

BAPTISMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Hebrews 6:2 refers to "the doctrine of baptisms." I am not sure that does not refer to the various washings connected with the worship under the Law of Moses. At any rate, aside from this passage, the New Testament refers to at least six different baptisms. Some might then think it strange that the same New Testament says, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, *one baptism*, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). We will deal with that seeming difficulty a little later in this lesson.

Please consider with me some different baptisms mentioned in the New Testament. A proper understanding of these will help us to have a better understanding of the one baptism mentioned in Ephesians 4:5.

DISCUSSION

I. THE BAPTISM ADMINISTERED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST.

- A. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4).
- B. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2).
- C. The teaching of John was well received. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matthew 3:5-6).
- D. Luke 7:29 says those who were baptized by John "justified God" in so doing. Simply means they declared by their actions that He who required those actions was just in so requiring.
- E. But look at the next verse. "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:30).
 - 1. This was true because it was God who had commanded that people submit to John's baptism.
 - 2. What do people today do who refuse to be baptized with the baptism which God has commanded?
- F. John's baptism was limited to that period of time which began when John began his preaching and ended when the church was established.
 - 1. Acts 19:1-6 shows this to be the case. "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."
 - 2. Note: These were baptized with John's baptism after it had already been replaced with the baptism of the Great Commission. (See the latter part of the preceding chapter.)

II. THE BAPTISM JESUS RECEIVED.

- A. "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 fulfil 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).

B. This obviously took place during that period of time when John's baptism was in effect.

1. But it was obviously different from the baptism John administered to others.

a. His baptism was normally a baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4).

b. Jesus had no sins for which to repent and of which to be forgiven. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

2. John himself recognized this was different. See what he said: "I have need to be baptized of thee . . ."

C. Then why was Jesus baptized?

1. He answers that himself: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him" (Matthew 3:15).

2. "Suffer" means "allow." "Allow it to be so N-O-W." Shows this is a case different from all others.

D. Incidentally, John's reluctance to baptized Jesus shows the denominational position on baptism is not in harmony with the Scriptures. Denominational preachers refuse to baptize those who have sins to be forgiven. John refused to baptize Jesus because Jesus had no sins to be forgiven.

III. THE BAPTISM OF SUFFERING.

A. "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matthew 20:20-23).

B. Baptism is here spoken of in a metaphorical sense. The literal meaning of the word is "to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge . . . to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water" (Thayer P. 94).

C. But Thayer, on the same page, under definition number 3 says the Greek word means, metaphorically, "to overwhelm." That is the sense it is used in this passage, as Thayer points out.

D. This use of the word denies that baptism could be sprinkling or pouring, as it is sometimes practiced by certain religious groups. Jesus was not talking about just a little sprinkling of suffering he was going to undergo, but an overwhelming of suffering.

E. Incidentally, this is the sense in which the word is used in First Corinthians 10:1-2: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." That is, they were completely covered, with the cloud over them and the walls of water on either side as they passed through the sea. They were completely submerged, covered.

F.

IV. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST AND THE BAPTISM OF FIRE

A. We consider these two together because of two reasons:

1. They are mentioned in the same verse, and

2. Some mistakenly think that the two are one baptism composed of two elements.

B. Matthew 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier

than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire"

1.Those who say that only one baptism is mentioned here, and that it is characterized by two elements: (1) the Holy Ghost, and (2) fire cite Acts 2:3: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

2.Acts 2:3 does not say the apostles were baptized with fire. It says they saw something "like as of fire." If it was "like as of fire," then it was not fire.

C.The context shows what the baptism of fire is:

1.Verse 10 mentions two classes: "And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." What does the word *fire* refer to in this verse?

2.Skip verse 11 and go to verse 12: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." What does the word *fire* in this verse mean?

3.If *fire* in verse 10 is referring to hell fire, and *fire* in verse 12 is hell fire, then what is the *fire* in verse 11?

4.A fundamental law of Bible interpretation is this: whenever a word is employed several times within a context, it will carry the same meaning in each case, unless there is a compelling reason to assign an unusual sense to the term. Certainly no such reason exists in this passage.

D.In Acts 1:5 Jesus alludes to the same thing John was talking about when he promised the baptism of the Holy Ghost. "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

1.Notice: Jesus did not say, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire not many days hence." Why? Because those who would be baptized with fire were not present on this occasion. Those to whom Jesus spoke, his apostles, would be baptized with the Holy Ghost, but not with fire.

2.John the Baptist, on the other hand, in Matthew 3, was addressing, not only the apostles, but also some he called "generation of vipers" who needed to bring forth "fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:7-8). Some he addressed (the apostles) would be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and some (the wicked and impenitent) would be baptized with fire.

E.The purpose of Holy Ghost baptism is a subject within itself, but for purposes of this study we will simply point out that it qualified the apostles to do the work they had to do as apostles.

V.THE BAPTISM OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

A.This is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. The others either had already taken place, or, in the case of the baptism with fire, is yet in the future. When the apostle wrote, "There is . . . one baptism," he was talking about the baptism of the Great Commission.

B.Matthew records these words in Matthew 28:18-19: "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."

C.Mark records another incident in these words: "And he 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."

D.This is the baptism that saves. "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" (I Peter 3:21).

E.This is the one that washes away sins. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash

away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

F.This is the one that is for the remission of sins. "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).

G.This is the one that puts one into Christ. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27).

CONCLUSION

Have you received the one baptism? Baptism in water, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, is the only baptism you need.