


Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

Volume VIII

January 7, 2001

No. 1

What Is Baptism?

Phillip Mullins

How much do you know about baptism? Are you confused over the various teachings and practices in regard to baptism? Consider from the Bible what baptism is and what it is for.

Baptism is the act of being immersed in water. Some religious groups sprinkle water on a person and call it baptism, but Bible baptism is immersing or plunging into water. Romans 6:4 calls baptism a "burial" and parallels it to the burial and resurrection of Christ in the tomb. This is also seen in the case in Acts 8 when the treasurer from Ethiopia was baptized. "Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water..." (Acts 8:38-39). They didn't kneel down beside the water for a sprinkling. It was necessary that they both get into the water so an immersion could take place. Any reliable Bible reference work will state that immersion was the original meaning of the word "baptize."

Baptism is a command that is connected to the preaching of the gospel. Anyone who desires to become a Christian and be saved through Christ must be baptized. Jesus commanded the teaching and practice of baptism with the preaching of the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16). In Acts 2 when

the message that Jesus was the Christ was preached, the audience cried out and asked what to do. In vs. 38 we are told that Peter responded by saying, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter taught what Christ commanded. When a person desires to obey the call of the gospel and have his sins forgiven, he responds by being baptized. This baptism is to take place when one believes that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:36-38). This belief is to be confessed before others (Romans 10:8-10). In addition an attitude of repentance is to accompany the act (Acts 2:38 and Luke 24:46-47).

Another passage that shows the connection between baptism and salvation is 1 Peter 3. In verse 20 the apostle Peter is writing about Noah and his family being saved in the flood that destroyed the wicked of their day. The divinely inspired writer then makes a parallel in the next verse. "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). This passage states plainly that baptism is necessary for salvation. It has nothing to do

with powers in the waters, but it has to do with an honest and sincere person responding out of a good conscience and obeying what God has commanded. Any person who is truly seeking to be right with God, who is willing to submit their will to the Lord's, will obey without hesitation what God has told them to do. God has commanded baptism as the avenue through which a person contacts salvation and finds forgiveness of sins in Christ. These passages that have been listed state this plainly and simply.

Study your Bible for yourself and see what God has said about baptism. Examine for yourself the role of baptism in salvation.

~via *The Path*; Anderson, California.



God's Commandments

Frank Himmel

Those who emphasize keeping God's commandments are often branded legalists. Well, if saying one needs to obey God makes me a legalist, so be it. I am in good company. Consider what John had to say in his first letter about God's commandments.

"And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep his commandments" (2:3). Too many talk about knowing God or Jesus in some nebulous, undefined way. Anyone who cannot precisely explain how you know God surely struggles with the question of how you can know whether you know God. John puts it in terms of commandments. That is simple and objective.

"The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (2:4). It is not fashionable to call religious people liars in these days when most folks think it doesn't matter

what you believe anyway, as long as you are sincere. But John knew it was possible to deceive others and even be self-deceived about your standing before God. Anyone can claim to know Him; the evidence is in action.

"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight" (3:22). In the movies a man can spend most of his life living for self, yet in a moment of crisis turn in prayer and receive whatever he asks. In reality, it is those who obey God to whom He is attentive (Psalm 34:15-16).

"And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit who He has given us" (3:24). When a boy talks and acts like his dad, people say they can see his father in him. Folks cannot see the heavenly Father in you if you do not obey His commandments. Why? Because He is not there.

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments" (5:2). It is commonly said that what the world needs is more love. I agree. The question is, What is love? Is it a warm feeling? Is it toleration of whatever lifestyle someone chooses or attitude he adopts? No, John says it is obeying God's commandments. You see, these commands not only tell us how to act in reference to God, but also with respect to each other.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (5:3). Worldly people commonly look at God's commandments as taking all the fun out of life, as unrealistically demanding. John found them otherwise. Ironically, God's laws make us free – free from the frustration of trying to find happiness in ways that do not work; free from the progressive nature of sin, where one bad thing leads to another; free from the guilt of wrong. It is the way of transgressors that is hard (Proverbs 13:15).

~via *The Manslick Road Speaker*, Louisville, Kentucky..

Handwriting of Ordinances

Glen Young

We are New Testament Christians! With this battle cry upon our lips, we confidently wield the Sword of the Spirit. From Colossians 2:14, we affirm that the Old Testament is not binding upon people today. The New Testament is the complete standard of authority in religious matters today, because the “handwriting of ordinances” were blotted out having been nailed to the cross. Hence, it is not uncommon for some to accuse us of not believing in the Old Testament. And the way some brethren grumble and complain about studying the Old Testament scriptures, it makes me wonder.

What, exactly, was nailed to the Lord’s cross? The immediate context identifies the handwriting of ordinances as being the Law of Moses. In verse eleven, Paul contrasts “the circumcision made without hands” with the fleshly circumcision of Moses’ Law. Further, in verses sixteen and seventeen, he establishes that abstaining from certain meats or drinks and the keeping of holy days, new moons or Sabbath days were “a shadow of things to come.” The writer of Hebrews speaks of the insufficiency of Moses’ Law by referring to it as having, or being, a “shadow” of the things to come and was not the image, or reality, which should latter come in the Christ. All of this leads to the inescapable conclusion that the handwriting of ordinances, which were nailed to the cross, were the Laws of Moses as given to him by God. These Laws are preserved in written form in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

The Law of Moses was not the only sacred writings of the Jews. Jesus points to this in Luke 24:44 when He refers to the Law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms as containing words about Him. It is recorded in John 10:34 that Jesus quoted from Psalms 82:6 and said “Is it not written in your law?” Thayer tells us that ‘nomos’ means, “anything established, any-

thing received by usage, a custom, a law, a command: a) used of any law whatsoever... b) used of the Mosaic law, and referring (according to the context) either to the volume of the law or to its contents...”

The Law of Moses is just one of the many definitions for the Greek word “nomos.” In commenting on this verse Adam Clarke states, “The words which our Lord quotes are taken from (Psa. 82:6), which shows that, under the word law, our Lord comprised the Jewish sacred writings in general.” (from Adam Clarke Commentary). Which would have been the way the Jews used the word “Law.” We conclude, then, that neither the Psalms (poetry), nor Proverbs - Ecclesiastes - Song of Solomon (wisdom literature), nor the prophets (both major and minor), nor the historical accounts of God’s dealing with man from Adam to Malachi, were abrogated at the cross. The Law that was repealed or made void at the cross, was the Law which Moses received and gave to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 5:1-3).

What is the point? Christians do a disservice to their God and themselves if they do not tap into the wealth of divine knowledge in the Old Testament scriptures. Christians do not try to justify their teaching and practice by the Old Testament scripture. Their appeal is to the teachings of Christ, the apostles and holy prophets of the first century. They, however, do not hesitate to study those things which were written afore time for they know they were written for their learning. A dear brother once told me, “I didn’t fully understand the New Testament until I had learned some things from the Old Testament.” Another brother wrote, “I think we make a criminal mistake in not teaching and using the Old Testament.” Truer words were never spoken.

~via *Road Creek Bulletin*, Elkhorn City, Kentucky

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Nell Bates* is in the Huntsville Hospital following her surgery this past Tuesday. She is in the CCU and is making progress...*Ragan & Mycala White* have been sick this past week and have not been able to be at services...*Lou Ann Phillips* was sick Wednesday and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night ...*Tisha Thomas' aunt, Pat Franklin*, is at her son's house recovering from her recent surgery in Nashville...*Wanda Tucker's father, Billy Letson*, received word that his Leukemia would be able to be treated with medication ..*Scottie Goode's uncle, O.L. Prince*, broke a hip this past Sunday and had surgery at ECM...*Nell Bates sister, Ruby Jean Green*, has been in the Athens-Limestone Hospital ...Remember *Nell Bates' niece, Tina Strickland*, is continuing her treatments for her cancer ...Also remember *Mattie Blanche Word* continues at home and not able to be out...Also remember *Gurtie Snoddy* who is in the Mitchell-Hollingsworth Nursing Home ...*Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ...Remember *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunt*, and *Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty*, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

VOLUME 8: With this issue of the *Gospel Power* we begin the 8th volume. It has been my pleasure to edit the *Gospel Power* over the past 5 plus years. I appreciate all of you that read it and I appreciate the number that have expressed many kind words about this work to me either by phone, written correspondence or in person. I hope and trust that only good will be done through this medium and I count it my privilege to the opportunity to be involved in this area of work.

THE RECORD: *Averages for 2000*

Sunday: Bible Classes 84
 Morning Worship 97
 Evening Worship 69

Wednesday:
 Bible Classes 62

Gospel Power

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
 Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

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Anderson-church.org

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