



Blackfoot Church of Christ

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A Reminder about Baptism, for Christians

By Doy Moyer

We often use passages about baptism to show unbelievers the need to be baptized into Christ. Certainly, baptism was taught to those who had not yet done it. The various occasions in the book of Acts demonstrate this. Peter taught the need to be baptized in Acts 2. Those in Samaria heard it and were baptized in Acts 8. That it was taught is the only way to make sense of why the eunuch from Ethiopia, as they were traveling along, asked Philip, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36) The eunuch did not just pull that up out of the blue on his own. Philip had taught it to him as they were riding along. Paul was taught to do it in Acts 9 (cf. Acts 22:16). Cornelius and his household were told to be baptized in Acts 10. The Philippian jailor obviously heard from Paul in Acts 16. On we can go. Baptism was an integral part of the conversion process, and Acts is clear about that.

Yet when we look into the rest of the New Testament to read about baptism, we need to recognize that these writings, these epistles, were written to those who had already done it. So, for example, in Romans 6, Paul is not making an argument to tell the Romans that they need to be baptized but is reminding them about the importance of the fact that they were, already, baptized. Whether Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:11-14, 1 Corinthians 12:13, 1 Peter 3:21, and so on, these are passages written to those who had already submitted themselves to the Lord.

Notice the assumption in these passages that all of these believers had indeed been baptized into Christ. These passages are not singling out some

of the Christians who were baptized and separating them from others who were not baptized. These passages assume that they were all baptized.

Why is this important? Because while we want to teach non-Christians to be baptized into Christ, as in Acts, it is just as important that we be reminded of why we were baptized in the first place, as in the epistles. The fact that there is so much written to Christians about their own baptism is itself evidence that baptism is both necessary and stands at the beginning of their walk with the Lord.

These passages also show us that we have a point in time to look back to so that we are reminded of the significance of what we did. Our baptism serves as a foundational grounding for us that we can think about no matter how mature we become in Christ. Sometimes it is quite important to go back to the beginning and remember why we did what we did.

We were united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. We put on Christ. We appealed to God for a good conscience. We were baptized into one body. We put our faith in the working of God. All of these points (and more) serve to remind us continually why we submitted to the Lord in the first place, and they ought to be continually before us as we grow.

The next time you read the epistles and come across these passages about baptism, don't just think about what the non-Christian needs to do. Think about what you did and why you did it. This will keep you grounded in the Lord. You will always have that anchor to go back to so that you can continue to move forward.

Additional Comments by Ross Ward

I found this article to be very insightful. We almost always (or probably always) use the baptism references in the epistles to teach the necessity and purpose of baptism, but how often are we reminded about our own baptism. The point of the article is that the baptism doctrine passages in the epistles were not attempting to convert a non-believer. Yet we find ourselves only using them for that purpose and overlooking the purpose of the writings.

This is a good warning for us on how we study. It is of greatest importance to understand a writer's primary point, what are they teaching their audience. This is what we often call the "context of the scripture". There may very well be important information provided within the context of the teaching, but it is also secondary to the message being taught. This secondary information may be information like the cleansing, renewal, or raising from death concepts associated with the act of baptism. These help to show the importance and operation associated with the baptism, as we noted, that was not the writer's point.

Another example that comes to my mind is what is often called the Parable of the Prodigal Son found in Luke 15. We often teach lessons about the son who rebelled and wasted his substance on prodigal living, but that is a secondary point/lesson in the parable. When we read what led to Jesus' teaching, we see that He addressed this parable to the Pharisees and Scribes who murmured because Jesus ate with sinners, Lk 15:2-3. In Lk 15:4-10, Jesus teaches lessons on the value of the lost. So, considering a lesson about the prodigal son is not wrong but it misses the main point(s) Jesus makes: A father's love for his lost son, the grace and mercy he shows towards that son, all contrasted against the jealousy of the older brother. So, considering a lesson about the prodigal son is not wrong but it misses the main point(s) Jesus makes.

I think we can all see that we are not immune to missing the context (the main point) of a scripture. Though I would not say the examples noted in this bulletin are misuses, it does show how we can miss the main point, though we have "studied" the passage our whole life. How many other scriptures have we done this to? I hope this heightens our awareness of how we study scripture. That we first attempt to understand the audience and point(s) the writer is making before jumping to the passage we have memorized to counter a popular doctrine in the world.

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Joe Price is here the entire week to present lessons
- Porters will be traveling to Georgia this coming weekend
- Tammy Woodward is suffering serious effects from cancerous brain tumors.
- Sister Bobby Adams is recovering from a stroke
- brethren from Nevada congregation
 - Dale & Holly's unborn baby health issues
 - Scott Boucher a relatively young man just underwent heart surgery and discovered he has cancer in his bones
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines.
- We meet again this afternoon at 2:30pm, then each night at 7:30pm.

For prayer requests, call or text

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Assignments

<u>Today</u> Bible Study – Joe Price Song Leader – Chad Mitchell Lord's Table – David Porter Sermon – Joe Price	<u>Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Joe Price Song Leader – Chad Mitchell Invitation – Joe Price
<u>Next Sunday</u> Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Ben Palmer Lord's Table – Larry Thompson Sermon – Ross Ward	<u>Next Wednesday</u> Bible Study – Chad Mitchell Song Leader – Ben Palmer Invitation – Ross Ward

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
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Meeting Times:

Sunday Class 10:00AM
Sunday Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Class 7:30PM



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