

The Angel Message Tracts

Chapter 4

BAPTISM IN WATER

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*And I saw another angel fly in the midst
of heaven, having the everlasting gospel
to preach unto them that dwell on the
earth.---Revelation 14 :6 : : :*



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Did Jesus Teach Baptism?

WHAT HE DID

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight-way 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: 13-17.

WHAT HE SAID

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matthew 28: 19.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.—Mark 16: 16.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God.—John 3: 5.

THE TEST

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.—John 14: 21.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.—John 14: 24.

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.—2 John 9.

IN DAYS OF OLD

And they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.—Acts 2: 41.

And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.—Acts 2: 47.

The Baptism of Water

CHAPTER 4

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.—Matthew 28: 18-20.

In order to establish a true relation among men and between man and God, the church was instituted through Jesus Christ. Various ordinances and commandments were given by him for faithful observance. He provided a perfect form of worship which would when accepted result in a marvelous transformation of character, purity of life, loving one's neighbor, rendering assistance to the needy, visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping oneself unspotted from the vices of the world.

DISCRIMINATION NECESSARY

The foregoing words of Christ spoken to the apostles indicate that baptism is positively commanded.

Is it true that in carrying out the command so-called, baptism may be administered by pouring or sprinkling, or by immersion, under the hands of one not holding authority from God to officiate in the ordinances of the Lord's house? Are there three distinct ways of keeping the one positive command of Christ?

To be involved in spiritual iniquity or confusion means to be away from God. He does not walk in crooked paths.

John the Revelator announces that in due time an angel will cry:

Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.—Revelation 14: 8.

He also writes:

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.—Revelation 18: 4.

It is necessary to discriminate between doctrines of men and the doctrine of Christ; otherwise, there will be no rejection of the doctrines of men and no acceptance of the doctrine of Christ. Truth and error should not be intertwined in the minds and hearts of men. One should believe in Christ, affirm the truth of his teachings, and have faith in the efficacy of all the words that came from his gracious lips.

Baptism is declared to be one of the “principles” of the “doctrine of Christ”:

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.—Hebrews 6: 1, 2.

John writes:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.—2 John 9.

The Jews made a great mistake in setting aside their best judgment concerning Christ and his work, and accepting in lieu thereof what their leaders enjoined upon them.

BAPTISM ESSENTIAL

And he [Jesus] said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.—Mark 16: 15, 16.

So important was baptism that Jesus after his resurrection made this direct reference to the ordinance; and also commanded his apostles to go and “teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Words could not convey more plainly that this ordinance precedes and is a condition of salvation.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3: 5.)

Simpler words, or words fraught in their operation with greater consequences, were never spoken. They reveal the mind of Christ relating to an entrance into the kingdom of God, and should be accepted as the truth.

Peter is on record as follows:

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.—1 Peter 3: 21.

Concerning Christ we read: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”—Acts 4: 12.

PERSONALITY OF CHRIST

It is not well to allow any theory of belief or philosophy to separate the Savior of the world from the church he founded, the gospel he proclaimed, or the work he performed. There is no salvation in Christ apart from his royal representations showing forth the will of God. Can one believe in Christ and reject his words?

Napoleon Bonaparte loses his unique personality if not identified with his military achievements; Abraham Lincoln can in no true sense be separated from his work of emancipation of the colored race; George Washington is inseparably connected with the service he rendered to his country; and Christ, the Savior of the world, can not be separated from his gospel. James declares it to be the “perfect law of liberty.” If Christ were separated from what he stood as a representative of, wherein would his personality be different from that of any ordinary person?

Since salvation is the result of obedience to the teachings of Christ, loss and disaster must follow in the wake of a repudiation of what came through the Son of God. In no mystical sense does Christ save, apart from obedience to his gospel. He said:

Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?—Luke 6: 46.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.—Matthew 15: 9.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.—John 12: 48.

CITIZENSHIP

An alien applying for citizenship in the United States must do the very thing exacted by our Government to obtain citizenship; he must live in the country a certain number of years, appear before an authorized officer of the law and swear allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. All this is required before citizenship is secured. Respect for law and authority is necessary to obtain citizenship.

Jesus, the “head of the church,” the “apostle and high priest of our profession,” has said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God.” Exacting are the requirements of entrance into the kingdom of God. Have you obeyed Christ? Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God? Paul writes: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”—Galatians 3: 27.

FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

Baptism is one of the conditions provided in the gospel for the remission of sins; this the law of God unequivocally proclaims:

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.—Acts 2: 38, 39.

These words were spoken on the day of Pentecost

to the immense throng, under the guilt of sin, who asked: "What shall we do? (i. e., to get rid of our sins and receive pardon)." The answer made by Peter is in full accord with the words of Christ: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." It is in perfect harmony with Christ's words to Nicodemus, making known how man can gain an entrance into the kingdom of God.

Ananias said to Saul: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22: 16.)

We read concerning John the Baptist:

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.—Mark 1: 4, 5.

Man fell by disobeying the words of God; now salvation is possible by obeying the law of God revealed through Christ the Lord. The servants of Jesus Christ to-day are teaching and practicing in harmony with Peter and Paul and John and Christ; and administer baptism as did his church nineteen hundred years ago for the "remission of sins." "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13: 8.)

PREREQUISITES OF BAPTISM

Peter said to the Pentecostal throng, outside of the church: "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.” Without *repentance* there would be no remission of sins in the administration of baptism. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Unless accompanied by *faith in God* baptism would be a useless form. Combined with faith in God and repentance, baptism remits sins. The value lies in obedience to an ordinance instituted of God.

INFANTS NOT BAPTIZED

Baptism is for the “remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), children have committed no sins, therefore they are not proper subjects for baptism. No case of infant baptism is recorded or referred to in the Bible. It is not true that “Hell is crammed with infants damned, without a day of grace.” Little children are of the “kingdom of heaven,”—when they arrive at the age of accountability they may be baptized.

Infant baptism is based on the traditions and doctrines of men. It comes in conflict with the true ordinance of baptism, the administration of which requires upon the part of candidates faith in God and repentance. Children before arriving at the age of accountability can not exercise faith or repentance—in case of death they are not lost, but are saved through the atonement of Christ.

The practice of the church of Jesus Christ was, and is, to have little children blessed through the laying on of hands; not baptized. Consider the following:

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.—Matthew 19: 13-15.

Jesus is the “Apostle and High Priest” of the church’s “profession.” (Hebrews 3: 1.)

MODE: IMMERSION

According to Greek lexicons the primary meaning of the Greek word *baptizo*, from which comes the word *baptize*, is: dip, plunge, immerse, submerge, overwhelm. This should satisfy any mind as to whether scriptural baptism includes sprinkling or pouring. No command from God exists for water to be poured or sprinkled on anyone as a means of entrance into the kingdom of God. All are commanded to be baptized. No example is given in the Scriptures of three distinct modes being offered to the world for keeping any command of God.

The terms *immersion* and *sprinkling* are not convertible terms. To read sprinkling where the word *baptizo* occurs does not make good reading or sense. To illustrate:

I indeed have baptized [sprinkled] you with water: but he shall baptize [sprinkle] you with the Holy Ghost.—Mark 1: 8.

And John also was baptizing [sprinkling] in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.—John 3: 23.

And Jesus, when he was baptized [sprinkled], 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.—Matthew 3: 16.

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized [sprinkled] and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.—Acts 22: 16.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism [sprinkling] 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.—Romans 6: 4.

A perfect definition of a word will make good sense when substituted for the word; the substitution of sprinkling for baptism renders the reading ridiculous, and makes void the word of God. The erroneous doctrine of "It makes no difference what one believes, just so one is sincere," does not make commandments of men equal to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

The manner of Christ's baptism is thus chronicled:

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered 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: 13-17.

Christ "*when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.*" The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost took part in the baptism; the Son of God obeyed; the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove; and the Father said, "This is my beloved Son,

in whom I am well pleased.” Reader, have you been baptized, and did you come up “out of the water” as did your Savior? All in the church were baptized after the manner of Christ’s baptism—they followed the words and example of their Lord.

ONE BAPTISM

Paul writes there is “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.” (Ephesians 4: 5, 6.) In writing to the Hebrews mention is made of “baptisms” as a part of the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6: 1, 2). There is no conflict. Jesus said: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God.” The baptism of water is not sufficient without the baptism of the Spirit. On the day of Pentecost Peter promised the gift of the Holy Ghost to all who would be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” John said those whom he baptized with water Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost.

Concerning Cornelius and those with him who received the Holy Ghost before baptism, which was done to confirm to those of the circumcision that the gospel was designed for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews, Peter said:

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.—Acts 10: 47, 48.

The two baptisms are thus associated. To be “born again” one must receive both baptisms.

There is "one God," yet there are "three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." (1 John 5:7.)

There is an "inward man" and an "outward man"; but it is proper to speak of the two as one man. (2 Corinthians 4:16.)

So one may speak of "one baptism," or of "baptisms," as did Paul.

CHARACTER TRANSFORMED

The truth of baptism may be determined by dealing with its source, its substance, and its results. The results of baptism are disclosed in the following texts:

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.—Colossians 2:12.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve him.—Romans 6:3-6.

Baptism is represented as a burial, the purpose of which is the putting away of the old man and his deeds, the bringing to an end of a sinful life, and the rising to a "newness of life" in Christ. Can one be "buried" with Christ in baptism except by immersion?

Note the character and unquestionable standing of those who are baptized: Jesus, Paul, and all the church for it is written: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3: 27.)

"HEAR YE HIM"

Membership in the kingdom of God is not gained merely by refraining from evils prohibited in the Mosaic law, swearing, stealing, lying, and covetousness. Who will say one can be saved through the law of Moses? If so, why was there a need for a faultless covenant, sealed by the blood of Christ? The voice out of the bright cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration said concerning Christ: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye him.*" (Matthew 17: 5.)

Why all the testimony through the world about Christ being the Savior of the world, if one can be saved without hearing and obeying him? He has spoken: "He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

AUTHORITY NECESSARY TO BAPTIZE

Citizenship comes in an earthly government by obedience to the law of the government, and recognizing its authority—the same is true of obeying the law and recognizing the authority of the kingdom of heaven. All governments have authorized officers. Jesus said to his ministry: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John 20: 21.) By baptism one gains citizenship in the *government* of God.

Has any man, or woman, or child, the right and authority to baptize persons who profess to believe Christ is the Son of God? In the Mosaic system, which was a "shadow of good things to come" under Christ (Hebrews 10:1), there was an administration of its ordinances only by those holding the priesthood, the right to act for God. So the ordinances of the kingdom of God, under Christ, should be *authoritatively administered*. Otherwise the Mosaic polity was not a "shadow" of the order of government that was to rest on the shoulders of Christ.

Baptism as an ordinance in the church of God is not simply immersion in water; it is immersion in water of a repentant person having faith in God, by an authorized servant of God. Aliens must appear before authorized officers in order to obtain citizenship, whether in the governments of men or the kingdom of God. In the commission given to the apostles, the Lord said:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
—Matthew 28: 18, 19.

Authority is thus associated with baptism.

No elder, deacon, evangelist, or bishop has the right to officiate to-day in the ordinances of the Lord's house on the basis of authority given nineteen hundred years ago to *apostles*, or to other men; to do so would be no less absurd than claiming civil authority on the basis of authority given by our government to other men. One must be called and authorized of

God to act in his name. Men without revelation from God can not appoint their fellow men to officiate in the ordinances of the Lord's house. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." (Hebrews 5: 4.) The fundamental teaching of the church of God is respect for *law* and *order*. True orthodoxy is that which is in harmony with divine law. We read:

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.—Acts 19: 1-6.

Why were these persons baptized by Paul after having been immersed by some one? They evidently had been immersed by some one not sent of God, not having authority to baptize; hence they were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" by Paul. Paul defended John, taught these people concerning the Holy Ghost, and rejected the baptisms performed by some one who had said nothing concerning the Holy Ghost, and who had baptized in imitation of John's baptism. If these persons had been baptized by John, Paul would have recognized the baptisms as valid, for John was "sent of God." (John 1: 6.)

Christ asked certain ones who interrogated him: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me." (Mark 11:30.) This discloses that there can be a baptism "from heaven" and a baptism "of men."

Has one authority to baptize who denies that baptism is essential to salvation?

Has one authority to baptize who is willing to sprinkle, instead of baptize?

Has one authority to baptize who says the ordinance is not for the "remission of sins"?

Has one authority to officiate in the ordinances of the Lord's house who says God does not reveal his will to men to-day?

Without a call from God by revelation, how is a man to know he should act as an officer in the government of God? How would he know what office he should occupy?

Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan to receive baptism at the hands of John the Baptist, who possessed authority to administer baptism by reason of being "sent of God." Nowhere is there an account in the Scriptures of valid baptism being administered by one not holding authority to act of God.

TRUE BAPTISM

What a beautiful ordinance has been given to close a sin-sick life and start life anew in Christ!

As national festivals have been ordained and established to commemorate great events in the history of nations, so it is eminently fitting that the children

of God should look back in their religious life upon an ordinance which to them commemorates their translation from the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The ordinance, being a *burial*, symbolizes in a beautiful manner the burying of the past life, the "old man with his deeds," and the rising to walk in "newness of life" in Christ.

Christ declared, "I will build my church." One church only was established by the Lord. The latest book of the New Testament was written near the close of the first century. After the first century serious changes took place, affecting the organization, doctrine, and practice of the church. The multitudinous sects of to-day testify by their existence to a departure from the faith of the primitive apostolic church. But God has not changed. And now in the evening of time, he has restored the gospel, as it was in the beginning, in harmony with prophetic announcements. (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 14:6, 7; Malachi 3:1-6.)

The Church of Jesus Christ in these latter days exists in complete accord with the primitive apostolic model of the church. The invitation is extended to all outside of Christ:

"Come. And let him that heareth say, Come."
(Revelation 22:17.)

NOTE.—The next chapter will take up the subject, "The baptism of the Spirit." Was the baptism of the Spirit promised to a few ancient disciples only? or is it for all obedient believers? What is the office work of the Holy Spirit?