

Sunday, August 7, 2022 am

**Concerning First Principles**  
**BAPTIZED, BUT NOT...**  
**Acts 19:1-5**

Being the first Sunday of the month, I would like to share with you another “first principles” lesson. This lesson is a very fundamental one, but one we need to consider from time to time. This is a lesson I received last month while in Illinois at our preacher studies. This lesson was presented by Bob McPherson and the credit goes to him. This lesson is entitled, “Baptized, but not...” It is designed to address typical, denominational baptism which is offered AFTER one is “saved”, usually as a “first act” or as “an outward sign of an inward grace”, etc.

**I. Introduction**

- a. **Acts 19:1-5**, we find a group of disciples in Ephesus. Paul had come there as he begins his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. He begins to inquire of them about their faith. While they had been taught, there were some things left out (such as understanding the Holy Spirit and baptism in the name of Jesus). Paul inquires about their baptism and they said they were baptized with John’s baptism. Paul clarifies the purpose of John’s baptism (as the forerunner and a baptism of repentance – Malachi 3:1, 4:5-6, Luke 3:3-5 [Isaiah 40:3-5]). Paul proceeds to explain to him the way of God more accurately – explaining about Jesus. Then in vs. 5, we find that they were “baptized in the name of Jesus”, which would have been a proper baptism.
- b. As we are studying with individuals, we begin to emphasize the importance of baptism as PART of God’s plan of salvation (as previously noted, we do NOT preach “water salvation”, but baptism is an important of God’s plan).
  - i. Romans 6:3-7 – baptism unites us with death, burial and resurrection of Jesus
  - ii. Galatians 3:26-27 – it puts us into Christ
  - iii. Acts 22:16 – it washes away our sins
  - iv. 1 Peter 3:21 – it saves us
  - v. 1 Peter 3:21 – it is an appeal to a good conscience to God
  - vi. Colossians 2:11-13 – we realize that when we are baptized by faith, but it is “in the working of God” meaning that He does what we cannot do – namely, he saves us because we have done what He required.
- c. Because of our studies they NOW have a CLEAR understanding of the importance of baptism as part of God’s plan of salvation. But following this, many will say, “I was baptized in the (fill in the blank – Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, etc.) church, so I must be ok”.
- d. But is that ok? Is it possible to be baptized, BUT NOT for the right reason or in the right way? That is what we want to address in this lesson. We will look at some things that will show one can be baptized improperly and thus it is NOT valid.

**II. Baptized, but not...**

- a. Buried – baptism is by immersion.
  - i. Romans 6:3-4 – we are buried with Him through baptism
  - ii. Colossians 2:12
  - iii. Acts 8:38-39 – Philip and the eunuch – they went down into the water.
  - iv. The word in the Greek for baptize is βαπτίζω (baptizo) or βάπτισμα (baptisma), a word which means to dip or submerge. It is always used that way meaning one is immersed (in whatever he is baptized into).
  - v. Many today baptize by either sprinkling or pouring water on the head. While they may fit the English definition of baptism, they are NOT the baptism of the Bible.

- vi. So, if you were baptized, but NOT immersed, it is NOT the baptism you need.
- b. Into Christ –**
- i. Romans 6:3 – As many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death
  - ii. Galatians 3:27 – as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
  - iii. These texts clearly show that baptism is HOW one gets into Christ.
  - iv. Many today profess that they are saved and THEN baptized. In essence one is saying they are in Christ (to my knowledge, all who believe in salvation through Jesus believe that if you are saved you are in Christ) and THEN baptized.
  - v. Grammatically, we must understand that we are “in Christ WHEN baptized” is different than being “in Christ, THEN baptized.”
  - vi. The order of these proves one understands the purpose of being baptized, and thus demonstrates one’s motives WHEN they are baptized. It is an important distinction.
  - vii. If you were “in Christ” and THEN baptized, it is NOT the baptism you need.
- c. For the remission of sins**
- i. Acts 22:16 – Paul retells His conversion. He was told to be baptized and wash away his sins. The idea of remission is the removal of sins, AKA forgiveness.
  - ii. Act 2:38 tells us we are baptized “FOR the remission of sins”.
  - iii. Again, the Greek language is clearly understood. The Greek word for “for” is εις (eis). It is a preposition that always means, “unto”, “into” or “in the direction” of something. Considering that, Acts 2:38 means that the act of baptism LEADS TO the remission of sins.
  - iv. Some have argued that “for” can mean “because of”. And in the English language that is true. But NT Greek has a different for that meaning – the preposition γάρ (gar) which means, “because”. See Galatians 3:27, “For as many of you...” or Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned...”, etc. This is a case where understanding the original language clears up misunderstandings.
  - v. Consider also that NO reputable version translates the word here as “because of”. Some study Bibles may insert a footnote, but that is always a man’s biased opinion. FURTHERMORE, consider this phrase in light of Matthew 26:28 where the EXACT same phrase in the Greek is used speaking of the blood of Jesus being shed “for the remission of sins.” QUESTION: Was Jesus blood shed because our sins had already been forgiven OR toward forgiveness of sins?
  - vi. IF one’s baptism was for some reason other than FOR the forgiveness or remission of sins, it is NOT the baptism you need.
- d. With urgency**
- i. Acts 2:41 – on Pentecost, “that day, about 3000 souls were added”
  - ii. Acts 8:36 – the Eunuch, “See here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?”
  - iii. Acts 16:32-33 – immediately the jailer and his family were baptized
  - iv. Acts 22:16 – Ananias told Saul, “Why are you waiting...?”
  - v. When we fully understand what baptism does, we realize UNTIL we take action we are in jeopardy. It is not something to be put off. That is why, when we offer the invitation, if someone desires to be baptized (and is ready – i.e., they understand what they are doing) we take action immediately). When someone is willing to put off being baptized, typically it shows a lack of understanding of the urgency. Someone may need to be taught a little more, but the delay should be minimal.
  - vi. Many denominations see baptism as a ritual AFTER salvation and therefore there is no real hurry. They may wait and schedule a “baptismal service” and baptize several. But that shows a misunderstanding of its important and makes the baptism nothing more than symbolic.

- vii. IF one's baptism was not executed with the urgency we read of in the Bible, it is NOT the baptism we read of in the Bible.

**e. Believing God was working**

- i. Colossians 2:12-13, as previously noted, when we are buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him through faith, it is "in the working of God." That expression means that God does His part to save us. Consider vs. 13, "*He made us alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses...*"
- ii. We must understand that baptism is not just about getting wet (we will see that in the next point). We are submitting to God's will by faith. We BELIEVE that he will do as He promised when we do what He tells us to do. Baptism HAS TO have a real purpose.
- iii. There are some who view baptism as a meritorious work. They see it as part of their "check list" for serving God. That is the point Paul continually is trying to dispel in many of his writings when he contrasts the Old and New laws. Sadly, that is what we are often accused of by the denominational world because we believe in the necessity of baptism.
- iv. Furthermore, this would dismiss infant baptism or the baptism of someone who does not fully understand the implications of his actions (people pressured into it or doing it for the sake of others, etc.)
- v. IF in your baptism, you did not appreciate God's part in saving you at that point, then it is NOT the baptism of scripture.

**f. FOR a clear conscience –**

- i. 1 Peter 3:21 – Peter declares that baptism now saves us and emphasizes that it is in water (just as Noah and his family were save through water). He then proceeds to give a reason behind it, "*Not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God...*"
- ii. Recently we addressed this passage in a lesson in our 1 Peter study. In that lesson we noted the faith associated with being baptized. First there is the faith that God will do what He said (see the previous point in Colossians 2:12-13) (note also that the word "answer" in this text indicates the idea of appealing TO God – asking Him to do something [see NASB, ESV]), and second, we believe that in being baptized our conscience is NOW clear. If we understand what we are doing, when we come up out of that water there is a sense of relief. We KNOW God has saved us. Thus, we are "a new creation" spiritually starting over (2 Corinthians 5:17). What a relief that is.
- iii. Consider denominational baptism after salvation. Such implies that your conscience is ALREADY clear BEFORE you are baptized. Once again, the order is wrong, as well as the motive. If you are not saved in baptism, how are you appealing to God for a good conscience (after all He has already saved you and cleansed your conscience)?
- iv. IF your baptism is NOT appealing to God for a good conscience, then it is NOT the baptism of the Bible

**g. To be saved**

- i. Again, 1 Peter 3:21 – "baptism now saves us". Understand how clearly this is stated. It cannot be misunderstood without help. ALSO, pick your translation – virtually every reliable translation declares baptism now save us.
- ii. Denominational baptism rejects this, which is why many denominational study bibles include a footnote explaining away this plain text.
- iii. IF your baptism is NOT for salvation, it is NOT the baptism of the Bible.

**III. Back to Acts 19**

- a. And thus we can see the significance of baptism. WHAT we do and WHY we do it is important. And as we have seen, this is emphasized in numerous places.

- b. So back to Acts 19:1-5. These individuals realized they had been baptized for the wrong reason. What did they do? They were baptized for the RIGHT reason – for the remission of their sins through the blood of Jesus.
- c. Notice I have not used the term, “rebaptized”, because I want us to understand you only need to be baptized ONCE. If one’s baptism was for the wrong reason, they need to be baptized for the right reason.
- d. What if you are not sure about your baptism? My encouragement is, why not make sure you’re your baptism is right? The outcome is too important to gamble with. This is about your eternal destiny. If I question the scriptural validity of my baptism, the safe course is to make sure I am right. IF, being baptized before was true, being baptized again to make sure you are right will NOT invalidate what you have done previously. It is simply making sure you are right with God. THAT, is the answer of a good conscience toward God.

And thus, we can see the importance of baptism. Clearly, I have not dismissed the importance of faith in this lesson. It has to precede baptism, along with repentance and confessing Him as the Son of God and Lord. So, if you have not been baptized for the remission of your sins, let me encourage you to take care of that today. And if we can help, we are ready. Think about it!