

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE

Lesson 9 • January 30, 2000

Water Baptism in Jesus' Name

▼ FOCUS

Water baptism is a scriptural imperative. The apostles administered water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and the church is to continue that practice today.

▼ SCRIPTURE SETTING

Acts 22:16

I Peter 3:20-22

▼ SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 28:19

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 6:1-6

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

▼ KEY VERSE

Acts 2:38

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.

4 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.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

DAILY BREAD

January

- ☐ 24 Gen. 47-48, Matt. 24
- ☐ 25 Gen. 49-50, Matt. 25, Psa. 13
- ☐ 26 Ex. 1-2, Matt. 26
- ☐ 27 Ex. 3-4, Matt. 27, Psa. 14
- ☐ 28 Ex. 5-6, Matt. 28
- ☐ 29 Ex. 7-8, Mark 1, Psa. 15
- ☐ 30 Ex. 9-10, Mark 2

▼ LESSON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- I. WATER BAPTISM
 - A. The Purpose of Baptism
 - B. The Necessity of Baptism
 - C. Typology of Baptism
 - D. The New Testament Church
- II. NEW TESTAMENT FORMULA—IN JESUS' NAME
 - A. Commanded by Jesus
 - B. Practiced by the Apostles
- III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME OF JESUS
 - A. Power in Jesus' Name
 - B. Name Above All Names

SUMMARY

▼ INTRODUCTION

Water baptism is, without question, one of the greatest and most important doctrines of the Bible. Among church organizations there is controversy concerning the significance of water baptism, the method of baptism, and the formula used in baptism. Many Bible scholars feel that baptism is simply a rite or ritual of the church and is not essential to salvation. Others contend that baptism is mandatory to salvation. Some believe that sprinkling the candidate with a few drops of water is a sufficient method of baptism, while many only accept the method of immersion. One of the controversies concerning baptism arises over the formula or words spoken over the candidate at the time of baptism. Many churches use the traditional formula of words recorded in Matthew 28:19 and contend that since Jesus spoke these words this is the only acceptable formula. Still others look into the Book of Acts to the example of the apostles' practice of Jesus' command. It is most significant that

the only formula ever used by the apostles as recorded in the New Testament was in the name of Jesus.

Many people may argue over these issues concerning water baptism, and many traditions may differ, but there is only one authority concerning water baptism and its essentiality to salvation—the Bible. The objective of today's lesson is not to examine denominational teachings or traditions, but to examine the doctrine of water baptism as presented in the Bible—the Word of God.

I. WATER BAPTISM

A. The Purpose of Baptism

Every reaction is closely associated with a previous action, and every action has in view a governing purpose for that action. If this is true among human dealings, how much more so in the realm of the divine. In His infinite wisdom God has a purpose and reason behind all that He does and all that He has spoken through the ages; He does nothing by accident, but does all things according to His divine plan and purpose.

Because water baptism was instituted and ordained by God, He surely has a divine prerogative and purpose in its practice. Some people believe that water baptism is nothing more than a ritual of the church, but according to the Scriptures, water baptism does have a definite purpose. When the apostle Peter preached the first message of the church on the Day of Pentecost, he stated that baptism was for the remission of sins.

According to *Strong's Concordance*, the Greek word *aphesis*, which is translated "remission" in Acts 2:38, literally means "freedom" or "pardon." Hence, the purpose of baptism involves the pardoning of our sins or the act of freeing us from sin. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* defines the word: "1. release from bondage or imprisonment; 2. forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission (forgiveness) of the penalty."

The apostle Paul quoted Ananias, who had given him instruction regarding baptism, as saying that baptism was to wash away one's sins (Acts 22:16). In the epistle to the Romans, Paul established in baptism that one is buried with Christ, making it a type of burying the old sinful nature of a person. (See Romans 6:1-6.)

B. The Necessity of Baptism

The Bible gives explicit instructions mandating the essentiality of water baptism to one's salvation. Moreover, the Bible also is clear regarding the mode for practicing baptism. It is important to understand both the mode and the essentiality of baptism as it relates to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Baptism is more than a mere ordinance of the church; it is part of the plan of salvation. This wonderful truth is given on this transparency.



One mode of so-called baptism accepted by some today involves sprinkling the candidate with a few drops of water. A study of the Greek term *baptizo*, from which we derive the word baptize, however, reveals the definition of the word as “dip” or “immerse,” while the Greek word *rhantizo* means “to sprinkle.” It is apparent that when the Scriptures speak of being baptized in water the idea of immersion is in clear view.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”
(Mark 16:16).

Jesus directly connected baptism with believing and salvation. He stated that both believing and baptism are required for salvation, indicating that water baptism is necessary to salvation. Moreover, in giving His disciples the great commission as recorded by Matthew, Jesus commanded them to baptize (Matthew 28:19).

The disciples evidently understood the necessity of water baptism, for they all practiced and taught it. Jesus Christ gave the “keys to the kingdom” to the apostle Peter

with the instructions, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). When Peter responded to the question asked by the multitude on the Day of Pentecost as to what they should do to be saved, he included baptism in receiving salvation (Acts 2:38). Baptism is more than a mere ordinance of the church: it is part of the plan of salvation!

C. Typology of Baptism

This transparency gives three Old Testament typologies of baptism—the Ark, through the Red Sea, and the Brazen Laver.

Typology of Baptism

- The Ark



- The Red Sea



- The Brazen Laver



God is consistent. The Bible makes numerous references to the fact that God never changes. When God introduced something new, such as the plan of salvation in the New Testament, the pattern for that plan was contained in the types and shadows of the Old Testament. While baptism is a New Testament teaching, its principles exist in typology throughout the Old Testament. Let us look into three areas of typology in the Old Testament that contain the principles of baptism.

① *The Ark.* In the construction of the ark and its purpose of providing salvation to Noah, there are two aspects of typology that bear out the necessity of water baptism to salvation.

First, when God told Noah to build the ark, He gave him specific plans for its construction. Any deviation from those plans would have rendered the ark useless and not seaworthy. In similar fashion, any deviation from the plan of salvation that God has given will result in a soul being lost. Water baptism is part of the plan and therefore is not optional.

Second, the apostle Peter wrote concerning the ark and salvation. “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 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" (I Peter 3:20-21). The apostle Peter wrote that water baptism is a component of salvation by showing that the salvation of Noah and his family came by water.

② *Through the Red Sea.* The deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt is one of the great typologies in the Scriptures. It was not a mere coincidence or an accident that Moses led Israel out of Egypt by way of the Red Sea. God had ordained this route so that He could again set the pattern for His future church. When Israel needed salvation from their enemy, Pharaoh, God provided that salvation by taking Israel through the waters of the Red Sea. Likewise, when we need salvation from sin, God provides that salvation through the waters of baptism!

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:1-2).

③ *The Brazen Laver.* After leading the people of Israel through the Red Sea and to Mount Sinai, God instructed Moses to erect a focal point for worship called the Tabernacle. Within the courtyard of the Tabernacle were the brazen altar where sacrifice was made and the brazen laver where the priests washed. Before entering the Tabernacle and into the presence of God, Aaron and his sons stopped to wash in the brass laver. Failure by the priest to wash in the laver before entering the Tabernacle resulted in his death (Exodus 30:17-21). The typology of the Tabernacle with regard to the plan of salvation is clear:

① The brazen altar was the place of death and sacrifice. It symbolized repentance in the plan of salvation, for repentance involves death to sin in our life. (See Romans 6:1-2, 5-11; Galatians 2:19-20; Colossians 3:3; I Peter 2:24.)

② The brazen laver was the place of washing prior to entering into the place of God's presence. It symbolized water baptism, whereby we are cleansed from sin. (See Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 5:26; Colossians 2:12; Titus 3:5-7; I Peter 3:20-21.)

③ The Holy of Holies was the place where the presence of God dwelled over the ark of the covenant. It symbolized receiving the Holy

Spirit, for when Christ died on the cross, the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom, opening the way for all to enter into the presence of God. (See Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; Hebrews 9:1-28; 10:19-22.)

A further study of typology reveals the Holy Place of the Tabernacle to be a type of our Christian walk with God. Just as the priest had to meet the requirement of washing before entering the Tabernacle so is the requirement of baptism for us before entering our Christian walk.

D. The New Testament Church

The preaching of baptism as a step in the salvation process was a part of the message of the New Testament Church. The Word of God teaches, from the Law of Moses through the New Testament, that to establish a doctrine requires two or three witnesses. (See Matthew 18:16; II Corinthians 13:1; I Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28.) Those involved in the establishment of the church explicitly proclaimed the essential nature of the doctrine of water baptism.

John the Baptist. The first to appear on the stage of time proclaiming the message of baptism was a roughly clad man of the wilderness named John. John was of priestly descent and a Nazarite from the time of his birth, so he likely knew the law well. He understood the requirement for the priest to wash before entering the Holy Place, and as the forerunner of Christ, he united this requirement with his proclamation of the coming Messiah. The gospel of Mark bears out the message of John concerning baptism: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4). John preached so ardently the necessity of baptism unto repentance and he baptized so many that he soon became known as John the Baptizer, or John the Baptist.

Jesus, the Christ. As John proclaimed his message of baptism, Jesus came to him requesting baptism—the Messiah who John preached would come. The first scriptural glimpse of Jesus in His adult life took place as John the Baptist baptized Him in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21). Many would argue, like John the Baptist, that Jesus did not need to be baptized since baptism was unto repentance of sin, and Jesus was without sin. (See I Peter 2:22.) However, Jesus submitted Himself to baptism to fulfill all righteousness of the law (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus endorsed the idea of baptism person-

ally by submitting Himself to baptism by John the Baptist and preaching the doctrine of baptism (John 4:1-2). In addressing a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, Jesus taught that the new birth included both water and the Spirit, and that only those born again would enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5).

Among the last instructions Jesus gave to His disciples prior to His ascension was a commandment to baptize new believers (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16). Jesus endorsed water baptism in His plan of world evangelism.

The Apostles. The men whom Jesus left to establish and lead His church understood the doctrine and message of baptism. In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost the apostle Peter proclaimed baptism as a requirement of salvation (Acts 2:38). On this first day of the church 3,000 were baptized. Philip, the evangelistic deacon, preached water baptism in his revival in Samaria (Acts 8:12), and baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert (Acts 8:36). Evidently Ananias of Damascus commanded Saul of Tarsus to be baptized, for after Ananias had prayed for him, Saul submitted to baptism (Acts 9:18; 22:16). The apostle Peter commanded those of the household of Cornelius to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:48). In Acts 19 the apostle Paul preached baptism in Jesus' name and baptized twelve disciples of John the Baptist.

That baptism is not merely an ordinance of the church but a part of salvation is evident from the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus, and His apostles. Water baptism is a biblical doctrine to believe and obey, and for ministers to preach and administer without reservation.

II. NEW TESTAMENT FORMULA— IN JESUS' NAME

Beginning in the summer of 1913, an understanding among Pentecostal people about Jesus Name baptism soon brought a controversy over the proper baptismal formula to be used. This issue still continues, some contending that the only traditional formula to use in baptizing a candidate is to repeat the words Jesus said in His commission of world evangelism: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Many Bible scholars question such an interpretation: "But it is curious that the words (of Matthew 28:19) are not given in any description of Christian baptism until the time of Justin Martyr (A. D. 100-166). . . ." (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, volume 1,

page 421). Oneness Pentecostals argue that the only way to obey Jesus' commission is to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" which is the name of Jesus Christ. A study of the New Testament supports this position, for the only formula given in the Book of Acts and alluded to in the epistle is in the name of Jesus Christ or Lord Jesus.

A. Commanded by Jesus

Throughout the narratives of the four Gospels, Jesus expounded many commandments to those who followed Him. Jesus told His disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Jesus desired for His followers to observe His commandments, referring to the motivation of their love for Him. The commandments that He gave concerning water baptism were no different. Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize in His name. (See Mark 16:16; Luke 3:3; 24:46-49; Acts 2:38.)

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus was commanding His disciples to baptize in the name of Jesus. The prepositional phrases "of the Father," "of the Son," and "of the Holy Ghost" modify "the name." There is one name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—and that one name is Jesus. (See John 5:43; Matthew 1:21; John 14:26.) Jesus is the only name that brings remission of sins and salvation (Acts 4:12).

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

B. Practiced by the Apostles

This transparency gives four areas or places where baptism in the name of Jesus Christ was practiced in the Book of Acts. The transparency can be used to enhance this portion of the lesson.

Baptism in Jesus' Name

- In Jerusalem
- In Samaria
- In Caesarea
- In Ephesus

The apostles preached and practiced baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. The only baptismal formula recorded in the New Testament includes the name of Jesus. There is no Bible record of anyone being baptized using the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17).

Apostle Paul further alluded to baptism being done in the name of Jesus Christ in his first epistle to the Corinthian church. Due to divisions in the church at Corinth, Paul asked, “Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (I Corinthians 1:13). The implication clearly suggests that the common practice of baptizing was in the name of Jesus Christ. Let us examine the practice of others as recorded in the Book of Acts.

① *In Jerusalem.* When Peter preached the message of salvation on the Day of Pentecost he preached baptism in the name of Jesus Christ; he made no mention of the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Moreover, he associated baptism in the name of Jesus Christ with the remission of sins. As Peter and John stood before the Sanhedrin council to testify about the healing of the lame man, Peter repeated the salvific importance of the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12).

② *In Samaria.* When Philip, the evangelist, went to Samaria proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, he preached and practiced baptism. “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12). Upon their arrival in Samaria, the apostles Peter and John found that Philip had preached the whole gospel to the Samaritans. The Samaritans had repented and they had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins (Acts 8:16). However, the Samaritans had not received the Holy Ghost, which happened when Peter and John laid their hands on the believers.

③ *In Caesarea.* Through the years of the early church as covered in the Book of Acts, the apostles never changed the message of salvation, including the formula of baptism. From the Day of Pentecost until the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10) was a period of about eight years. As Cornelius, a Roman centurion

who loved God, prayed one afternoon an angel came to him with the message to send for Peter to bring the message of salvation. The Holy Ghost sent Peter to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles. While Peter was preaching the message of Jesus Christ to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Ghost fell on them just as it had on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Peter then commanded these Gentile converts to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 10:48).

④ *In Ephesus.* After his conversion, Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul and began carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far reaches of the Roman empire. On his third missionary journey, some twenty years after Pentecost, the apostle traveled through Ephesus, a city of Asia minor located on the Aegean Sea. It was in Ephesus that Paul met disciples of John the Baptist. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost. When he learned that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost, Paul asked how they had been baptized. They replied, “Unto John’s baptism.” The apostle then proclaimed and administered Jesus Name baptism to them (Acts 19:1-5).

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME OF JESUS

A. Power in Jesus’ Name

The wise man Solomon once stated, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches” (Proverbs 22:1). While great riches may be the desire of the flesh, there is influence within an individual’s name. When a name is spoken it invokes respect or condemnation, love or hate, joy or fear. Sometimes within a name includes the idea of wealth or authority.

In His great commission to the disciples, Jesus declared, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Among the final words Jesus said to His disciples was this statement: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17-18). Since Jesus possessed all power in heaven and earth, and since He gave His disciples the authority to use His name, then His power is obtainable to believers who in faith invoke the name of Jesus.

Some who claim to be believers in Jesus Christ think that the day of miracles has ended. The issue is not whether or not miracles have ceased but that their faith in the

name of Jesus has faded. After the lame man received healing by the Gate Beautiful the apostle Peter stated, "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong" (Acts 3:16). Faith in the power of the name Jesus can cause the blind to see and the lame to walk. When the name of Jesus Christ is uttered in faith, there is more spiritual power than there is physical power in all the nuclear weapons of the world combined. There is absolutely nothing more powerful than that precious name of Jesus!

The greatest power of the name of Jesus is not the ability to protect an individual but the power to cleanse one of sins. When the apostle Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthian church he noted many types of people who will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-10). He even identified some of the Corinthians as having been among these types, but he also noted how they had been cleansed, sanctified, and justified through the name of Jesus (I Corinthians 6:11). What power there is in the name of Jesus to be able to wash away the filth and degradation of sin for all eternity and to write one's name in the Lamb's Book of Life!

B. Name Above All Names

With the dawning of creation, man had a longing to know the name of his creator. The prophets of old, anointed by the Spirit of God, spoke of the coming Messiah and longed to know His name. God in His infinite wisdom knew that until the time was right man could not deal with the knowledge of His name. Therefore God used progressive revelations throughout the Old Testament to prepare mankind for the announcement of His salvation name. Even with the announcement to Mary that His name would be called Jesus, it was years before a revelation of the power of His name was declared. God waited through the years of Jesus growing into manhood to begin His ministry with no further revelation. However, the miracles done by Jesus during His ministry soon associated His name with healing, walking on water, turning water into wine, casting out demons, and raising the dead. Jesus spent some three and one-half years teaching His disciples about the power of His name.

The name of Jesus is the name above all names, whether in heaven, on earth, or beneath the earth. (See Philippians 2:9-11.) The angels of heaven fall down and worship at the mention of the name Jesus. The name of Jesus causes demons to fall prostrate in

homage. People may presently bow their knee to worship idols and material things and not Jesus, but there is coming a time when every one will bow to and submit to His name. The apostle John saw Jesus returning with a name written on His vesture saying, King of kings, and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). His name is above every other name!

▼ SUMMARY

Water baptism is an essential step in the experience of salvation. Baptism is to be administered in the name of Jesus Christ. Those who walked with Jesus, heard His teaching, and practiced baptism in His presence understood that the name of Jesus Christ was essential in remitting sins, and so consistently used it in the early church. The title "father" is used over nine hundred times in the Scriptures, and the word "son" is recorded over two thousand two hundred times, but not once does the Word of God record either of these titles as having power to wash away sins. Only in the name of Jesus is there power to cleanse one from the squalor of sin.

Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:3). History and the Bible witness that water baptism is to be performed by immersion and in the name of Jesus Christ; all other modes and formulas are merely the traditions of mankind. The Word of God extols the commandments of God to men, yet men still today refuse to call on the name of Jesus Christ in water baptism.

The apostle Peter expressed the power and necessity of the name of Jesus Christ clearly in Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

▼ REFLECTIONS

- What is the meaning of the word *baptize*?
- Discuss the different areas of typology associated with water baptism.
- What singular name do the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in Matthew 28:19 refer to? Discuss.
- Are any instances of water baptism recorded in the early church administered in any formula other than the name of Jesus Christ? Discuss.
- Discuss the significance of the name of Jesus being above all other names.