

# Objections to Baptism Answered

**TEXT: Acts 26:14**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. WHEN BAPTISM IS DISCUSSED OBJECTIONS ARE RAISED.
- B. THIS LESSON PROVIDES ANSWERS TO THOSE FREQUENTLY GIVEN.
- I. "JESUS WASN'T BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS AND WE ARE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE!"**
- A. WE ARE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE( **1 John 2:6; 1 Cor. 11:1** ).
- B. BUT JESUS HAD NO SIN. THERE WOULD BE A DIFFERENCE( **Heb. 4:15** ).
- C. WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?( **John 1:29-34** ).
  - 1. Jesus was baptized so John would know he was the Messiah.
  - 2. Who has been baptized for the same reason Jesus was?
- II. "JESUS' BLOOD REMITS OUR SINS, NOT BAPTISM!"**
- A. WE DON'T DOUBT THE ROLE OF THE BLOOD( **Matt. 26:28** )
- B. PETER USED THE SAME LANGUAGE ABOUT BAPTISM( **Acts 2:38** ).
  - 1. Peter used identically the same language in the Greek about baptism:
    - a. Does "**for**" mean "**in order to**" or "**because of**"?
      - **eis** (ice); to or into (indicating the point reached or entered), of place, time, or (figuratively) purpose (result, etc.). **Strong**.
    - b. Note that we find the same grammatical construction in **Matt. 26:28**.
  - 2. If we can't believe Peter, why can we believe Jesus using the same language?
  - 3. Did Jesus shed his blood because our sins were already remitted?
- C. WHERE DENOMINATIONAL PREACHERS WILL ARGUE THAT "FOR" MEANS "BECAUSE OF," DENOMINATIONAL SCHOLARS WILL NOT SACRIFICE THEIR SCHOLARSHIP.

**G.R. Beasley-Murray**, Principal of Spurgeon's College in London, later Senior Professor at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY, wrote a modern classic, **Baptism In The New Testament**. He gives chapters which thoroughly discuss baptism in the Gospels, in Acts, in Paul's writings, and in other apostolic writings. In his introduction, Beasley-Murray said:

This book is intended to offer a Baptist contribution to the discussions on baptism that are taking place throughout the Christian world. But the indefinite article should be observed; the impression must not be given that my interpretations are characteristic of Baptist thought generally. At most it can be claimed that they represent a trend gaining momentum among Baptists in Europe. I have striven to interpret the evidence of the New Testament as a Christian scholar, rather than as a member of a particular Christian Confession. (**G. R. Beasley-Murray**, **Baptism In The New Testament**, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, pp. v-vi).

From his chapter on baptism in Acts, **Beasley-Murray** said:

Consequently, baptism is regarded in **Acts** as the occasion and means of receiving the blessings conferred by the Lord of the Kingdom. Admittedly, this way of reading the evidence is not characteristic of our thinking, but the intention of the author is tolerably clear. (Ibid., p. 102)

Whatever the relationship between baptism and the gift of the Spirit elsewhere in Acts, there appears to be no doubt as to intention of **Acts 2:38**; the penitent believer baptized in the name of Jesus Christ may expect to receive at once the Holy Spirit, even as he is assured of the immediate forgiveness of his sins. (Ibid., p. 108)

From his chapter on baptism in the apostolic writings, concerning **Romans 6:3-4**, **Beasley-Murray** said:

We that are Baptists have largely ignored this aspect of Pauline teaching; even when we have heard it we

have hesitated to accept, partly no doubt because of the one-sided emphasis it has often received but partly also because we have not known how to deal with it. But misapplication of truth must never be permitted to make us insensitive to it.(Ibid., pp. 142-143)

Some concluding statements were:

In light of the foregoing exposition of the New Testament representations of baptism, the idea that baptism is a purely symbolic rite must be pronounced not alone unsatisfactory but out of harmony with the New Testament itself. Admittedly, such a judgment runs counter to the popular tradition of the Denomination to which the writer belongs...

The extent and nature of the grace which the New Testament writers declare to be present in baptism is astonishing for any who come to the study freshly with an open mind.

...the "grace" available to man in baptism is said by the New Testament writers to include the following elements: forgiveness, **Acts 2.38** and cleansing from sins( **Acts 22.16, 2 Cor. 6.11** ), union with Christ( **Gal. 3.27** ), and particularly union with Him in his death and resurrection( **Rom. 6.3ff, Col. 2.11f.** ), with all that implies of release from sin's power, as well as guilt, and the sharing of the risen life of the Redeemer,( **Rom. 6.1-11** ); participation in Christ's sonship( **Gal. 3.26f** ); consecration to God( **1 Cor. 6.11** ), hence membership in the Church, the Body of Christ,( **1 Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27-29** ); possession of the Spirit, ( **Acts 2.38, 1 Cor. 6.11, 12.13** ), and therefore the new life in the Spirit, i.e., regeneration,( **Titus 3.5, John 3.5** ); grace to live according to the will of God, ( **Rom. 6.1ff; Col. 3.1ff** ), deliverance from the evil powers that rule this world( **Col. 1.13** ); the inheritance of the Kingdom of God( **John 3.5** ), and the pledge of the resurrection of the body( **Eph. 1.3f, 4.30** ).(Ibid., pp. 263-264)

Beasley-Murray stated his conclusion in a chapter entitled "Baptismal Reform and Church Relationships":

First, there ought to be a greater endeavor to make baptism integral to THE GOSPEL. It is taken as axiomatic amongst us [Baptists ] that the proclamation of the Gospel consists of making the redemptive acts of God in Christ known and calling for faith in Christ as the due response; baptism is then a proper subject for exposition in the enquirers' class, along with instruction as to the nature of the Church, of worship, of Christian obligation in the Church and to the world, etc.

Peter's response, however, to the cry of his conscience stricken hearers on the Day of Pentecost was not "Repent and believe", but "Repent and BE BAPTIZED"! (**Acts 2.38**). Naturally faith was presumed in repentance, but Peter's answer told the Jews how to become Christians: faith and repentance are to be expressed in baptism, and SO they are to come to the Lord. Baptism is here a part of the proclamation of Christ. In an Apostolic sermon it comes as its logical conclusion. An effort ought to be made to restore this note in our [Baptist] preaching. (Ibid., p. 393)

Thus, we believe the blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of sins, because the Bible says it. Likewise, we believe baptism is for the remission of sins, because the same Bible says it in identically the same words.

### **III. "BAPTISM IS A WORK, WE'RE NOT SAVED BY WORKS."**

A. NOT SAVED BY WORKS OF A DISTINCT KIND - WORKS OF MERIT.

B. THIS ARGUMENT IS ALSO AGAINST OTHER THINGS:

1. Against repentance, for it is a "thing done."( **Acts 26:20** ).
2. Confession is a work( **Rom. 10:9-10** ).
3. Similarly, faith itself is a work( **John 6:28-29** ).

C. THE TRUTH IS, GOD WORKS IN BAPTISM( **Col. 2:12** ).

1. What work does God do in baptism?( **vs. 13** ).
2. We must have faith in the working of God.

### **IV. "PAUL SAID CHRIST DIDN'T SEND HIM TO BAPTIZE, THEREFORE BAPTISM MUST NOT BE ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION!"( **1 Cor. 1:11-17** ).**

- A. THE PASSAGE SHOWS BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL - ALL WERE BAPTIZED.
  - 1. Preacher problems - allegiance to certain ones.
  - 2. Paul was glad he hadn't baptized any more than Crispus and Gaius, not because he didn't think baptism was important, but lest any man should say that he was baptized into Paul's name.
  - 3. Many were baptized by other men( **Acts 18:8** ).
- B. THE "ELLIPSIS" OF **VERSE 17**.
  - 1. "For Christ sent me NOT to baptize BUT to preach the gospel."
  - 2. A figure of speech where certain words not directly expressed are understood.
  - 3. Other scriptural examples:
    - a. **1 Pet. 3:3-4**. In this passage Peter didn't forbid putting on apparel.
    - b. **John 6:27**. Jesus didn't forbid working for food (**2 Thes. 3:10** ).
  - 4. Jesus wasn't saying that Paul should 't baptize, he baptized Crispus and Gaius. His was to preach; he had done his job whether anyone was baptized or not.
- C. **Acts 18:8**, CRISPUS BELIEVED - **1 Cor. 1:14**, CRISPUS BAPTIZED. TRUE BELIEF RESULTS IN BAPTISM.
- D. TWO THINGS BEFORE ONE MAY BE CALLED AFTER ANOTHER.
  - 1. The person must die, and the disciple must be baptized in his name.
  - 2. For one to be called after Christ, Christ must die for him, **and he must be baptized in the name of Christ**. Think about that.

## **V. "WHAT ABOUT THE THIEF ON THE CROSS?"**

- A. HOW DO WE KNOW HE WASN'T BAPTIZED?
  - 1. John taught and was known as a baptizer( **Matt. 3:1-6; Luke 3:7,12**):
  - 2. The whole region came to hear and be baptized, no one knows for sure
- B. HE HAD A REMARKABLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF JESUS AND THE KINGDOM( **Luke 23:42** ). KNEW DEATH COULDN'T STOP IT.
- C. HE WAS NOT BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS.
  - 1. Jesus had not commanded baptism in his name yet.
  - 2. The Great Commission was after the resurrection( **Matt. 28:19** ).
  - 3. **The thief was therefore never commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus**.
  - 4. Fifty days later, after the resurrection of Christ, Peter taught( **Acts 2:38** ).
  - 5. Have you been commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus?
- D. THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF LAWS( **Heb. 7:12** ).
  - 1. He was not under the covenant you and I are subject to, for Christ's covenant didn't go into effect until He died ( **Heb. 9:16-17** ).
  - 2. The thief never heard the words Christ directs to believers today.

## **CONCLUSION:**

- A. ALL MAN'S ARGUMENTS FALL.
- B. THESE PASSAGES STILL READ THE SAME( **Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:21** ).
- C. THE FIRST TIME THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED WHAT WAS THE RESULT?( **Acts 2:41** ).
  - 1. People today who receive the gospel do the same thing.
  - 2. Friend, won't you confess His name before men and be baptized for the reasons HE said while you have opportunity?