

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

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FIRST PRINCIPLES: THE DOCTRINES OF BAPTISMS

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Continuing our study of "the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God" (Heb. 5:12-13) we now look at "the teachings of baptisms" (6:2). There are at least eight that are discussed in the New Law. Let us examine each of them in turn.

First, there was John's baptism. It was done by John in water (John 3:23) and carried on by his disciples (Acts 18:24-25; 19:3-5). We read that only Jews received it. Thus, it was a call for the Jews to return to God and repent of their unfaithfulness. Also, it was to prepare them for the coming of the Christ (Acts 19:4; Luke 3:3-14). Thus, it was only temporary and for those Hebrews near the Messiah's coming.

John spoke of two baptisms that would come at the hands of Christ. These were the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the baptism in fire (Matt. 3:11). The first has been much abused in our day and applied to all manner of emotional and crazy behavior. Rather than appealing to the personal testimonies & experiences of men, let us look to God's word.

Jesus explained the promise of Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 1:5. Jesus here tells His apostles that they would soon undergo it. Then, in Acts 2, the miraculous event is fulfilled. The sound of a loud rushing wind filled the house where they were and fire appeared upon their heads. Also, they spoke (and were understood) in other languages (Acts 2:4, 8-11).

So, what was the purpose of this miraculous baptism? Peter said that it was a

fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16) and showed that salvation was available (2:21). Peter also said that this baptism came directly from heaven proving that Jesus is sitting at God's right hand (2:33). By this God proved Christ's resurrection & kingship, and announced the way of salvation.

We also read of a second case of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 11:15-16). The recipients were not apostles, nor did they receive a promise or commission from Christ to be apostles. Even so, this event is likened to what occurred in Acts 2. The Bible says this occasion showed that the Gentiles were given the same opportunity to repent and have life, just like the Jews (Acts 11:18). Also, we read that Peter was reminded by it of "the beginning" (Acts 11:15), when the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles. Notice, he did not say that he was reminded of "all the other times" that this baptism was given "to all believers", but of only ONE event back in Acts 2. This clearly shows that these two events were special, not common nor ongoing events as many think today.

Also, while many think that the baptism in fire (Matt. 3:11) is included in the reference to Holy Spirit baptism, it is actually a reference to judgment. Notice the context (Matt. 3:10, 12). John uses the word "fire" referring to punishment. This stands in contrast to receiving the baptism of the Spirit (which proved salvation was now available in Christ). Thus, baptism in the Spirit signified life and baptism in fire signifies judgment.

Next we read of Israel's baptism into Moses. It is properly called a baptism because they were "immersed" in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:2). Also, it was the moment of their liberation from Egypt (Pharaoh and his army were destroyed there). In this way, it is a figure of what takes place in baptism into Christ.

There is also a baptism "not" into Paul (1 Cor. 1:13, 15). This is not a real baptism. Paul was simply using an illustration to discourage division in Corinth.

We also read of the "baptism" of Christ in suffering (Matt. 10:38-39; Luke 12:50). This refers to His immersion in suffering on the cross.

In the same way, Paul refers to baptism "in place of" the dead ones (1 Cor. 15:29). This involved persecution and "jeopardy" (1 Cor. 15:20). Paul is here fighting the false doctrine that "there is no resurrection" (15:12). He asks, "If there is no hope of a resurrection, then why are we immersed in the same jeopardy and sufferings of those who have died before us? Why would we stand in their place and suffer persecution if there were no resurrection?" This is another figurative use of baptism.

Finally, we read of the baptism into Christ (Acts 19:3-5). It was commanded by Peter and done in water (Acts 10:47-48). It is described as "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; 22:16). It was not the water that cleansed, but the appeal to God for a clean conscience, based upon the resurrected Christ (1 Pet. 3:21).

Of all these baptisms, only "one baptism" is required today (Eph. 4:4). In Ephesians 5:25 Jesus is identified as the Savior of the body, the church. He died for this church and cleanses it "by the washing of water with the word" (5:26). That is a clear, unvarnished reference to baptizing believers in water for the purpose of cleansing & sanctifying them.

Add to this the fact that Ephesians was

written in 60 AD, and only one baptism is ever commanded after that date: Water baptism into Christ for salvation (1 Pet. 3:21; written 64 AD). Friend, do you believe Jesus? Then show it by obeying His word. You can receive the forgiveness of your sins and the promise of Heaven, if you truly treat Him as your Lord (Mark. 16:16; Lk. 6:46). This is indeed one of the "basics of the basics".

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Johanna Fletcher, Othena Kinnard (resumed Chemo in Nashville), Wesley Geer, Mag Bumbalough, Thelma Cunningham (stroke, Chattanooga), Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet (NHC 220), Robert & Betty England, Joe Smith, Mike Tenpenny, Thelma Klein, Nathan Hill, Ed Williams, Lydia Poe, Larry Bumbalough, Jake Hale, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Carolyn Williams, Kenley Streeval. Matthew Taylor (leukemia), Joyce Simmons Wagner.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Radio Program** - Every Sun. 2pm, AM 1050 WSMT
- **Home Bible Study** - Sat. Sept. 29th, Oct. 13th & 27th.
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Sept. 30th.
- **GM** - Raymond Castillo, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Ron Daly, April 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

We Invite You To All Our Services!

Sunday @ 9am, 10am & 6pm
Wednesday @ 7pm

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