

Title: Christ's Water-Baptism  
Text: Matthew 3: 13-17  
Date: August 10, 2014  
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**Matthew 3: 13: Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14: But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15: 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. 16: 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: 17: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

We have a brother and sister who have expressed a desire to be baptized. We will baptize one next Sunday and the other during the Danville Conference.

**Subject:** Christ's Water-Baptism.

**Proposition:** By Christ's water-baptism he sets before us an example of obedience to God which he commands every believer to follow.

**I. Matthew 3: 13: Then cometh Jesus...--FIRST, BY CHRIST'S BEING BAPTIZED WE CAN CORRECT SOME OF THE ERRORS ASSOCIATED WITH BAPTISM.**

### **Not For Remitting Sins**

This one who came to be baptized is the holy, sinless, GodMan. Christ had no sins to be forgiven. That tells us baptism is not for the purpose of remitting sins. On the day of Pentecost when Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins—Peter was not saying by baptism God forgives our sins. (Acts 2: 38) "For" means "because of" the forgiveness of sins. It is by Christ putting away the sins of his people that God forgives our sins. Christ said, "this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."(Mt 26: 28) After regeneration, God the Holy Spirit bears witness in our hearts that God forgives our sins because of Christ's finished work.

Hebrews 10: 14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15: Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: [A witness of Christ. Therefore, God says]...17: And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18: Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

So it is through God's gift of faith in Christ, for the sake of Christ, that God forgives our sins.

Acts 10:43: To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins

So Peter was saying that if you believe Christ, believe God that your sins are forgiven through faith, then follow him in believer's baptism confessing that you are doing it, "because" your sins have been forgiven.

### **Not For Washing Away Sin**

Also, by our Savior being baptized we see that baptism is not for the "washing away of sin"—Christ knew no sin. When Ananias told Paul, "be baptized and wash away thy sins", he was speaking of what baptism

pictures. It is by Christ's blood that the sins of God's elect were washed away. That is what we picture in believers' water-baptism.

### **Not For Regeneration**

Also, by Christ being baptized, we see that water-baptism is not for regeneration. Christ had no need of regeneration. In one person, Christ is the GodMan—the holy nature of God and the holy nature of Man. Sinners are not regenerated by water-baptism but by the Holy Spirit, through the hearing of the faithfulness of Christ, when Christ speaks the word into our hearts:

John 6:63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Ephesians 2:1: And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

### **For Believers Only**

Lastly, by Christ the Faithful, being baptized we see that water-baptism is only for believers. It is not for any who do not believe. Water-baptism is obedience to God. Peter said, baptism is "(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.)" (1 Pet 3: 21) When scripture speaks of a believer being baptized and "all his house", it is because God gave faith to him and all those in his house. For example:

Acts 18: 8: And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

**II. YET, CHRIST DOES SHOW US HOW VERY IMPORTANT WATER-BAPTISM IS—Matthew 3: 13: Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, to be baptized of him. 14: But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15: 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.**

It was a three days journey from Galilee to Jordan. For our Savior to walk that far to be baptized tells us water-baptism is of utmost importance.

### **Humility of Heart**

First, we see water-baptism is important because it shows that our hearts are humbled before God. This is God the Son. But he humbled himself "to be baptized of John." God over all heaven and earth, the Creator of all things, did not come into this world in pomp and flash—he came as an infant born to poor parents. Throughout his earthly life he made himself of no reputation. He ended his ministry bloody and stripped naked on a cross. Likewise, he began his ministry by being baptized by a man in a muddy river. (II Cor. 8:9).

2 Corinthians 6: 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

The first thing required of God's people is to come down: we must be stripped of our vain riches, our so-called righteousness. We must be brought to trust Christ alone for all acceptance with God. That requires a broken and contrite heart. True believer's baptism is a confession of humility of heart, of submission to Christ our Master, of consecration to him and his people.

Psalm 51:17: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Matthew 11:29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

## **Obedience to God**

Also, water-baptism is important because it is the will of God, given for every child of God to obey—“it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” The Preeminent Son of God submitted to the will of God his Father in all his service to God, just as he did here, being baptized according to the will of his Father.

Notice, John protested at first. John knew himself to be a sinner in need of the grace of God. He needed Christ to do all things for him. But when Christ told him this was the will of God, John submitted to God by submitting to Christ

1 Samuel 15:22: And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

## **Worship of God**

Water-baptism is important because anything God's will for his child is also the worship of God. Christ Jesus did not let the long walk or the humility involved, or the protests of John prevent him from worshipping God the Father in water-baptism.

Unregenerate men let very little come between them and their job. If their employment dries up, they will move clear across the country to another job. They will move for a job then look for a church. True believers are faithful in their work place, but believers let nothing come between them and the worship of God. Believers will move clear across the country for the gospel or drive long distances each week to hear the gospel. If the believer's job dries up, he will first look for a city where the truth is preached then try to find a job there. It is the difference grace makes: the difference between having Christ for your life and having the world for your life. Likewise, those who claim to believe Christ yet refuse water-baptism show an unchanged heart, a refusal to obey God, and refusal to worship God.

## **III. THIRDLY, CHRIST SHOWS WHAT WATER-BAPTISM PICTURES AND WHAT WE ARE CONFESSING IN WATER BAPTISM—Matthew 3: 15: Jesus said...thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.**

John did what was right on this occasion. But John did not fulfill ALL righteousness. Christ is the ONLY ONE who fulfilled ALL righteousness. So why did the Lord Jesus include John?

## **Representation**

Christ declares here that John, like all God's elect, were in Christ when Christ served God in the earth. When Christ fulfilled all righteousness, all God's elect fulfilled all righteousness in him.

As the Representative of his people, even when Christ was baptized in water, all who were in him were baptized in water in perfect righteousness. Next week, Kevin and I will not fulfill this ordinance in righteousness. There will be sin in him and me. But in Christ, both of us fulfilled this ordinance of water-baptism in perfect righteousness. The same is true when we observe the Lord's Table, in every aspect of our

worship of God on this earth. Christ is our Righteousness in all things because everything Christ did when he walked this earth as the Representative of his people, his people did in him.

When Christ obeyed every precept of the law in perfect righteousness, his people obeyed every precept of the law in perfect righteousness. Christ is the end of all the law for the believer because Christ is the righteousness of the law for the believer. Believers should never intentionally break the law of God, but we do not look to the law for righteousness or sanctification, we look only to Christ, who is made unto us Righteousness and Sanctification.

When Christ served God and his brethren in perfect faith and fidelity, his people did so in him. Not only is Christ's righteousness given to us through faith, Christ is the Righteousness of our faith.

But what about our sins—there is a penalty for breaking the law—we all broke the law. Christ also took the sins of his people. All our sins before we were converted, all our sins when we were baptized in water, sins as we preach and hear the gospel preached, sins as we observe the Lord's Table, sins as we pray to God, all our sins of breaking every law of God, sins from conception to the day we die, known and unknown. Christ took all the sins of all his elect people on him.

### **Picture of Death in Baptism**

Here is the work of Christ on the cross, which Christ pictured by his water-baptism—**Matthew 3: 16: And Jesus, when he was baptized,...**

First, the Holy Spirit tells us Christ was immersed. The word baptism means—immersion—under water. The Greek word “baptize” described a process of dying clothe. They immersed clothe in dye to change its color. Imagine if a person ordered a piece of baptized clothe but they sprinkled it instead. The person expecting clothe all one color would be unhappy.

But the reason we immerse is much greater than a matter of semantics, we immerse because of what Christ bore on the cross. Having been made sin for us, God baptized—immersed—Christ in the just judgment and wrath of God, baptized him in that spiritual second death then in physical death and then immersed him in the grave. All this is that immersion Christ spoke of when, long after water-baptism, he said,

Luke 12:50: But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

When we are immersed in water-baptism we are confessing that when Christ was immersed into that death our old man of sin was baptized into that death in him.

Romans 6: 3: Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized [unto] Jesus Christ were baptized [unto] his death? 4: Therefore [the picture we show is] we are buried with him by baptism into death

What are we confessing that Christ accomplished by his death and burial?

Romans 6: 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed from sin.

This is that eternal death the law demands of the law-breaker, which his people would have suffered eternally. But by Christ being immersed into that death for us our old man of sin was crucified and died with Christ. The body of our sin is destroyed by Christ's death. Now, before God, before the law, it is impossible

for God's child to serve sin, "He that is dead is freed from sin." "Brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." (Rom 7: 4)

### **Picture of Resurrection in Coming Up From Under the Water**

Then our text says Christ, **Matthew 3: 16:...went up straightway out of the water:...**

When we come up out of the water this is what we are confessing and picturing.

Romans 6: 4:...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. 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:...9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we come out of the water we confess that when Christ arose our new man arose in him.

Ephesians 2: 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

And we are confessing that in time, we were regenerated by the Holy Spirit so that Christ now dwells in us. Peter compares baptism to the waters of Noah. When the ark came up out of the water, Noah came up out of the water. Noah was delivered to a brand-new life. That is what we are confessing in believer's baptism: we now walk in newness of life. We died unto sin, now we live unto God. We were the servants of sin, now the servants of Christ our Righteousness

### **V. LASTLY, BY WATER BAPTISM WE ARE CONFESSING THAT OUR SALVATION IS THE WORK OF THE TRIUNE GOD IN CHRIST.**

#### **Christ's Ascension by the Triune God**

Remember, at Christ's ascension: the heavens opened, the GodMan arose glorified by the Holy Spirit, God declaring that he is satisfied with his people in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 2: 12 calls it, "the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

That faithful operation of God was a meeting of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity showing that salvation is of the LORD: purposed by God the Father, performed and purchased by God the Son, ministered by God the Holy Spirit.

So at his water-baptism, after Christ pictured his death, burial and resurrection, God gave a foreshadow of that faithful operation of the triune God which raised Christ—**Matthew 3: 16: 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: 17: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

There is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit declaring God is satisfied, justice is upheld, he is the Justifier in Christ the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

So when a believer comes up out of the waters of baptism, we are picturing and confessing, that we believe our salvation and acceptance in heaven with God is in the Beloved by the faithful operation of the triune God. We are confessing salvation is of the Lord.

Colossians 2: 12: 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.

True water-baptism is a confession that our salvation is not by us, in any degree—it is a confession that all we are is sin. It is a confession that our salvation is by the triune God—of the Lord: by God the Father who elected us, foreordained us and predestinated us, by God the Son who redeemed us, who sent the gospel to us, by God the Holy Spirit who regenerated us and keeps us and will one day raise us up forever to be with God. We confess that by the same faithful operation of the triune God which raised Christ, we are now raised to newness of life, consecrated to God and his people, in obedience to our new Master.

### **Three Important Words**

In closing let me say three things.

First, if you God has called you so that you believe Christ—that salvation is of the triune God, apart from your works—it is God's command to confess him in believer's baptism. If you believe him truly then you will want to.

Secondly, baptism is only to be done once. It can only be done once in truth. But if you were baptized but did not believe on Christ, in spirit and in truth, then you only went through the motions. If since then God has given you a heart to believe on Christ then you should follow Christ in believer's baptism.

Thirdly, if you do not believe, wait on the Lord. You cannot confess who you do not believe and trust. Never make a false profession. Avoid it all costs.

Lord willing, when we baptize these brethren, I hope this helps you understand how important this ordinance is and what these brethren are confessing by it.

**Amen!**