

BAPTISM (NEW TESTAMENT STYLE)

IT is hoped this article may help those who want to be sure that they have carried out God's will with regard to baptism, and if they haven't, would sincerely desire to do so.

If you don't agree with what I write, please don't reject it out of hand like some of the Thessalonians did with Paul, but examine the Bible passages on baptism for yourselves like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:1-11) and see if what I write is correct. On the other hand I don't want you to believe anything I say, or for that matter what anyone else says, whosoever they may be, preacher, 'priest', or vicar, without examining it for yourselves. When you stand before the great white throne on the day of judgement, you won't be judged on whether you did what I said or on what any other human being said, but on whether you did what Jesus said (John 12:48). One thing I would like you to know, neither I nor the publishers of this magazine have any vested interest in whether you accept or reject what is written in it, We don't get any money for what we do. We may never know till Judgement Day itself how you react to this teaching, but we do want you to enjoy fellowship with Jesus and to go to heaven. So please consider these things carefully.

The word "baptism" means different things to different people. Some think of an adult being immersed in water. Most think of a baby having water sprinkled or poured on it. People talk of 'baptism by sprinkling', 'baptism by pouring', and 'baptism by immersion'. What Jesus meant by his command to be baptised, needs to be known, before it can be carried out.

It is often possible to tell what a writer means by a word by the way he uses it in a sentence. An outstanding example of a word that has completely changed its meaning within the last 300 years is 'let'. In the Authorised Version Paul is recorded as saying "oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto)" Romans 1:13. It is obvious that "let" in the Authorised Version of 1611 meant "hindered", and that is how it is translated in the Revised Version of 1884. Put the word "hindered" in place of the word "let" and it makes sense to us today.

Carrying out a similar exercise with the word "baptism" we can find out what it meant in New Testament times. Consider Colossians chapter 2 verse 12, "Having been buried with him (i.e. Christ) in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead". Take out the word "baptism" and try each one of these alternative words in turn in its place; sprinkling, pouring, immersion. If the word you put in its place has the same meaning as "baptism" the sentence will still make sense. The thought of being

buried by a sprinkling of water is absurd, and it would take an awful lot of water to bury one by pouring water on them, whereas immersion in water is a kind of burial. You could try the same exercise in Romans chapter 6 verse 4: Acts chapter 8 verses 38-39: and John chapter 3 verse 23. Bible baptism is immersion in water.

Why should we be baptised (immersed)?

- (1) If only for the simple reason Jesus commanded it; Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:19. "If you love me ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15 R.V.).
- (2) Because it is for the salvation of the believer Mark 16:16 and 1 Peter 3:21.
- (3) It is for forgiveness of the sins of the repentant one, Acts 2:38
- (4) It brings one who has faith into Christ Galatians 3:24-27.
- (5) At baptism the old sinful life is buried and we start a new life Romans chapter 6.

Who can be baptised?

Anyone who believes Mark 16:16, and repents Acts 2:38. You must believe that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37).

You will see then that baptism is not intended for babies. They can't believe, and they have no sins to repent of. There are no examples of babies being baptised in the New Testament. They don't need baptism; Jesus said "Suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven". Nice, pleasant and well-meaning reasons are put forward for performing some sort of ceremony on babies, but however sincerely carried out they are vain, a waste of time. God has not authorised baby sprinkling or baby baptism – so to say over the infant "I baptise thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit" is blasphemy against all three. It is a presumptuous sin, and those who take part in it or condone it by their presence are "partakers with them in their evil deeds", so don't be coerced into having anything to do with "baby baptism".

One of the most damaging effects of "baby baptism" is that when the child grows up it thinks it has done what Jesus asked for, and so God's command is rendered ineffective. Now I know that the majority of people who perform "baby baptism" are very sincere, are not blaspheming wilfully, and really believe with all their heart they are doing God's will. My heart is sad for them because "when the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a pit".

Have you done what you now know to be true with regard to baptism? Are you a true worshipper in this respect? If not – I pray that you will be. **ALLAN ASHURST**