

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

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AN INQUIRY INTO BAPTISM

by Jefferson David Tant Jr.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Basil the Great, A.D. 370: "The bodies of those baptized are as if buried in the water."

Barnabas, A.D. 119: "We indeed go down into the water. Again, "Blessed are they, who, placing their trust in the cross, have gone down into the water."
(**Epis. XI, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 144**)

Origen, A.D. 184-254: "Man, therefore, through this washing is buried with Christ; is regenerated."
(Comment on Matthew)

Gregory, A.D. 240: "He who is baptized in water is wholly wet." Again, "Immerse me in the streams of Jordan, even as she who bore me wrapped me in the children's swaddling clothes." (**Ante Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 70**)

Chrysostom, A.D. 347: "To be baptized and to submerge, then to emerge is a symbol of descent to the grave, and of ascent from it." (**Hom. 40 in I Corinthians 1.**)

Canon of the Council of Calcuth, A.D. 816: "Let the presbyter also know, that they may not pour the holy water over the infants' heads, but let them always be immersed in the font."

Comment: *The early church fathers lived and wrote while the Greek was still a living language, and history furnishes us with not even one example in all their writings where baptizo is ever used as meaning sprinkle or pour.*

Even in later years, after infant baptism had been introduced, immersion was yet the practice, as evidenced by the decree of the Council of Calcuth in 816 A.D.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE COMMENTATORS

"This passage cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion." **Romans 6:4.**

"The candidate says to himself, 'Now I enter into fellowship with the death of Christ; I am to be buried with Christ in the *immersion*, and in the *emersion* I rise with Christ to newness of life.'" **Commentary on Romans, Meyer, Romans 6:4.**

"Here is a plain allusion to the ancient custom of baptizing by immersion; and I agree with Koppe and Rosemuller that there is reason to regret it should ever have been abandoned in most Christian churches, especially as it has so evident a reference to the mystical sense of baptism." (**Rscens. Synop. Bloomfield, Romans 6:4.**)

"**Verse 4:** *We are buried with Him by baptism into death.* It is probable that the apostle here alludes to the mode of administering baptism by *immersion*, the whole body being put *under the water*, which seemed to say the man is *drowned*, is *dead*; and when he came up out of the water, he seemed to have a *resurrection* to life. *The man is risen again; he is alive!*" (**Commentary on Romans 6:4, Adam Clarke [Methodist Protestant Church], 1836**)

“4. *Therefore we are buried {...}*. It is altogether probable that the apostle in this place had allusion to the custom of baptizing by immersion. This cannot indeed be proved, so as to be liable to no objection: but I presume that this is the idea which would strike the great mass of unprejudiced readers.”

(Commentary on Romans 6:4, Albert Barnes [Presbyterian])

COMMENT: *These commentators, along with multitudes of others recognized as scholarly men, were all of denominations that did not practice immersion. Their statements, though, show their understanding of what the New Testament teaches, even though they did not choose to follow this teaching in their personal lives and although there is evidence that some of them were immersed.*

It is interesting to note the comment of Barnes that immersion “is the idea which would strike the great mass of unprejudiced readers.” In other words, just the simple, unadorned word conveys the idea of immersion. But if minds have been prejudiced by custom, tradition, or creeds of man, the conclusion might be different.

WHERE IS GOD IN SUFFERING?

What role does God play in human suffering? If God is good, why does He allow suffering? This common objection to God turns many away from faith in God. When you are asked about such matters, what do you say? Who gets the blame? Satan? Human beings? If God did not create evil, where did it come from?

After God created the heavens and the earth, He said the creation was *“very good”* (**Genesis 1:1, 27, 31**). God’s world was without sin or suffering. The first human beings were created in the divine image; Adam and Eve had the capacity to love, to understand morality, and were responsible as free moral beings to act in ways consistent with their free-will. Part of free will, though, involves the possibility of rejection. If you can choose to do what is right, you can choose to do what is wrong. To lovingly accept God’s rule was freedom; to reject God’s rule, as Adam and Eve did, was an act of freedom, too. Why did God create Adam and Eve and give them free-will?

While the Bible does not give an explicit answer, it seems that God’s ultimate purpose was to create a people for Himself—a people who would accept, love, and obey Him, freely. God created man out of love; real love cannot exist without the freedom to accept or reject.

If you take a hammer and smash your finger you will feel pain. You can exercise free will and hit your finger, but you will experience pain. Some other person may hit your finger with the hammer; you now have pain because of their actions. Either way, your finger hurts. While you don’t want someone to smash your finger, do you really want to live in a world void of free will? Would you want to live in a world void of natural laws? While the absence of rain might trigger wildfires, the presence of rain is a blessing. You can violate the laws of gravity and go to the top of a high building and jump off. If you do that, you will likely hurt or even kill yourself. But you will come down. But do you want to live in a world without gravity?

Adam and Eve exercised free will; their decision brought devastation, disease, and death to something that at first was, *“very good.”* Sin changed the original creation. The physical universe suffers the *“groans”* of creation because of these choices (**Romans 8:18-22**). We live in a fallen world, not a perfect universe. Christians can expect pain and suffering as a part of this world.

Why do we blame God instead of human beings for the misery in the world? Sin rebels against God—it is evil. The chaos in the world is the result of our rebellion; it is not God’s fault. God is not pleased with the condition of this world. That is why He has set about to rectify the mess man has made; He does this through His Son Jesus Christ. When men try to live independently of God, the result is sin. Living for God brings life; it also brings some answers to life’s most perplexing questions.

Randy Harshbarger

A Great Responsibility

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe (**1 Timothy 4:12**).

Regardless of our age, being an example of the believer is one of the ongoing responsibilities we have as a child of God. My friends, the living example of a child of God is the most powerful statement of truth that can be uttered. The gospel of Jesus Christ had and has a great impact upon the world because Jesus not only told men what to do but he himself did it (**Acts 1:1; 1 Peter 2:21**). Study his life diligently from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and be impressed with the examples of love, mercy and justice that he set for us. Observe his concern for the poor, needy, sick and oppressed. I wonder, how well are we following in his footsteps? If we are going to influence others for Christ, we must by example show them that Christ lives in us and we are following in his footsteps (**Gal.6:10; James1:22-25, 27; Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 9:8; Rev. 14:13; 1 Pet. 2:21**). All of us have one thing in common and that one thing is "influence". Make no mistake about this, someone is watching and listening to you each day. It may be your husband or wife, it could be your son or daughter, a family member, neighbor, co-worker or even a total stranger. By your example today, where are you leading them spiritually? Soul searching thought, isn't it?

There is no doubting that when speaking doctrinal truths from God's word our speech must be sound and uplifting. Rest assured, the same holds true for our everyday conversations with others. The words we speak or write will proclaim clearly whether or not we are true followers of Christ (**Matt. 26:73**). The words of **Titus 2:7-8** tell us that in all respects we are to be a model of good works, show integrity and dignity and have sound speech that cannot be condemned.

It is not just a matter of what our faith is on Sunday morning as we gather together and find ourselves surrounded by Christians of like faith. What is our faith like the rest of the week when we are out in the midst of an exceedingly wicked world, out where sin and error abound mightily? Is it then that our faith shines like a great beacon light—**Matt. 5:14**? In that environment does our light shine in a way that a wicked world sees our good works and is led to glorify God—**Matt. 5:16**? It really comes down to this, in our everyday life, going about all of our daily activities, is our life an example of the believer in word, life, love, spirit, faith and purity (**1 Tim. 4:12**)?

Charles Hicks, Gallatin Tennessee
swabbie5256@gmail.com

ACCEPTING GOD'S LOVE

How do you respond to an act of love? A friend or relative does something very nice to you because of their genuine love for you and their desire for you to know that. Generally this would enhance your relationship with that person.

We hear of people who have conducted random acts of kindness.

It would appear God has done such by sending Jesus to the cross to pay for the sins of mankind. Since we were all condemned to eternal punishment without such a plan for redemption, this would seem to be a random act of kindness.

We understand from Scripture it really is not random. It is just the kindness of God Who loves us (**John 3:16; 1 John 4:8,9**).

Jesus' death on the cross, the death of One Who was sinless was the price needed to satisfy the wrath of God (**Romans 3:24-26**).

How have you responded to this act of love? Have you accepted His offer of salvation or have you shown disdain for His loving kindness?

Jim Stauffer

Are you interested in studying the Bible? Maybe there are things in life you feel you do not have answers for and have not been able to find satisfaction in the usual places people seek in society.

Jesus said, "and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32).

Jesus further said about the word of God, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." (John 17:17)

***If you believe in Jesus or even if you are interested in investigating what He has offered for our comfort and relief of the problems we have in our daily lives, give me a call at :
913-620-0563***

Jim Stauffer

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

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.
Lenexa, Kansas 66216
913-620-0563

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Check out the following websites:

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

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Elders:

Ron Peck
Jim Stauffer

Deacons:

Bill Miller
Troy Armstrong

NEWS AND NOTES:

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ALMA BAUMGARTNER, DENESE GORING, BROOKLYN BOYER, TRACY RICHARDSON, MATT BASSFORD, WAYNE MOODY, TONY MAUCK, DAVID AND JOANNE BECKLEY, MARK WALKER, PAT M-CLOUD, PENNY STAUFFER, ELLIE GOLDSTON. AND WINNIE RAWSON.

Bible Classes: Sunday Morning
Prayer - Ron Peck

Wednesday Evening - **Minor Prophets - Jim Stauffer**

Sunday Sermon: **God is Not the Author of Confusion**



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