

Tuesday, July 23, 2024—Grace School Of The Bible Summer Family Conference—Baptism: One or Many?

Thanksgiving & Announcements

- Richard Jordan & GSB
- My parents: Steve & Jeanie Ross who are celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary
- 2023 West Michigan Grace Bible Conference
 - October 18-20
 - Understanding The Nature & Character of God The Father
 - Matt Hawley, Charlie McQuillan, Bryan Ross
- Book Table—*The Myth of Verbatim Identicality*

Introduction

- *Assignment:* Baptism: One or Many? (Eph. 4:5, Matt. 3:11): A study of one of the most confusing doctrines in Christendom and the answer right division provides.
- Is there one baptism or many? The answer is yes. Enjoy your lunch.
- Pastor J.C. O’Hair called the topic of baptism religious TNT—water baptism is one of the sacred cows that believers will do battle over.
- Even within denominational circles there is little agreement regarding the topic of water baptism. Disagreements abound over its significance and/or the mode in which it should be conducted.
- Many teach that it is not necessary for salvation, but they will surely question your salvation if you have not been baptized.
- People say things like:
 - You need to follow the Lord in believers’ baptism.
 - Baptism is an outward sign of an inward commitment.
- To tackle this subject matter, we will be considering the following points:
 - Biblical Word Forms & Meanings
 - Types of Baptism
 - Biblical History of Water Baptism

- John's Baptism
- The Baptism of Jesus
- Paul's Teaching on Baptism

Biblical Word Forms & Meanings

- Forms of the word “baptize” occur 115 times in 91 verses in the KJB. The word is not found in the Old Testament.
 - Baptist—10 times in 10 verses. John the Baptist
 - Baptize—9 times in 7 verses.
 - Baptized—61 times in 51 verses.
 - Baptism—22 times in 22 verses.
 - Baptizing—4 times in 4 verses.
 - Baptizeth—2 times in 2 verses.
- The Greek word translated “baptism” is the word *baptisma* which carries the following meanings according to lexicographical information provided by Blue Letter Bible.
 - immersion, submersion
 - of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed
 - of John's baptism, that purification rite by which men on confessing their sins were bound to spiritual reformation, obtained the pardon of their past sins and became qualified for the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom soon to be set up.
 - of Christian baptism; a rite of immersion in water as commanded by Christ, by which one after confessing his sins and professing his faith in Christ, having been born again by the Holy Spirit unto a new life, identifies publicly with the fellowship of Christ and the church.
- The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides both literal and figurative meanings of the word “baptism.”
 - The action or ceremony of baptizing; immersion of a person in water, or application of water by pouring or sprinkling, as a religious rite, symbolical of moral or spiritual purification or regeneration, and, as a Christian ordinance, betokening initiation into the Church.
 - *Figurative* Also applied to the death by violence, or ‘baptism of blood,’ of unbaptized martyrs, and to the ceremony of blessing and naming church bells and ships.

- *figurative* (in various shades of meaning, in reference to initiation, spiritual agency, etc.)
 - baptism by fire—(b) martyrdom, esp. by fire; (c) the undergoing of any severe ordeal or painful experience; (d) a soldier's first experience 'under fire' in battle (so French baptême de feu).
- In terms of meaning and usage, there are both literal and figurative meanings of both the Greek and English words associated with the study of this topic.
- Matthew 3—is where we first encounter various forms of the word.
 - Baptist—referring to a person i.e., “John the Baptist” (Matt. 3:1).
 - Baptized—in water in the Jordan river (Matt. 3:6).
 - Baptism—what John was doing in verse 6 (Matt. 3:7).
 - Baptize—John identifies 3 different baptisms in this verse: 1) water, 2) Holy Ghost, & 3) Fire (Matt. 3:11-12)
- The basic meaning of the word baptize is identification. The word can be used in reference to both physical and spiritual identification. The context must determine the intended meaning.

Types of Baptism

- The Scriptures speak about twelve distinct kinds of baptism, and only five of which have any reference to a ceremony involving water or any other physical substance.
- The five ritual/physical types of baptism mentioned in the Scriptures are:
 - John 1:31, Luke 3:3—John’s baptism for entrance into the Little Flock.
 - Acts 2:38, Mark 1—the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.
 - Matthew 3:5—the baptism of Christ by John.
 - Hebrews 9:9-10—the divers baptisms required of the Law (Leviticus 19). It is most important to understand that water baptism is not an innovation of the New Testament. Israel practiced many baptisms for fifteen hundred years before New Testament times.
 - Mark 7:1-9—the traditional baptisms of the Jews that were not required by the Law.
- The seven baptisms that are either spiritual or figurative in nature are:
 - Matthew 3:11—Christ baptizing with the Holy Spirit, which took place on the day of Pentecost and resulted in the endowment with miraculous power from on high (Luke 24:49).

- Luke 3:16—Christ baptizing with fire. From the context, it appears that this baptism of fire is yet future and describes the phenomenon which will accompany Christ’s second coming.
- Luke 12:50—Christ’s baptism into death upon the cross.
- I Corinthians 10:2—the baptism of the children of Israel unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.
- I Corinthians 12:13—the Holy Spirit baptizing believers into the Body of Christ.
- I Corinthians 15:29—this much-debated baptism for the dead.
- I Peter 3:20-21—the typical baptism of Noah’s ark, the anti-type of which is Christ death baptism, the baptism which now saves us.

Biblical History of Water Baptism

- John 1:25—the leaders of Israel do not question John’s practice of water baptism but by what authority he was baptizing. At this point in the word of God, Israel has had a long history of baptizing or washing things and people in water.
 - Hebrews 9:10
 - Leviticus 15:1-33, 16:4, 17:14-15
- Mark 7:4—the religious leaders of Israel became enamored by this practice and added a bunch of man-made ordinances and traditions on top of those required by the law.

John’s Baptism

- Matthew 3:1-6—Consider the following details of John’s message:
 - John is calling Israel to repent because the kingdom of heaven was “at hand” i.e., near.
 - John was the forerunner of the Messiah.
 - John was baptizing people with water in the Jordan River.
- Mark 1:4, 14-15—These verses add the following details to our understanding of John’s message:
 - Baptism was required for the remission of sins.
 - John’s message is called the Gospel of the Kingdom.
- Luke 7:29-30—these verses are not teaching baptism as an outward sign of an inward commitment rather they are clearly teaching baptism with water as a requirement.

- Notice in Luke 7:31 that Jesus tells his hearers that then living generation within Israel has a major problem.
- Matthew 3:7-11—John calls these men a generation of vipers who were trusting in the fact that they were the physical descendent of Abraham for their salvation.
- Acts 2:40—Peter warns his hearers at Pentecost that they need to save themselves from this untoward generation. How would they do this? Acts 2:38, repents and be baptized for the remission of sins.
- John’s Baptism was drawing a line in the sand within Israel to separate the believers from the untoward generation or apostle nation that was living in rebellion against God.

The Baptism of Jesus

- Matthew 3:13-17—Jesus Christ was baptized so that he could “fulfill all righteousness.” After Jesus Christ is washed with water the Spirit of God descends upon him.
- Exodus 29:1-4—in order to function in the office of a priest the law required that the priest be washed with water and anointed with oil. Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. We know from the book of Hebrews that Jesus Christ is a high priest.
- Jesus Christ is baptized with water to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law for those who would function in the office of a priesthood.
- All of this helps to explain why water baptism was required in the preaching of John and the 12.
- Exodus 19:6—the entire nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priest and holy nation.
- Isaiah 61:5-6
- I Peter 2:9—John, Jesus Christ, and the 12 were forming the believing remnant that will function as the kingdom of priests once the Kingdom of God is established.
- Luke 12:32—this believing remnant is called the Little Flock
- Water baptism was part of God’s dealing with Israel related to the prophetic program.

Paul On Baptism

- I Corinthians 1:17—Paul was functioning under a different commission that did not include water baptism.
 - Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16
- Paul’s commission did include a baptism; however, it has nothing to do with water.
- I Corinthians 12:12-13—our baptism today is a spiritual baptism into the Church the Body of Christ.

- This baptism is a once for all transaction through which believers are made members of the Church the body of Christ, in which position they are sealed and secured unto the day of redemption.
 - Ephesians 4:30
- Colossians 2:11-12—our baptism today is not made with hands rather it is spiritual process performed by God the Holy Spirit the moment we trust Christ and believe the gospel we are identified with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.
- Galatians 3:27—the immediate context is spiritual in nature; there is no suggestion that it is dealing with physical water baptism. The baptism here in Galatians 3:27 is talking about our spiritual baptism into Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 - Romans 6
- Ephesians 4:4-6—how many baptisms do you have?

Conclusion

- There are many different baptisms discussed in scripture but only one that matters today during the dispensation of grace.
- The baptism of God the Holy Spirit whereby one is placed into the church the body of Christ and sealed until the day of redemption.
- This baptism is spiritual i.e., not made with hands and has nothing to do with water.