

Saturday, June 25, 2011 – The Baptism of an English Teacher; A True Story

A Gospel preacher was conducting a meeting in Mississippi sometime during the 1950's. In the audience one evening was an English teacher from the local high school. After the sermon, she approached the man and told him how much she appreciated what he had to say with one exception; she did not believe a person needs to be baptized to be saved.

The preacher asked her if she would stay around and continue their conversation, to which she agreed. The preacher opened his Bible to **Mark 16:16**. The passage reads:

Mark 16:16 - He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (KJV)

He simply asked the teacher to do one thing, "Please diagram that sentence for me." The teacher took a look at the passage and made the following observations:

- 1) "He" is the simple subject.
- 2) "Shall be saved" is the simple predicate.
- 3) "He shall be saved" is the independent part of the sentence.
- 4) "That believeth and is baptized" is the dependent clause.

The minister then asked the following questions of the teacher:

- 1) What "he" shall be saved? Is it just any "he"?
- 2) If it's just any "he", then universal salvation results. All will be saved.
- 3) Is that what Jesus said? Of course not. He stated that "he that believeth and is baptized will be saved."

The teacher was baptized that very night. Why? Because when she read the Word of God, she was not disposed to argue with Him. What Jesus had to say was right and that settled all controversy with her. Jesus, the very one who went to the cross for you and for me said it, she believed it and obeyed His command. The Lord said there are two conditions essential to our salvation. They are belief and baptism. Please notice that the Lord did **NOT** say, as some would have you believe, "He that believeth and is saved may be baptized..." The passage reads "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...**"

Suppose **Mark 16:16** read this way: "He that believeth and is baptized shall receive a new house." What if it stated, "He that believeth and is baptized shall receive a new

car.” If the passage read that way, we would have people lined up for miles around every Lord’s church in the world wanting to be baptized! But the gift which God offers to those who will obey is beyond our human comprehension: **ETERNAL LIFE WITH HIM!**

The design of water baptism in the New Testament is unquestionably to allow for the sinner’s sins to be removed by the blood of Jesus. This purpose is variously described as “**to be saved**” (Mark 16:16), “**for the remission of sins**” (Acts 2:38), to “**put on Christ**” (Galatians 3:27), to “**enter the kingdom of God**” (John 3:5), to “**wash away your sins**” (Acts 22:16), to place one “**into one body**” (1 Corinthians 12:13) and “**into Christ**” (Romans 6:3). These are parallel expressions that identify the same design.

In Romans 6:3-7 we are told, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin."

When the believing, penitent non-Christian allows themselves to be lowered into the watery grave of baptism, a parallel to Christ’s redemptive work is taking place. Baptism is into Christ’s death because that is where He shed His blood on our behalf. The atoning activity of Christ was achieved in His death, burial, and resurrection. Consequently, the alien sinner taps into that redemptive power in the act of water immersion.

The “newness of life” follows—not precedes—baptism (**vs. 6**). The “old man of sin,” the “body of sin,” is eliminated in the waters of baptism. Being immersed in water— “buried in baptism” (**vs. 4**)—is equivalent to “you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered” (**vs. 17**). Only then, i.e., in the act of emulating Jesus’ atonement in the waters of baptism, is one “set free from sin” (**vs. 18**).

To summarize, notice that seven significant achievements occur at the point of water immersion: (1) baptized into Christ; (2) baptized into Christ’s death; (3) newness of life; (4) united in His death; (5) old man/body of sin crucified/done away; (6) no longer slaves of sin; and (7) freed from sin.

I pray that you will carefully consider, not what I say, but what God says through His Word on this important subject.