

## THE GOSPEL 8

### BAPTISM

David C F Wright DD

This subject is controversial yet it should not be.

In some established churches, baptism is termed christening where an infant or baby has water poured on its head and is said to be baptised and godparents promise to bring up that child decently and morally and, by implication, in the Christian faith. But few do. Most of them do not have a Christian faith and only go to church on rare special occasions.

In the New Testament, there is Christian baptism, sometimes called believers baptism, and it is by immersion with the one who is being baptised confessing their faith in the Lord Jesus.

We are baptised into His death and buried with him by baptism (Romans 6.3ff). A burial is a complete covering and the baptism speaks of the death of the old life and being raised in newness of life. Baptism is a personal admission that we are dead to sin and that our body of sin is destroyed since we are crucified with Him. He died for our sins and our sinful life should be dead to sin. Verse 8 says that if we are dead to sin we are alive in Christ. We have a renewal since we have a new life of commitment to the Lord. An infant or baby cannot confess their sins nor are they immersed in water as if a burial. Christening and godparents have no place in Scripture.

In Acts 16.14 ff we read of Lydia who was baptised with her household which some assert means that this included children and infants. But it does not say that. Baptism also has a general meaning of being identified with. In earlier days, some were baptised in the sense of being identified with Moses.

The Lord Jesus went down in the water and was baptised. He was not held by a priest over a font and had water poured on his forehead with godparents in attendance,

For by one spirit we were all baptised into the body of Christ which is the church (1 Corinthians 12.13) which means our being dead to sin (1 Corinthians 15.29) and alive to Christ. We are baptised into Christ (Galatians 3.27).

John the Baptist baptised with water but said that One would come and baptise with both the Holy Ghost and power which Pentecostals and charismatics call the second blessing. But Ephesians 4.5 speaks of One Lord, one faith and one baptism which, as George Harpur and many others clearly point out, this one baptism refers to baptism in water. The whole section of this passage also refers to unity and this applies to the faith and yet some denominations vary the faith and even add to it, contrary to the final chapter of Scripture.

It was Agnes Ozman who is said to be the first person to speak in tongues, in recent times, circa 1901, which is diametrically opposed to 1 Corinthians 13. It was, to a large extent, the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement which evolved from the Holiness Movement.

I asked a young convert about this and the claims of two baptisms. His reply was that the baptism into Christ was to declare our allegiance to Him and burying sin, having newness of life and this was paramount.

But it has to be said that baptism does not save you and there are people who, because of age or infirmity, cannot endure baptism. They will not lose out.

Pentecostals and charismatics believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is something completely different and is the second blessing evidenced by the speaking in tongues. And those who have this blessing and speak in tongues are superior Christians and have the full gospel.

It is at conversion that we both embrace and receive the Holy Spirit. We are born again of the Holy Spirit. It is not something that happens at some time after conversion.

A friend was baptised by immersion in a Pentecostal church and weeks later was told that she was not saved because she had not spoken in tongues and had not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This view is held by Elim and other Pentecostal groups and is a false teaching.

In fact, this false teaching is in the Elim official statement of their essential doctrines and states emphatically that baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues.

(737)

---

© Copyright David C F Wright DD 2010. No part of this article, however small, may be reproduced or stored in any system whatsoever. It must not be copied, altered or downloaded. Failure to comply is illegal being theft and contrary to International Copyright law and will render any offender liable to action at law.