

SCRIPTURAL WATER BAPTISM

by Elder Bob Allgood

"The baptism of John , whence was it ? From heaven or of men ?"

These are the two questions Jesus asked the chief priests and elders of the people, when they questioned his authority in Matthew 21:23-27. But they would not answer, reasoning with themselves, saying, "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him ? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And so they gave an EVASIVE answer "We cannot tell". This is the kind of an answer you expect from a middle of the road Politician, or a "dumb dog that can not bark" (see Isaiah 56:10-11). This answer had all the aroma of a frightened skunk's foul smelling secretion being sprayed in an attempt to ward off an attack by it's enemy.

JOHN THE BAPTIST "was a man SENT FROM GOD" (John 1:6) - "to MAKE READY a people PREPARED (they were already prepared) for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb" and was to be "great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke 1:15). Jesus said "Among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist", except for Jesus Christ himself, being the LEAST (Mikros = younger in age) in the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist was more than a prophet, he was a Gospel Evangelist (Matt 11:8-15, Luke 16:16).

JOHN'S BAPTISM WAS AUTHORIZED BY GOD HIMSELF - HIS AUTHORITY WAS HEAVEN SENT. It was NOT A NEW FORM of any Old Testament Jewish ritual or washing. John's Baptism was to SEPARATE unto the MESSIAH a "people prepared for the Lord". John the Baptist was born of the lineage of the Aaronic Priesthood, see Luke 1:5. The purpose of John's baptism was to place the name of God on the chosen people of God - the Israel of God, see Numbers 6:22-27 and Galatians 6:15-16. When the proper candidate is Scripturally baptized in water into the Lord's church, he is baptized IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, in the name OF THE SON, and in the name OF THE HOLY GHOST (Matt 28:19). Scriptural baptism is

to be administered in the name of the GODHEAD, "for these three are one" (not three in one - I John 5:7). When one is baptized in the NAME OF JESUS, he or she (to be politically correct) is baptized in the NAME OF THE GODHEAD - "For in him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). To know Christ is to know the Father; to be in Christ is to be in the Holy Spirit, for these three are one (Read very carefully John 14).

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, began his earthly ministry by walking about 60 miles from Galilee to the river Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. WHY? Why couldn't Jesus just dunk himself, or pour water on his head, or sprinkle a few drops of water on his forehead, or just forget it? After all, being God manifest in the flesh, why should he go to all that effort? BECAUSE HE MUST FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS and John the Baptist was given THE AUTHORITY OF GOD TO BAPTIZE. Jesus went to John to "BE ANOINTED"; and to "FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Read Daniel 9:24-26); and to be "publicly identified" as THE SON OF GOD. What a shame, we have some who claim to be children of God who won't walk 60 feet down an isle to be baptized. One of the problems we have in the church today is that too many people want to "do it their way" instead of doing it the Lord's way.

When Jesus the Messiah was baptized, the Father spoke from heaven saying "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased", and the Spirit of God descended upon him and abode with him. In water baptism THE NAME OF GOD was placed upon him. Water baptism did not make Jesus THE SON OF GOD, He was BORN THE SON OF GOD. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God -- And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (Matt. 3:13-17, John 1:1, 14).

SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM REQUIRES: The Proper Subject being baptized in; the Proper Mode; for the Proper Reason; and by the Proper Authority.

THE PROPER SUBJECT: Is a Child of God. Jesus did not come to John for the purpose of becoming a child of God. He was already THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD. Baptism does not make one a child of God. Baptism is an "ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" to be "fulfilled" (Matt 3:15-6). Only a child of God; one who has been BORN FROM ABOVE (born again, quickened, made alive by God's Spirit - see John 3:3-8 and Eph.2:1-6) and gives evidence to that experience (Matt 3:7-9); and to the fact that they BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST (Acts 8:35-39) is a proper candidate for Baptism.

This ORDER critical and irreversible. Philip required of the Ethiopian eunuch a testimony to his Spiritual Birth and his Belief in the Gospel before he would baptize him (Acts 8:35-37). Today most churches will take anything that moves, crawls or pays it's way to the front of the building to join, regardless of their testimony. John the Baptist would not accept all that came to his baptism. He said to the Pharisees and Sadducees "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance". REPENTANCE AND FAITH must be

evident in the proper candidate for Baptism. This excludes INFANT BAPTISM, because such is unnecessary. Baptism is a TIMELY act, not an ETERNAL one.

THE PROPER MODE: John baptized "with water and in water". The word BAPTIZE comes from the Greek word BAPTIZO meaning to "whelm or cover". To baptize "with water and in water" means to FULLY IMMERSER. The Scripture says "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water". You can't go UP OUT OF THE WATER unless you are DOWN IN the water. When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch "they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38). The AUTHORITATIVE MODE for baptism is "with water in water", i.e. FULL IMMERSION. But there is more to it than just "getting immersed". SO WHAT IF YOU HAVE BEEN FULLY IMMERSERED ? Many cult religions such as the Mormons, (who believe that Adam is their God in heaven, and Christ was not born of the Holy Spirit), immerse their candidates and call it "baptism". In fact some of their members volunteer to be immersed hundreds of times for their dead relatives and friends. There is no way this can be Scriptural baptism !

THE PROPER REASON or PURPOSE: Water baptism identifies the child of God as being in union with Christ Jesus in this time world. When a man and woman stand before a minister and a congregation to take marriage vows, they do so, "to be publicly joined together as husband and wife". Neither of them are ashamed of the vows they take and they want everyone to know they are married. What would you think of your spouse if he or she wanted to keep your marriage a "secret"? When one is born of God Spirit he is joined unto Christ for all eternity in accordance with God's eternal purpose. When one believes that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor.15:3-4) that person should desire to be identified with Christ by following him in Scriptural baptism. It is more than a matter of obedience. Baptism reflects ones love and desire for public identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. But, as we have already pointed out, just any form of immersion is not Scriptural Baptism. There remains the question of authority. HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED ? BY WHAT AUTHORITY ?

THE PROPER AUTHORITY: John had the authority to Baptize. He received that authority from God. Jesus as God (John 1:1-3) manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16) was both man and God (I Tim. 2:5), the founder and head of the church (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 5:23) and the one who "ever liveth to make intercession for" the elect (Heb. 7:25). I believe the authority to baptize was passed on from John, to Christ himself when he was Baptized by John. Just as the mantle was passed from ELIJAH (John the Baptist was the Elijah to come - see Matt 11:14) to ELISHA with a double portion of his spirit (II Kings 2:9), so it was that AUTHORITY PASSED to Jesus, "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34). This seems evident in the words of Christ to John when he said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness". I am not dogmatic in this, it is just what I see in the Scriptures.

Jesus himself never did baptize anyone as far as we can tell. But he called his disciples and gave them authority to baptize. Scripture says "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, (John 4:1-2). This does not mean Jesus baptized his disciples -- but that the Disciples of Jesus did the baptizing. John baptized the disciples of Jesus - see Acts 1:21-22. This implies the authority to baptized had passed from John to Christ to the Disciples. John had testified, "I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him - He must increase, but I must decrease - He that hath the bride (or Church) is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy is fulfilled" (John 3:28-30). SO THE AUTHORITY WAS PASSED TO CHRIST. "He that hath received his (Christ) testimony hath set his seal that GOD IS TRUE. For he whom God hath sent (Christ) speaketh the words of God" (John 3:33-34a). JESUS SPOKE WITH THE AUTHORITY OF GOD.

ALL of the disciples that Jesus called to follow him; those DISCIPLES whom John referred to as the BRIDE; those Disciples that made up the nucleus of THE FIRST (Primitive, Original) CHURCH were ALL men who had been baptized by John. Look again at ACTS 1:15-23, and you will see in verses 21-22 that the REQUIREMENT for the one who was to take the place of Judas, was that he had been with them "all the time that the Lord went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John". THE FIRST CHURCH WAS A BAPTIST CHURCH, if not in name, certainly in practice and authority. Jesus said "Upon this rock (speaking of himself, for he is the Rock - see I Cor. 10:4) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. - And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven ---" (Matthew 16:13-19). Here we have the authoritative word of God, that his Church will have perpetual existence. It will not fail, it will not dissipate, it will not be overcome by the forces of Satan.

Jesus gave this AUTHORITY to his Apostles in the first church. The kingdom of heaven (and of God) speak of the church in time. No man, other than Jesus Christ, has the keys to eternal life. The keys to the church kingdom begin with Water Baptism. Jesus said to his Apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations (people), 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 (aion = age)" (Matthew 28:19-20).

So the AUTHORITY WAS PASSED ON. This time to BAPTIZE and to TEACH ALL THE THINGS THAT OUR LORD TAUGHT. Jesus said to His Apostles, "But ye shall RECEIVE POWER after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you --" (Acts 1:8). The Church that Jesus called out; that he established during his ministry and taught them all things that they should observe, was not going to be without power. Jesus said "I will not leave you comfortless (without the peace and power of God), I will come unto you" (John 14:15-18, 28).

There was only ONE CHURCH to start. It was a BAPTIST church in practice and authority. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached and "They

that gladly received his word were baptized (the proper candidates, in the proper mode, for the proper reason, by the proper authority), and The Lord ADDED TO THE CHURCH daily such as should be saved. The Church existed prior to Pentecost. You can not add to something that does not exist already. But BAPTIZING was not all that the church did. IT TAUGHT THE DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES THAT OUR LORD JESUS HAD TAUGHT THE APOSTLES. Read Acts 2:41-47.

The CHURCH becomes CHURCHES: "And at that time there was great persecution against THE CHURCH THAT WAS AT JERUSALEM; and they were all scattered a- broad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria --" (Acts 8:1). After Saul was converted on the Damascus road and became Paul the Apostle (Acts 9), THEN HAD THE CHURCHES REST throughout all Judea - Galilee and Samaria, and were EDIFIED (built up) - walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost, (and) WERE MULTIPLIED.

History tells us that a major division of these First (Primitive) Churches took place in the third century because some departed from the practice of SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM. Infant Baptism and Baptismal Regeneration were introduced in the departed churches which ultimately became the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. The Primitive Baptist Churches would have no part of unscriptural baptism and became known as ANA-BAPTIST or TRUE BAPTIST. Through the ages they remained TRUE to the DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES as they were taught by our Lord. They had the AUTHORITY and the TEACHINGS of our Lord who did not leave them. Primitive Baptist Churches watched with hope as the Protestant Reformation took place. Primitive Baptist are not Roman Catholic or Protestant. The Protesters did not come all the way over to the Authorized Churches to be baptized. They came out of Romanism, but stop short of coming to the True Church.

True Primitive Baptist Churches do not recognize the baptism of unauthorized churches or orders. This does not mean that we consider others of a different order, not to be children of God. Water Baptism has nothing to do with the eternal destiny of a child of God; but,

Baptism has everything to do with a child of God being obedient to Jesus Christ. When a child of God refuses to submit himself to the Authorized Baptism of the church, he is disobedient to Christ who told the church to Baptize; and he denies the church the blessing of being obedient to Christ. When a child of God refuses to be Scripturally Baptized, he denies himself a home in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the righteousness, and peace, and joy, that comes from dwelling in the Kingdom of God here in time.

HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED ? BY WHAT MODE ? FOR WHAT PURPOSE ? BY WHAT AUTHORITY ? My journey to the true church and Scriptural water baptism was long and hard. Many of God's people have been dunked or sprinkled in a disorderly fashion by disorderly groups. I went into the water four times before being Scripturally baptized. If you would like more information on this subject I will be happy to share with you

the truth God has blessed me to have. Written with love for God's people and for the cause of the Truth.