

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-41.

DISCUSSION:

1. What is baptism in the name of the Lord?

A. **Immersion.** While the 20th century English word “baptism” can mean immersion, pouring, or sprinkling, the 1st century Greek word translated “baptism” means immersion not pouring or sprinkling.

1) Definition of the Greek word. “1. From the preceding examples it appears, that the ground-idea, expressed by this word is, to put into or under water (or other penetrable substance), so as entirely to immerse or submerge; that this act is always expressed in the literal application of the word, and is the basis of its metaphorical uses. This ground-idea is expressed in English, in the various connections where the word occurs, by the terms (synonymous in this ground-element) to immerse, immerge, submerge, to dip, to plunge, to imbathe, to whelm. 2. These examples are drawn from writers in almost every department of literature and science; from poets, rhetoricians, philosophers, critics, historians, geographers; from writers on husbandry, on medicine, on natural history, on grammar, on theology; from almost every form and style of composition, romances, epistles, orations, fables, odes, epigrams, sermons, narratives; from writers of various nations and religions, Pagan, Jew, and Christian, belonging to many different countries, and through a long succession of ages. 3. In all, the word has retained its ground-meaning, without change. From the earliest age of Greek literature down to its close (a period of about two thousand years), not an example has been found, in which the word has any other meaning. There is no instance, in which it signifies to make a partial application of water by affusion [pouring] or sprinkling, or to cleanse, to purify, apart from the literal act of immersion as the means of cleansing or purifying” (Conant).

2) Substitution. If we substitute pouring, sprinkling, and immersion for “baptism” in John 3:23, Acts 8:38-39, and Romans 6:4, immersion is the only word that makes sense given the way “baptism” is used in these texts.

3) Transliteration. Apparently the only reason we have the English word “baptism” is because the translators of the KJV were afraid to properly translate the Greek word because the Church of England practiced pouring. Therefore, to avoid mistranslating AND to avoid angering King James, the translators transliterated the Greek word, i.e. they made it an English word and left it to the readers to interpret its proper meaning.

B. **Water baptism.** Acts 10:47-48A.

C. **The one baptism of Ephesians 4:4-6.**

1) The New Testament mentions several baptisms—John’s baptism (Ac 19:3), baptism with the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:11), baptism with fire (Mt 3:11), the baptism of Christ’s suffering (Mt 20:22-23 NKJV), baptism into Moses (1 Co 10:2), baptism for the dead (1 Co 15:29), and baptism in the name of the Lord (Ac 10:48A).

2) The one baptism of Ephesians 4:4-6 is very significant as are all the other “ones”.

3) Baptism in the name of the Lord is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:4-6.

a. It is the only baptism that is commanded of all people for all times. Acts 2:38-39.

b. As we will see, it presently serves a vital purpose, namely it is the final step a person must take to be saved.

c. Baptism into Moses in the cloud and in the sea was only for the Jews of the exodus from Egypt.

d. Baptism with fire and the baptism of Christ’s sufferings are figurative baptisms.

e. Baptism for the dead or into the resurrection of the dead is the same as baptism in the name of the Lord.

f. Baptism with the Holy Spirit was only for the apostles and the first Gentile converts—Cornelius, his relatives, and close friends. The Ephesians received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the apostles’ hands, not by baptism with the Holy Spirit. Acts 19:1-6.

g. The baptism of John was replaced by baptism in the name of the Lord. Acts 19:1-6.

h. Internal evidence. Ep 5:25-27. As we have seen, it is the only remaining water baptism.

i. Historical evidence. The Ephesians were baptized in the name of the Lord. Acts 19:1-6.

j. Chronological evidence. It was the last baptism being practiced when the NT closed.

D. **Essential to salvation.**

1) Matthew 28:19. “What did Christ mean by baptizing them ‘into the name’ of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Many scholars were uncertain. Then archaeologists began to uncover numerous Greek papyri continuing the phrase *eis to onoma*, ‘into the name.’ It was a technical expression denoting ‘into the possession’ of someone. A slave was sold into the name, i.e., into the possession, of his owner. So, as Moulton and Milligan comment: ‘The usage is of interest in connection with Matthew 28:19, where the meaning would seem to be “baptized into the possession of the Father,” etc.’ What a thrilling concept! When one, in believing penitence, turns to the Lord by the obedient act of being immersed in water, by that submission, he becomes the possession of the divine Godhead” (Apologetics Press).

2) Mark 16:16.

a. This passage teaches two things—what is required for salvation (belief and baptism) and what is required for condemnation (disbelief).

b. Faith and baptism stand or fall together. Either both or neither are required for salvation. Since faith is required for salvation (Hebrews 11:6), baptism is also required for salvation.

c. Why isn’t baptism mentioned in the second half of the verse? If we don’t believe, it goes without saying we won’t be baptized. If we do believe and want to be saved, we will be baptized.

d. Which properly reflects what Jesus said? He who believes and is saved will be baptized, or He who believes and is baptized will be saved? The latter!

3) Acts 2:38A. Does “for” mean “in order to” as in “run for the gold medal” or “because of” as in the phrase “wanted for murder.”

a. Peter said this on the day of Pentecost after the first gospel sermon in response to the question, “Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

b. Repentance and baptism stand and fall together. Either both or neither are required for salvation. Since repentance is required for baptism (Luke 13:1-5), baptism is also required for salvation.

c. Acts 2:40-41.

d. Matthew 26:28.

e. Acts 3:19. For the remission of sins vs. That your sins may be blotted out.

4) Acts 22:16. The popular but false teaching regarding the purpose of baptism in the name of the Lord completely reverses the Biblical order of this verse. Explain.

5) Romans 6:3-4.

6) 1 Corinthians 1:12-13.

7) Galatians 3:26-27.

8) 1 Peter 3:21.

9) John 3:5—Water; Spirit; Enter Kingdom. 1 Co 12:13A—Baptized; By One Spirit; Into One Body. Ep 5:25B-26—Washing of Water; By the Word; Sanctify, Cleanse. Titus 3:5B—Washing of Regeneration; Renewing of Holy Spirit; Saved

10) Acts 2:41; 8:12, 35-39; 16:30B-34. There is only one explanation for the haste with which people were baptized in the name of the Lord—it is essential to salvation!

## 2. Objections answered.

A. No, I am not teaching salvation by works of merit.

1) We should not be baptized because we foolishly think it somehow earns our salvation, but because no matter what works we do we can never earn our salvation and must therefore trust in God for salvation by meeting whatever conditions He graciously offers us for forgiveness. Baptism is one of those gracious terms. Titus 3:5. Baptism for the forgiveness of sins is an act of faith, not a meritorious work. Acts 16:15.

2). The reason many people are so antagonistic to baptism is that admitting its necessity would undermine their concept of salvation by faith alone, i.e. that we do not have to do anything to be saved but believe that Jesus has saved us. Logically so would repenting and praying. Yes, we are saved by faith (Acts 16:30-31), but faith does not exclude works of faith (Acts 16:32-34; James 2:14-26), only works of merit (Luke 18:9-14; Romans 3:21-27; 4:4-5).

B. “There are passages on salvation which say nothing about baptism. Therefore, baptism cannot be essential to salvation.” There are also passages on salvation which say nothing about faith, confession, or repentance. To know what we must do to be saved we must look at everything the New Testament says on the subject and it does not contradict itself. It is not Ro 10:9-10 instead of Ac 2:38, it is both and they are easily reconciled.

C. “Jesus saves, not water.” I could just as easily say, “Jesus saves, not prayer.” God says us by the blood of Jesus saves us when we are baptized. Romans 6:3-4.

D. “But, what about the thief on the cross?”

1) For all we know the thief may have been baptized.

2) However, since the thief died under the Law of Moses, he did not have to be baptized to be saved.

3) But, even if baptism was essential to salvation at the time the thief died, an exceptional case where baptism was impossible would not invalidate the general rule that baptism is essential to salvation.

4) Finally, Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins. Matthew 9:2-8.

## 3. Who should be baptized in the name of the Lord? People who have:

A. Sinned. Acts 2:38.

B. Believed. Mark 16:16.

C. Confessed their belief. Romans 10:9-10.

D. Repented of their sins. Acts 2:38.

E. Decided to be baptized to be saved, for the forgiveness of sins, etc. Acts 2:38.

## 4. When should people be baptized in the name of the Lord? As soon as they meet the prerequisites. Acts 2:41; 8:12, 35-39; 16:30B-34.

### APPLICATIONS:

1. I've not preached “Church of Christ” doctrine. I've only done what Phillip did—preach Jesus. Acts 8:35-39.

2. It is absolutely vital that we understand, believe, practice, and preach the doctrine of Christ about baptism and all other Bible subjects. Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 1:9.

3. If you've never been baptized, you need to be baptized in the name of the Lord for the forgiveness of your sins.

4. If you were “baptized” as an infant you did not meet the prerequisites for baptism in the name of the Lord—as an infant you did not have any sins that needed to be washed away—and therefore you need to be baptized for the remission of your sins as a responsible human being.

5. If you were baptized before you believed with all your heart (Ac 8:37), confessed with your mouth (Ro 10:9-10), and/or genuinely and whole-heartedly repented (Acts 2:38), you need to be baptized after you have met these prerequisites.

6. If you were poured or sprinkled, i.e. not immersed, you need to be baptized, i.e. immersed.

7. If you were baptized for the wrong reasons, i.e. you thought you were already saved, to make your parents happy, your peers were getting baptized, so your spouse would marry you, etc., you need to be baptized for the right reasons.

8. If you have not been baptized in the name of the Lord out of loyalty to relatives, remember Mt 10:37, that true love always does right (1 Co 13:6), and that if they lose their souls they will not want the same for you (Lk 16:27-28).

9. If you have any doubts about whether you were saved when you were baptized, you need to eliminate all doubt by undoubtedly being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.