

SPECIAL INTERLUDE
"Baptism Sunday: Answering Questions About Baptism"

Introduction: (To show the need...)

(1) Just before going on vacation, the Church Board discussed with me the need to answer the question: Is ritual baptism Scripturally necessary? Apparently the question arose in a youth Sunday School class, and the Board and myself thought it would be good to address from the pulpit.

(2) I have lately had to answer whether or not baptism is necessary for salvation. Some come from backgrounds that teach "baptismal regeneration" where baptism is considered necessary with faith in order to enter heaven.

(3) Still others of us were baptized as infants, and some have asked me if they should be baptized as adults since coming to faith in Christ.

(4) Some of us were baptized by sprinkling, or perhaps, by pouring, and we are wondering if we are supposed to be baptized again by immersion in the river to be acceptable to God.

Age I start to baptize them!

(6) What if someone has a fear about going under water a certain way, or has a physical malady where the doctor strictly forbids them from being immersed -- can we Biblically make allowances and baptize them another way?

(7) Well, since this is Baptism Sunday at Nepaug Church, and we have a number of people who will be baptized ritually following today's service, this seems to be a good day to answer these and related questions on baptism.

Need: "Since this is 'Baptism Sunday' at Nepaug Church, could you supply some answers to questions I have about baptism issues?!"

I. The Issue of Infant Ritual Baptism:

A. Question: "Why don't we baptize infants at Nepaug Church?"

B. Answer: "Many who baptize infants teach that that it imparts eternal life. Yet, (1) baptism does not save where faith in the Gospel saves, see 1 Cor. 1:17; according to Gal. 1:8-9 and 2:12-14, we must defend this truth by not practicing infant baptism. (2) Paul says that a child's **practical** spiritual welfare depends on his parent's holiness, **not** on anything else (1 Cor. 7:14)! (3) When infants die, God takes care of them by grace, 2 Sam. 12:22f. (4) Some teach infant baptism via A. 16:15, 33 & 1 Cor. 1:16 as 'households' are baptized. Yet, 1 C. 16:15 shows 'household' means non-infants.

II. The Issue of "Baptismal Regeneration:"

A. Question: "But Pastor Shell, some use Scripture to teach that we must be baptized in water to go to heaven! Can you explain these verses?!"

B. Answer: "We examine these passages to clear up our concerns:

1. Acts 2:38 & Mk. 16:16 (repent + baptism & believe + baptism) - baptism does not save according to 1 Cor. 1:17, so these verses show baptism only as the outward testimony of salvation.
2. Acts 22:16 ("arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord") - A better reading is: "having arisen, be baptized; and wash away your sins, calling on the ... Lord," Ryrie St. Bib. footnote. This verse is similar to "III, B, 1."
3. John 3:5 ("Except a man be born of water **and** of the spirit, he cannot enter...the kingdom...") Jesus alludes to Ez. 36:24-26 where water washing pictures spiritual salvation, a typical Hebrew expression; Jesus does not add water baptism to the spirit but **figuratively** equates 'water' and 'Spirit' as a spiritual entity!"
4. 1 Peter 3:21 ("even baptism doth also now save us") - Peter writes to Jewish believers (cf. 1 P. 1:1) who had scattered from Palestine (*diaspora*) for converting to Christ. He says that **just as** the ark separated Noah from judgment in his day, v. 20, **so also** their Christian baptism resulted in their expulsion from the land **which in turn** removed them from coming judgment on Palestine! The "salvation" in this context is physical, not spiritual!"

III. The Issue of the "Second Blessing" Baptism with the Holy Spirit:

A. Question: "Some take the "**by** the Spirit" baptism of 1 Cor. 12:13 (KJV) to occur to all at salvation and the "**with** the Spirit" baptism of Acts 1:4-5 and 11: 16 (KJV) to be a **second** spiritual baptism with tongues

speaking as at Pentecost, cf. Dict. of Pent. and Char. Movs., p. 40. Must I be 'baptized with the Spirit' and speak in tongues?!"

B. Answer: The Greek preposition is the same in all of these verses, UBS Gr. N.T., p. 416, 460, 606. The spiritual baptism of Pentecost occurs to every believer at salvation even without tongues!"

IV. **The Issue of Needing Water Baptism Besides Spirit Baptism:**

A. Question: "If we are **spiritually** baptized into Christ **at** salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13), why be baptized in water **after** believing in Christ?"

B. Answer: "Jesus commanded us to baptize those we disciple in Mtt. 28:19-20, making water baptism an ordinance for the Church."

V. **The Issue of How Water Baptism is to Be Performed (Mode):**

A. Question: "Some teach effusion (pouring) and others sprinkling where we immerse people in the river! What mode is right, and why?!"

B. Answer: "(1) When one converted to Judaism in Jesus' day, he was baptized by immersion, The Mishnah, Danby, p. 733 (Mikwoath, 1.7); Ryrie St. B., p. 1854. John 3:23; Mtt. 3:16 and Acts 8:39 all imply immersion due to the wording! Thus, we immerse as this mode best imitates Scripture! (2) However, Christians in the catacombs with water shortages practiced effusion (Walker, A Hist. of the Chr. Ch., p. 88), and Jesus made a hardship allowance for them, cf. Rev. 2:9a. Thus, we will modify our **mode** to meet personal hardship! (3) If one was baptized without immersion as a believer, we do not ask him to repeat baptism. God commands us only to practice water baptism, not how we must do it!"

VI. **The Issue of Age Qualifications for Water Baptism:**

A. Question: "How old should one be before being baptized in water?"

B. Answer: "Since water baptism is for believers, a child in question must understand so as to believe Scripture regarding salvation and baptism **prior to** baptism (1 Cor. 14:16-19)! **Whenever** a child understands and believes, we consider him ready for water baptism!"

Application: (1) *To be baptized "by/with" the Holy Spirit, we must believe on Christ, Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 12:13. (2) Yet, as a testimony, Christ directs that we **THEN** be baptized by water, Mtt. 28:19-20!*

Lesson: *When anyone believes in Christ, he is spiritually baptized by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13. Yet afterwards, Christ commands his water baptism as a public testimony to this conversion!*

Conclusion: (To apply the message)

since that baptism, it is necessary for him to obey Christ and be baptized as a believer in accord with Mtt.28:19f.

(2) If we were baptized as a believer, but did not understand what it meant, be encouraged to be baptized again to fulfill the intent of Matthew 28:19-20.

Mode. However, if **anyone** chooses to be re-baptized because his conscience bothers him about the mode used in his past, we will re-baptize him upon his request.

(4) If, following this message, anyone would like to be baptized, but had not planned on it today, we will be happy to baptize him two weeks from today, on August 28th. We are holding a Baptismal Service then as well. Please see the Pastor or a Board Member in the meantime about this!