But notice

also that baptism looks forward. We are raised out of the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life. One is not walking in newness of life before baptism; however, when he is brought forth, he is to henceforth walk a new life.

Brother E. R. Harper had a sermon entitled, “Did Your Baptism Take?” It emphasized the importance of baptism; but even more, the fact was stressed that, as a child of God, one is to walk in newness of life. He is to walk in the light of God’s word. John wrote, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Some readily accept the gospel, being baptized into Christ; but then they spiritually die in spiritual infancy. They do not grow beyond being babes in Christ. The apostle Paul often referred saints to their baptism to encourage them not to go back into sin (Romans 6), to be united in Christ, and not to be divided by men (1 Cor. 1:10-17), and to recognize that insofar as salvation is concerned we are one, heirs of Christ and Abraham’s seed (Gal. 3:23-29).

In spite of all that we have noted from the New Testament, our Baptist friends will tell us, “I believe that baptism is a command of God, but I do not believe it is necessary for salvation” Of course such a statement flies in the face of our Lord, who said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” However, please tell me what command of God is not essential to salvation? Just name it. Write it down. Send it to me. What command of God is not essential to salvation? The writer of Hebrews said, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:8-9). Since obeying the commands of God is essential to salvation, and baptism is a command of God, then baptism is essential to salvation. If not, why not? Conversion is a process just as is the birth of a child. Conception, the development of the child within the womb, and finally the birth of the child are all involved in the procreation process. Likewise, hearing the gospel, believing the gospel, turning away from sin, confession of Christ and, ultimately, immersion in water are all involved in the spiritual birth of one. Baptism is the translating act, i.e., the act that takes one from a state of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13).

What about you? Have you been baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins?

Ben F. Vick, Jr. from *The Informer*

ANNIVERSARY

Joel and Cindy Nelson, 03-09.

BIRTHDAYS

Taylor Nemechek, 03-08; Gary Cole 03-09.

ILL

Wednesday: Melissa Cole. Dee Adams had surgery on her hand Wednesday, March 1 and is recovering at home. Those battling cancer: Diane Cannon and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Janice Carter, Allen Scott, Kim Clark, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

AT HOME

Bob Adams is at the Del Mar Gardens, Room 229. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

Debra Gragg is in Hayes, KS visiting relatives. Tom Tucker is in Eldon, MO visiting relatives.

CONGRATULATIONS

Kimberly Rachelle Johnson was born February 28 and weighed 7 lb. 10 oz. Allen and Clara Scott are the proud great-grandparents.

POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held this Sunday, March 5 following our AM worship.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, March 12, following our AM worship.

WEDDING SHOWER

There will be a wedding shower for Jodie Wilson at 1 PM on March 18 hosted by Wilba Hopkins and Julia Thrasher at Wilba's house.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 63; Sunday PM, 44; Wednesday PM, 49.

Those To Serve

March 5, 2006

BUILDING AND COMMUNION.....Cole

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas
SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
OPENING PRAYER Charles Tullis
PRESIDE..... John Carter
ASSIST..... Allen Scott
ASSIST..... Joe Brewer
CLOSING PRAYER..... Gary Cole

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER John Dodson
CLOSING PRAYER..... Ken Greer
LORD'S SUPPER..... John Carter

WEDNESDAY 8th

SONG LEADER..... Michael Simmons
INVITATION Jeff Nemechek

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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