

A Fresh Look At Scriptural Baptism By E.L. Bynum

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“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:13,16,17. “. . .Keep the ordinances, as I delivered them unto you.” 1 Corinthians 11:2.

Is Scriptural Baptism Important?

The Son of God knew it was important, for Jesus walked 60 miles to be baptized by the only man who was authorized to baptize at that time. The Holy Spirit knew it was important for he attended the baptism of Jesus. God the Father knew it was important for He sent John the Baptist to baptize, and He also voiced His approval when His only begotten Son was baptized. The Devil must think that it is important for he has tried to counterfeit it many times.

What Is Necessary In Order To Have Scriptural Baptism? It must be administered according to the teaching of the Bible, if it is to be scriptural baptism. Anything less than this is not true baptism, even though many might call it baptism. There are four conditions that must be met, if we are to have scriptural baptism.

1. A SCRIPTURAL SUBJECT A Child of God! Only those who are children of God can be baptized. A person must be saved, born again, before he can be baptized. Jesus was never lost, therefore He did not need to be saved. He was already the only begotten Son of God. All others must be saved before they can be baptized.

Scriptural baptism is believers' baptism. The lost are to be taught (discipled), then baptized. Matt. 28:19. In Acts 2:41 they received the Word, then they were baptized. In Acts 8:12,36,37, they believed, then they were baptized. In Acts 10:43,44,47, they believed, received the Holy Ghost, and then they were baptized. (Lost people do not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit).

When the Philippian jailer asked, “what must I do to be saved?” they said, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. . .” Acts 16:30-34. Paul did not tell him to be baptized to be saved! His baptism came after his believing! If water baptism cleanses us from sin, or any sin then what does the blood of Christ cleanse us from? See 1 John 1:7 and Heb. 9:11,12,22,25,26. If the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, how can water baptism do any better? See Heb. 10:4.

2. A SCRIPTURAL METHOD Immersion in water. Pouring and sprinkling cannot be scriptural

methods, because neither one can be found in the Bible. Immersion in water is the only scriptural method of baptism. Jesus was immersed. Mark 1:9,10; Matt. 3:13-16. John the Baptist needed “much water” for baptism. John 3:23. Sprinkling requires little water. In Acts 8:38,39, we are taught immersion for baptism. Baptism pictures a burial, and sprinkling could never do this. Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12. “Baptism” or “baptizo” as it is found in the Greek, means immerse, plunge, or dip. The Greek word for sprinkling is entirely different, and is never used in connection with baptism in the Bible.

3. A SCRIPTURAL PURPOSE Symbolic and picture certain Bible truths. Baptism does not save, as many try to teach. Any form of doctrine that makes baptism necessary for salvation, frustrates the scriptural purpose. Under roman numerals II and III, we explain more fully the purpose of scriptural baptism.

4. A SCRIPTURAL ADMINISTRATOR By the authority of a New Testament Baptist Church. Just anyone cannot print legal money. Just anyone cannot practice medicine as a doctor. Just anyone cannot be an undertaker. These things are regulated by the laws of man. Baptism is regulated by the laws of God. If any one of the above conditions are not met, then the baptism is not scriptural, and therefore is not really baptism at all. It may be that the administrator and the candidate for baptism may both be sincere, but sincerity is no substitute for truth.

Much dispute centers around the matter of who has the authority to administer scriptural baptism. This should not be, as a little study of the scriptures with an open mind will clear this up. John the Baptist was the first baptizer, and he got his authority from God. John 1:6. Jesus and all twelve apostles were baptized by John. Acts 1:21,22. Jesus gave the apostles, who made up the first Church (I Cor. 12:28) the authority to baptize. He commissioned this same Church to baptize. Matt. 28:19. On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 who received the word were baptized, and added to the Church. Acts 2:41. It stands to reason, that the same body they were added unto, was the one that had the authority to baptize them. Philip preached in Samaria and baptized the converts, because he was a member in good standing in the Jerusalem Church and got his authority from that Church. Peter preached in the house of Cornelius and the whole household believed and received the Holy Ghost. But Peter did not baptize them until he got the approval of the quorum of 6 saved and baptized brethren from the Jerusalem Church that were with him. Acts 10:47;11:12. Paul could baptize while on his missionary journeys because he was called of the Holy Ghost to this task, but even then, he was sent out by the Church at Antioch and the Holy Ghost. Acts 13: 1-4.

When Paul found disciples at Ephesus, whose baptism was unscriptural, he did not hesitate to instruct them correctly and then give them scriptural baptism. When a person finds out that their baptism was not scriptural, then they should immediately seek to be scripturally baptized.

I. Scriptural Baptism PLEASES The Lord.

When Jesus was baptized, God the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matt. 3:17. When we follow the example of Jesus we most certainly please the Father. Scriptural baptism is obedience to the scriptures, and obedience is better than burnt offerings and sacrifices. I Sam. 15:22; Acts 5:29. “Then they that gladly received the Word were baptized” Acts 2:41.

Scriptural baptism is the after-effects of soul winning, and therefore pleasing to God. Until a soul is won to Christ, there can be no baptism. The Bible says, “He that winneth souls is wise.” Prov. 11:30. ” . And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:41. Baptism puts people into the New Testament Church.

Scriptural baptism shows the growth of a Church, both in numbers and in maturity. A Church that is not baptizing people, has stagnated, and is not obedient to the Great Commission. The Commission is three-fold: (1) “Teach all nations,” this is giving the gospel to all of the lost. (2) “Baptizing them,” that is those that believe (the saved). (3) “Teaching them to observe all things” this the Church is to continue doing after a person has been saved and baptized.

Scriptural baptism pleases the Lord, because it recognizes the authority of the Church. Baptism can only be administered on the authority of a New Testament Church, and that authority comes directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. When He gave the Great Commission, He gave it so the Church, not to an individual. The word for “power” in Matt. 28:18, means “authority.”

Scriptural baptism guarantees the continuity of a church. Through baptism, the church receives new life, new blood, and this assures its continued existence.

II. Scriptural Baptism PROCLAIMS The Gospel.

The purpose of baptism is not for salvation, as some suppose. Indeed, you cannot have scriptural baptism until the person to be baptized has been saved. If the candidate for baptism has not been saved when he enters the baptistry, he goes into the water a dry sinner, and comes up out of the water a wet sinner. In this case scriptural baptism has not taken place. Baptism is a picture, type, figure and symbol of our salvation. A picture or figure is not the same as the real thing. A man does not marry the picture of his bride, but he marries the bride. The picture of the bride is fine, but what man would settle for the picture only. You do not eat the picture of a loaf of bread, but you eat the bread.

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” I Peter 3:21. The above scripture plainly tells us that baptism does not put away the filth of the flesh . It is only a figure, picture, or symbol of that salvation. To contend that the figure or picture is the same as the real thing is foolish indeed. “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, WHO is the FIGURE of HIM that was to come. ” Rom. 5:14. This scripture tells us that Adam was a

figure of Christ. No one would argue that Adam was Christ. No, he was only a figure, or picture of Christ. “Water baptism is the outward testimony of the believer’s inward faith. The person is saved the moment he places his faith in the Lord Jesus. Water baptism is his visible testimony of his faith and the salvation he was given in answer to that faith.” ‹Wuest. We hasten to add if that “inward faith” did not exist, then the baptism was not scriptural baptism; because an unsaved person cannot receive scriptural baptism.

1. Scriptural baptism PICTURES and PROCLAIMS the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. “Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.” Col. 2:12.

2. Scriptural baptism PICTURES and PROCLAIMS the death of our old life to sin; the burial therein; and the resurrection to walk in newness of life. “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Rom. 6:4.

3. Scriptural baptism PICTURES and PROCLAIMS our faith in the Triune God. “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matt. 28:19.

4. Scriptural baptism PICTURES and PROCLAIMS our putting on of Christ. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Gal. 3:26,27.

III. Scriptural Baptism PROTECTS The Church.

In many ways, scriptural baptism is a shield of protection to the church. Many have not considered it from this standpoint.

Scriptural Baptism Protects The Church From Doctrinal Error.

Scriptural baptism protected the church from the false doctrine of “baptismal regeneration.” In the 2nd century, some of the churches began to teach that baptism was necessary for salvation. In the 1st century Paul had dealt with those who taught that you had to be circumcised and keep the law, to be saved. He repudiated that doctrine. Even so those preachers and churches who were sound in the faith during the 2nd century, repudiated baptismal regeneration. However, large numbers continued baptizing for the wrong purpose. This eventually led to the formation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Scriptural baptism protects the church from the false doctrine of “infant baptism.”

Those who were teaching baptismal regeneration (salvation by baptism), decided that if baptism was so important, then the sooner it could be performed, the better. This led to infant baptism. At first the infants were immersed, for until this time immersion was the only method of baptism known.

Scriptural baptism protects the church from the false method of “sprinkling” for baptism.

The churches who believed in “baptismal regeneration and infant baptism,” changed the method

of baptism from immersion to pouring, and then later on to sprinkling. By the 4th century, Constantine had formed the Roman Catholic Church, and in 416 A.D., infant baptism was established by law. The Protestants who teach baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, and sprinkling, are merely following the example of the Roman Catholic Church.

The three doctrinal errors listed above, violate the first three requirements for scriptural baptism. (1) Baptismal regeneration requires sinners to be baptized. Scriptural baptism requires the saved to be baptized. (2) Sprinkling requires little water, while scriptural baptism requires “much water.” John 3:23. (3) Infant baptism requires little infants who are unable to hear and believe to be baptized, but scriptural baptism requires that believers only be baptized.

Scriptural Baptism Protects The Church From Protestant Denominationalism.

Since Protestant denominations came out of the Roman Catholic Church, it is not surprising that all of them contend for one or more of the above doctrinal errors. The Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists all sprinkle infants, and all believe in some form of baptismal regeneration. All other Protestant denominations are either branches off of the Roman Catholic Church, or one of the above Protestant denominations, and/or accept the baptism of them.

Baptists are not Protestants, but have existed in every century since the 1st century. They have existed under different names such as: Christians, Montanists, Donatists, Paulicians, Waldenses, Ana-Baptists and Baptists. (A rose by any other name smells the same.)

Baptists cannot accept the baptism of churches that are wrong on the matter of salvation. This is one doctrine that is vital to the Christian faith. Although it is not generally known, the Protestant denominations do teach baptismal regeneration, as the following notes from “The Church that Jesus Built,” by Roy Mason, clearly show:

The Episcopal Catechism says: “Baptism is that wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God. . . “

The Presbyterian Confession reads: “Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and a seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins...”

The Methodist ritual reads as follows: “Sanctify this water for His holy sacrament and grant that this child, now to be baptized, may receive the fullness of Thy grace, and ever remain in the number of Thy faithful and elect children.” The Methodist articles were based on those of the English Church (Episcopalian)... Concerning the articles of the English Church, to which he belonged, we find John Wesley writing as follows (Sermons, London, 1872, Vol. 2, sermon 45, p. 74): “It is certain our church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office of the baptism of infants proceeds on this

supposition.”

Again, let us examine the Lutheran view. This is expressed by the founder in the Augsburg Confession as follows: “Concerning baptism, they teach that it is necessary to salvation . . . and condemn the Anabaptists, who hold . . . that infants can be saved without it.” (Neander, History of Christian Dogmas, Vol. 2, p. 693). (End of quote from Roy Mason).

Scriptural Baptism Protects The Church From Interdenominationalism.

While there are many different forms of Interdenominationalism and Nondenominationalism our experience has been that none of these groups hold the line on baptism and the Lord’s supper. All of them, as far as we know, will accept people into their membership who have been immersed (regardless of who did the immersing), as long as the member is satisfied with his baptism. Unfortunately there is a growing number of Baptist (so-called), who take this position. We say that such Baptists should take down their sign, and call themselves Interdenominational, for that is all they are. We believe that when a Church is wrong on salvation and/or baptism, it is not a scriptural Church, regardless of the name. Many Interdenominational churches will accept into their membership those who have been sprinkled, or even have received no form of water baptism at all. How sad to see people take this position and yet contend that they believe the Bible.

Scriptural Baptism Protects The Church From The Ecumenical One World Church

No Baptist Church that holds the line on SCRIPTURAL baptism can ever be a part of the Ecumenical movement and the coming World Church. Scriptural baptism stands as an impassable barrier and an unbridgeable gap between sound Baptist Churches and the Ecumenical movement. As long as we will not accept the baptism of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, we cannot ecumenicalize with them. (This is not the only reason why we should not, but it stands as a barrier so that we cannot.)

Already the Catholics and some Protestant denominations have united some of their schools, so that theological students from various denominations are studying in the same school. Steps have already been taken by some denominations to accept the ordinations of ministers from other denominations. A number of denominations have merged, and the Harlot Church of Revelation 17 is being formed.

Baptists Who Accept Alien Immersion Are Helping To Pave The Way For The Ecumenical One World Church.

This is a serious statement, but we are willing to stand upon it. Any Baptist Church that accepts the baptism of the Protestant Churches, is preparing the way for joining the Ecumenical Church at a later date. If their baptism is valid, then why not join them? But Protestant baptism is not valid because they do not have scriptural authority, nor do they baptize the right people for the right reason or purpose.

How can scriptural Baptists fellowship with, cooperate with, or receive baptism from churches that are Baptist in name, but who receive baptism from every denominational Tom, Dick and Harry that comes along. Baptism does not hinge upon whether the person is satisfied with it, but the question is, is the Lord satisfied with it? Does it meet the teaching of the Scriptures?

We know some preachers and Baptist Churches, that seem to be sound on baptism as far as the local congregation is concerned. However, these same preachers and Churches do not seem to be embarrassed as they work together with “alien immersion Baptists.” These preachers with diverse positions on baptism, swap pulpits for revivals, Bible conferences, etc. They also work together in sending out missionaries, both “board” and “independent” in method. They work together in building schools for the training of preachers. What they will be able to teach in the schools on baptism and church truth, remains a mystery to me . “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.?” I Cor. 5:6.

Lest some reader should misunderstand, we do not doubt that there are many saved people among the Protestants and Interdenominationalists. Salvation is of the Lord and is by grace . A person can be saved and be a member of any church or no church. (We do not mean that by so doing, that the saved person is pleasing to the Lord in all things. For it is at this point that the problem arises.) Salvation is of the Lord, but baptism must be administered by man. But if that man does not have the Bible authority to baptize, then his baptism is no more authentic, real, or scriptural, than some false brand of salvation. We contend that this authority rests in a scriptural New Testament Church, and we have never seen a Church that could meet that test, other than some Baptist Churches.

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