

CAN WE PUT TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON BAPTISM IF IT IS IN THE SCRIPTURES?

Some times we find ourselves having to just go back to the scriptures to show people that what we preach and teach is what the Bible says, not what we want it to say. This comes up with numerous issues, but today we just want to look at a very simple, but sometimes misunderstood topic: baptism.

Why would a topic like baptism (for the remission of sins) be so controversial for many in the world and denominations today? Perhaps it is because in the church we often hear that we are legalists, or that we put too much importance on "minor" things like baptism in relation to salvation. In view of what the Bible teaches, I do not see how this could be possible. There are five very clearly written passages in the New Testament that mention both baptism and salvation in the same verse. Here is the list -- see for yourself: Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16 and I Peter 3:21. In every one of these passages, water baptism precedes salvation, the remission of sins or walking in the newness of life. Do you know of a single exception?

Just read this verse, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). This passage clearly contains the conditions for salvation: faith and baptism. It also contains the conditions for damnation: a lack of faith. If anyone wants to know what to do to go to hell, have them read Mark 16:16 -- all that is necessary is a lack of faith. If they want to know what to do for the salvation of their soul, have them read the same verse -- it tells them to believe and be baptized. We can also read in Acts 2:38 that Peter told a group of believers to "repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Our denominational friends (mostly Baptists) often focus on the word "for" in this passage and insist it means "because of," even though it is never translated that way in the Bible. We have to remind them that if baptism is "because of" the remission of sins, then so is repentance. Baptism and repentance are joined by the little conjunction "and." Which means that whatever baptism is "for," repentance is "for" also. After one is buried with Christ in baptism, they are raised to walk in a newness of life (Romans 6:1-4). This new life comes **after** baptism. Many denominationalists obviously want to "bury" the "new man," since they claim the newness of life comes before our "burial."

Remember that three days after the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus, Ananias told him to "arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). Some people today claim Saul was saved three days before Ananias met him. Well, Ananias must not have known it, for he told Saul how to "wash away" his sins. If Saul had been saved on the road as some groups claim, he must have been the most miserable saved man in the Bible. Saul was blind and spent three days praying and fasting until Ananias arrived.

In I Peter 3:21 the Bible plainly states baptism "now saves us." I realize that baptism alone is not the only thing necessary for salvation. Other requirements must be met, like faith, love and repentance. I do not know of anything "alone" that will save a sinner, not even faith (James 2:24). So, as always, we want to speak where the scriptures speak (without additions)

*Johnny Oxendine
San Mateo, CA*

BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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SOFT-PEDAL JOURNALISM

Personalities in journalism, which means naming teachers of error along with systems of error, are not any violation of "courageous, dignified religious journalism." Naming the men who teach error and practice deception in religion, even in the church, "can be done in a courteous and Christian manner," but it should be done.

To talk and write of courageous, dignified, courteous methods of religious journalism is to deal only in broad generalities. For some of our old landmarks as gospel papers to recede from former drastic policies and retreat behind the verbiage of carefully worked resolutions of editorial committees to restrain the power of pens, is a keen disappointment to many of us who have looked to these papers to take the lead in a major fight, without generalities, relentless offensives against false movements and the men who promote them.

Whether some "temptation or scheme of intimidation" has "seduced" and "provoked" the editors and publishers to modify policies we cannot say, but it is obvious that something has caused them to seek retrenchment. Our only point here is that it is no time to be saying pretty platitudes and dealing in generalities. We are in a fight for the truth and the cannon fire cannot cease until the enemies of the church stack arms.

Calling names of false teachers and their aides and sympathizer is neither undignified nor discourteous, because Paul did it, and he was courteous, dignified and educated. He said. Demas forsook me having loved this: present world." It was hard on Demas for Paul to say that publicly. He should have taken that up with Demas privately' Again he said that Hymenaeus and Philetus had shipwrecked their faith and were overthrowing the faith of -others by their theory of the resurrection and he wrote it down in the New Testament (a rather dignified book) that he had turned those brethren of his over to Satan. He clashed with Barnabas upon one occasion and withstood Peter to his face and rebuked him publicly. Neither incident mined the church, nor marred the dignity of the New Testament. He further said that Alexander the coppersmith did him much evil and declared that the Lord would reward him for what he did. Paul did not seem to covet the kind of reward he intimated Alexander would get. He told a perverter of the truth one time that he was full of guile and villainy, called him a son of the devil, and asked him if he ever intended to quit perverting the way of the Lord. When a paper develops better manners than the New Testament and a preacher becomes more dignified than the apostles, neither is worth anything to the defense of the truth nor to the cause of Christ.

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. (deceased)

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.
Morning Worship 11.00 am.
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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HOMOSEXUALITY

A number of years ago an article appeared in a newspaper with the following headline: “Church welcomes everyone” which reported on the establishing of a new church group in Charleston. This particular church, the Appalachian Metropolitan Community Church, however, is different to most in that it is a part of a denomination that caters particularly to homosexuals. Alongside that article was a short column under the title “4 your info, ‘4’ parents!” This stated, “At issue: Many Christian denominations believe that homosexuality is condemned in the Bible. But other Christians believe that particular passages have been misinterpreted or mistranslated. For example, the Sin of Sodom is generally thought to be that of homosexuality. But some Bible scholars say the sin is instead that of uncaring and godlessness. What do you think?”

Indeed, what do you think? Here is the passage of Scripture:

“And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant’s house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door” (Genesis 19:1-10).

Does this sound like the sin of “uncaring and godlessness”? One has to ignore the plain meaning of the text to come up with such an idea. For one to promote such a perverted interpretation of the text, as proposed above, is simply to enable one to promote or at least accept this perverted lifestyle. Not only is the sin of homosexuality condemned in this passage but it is also condemned in Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:24-28; I Corinthians 6:9-11; I Timothy 1:8-10. Again, these passages are very clear. For one to deny that the Bible condemns the sin of homosexuality is to ignore plain Bible teaching.

Brethren, we are living in an age in which it is not popular to condemn such behavior. Even our court system is ready to uphold this sinful practice by making it possible for such to “marry,” as has been upheld in at least two states. However, popular or not we have an obligation to speak out against this perverted lifestyle and to show that God condemns such behavior. We need also to teach that those who practice such **can** change (“*and such were some of you*” – I Corinthians 6:11). If homosexuality were not sin, God would not have condemned it. But God has always condemned homosexual and lesbian relationships as sin, and so must we.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett and mother, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick’s aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron’ sister who has having health problems, and Tim Smith.

Lanny Niver asked us to remember his aunt in prayer and for his daughter who has skin cancer. Myrtle Grimsley and Aiden Arnold were not out Sunday because of sickness.

Rachel Fitzpatrick and Kathy Treadway were out of town Sunday.

The next Pot Luck will take the form of a low country broil and will be on November 1, 2008. Les Culpepper will prepare this and would appreciate some help with the costs and also needs to get a rough count of who plans to be there, please let him know if you plan to attend. There will also be a need for some sides and deserts.

A NEW ATTITUDE

ONE. Give people more than they expect—cheerfully (Philemon 1:21).

TWO. Don’t believe all you hear, spend all you have, or sleep all you want.

THREE. Smile when answering the phone. Callers can hear it in your voice.

FOUR. Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.

FIVE. When you say, “I’m sorry,” look the person in the eye.

SIX. Be engaged at least six months before you get married.

SEVEN. Believe in love at first sight.

EIGHT. Spend some time alone (Matthew 14:23).

NINE. When you say, “I love you,” mean it (1 Peter 1:22).

TEN. Never laugh at a dream. People without dreams don’t have much.

ELEVEN. Don’t let a little dispute injure a great friendship (Proverbs 27:10).

TWELVE. Talk slowly but think quickly (James 1:19).

THIRTEEN. Don’t judge people by their relatives (Matthew 7:1).

FOURTEEN. Marry a man/woman you love to talk to (1 Peter 3:7).

FIFTEEN. Do an anonymous kindness each day (Ephesians 4:32).

SIXTEEN. When you lose, don’t lose the lesson (James 1:1-3).

SEVENTEEN. When you make a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.

EIGHTEEN. In disagreements, fight fairly. No name calling, threats, or bringing up ancient history.

NINETEEN. Remember the three Rs: Respect for self; Respect for others; and Responsibility for all your actions.

TWENTY. When someone asks you a question you don’t want to answer, smile and ask, “Why do you want to know?”

TWENTY-ONE. Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt but it’s the only way to live life completely.

Author Unknown