

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA.55:10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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BAPTISM IN MARK AND LUKE

Mark 1:4. I take the words of this passage to mean: "There came to be John, the one doing a work of identifying in the wilderness, where he proclaimed an identification with the submissive ones with a view to (*eis*) the remission of sins." All of John's work was preparatory. The Greek word *eis* and the English *for* both have the meaning of "in order to obtain," or "with the mind directed toward." John's preparatory work did not bring them remission of sins, but it did put them officially, in God's sight, among the submissive ones, where they must be when the great sacrifice is made that would bring them pardon. If John's ritual baptism could bring remission, why then should Christ die?

Mark 1:8. Two baptisms are set in contrast here: *en hudati* (in water) and *en pneumatihagio* (in Holy Spirit). The Greek word *en* is quite flexible and has several meanings. Thayer's Lexicon uses seven columns to explain this preposition. It can mean in, on, at, with, by, among. "With" seems to be the most accurate translation for this sentence. John said: "I have identified you with water, but He will identify you with the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1:9. It was God's purpose that the individual Israelite should identify himself with the submissive portion of the nation. He commissioned John to do this and gave him the water ritual that would accomplish it. Since the Lord Jesus was an Israelite He desired to be related to those who made up this company. Thus He sought the ministry of John.

Mark 6:14, 24, 25. In these verses we find three references to the significant title that declared the position and service of John. In the Greek he was *Ioannes the Baptizon*. Translated into English, he was John the Identifier.

Mark 7:2-8. In this portion we find in the KJV six occurrences in one form or another of the word "wash." In the Greek of 7:4 we find the "baptizing of cups." This had to do with the ceremonial washing of vessels, and cleanliness is not in the picture.

In 7:8 we read of baptizing of the tables, but the Greek is *klinon* which means couches. Yes, they did baptize their couches! This was one of the "traditions of men" which they had adopted. The Pharisees and scribes held that even the most superficial application of water was a devout act.

Mark 8:28. Another occurrence of the significant name that declared the position and service of John.

Mark 10:38, 39. See comments on Matt. 20:22, 23.

Mark 11:30. See notes on Matt. 21:25.

Mark 14:20. In this verse the Greek word for "-dippeth" is *embapto*. This literally means "in-dip," and it takes us back to the basic meaning of the word *bapto*, which is, to dip. The original meaning of the word does not pass away when it takes on a new meaning. Words have histories, and in tracing this out much knowledge can be gained. For example, our word *prevent*, (from the *Latin praeventus*) originally meant to go out before, that is to precede. This is in harmony with its Latin elements. *Prae* is "pre" and *venire* is "to come." Its present meaning in English is to hinder, to stop all progress, to forestall. However, later meanings do not erase former meanings. Note this in 1 Thess. 4:15.

Multitudes have taken a passage such as this, then studiously avoiding making any attempt to translate the word *baptisma*, doing nothing with it except dropping the final letter, they bring it over into English, making it to mean whatever they want it to, which is usually the thing they are practicing. Then readily accepting the erroneous and ridiculous translation of *metanoia* (repentance) they come to certain conclusions which they hold out as being the truth of God. However, we can say of this process what is often said of computers: "Put garbage in you will get garbage out." The idea that remission of sins can come out of a water ceremony is theological garbage. John's water ritual identified men as submissive. It prepared the way for forgiveness, but it did not bring it.

Luke 3:7. John incisively examined the multitudes that flocked to his ministry. It seems that to be baptized by John had become popular in Palestine. He asked one searching question. "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come." This, with the warning that followed prompted the people to ask: "What shall we do then.?" His reply should be noted carefully by all who support their baptismal practices by the words of this chapter. John's answer to them was: "He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none; and he that has food, let him do likewise (3:11). The publicans (tax-gatherers) asked the same question and his word to them was: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." The soldiers similarly asked him the same question and his answer was: **"Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely,**

and be content with your wages." These answers show that John the Baptist did not have a salvation-bringing message to give to others, but they do reveal the character of the works demanded by John before he performed in their behalf his divine ceremony.

The Greek element *bap* at one time meant "dip," and nothing else. In time an omega was added to it and it became *bapto* a verb meaning "to dip." Since all dyeing was done by dipping, in the course of time *bapto* came to mean "to dye." And inasmuch as "to dye" meant to give a cloth a new color by impregnating it with the dye, it took on another meaning, which we find difficult to express in English, but we can come near to it by using the word "identify," especially when we build into it the ideas of merging or fixing a relationship.

Mark 16:16. There is not a drop of water in this passage. It tells us: "He that believeth and is identified shall be saved." In John 12:42, 43 we read of those who believed in Him but refused to identify themselves with Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue. As said before, there is a ritual called baptism and a reality called baptism. It is the reality that is declared here, and this reality is our identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. See Issue No. **SB019** for further comments on this passage.

Luke 3:3. This passage gives us the very essence of John's message. He came heralding identification with the submissive ones in Israel with a view to the remission of sins. This was not based upon some arbitrary decision of his but of divine authority. The words of this verse have been used by thousands in order to make a water ceremony essential to salvation. They speak as if there were a verse in Scripture that says: "Without a water ceremony there is no remission of sins." But there is no such verse. However, there is a verse that declares: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Heb. 9:22). Since John's ministry was one of preparation (Luke 1: 17), his ritual was only with a view to remission. They had to be officially among the submissive ones in Israel in order to receive the great benefits that could come from Christ's death.

Luke 3:12. These publicans were tribute-collectors. If they followed John's directive, every penny of profit would have disappeared from their business and they would have been working for nothing. Did they prove their submissiveness after they found what it was going to cost them? We are not told.

Luke 3:16. Of all the promises made in the Word of God to the faithful in Israel, there was none greater than that they would be identified with the Holy Spirit and fire. The Apostle Paul, as identified with and merged into the Holy Spirit could truly say: "**Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth**" (1 Cor. 2:13). I am unable to say this of the words that I speak. The great promise of identification with the Holy Spirit was made only to

men of Israel and is not available to anyone today, neither Jew nor Gentile. Such identification would make the possessor a mediator between God and men, and this would contradict the truth declared in 1 Tim. 2:5. "**One mediator between God and men,**" is truth for today. It was not true in the Acts period, and it will not be true in the kingdom of God.

Luke 3:21. This repeats the truth found in Matt. 3:13, 17 and Mark 1:9-11.

Luke 7:29, 30. Those who yielded to the demand made in John's proclamation declared God to be righteous in laying this requirement upon them. The Pharisees and Lawyers refused to admit to any need of submitting to God's demands made by His deputy, John.

Luke 9:19. Another mention of the name and title of John. Passages such as this tell us something about John but provide no truth concerning baptism.

Luke 11:38. The word for "washed" here is *baptiza*.

Luke 12:50. The Lord Jesus concealed the exact nature of His approaching death by calling it a *baptisma*. This clearly demonstrates a metaphorical use of this term. To say that it always means "immersion in water" is to deny its usage in the Word of God. To understand the nature of this declaration we might suppose, as an illustration, the first astronauts who flew to the moon saying of their upcoming mission: "We have an experience to be experienced and we are under great pressure until it is accomplished." This would have been a highly figurative statement, but very easily understood by all who were familiar with their purpose to visit the moon. Our Lord's statement was also clear to those who heard it. He was to be overwhelmed unto death.

Luke 16:24. The word "dip" here is *bapta*, which once again takes us back to the original, basic meaning of this word. However, we must not deny its history and progress. If a student of the Greek Language, living in the first century, had been asked what the word *bapta* meant, he probably would have answered: "It means to dip, and we use it this way. But it may also signify to dye, to wash, to overwhelm, to identify, and to merge, depending upon its context."

Luke 20:4. A very important question which the scribes and elders could have answered, but to do so would have involved them in God's truth. Thus, these leaders are compelled to confess their ignorance as well as their incapacity to guide others in a matter that was of the deepest concern to all in Israel. They dared not to confess the divine origin of this addition to Israel's religion.

End Issue No. SB144

