

Salvation Not In Baptism

Multitudes are being led astray by the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Some call it baptismal remission, but it really makes no difference, since both teach that salvation comes in the waters of baptism. This is an old, old heresy. It began quite early in church history and led eventually to the formation of the Roman Catholic apostate religion. The newer groups that promote this heresy are merely following in the footsteps of Roman Catholicism.

The key verse for those who teach salvation by water is Acts 2:38. *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."* In giving an explanation of this verse, I will quote a learned Bible scholar of the past.

Repent (metanoesate, 2 per., pl., aor. 1, impera. of metaanoeo, "to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins, Acts 2:38" – Thayer).

Be baptized (baptistheto, aor. 1, imperat., pass., baptizo, "an immersion in water performed as a sign of the removal of sin, and administered to those who, impelled by a desire for salvation, sought admission to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom" – Thayer). Mr. Thayer's first definition is, "properly, to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge (of vessels sunk)." Why the passive voice to the verb "be baptized?" Because they had complied with verse 21, for the passive voice represents an act in obedience to a previous act – it shows that the subject has been acted upon, in obedience to something.

How absurd is the idea that baptism must first be performed in order to secure something that previous existed. Upon what does the sinner's hope depend, Jesus or baptism? Who was set apart for the sins of the world, Jesus or baptism?

Some will answer "Jesus" is the sinner's hope, and was set apart for the sins of the world, but will add that we get into Jesus by repentance and baptism. This requires action on the part of the sinner. Let's examine the verbs "repent" and "be baptized," and see whether they show any action on the sinner's part. The verb "repent" shows something that the sinner can do – change his mind – an active act. But he cannot baptize himself. It has just been shown that a sinner must act and that baptism is part of the acting "role" in order to get into Christ and yet he can't act in the baptism of himself. What is the trouble?

The trouble lies within the minds of designing men, who teach that baptism is a part of the plan of salvation. The verb "be baptized" is passive voice, which shows that the subject does not act in order to get forgiveness of sins, but that his sins are already forgiven in obedience to a past act of the mind – repentance.

A passive act never secures a direct result, but is always the result of a previous active act. Exam.: John struck William. Who received the act? William. Why? Because William had done

something to John that caused the blow – a previous active act of William's caused him to be struck by John.

Why were they baptized? As a result of a previous active act – repentance. In every instance in the Bible where people have been baptized, it has been in obedience to some previous act, and the same is always represented by the passive voice. Neither Thayer nor Liddell & Scott ever renders the preposition *eis* (into) by the words "in order to."

Those who would use Acts 2:38 to prove baptismal regeneration, are basing their proposition on a preposition. The little Greek word "*eis*" is here translated "for," but is translated in the New Testament in the following ways and number of times: "against" 25, "among" 16, "at" 20, "for" 91, "in" 131, "into" 571, "that" 30, "on" 57, "to" 282, "toward" 32, "unto" 208, and "upon" 25. So you can see that they are making a foolish mistake to base a vital doctrine on a little 3 letter preposition that is translated in so many different ways. The baptismal regeneration crowd interpret "*eis*" "for" in Acts 2:38 to mean "in order to," thus causing a person to be baptized "in order to" be saved or to received remission of sins.

Let us notice how that "*eis*" is used in Matt. 12:41. "*The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at (eis) the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*" They repented not "in order" to Jonah's preaching, but "because of" the preaching of Jonah.

Of "*eis*" in Acts 2:38, Dr. Carl E. Sadler has the following to say in his notes on Acts.

The Greek word "*eis*" about which all this contention is in Acts 2:38 is used with the word baptize or word baptism in three other passages: In Matt. 3:11, you have baptism **eis** repentance. *Eis* cannot mean **in order to** there, but **because of** repentance. Every Campbellite, Mormon, and others who teach baptism in order for remission of sin admits that repentance comes before baptism. In Romans 6:3, you find the expression baptism **eis** the death of Jesus. *Eis* cannot mean **in order to** there, but must mean **because of**; both because Christ was already dead and raised again, and because in baptism we declare that we died with Him, and have been raised with Him. In I Cor. 10:2, we have the expression **eis** Moses. *Eis* cannot mean **in order to** there, because they were not baptized in the cloud and in the sea in order to get Moses to be their leader, but because he was their leader. He had already led them out of Egypt. If baptism *eis* repentance in Matt. 3:11 means be baptized because they repented, if baptism, or be baptized *eis* the death of Christ means be baptized because Christ died and we died with Him, if "were baptized *eis* Moses" in I Cor. 10:2 means they were baptized because Moses was their leader, then it follows conclusively that "be baptized *eis* remission" in Acts 2:38 must mean be baptized because your sins have been remitted.

Dr. Sadler further says, "The argument that the Campbellites make that the expression, for remission of, modifies both verbs, repent and be baptized, won't hold water. Repent is a plural verb, active voice, second person, has ye for its subject, and was addressed to the whole crowd. Be baptized is a singular verb, passive voice, third person, and has for its subject, not the whole crowd, but only such as had repented and believed. **For remission** does not modify both verbs. It

modifies **baptized** only, and means that everyone who has repented and trusted in Christ is commanded to be baptized because his sins are remitted."

While I am on the subject, I might as well deal with Romans 6:3, for the Acts 2:38 crowd will sometimes harp on this verse also. "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ...*" "**Into**" is the same Greek word "eis." We are not saved by being "*baptized into Jesus Christ,*" as some of these false teachers would have you to believe. The foolishness of such an argument is certainly made to seem ridiculous by comparing I Corinthians 10:1,2 with Romans 6:3. The scripture speaks of Israel's passing through the Red Sea, "*And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*" "**Unto**" is the same Greek "eis" that we have above and could have been as well translated "into" or "for." Yet, we know they were not baptized into or for Moses, nor were they saved at the Red Sea. Their salvation is to be found in Exodus 12:7,12,13, where the blood on the door posts was the only means of safety. It is even so today, for only the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin. Baptism has no meaning until the blood of Christ is applied by faith. Indeed baptism cannot take place until the soul is saved. One may be immersed, but only a saved person can be baptized. Unsaved people may go through the motions, but it is not real, but only an act or pretense until one is saved.

The Israelites could have ignored the blood, and they could have run down to the Nile River and immersed one another, but they would not have been "baptized unto Moses," for they would not have been obeying God or Moses. The blood saved them from the wrath of God, while the baptism at the Red Sea saved them from the wrath of Pharaoh. Man can kill the body, but only God can kill the soul. (See Exodus 12:12; Matthew 10:28). The soul is saved by "*grace through faith*" (Eph. 2:8,9), and this always comes before baptism. Baptism is a testimony of salvation, and every saved person should submit to Scriptural baptism. The "dipped or be damned" crowd have neither salvation or baptism, for when they reverse the scriptural order or sequence of the two, you nullify both (or make it impossible to have either). (Of course you understand that the baptism of Israel in the Old Testament was not New Testament baptism).

When the children of Israel "*were all baptized unto (eis) Moses in the cloud and in the sea,*" they were giving a testimony. The armies of Pharaoh were there in great strength, ready to capture and take them back to Egypt. But they were not captured, and they were not taken back. Instead of going back, the children of Israel continued to submit to the leadership of Moses, and marched through the Red Sea dry shod. With a wall of water on either side, and the glory cloud above them, they present a beautiful type of New Testament baptism. They were testifying to the world that they no longer were in submission to Pharaoh, but they were following the leadership of Moses. When a saved person submits to Scriptural baptism, they are saying to the world that they are no longer under its dominion, but that they are following the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Mark 16:16 we find the emphasis is on believing. It does not say, "he that is baptized not shall be damned." Their argument here is very weak. The saved by water crowd pass over what they do not want to believe. They often quote Acts 2:38, but you will never hear them quote Acts 3:19. "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...*" Since it does not mention water or baptism, they never find time to quote it at all.

By E. L. Bynum

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