

Rom. 14:19
"So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another."

John 8:32
"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

June
18
2023

AN INQUIRY INTO BAPTISM

by Jefferson David Tant Jr.

Editor's note: We continue the presentation of a series of articles designed to inform on this topic by consulting all the appropriate sources of knowledge on the subject. JCS.

TESTIMONY OF THE GREEK LEXICONS, DICTIONARIES, ETC.

on "βαπτίζω" (baptidzo)

1. to dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge....2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water...3. to overwhelm...
(GRIMM'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, translated, Revised, and Enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D. [A standard reference work recognized in both Europe and America to be an outstanding work]).
2. 1. to dip, immerse, sink; 2. To overwhelm... 3. To perform ablutions, wash oneself, bathe....4. of ablution, immersion, as a religious rite, **to baptize...** (A MANUAL GREEK LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, G. Abbott Smith, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.)
3. to dip, immerse, or plunge into water. (Parkhurst)
4. to immerse, to sink. (Robinson)
5. to dip repeatedly. (Liddell and Scott)
6. 1. of Christian baptism; this, according to the view of the apostles, is a rite of sacred immersion, commanded by Christ, by which men confessing their sins and professing their faith in Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit into a new life, come into the

fellowship of Christ and the church
(GRIMM'S GREEK –ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, op. cit.)

COMMENT: *Of literally scores of such authoritative works, Greek dictionaries, lexicons, etc., I have never heard of even ONE that defines "baptize" or "baptism" as sprinkling or pouring. Indeed, there are other works in the Greek language that denote these actions. The word "ραντιζω" (rantidzo) means "to sprinkle," and the words "εκχεω" (ekcheo) and "βαλλω" (ballo) may be translated as "to pour," but these words are never used in reference to baptism in water in the New Testament.*

*It is of more than passing interest to note that in **Luke 16:24**, the rich man asked if Lazarus might "dip the tip of his finger in water." The word "dip" there is translated from the Greek "βαπτω" (bapto), the form from which we get "baptize." Would one be led to think that the rich man simply asked from Lazarus to sprinkle some water on his finger, or for Lazarus to immerse the end portion of his finger in water, that it might give some relief to the parched mouth of the rich man? I think the latter would be obvious, and so did the translators.*

How Many Roads Lead to Heaven? by Erin Percell

On a map you can see many roads into any major city. You can pick whatever route suits you. Many people think the same thing about variety among churches - "We're all on different roads to the same place," they

say. Can such a thing be so?

Do you believe we can follow different roads? What does the Bible say about it? The Bible speaks of only two roads. In **Matthew 7:13-14**, Jesus said: *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”* Yes, there are different roads, but only one goes to Heaven, and it is narrow.

In **John 4**, when the woman at the well met Jesus, she immediately pointed out that her people worshipped differently from His (**John 4:19-20**). Jesus did not reply that both roads led to the same place. He said that one road was right and the other was wrong (**John 4:22**), and that if she wished to please God, her worship must be *“in truth”* (**John 4:24**)

In **Acts 15:1-31** the apostles disputed with some who believed in Jesus, but taught error about what one must do to be saved. Instead of concluding that there were different roads, they gave notice to the churches that one road was right and the other was wrong.

The idea of “different roads” is used to avoid discussing different religious teachings and practices. After all, does doctrine really matter if your attitude is right? Indeed it does. The Bible says there are doctrines that God hates (**Revelation 2:15**), and that some doctrines are of demons (**I Timothy 4:1**). Taking heed to doctrines necessary for salvation (**I Timothy 4:16**, **II John 9**), because obedience to God’s *“form of doctrine”* is what makes one free from sin (**Romans 6:17-18**). Even many who believe in Jesus are on the wrong road because they do not obey (**Luke 6:46**, **Matthew 7:21-23**)

Multiple roads result when men choose their own ways, but only God’s way is right. The “different roads” philosophy has led churches to abandon the question of what is right, and instead accept a wide diversity of beliefs. But we should not be ashamed to say that some beliefs are right, and others are wrong, because that is what God says. *“There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”* (**Proverbs 14:12**) If people are on different roads, they are not all headed for Heaven.

“Preach the Text”

I am very concerned with what I perceive to be an approach to preaching (and listening) which, more and

more, seems to place the word of God in the background. I've heard some sermons recently which illustrate the point. In one, I was not required to open a Bible for the first 20 minutes; in another, one verse was referred to, sort of as a launching pad," and then the Bible was closed from that point on. I heard another "sermon" in which the preacher (who had a degree in psychology) first expressed his opinion about certain problems in our relationship with God, then quoted psychological theories to validate his opinion, then threw in a little Bible, presumably to validate the psychology. If these are examples of "preaching the text," I must admit that I'm very worried about the future of preaching!

We need a fresh reminder of the lesson of Nehemiah 8, where Ezra stood in the pulpit (**v. 4**) and OPENED THE BOOK (**v. 5**), reading distinctly from it and helped them to understand what the BOOK said (**v. 8**). If that does not describe our function as "preachers of the word," then I'm at a loss as to what I'm supposed to be doing as a full-time gospel preacher and teacher. Of course, I'm not sure the problem is all in the pulpit. In fact, I'm pretty well convinced it is not. I preached a meeting recently in which the majority of people did not have a Bible in their possession. Since I was attempting to present an exposition of one of the minor prophets, needless to say, I was at a disadvantage.

I cannot pretend to understand why people of God would enter a building, presumably to hear the word of God preached, and not have a Bible with them. What is going through a person's mind? What are they expecting to hear? What do they want to hear? Platitudes? Maxims? Jokes? God said through Amos, many years ago, that there would be a *“famine in the land, not of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord”* (**Amos 8:11**). Such a famine came and the people of Israel suffered the spiritual consequences. There is no such famine now, except when it is self-imposed. In too many places and in the sermons of too many preachers (one is too many), such a famine exists. It extends to the pew and people are beginning to get along quite well without the word of God... after all, if we hear only opinions, we have a choice to accept them or reject them, don't we? "My opinion is surely as good as his, though perhaps not as eloquent."

Perhaps I'm sounding an alarm which is not needed (though I know many others who share my concern). Jeremiah said to beware of those who cry *“peace, peace when there is no peace”* (**6:14**). These are just my observations—but if they ring true, in your experience, I'd like to make a couple of short suggestions. To those who occupy the pews each

week and listen to preaching, demand (yes, demand) Bible preaching — accept no substitutes. In addition, bring your Bibles, open them up, take notes, listen. Challenge the preacher to present the word of God as the only solution to every problem he presents. We need to be challenged, checked and, sometimes, corrected. And, to my fellow preachers, let's "just preach the text" (2 Tim. 4:2).

by David Posey

WHO ARE WE FOLLOWING?

In the book of Nehemiah we learn of this good man who was given leave from the King of Persia to return to Jerusalem to restore the city. Ezra and several of the captives who had been released by Cyrus had already begun to rebuild the temple. Under the supervision and guidance of Nehemiah *...the people had a mind to work (Neh. 4:6)*. As a result much was accomplished in spite of opposition from the nations around who distrusted the Jews and tried to discourage them.

Nehemiah had to return to Susa to the King but before he did, he and Zerubbabel set things in order for the people to restore the worship in Jerusalem. They were able to instruct the people to honor the temple and the priesthood appropriately. Nehemiah and Zerubbabel taught the people from the word of God and set things in order according to the Law that had been given to Moses years before.

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem from Susa he discovered those things he had taught the people were being neglected and disregarded. They had allowed foreigners to take their places in the house of God. This in violation of the Law of Moses. They had ceased to tithe as the Law demanded. They failed to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy and they had married women of the nations around them which also violated the Law of Moses. All these things had been set in order prior to Nehemiah returning to Susa. And yet when he came back to Jerusalem, he found them neglected again.

The question to be answered is who were the people serving when Nehemiah taught them from the Law of God how to worship and how to live righteously before God? Since the things they were taught came from God's law, one would conclude they were following

God. Yet, when Nehemiah was not among them, they neglected all those things they had learned from the Law of God. When he returned the very things they neglected in his absence were restored to their daily lives. The answer to the question above is, they were obeying Nehemiah, not God.

I would ask you to answer the same question. Are you serving God or some man you presume has instructed you in the way God would have you to go? Religious organizations today are honoring societal demands rather than submitting to the commands and precepts of God. They have decided women can be the leaders over men in the worship, contrary to Scripture (1 Timothy 2:12). They are condoning homosexuality and even honoring it by granting such sinners places of leadership in the churches (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Long ago this began when churches decided they could alter the plan of salvation by teaching the concept of salvation by faith alone (James 2:24-26). They became dissatisfied with God's instruction to sing and make melody in the heart and decided the melody should be made with musical instruments (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16,17). The list could go on and on of the things men have either added to or taken from the instruction God has given (2 John 9; Revelation 22:18,19).

But the answer is obvious. When we conduct ourselves in worship or service to God and Christ of our own design and authority, we are no longer serving Him. We are indeed, just as the Jews without Nehemiah, serving ourselves and therefore we are doing what Jesus condemned in the religious leaders of His day. *'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'* (Matthew 15:9).

Jim Stauffer

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We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

- Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
- Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
- Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
- Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- ▶ **Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17
- ▶ **Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6
- ▶ **Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30
- ▶ **Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10
- ▶ **Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38
- ▶ **Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10