

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

July  
9  
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.*

### THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORIANS

"It is without controversy that baptism in the primitive church was administered by immersion into water and not by sprinkling; seeing that John is said to have baptized in Jordan, and where there was much water, as Christ also did by his disciples in the neighborhood of these places. Phillip also **going down into the water baptized the eunuch.**" (**Ecclesiastical History, Chapter I, Sec. 138.**)

"Immersion and not sprinkling was unquestionably the original form. This is shown by the very meaning of the words *baptizo*, *baptisma*, and *baptismos*, used to designate the rite." (**HISTORY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH, Schaff, p. 488.**)

"The practice of the Eastern Church, and the meaning of the word, leave no sufficient ground for question that the original form of baptism was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters." (**History of the Early Church, Stanley, p. 34.**)

"The Greek Church in all its branches does still use immersion, and so do all other Christians in the world, except the Latins. All those nations that do now, or formerly did submit to the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their children by pouring or sprinkling. But *all other Christians in the world*, who never owned the Pope's usurped power, do and ever did *dip* their infants in the ordinary use. All the Christians in Asia, all in Africa, and about one-third in

Europe are of the last sort." (**History of Infant Baptism, Wall, Vol. II, p. 376, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.**)

"In this century (the first), baptism was administered in convenient places without the public assemblies, and by immersing the candidate wholly in water." (**Ecclesiastical History, Mosheim. Century I, Part II, Chapter 4.**)

"From the thirteenth century sprinkling came into more general use in the West. The Greek Church, however, and the church of Milan still retained the practice of immersion." (**History of Doctrine, Hagenback. Vol. II, p.84, note I.**)

The first record of pouring or sprinkling is that of Novatian in 251 A.D. Eusebius, the father of church history, describes it: "He (Novatian) fell into a grievous distemper, and it being supposed that he would die immediately, he received baptism, being besprinkled with water on the bed whereon he lay, if that can be termed baptism."

COMMENT: *We could go on for page after page citing such quotations, but these will serve our purpose of establishing the unanimity of thought on the part of historians. One might wonder how the word "baptize" ever came to be used in the English text, rather than the translation "immerse" or "dip". Perhaps a bit of historical background will be of interest.*

*When King James I (Church of England) authorized the translation of the Bible, which was completed in 1611, he gave the scholars some fourteen rules to follow. Two of those rules were: 1. "Old ecclesiastical words must be kept, as, the word 'church' must not be*

translated 'congregation' etc." 2. The ordinary Bible, read in the church, commonly called the Bishop's Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the originals will permit." (See **Lewis' History of the English Translation of the Bible**)

It was during this time that the controversy over immersion vs. sprinkling was heating up, and it was in this atmosphere that the King James translation was done. Some of the Bishops had gone before Parliament affirming that "the devil of immersion ought to be legislated out of the realm, it (was) so troublesome." When these men came to the word βαπτίζω, they had a problem. If they were to translate the word by its accepted meaning of immerse or dip, it would effectively serve to "legislate the devil of immersion" into the realm, rather than legislating it out.

They decided not to translate the word at all, but rather transfer it from Greek into the English language. They dropped the Greek letter omega (ω) at the end of the word, replacing it with the English letter "e." So from baptizo in the Greek we have baptize in English. Therefore, the Bishops did not translate the word at all, but left it in the Greek to cover up their pious fraud. Those who could read could then assign whatever meaning they wanted to this new English word.

As earlier indicated, all historians of whom I am aware are unanimous in their statements concerning the practice of immersion by the early church, which, we remember, was under the direct and inspired guidance of the apostles.

## The Search for Assurance

### Paul Earnhart

It was a discussion between preacher friends. We were wrestling with the question of how confident Christians ought to be, moment by moment, about their salvation. Some were arguing for an absolute assurance, others for a more cautious one. There is perhaps no concern which weaves its way so pervasively through the history of God's people as does the desire for assurance in one's relationship with God. Christians seem to vacillate between two contrasting themes of Scripture—assurance (**1 John 5:3**) and warning (**1 Corinthians 10:12**).

The subject of assurance has been hotly debated down through the centuries, especially in the Calvinist-

Armenian controversies. Are all who have been converted to Christ unconditionally assured of their eternal salvation, or is the life of a Christian one of probation in which his relationship to God is conditioned on faithfulness? Nothing is more clearly established in Scripture than the possibility of apostasy. As certainly as the wicked can turn and be saved, so can the righteous fall and be lost (**Ezekiel 18:21-26**). A Christian's fellowship with his Father is dependent upon an ongoing spirit of obedient faith (**Romans 11:19-22; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Colossians 1:22-23; Hebrews 3:6,14**).

Does this mean that we must live our lives in daily uncertainty about our relationship with God? Are we never, on this account, to experience any moment-by-moment assurance of our hope? This is a question which troubles many Christians and deserves study.

The evidence of Scripture on this matter is unequivocal. The heavenly Father clearly intends for His children to know assurance. The cry of "Abba, Father" is a cry of joy and confidence which comes from being sons, not slaves, of the living God (**Romans 8:15**). Paul affirms that the very essence of the kingdom is "*righteousness, peace and joy*" (**Romans 14:17**) and names "*love, joy and peace*" as among the "*fruit of the Spirit*" (**Galatians 5:22**). It goes without saying that there cannot be peace without assurance, and no joy without peace.

The apostle Paul himself is a great illustration of the confidence a Christian may have of his relationship with God. In the final hours of his life, he confidently affirms that "*there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day*" (**2 Timothy 4:8**). In his heart there was a certainty about his destiny, an assurance of his salvation.

It may be objected that the case of Paul, as an apostle, is different than our own. It should not be. As a sinner, he was saved by the grace of God just as you and I must be. Having no righteousness of his own (**Philippians 3:9**), he was "*justified by faith in Christ*" (**Galatians 2:16**).

There are only two ways to be justified before God—by my own perfect righteousness or by God's grace. Since all men have sinned (**Romans 3:10, 23; Ecclesiastes 7:21**), seeking to find peace with God through our own righteousness is a dead end street. Confidence in our salvation and the peace it produces can come only from God's grace and assured promises. It is what God has done, not what we have done, which gives assurance of salvation. We are

justified by faith—looking up to God, not to ourselves **(Romans 3:21-26)**.

Does this mean that we no longer have to be concerned about sin in our lives? To the contrary, the person who truly trusts in God as Father has never before fought sin so ferociously nor hated it so intensely **(Romans 6:1- 14)**. True faith works the will of God **(Romans 1:5; Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26)**. True love keeps the commandments of Christ **(John 14:15)**. Any failure to please our Savior will bring grief **(2 Corinthians 7:10)** and result in penitent confession **(1 John 1:9)**.

But what if I am deceived and sin ignorantly? A single-minded will to do God's will **(John 7:17)** and a genuine love of His truth **(2 Thessalonians 2:10)** are an absolute defense against deception. If we trust in God with a whole heart, all that we yet need to know of His way will be revealed to us **(Philippians 3:13-15)**. It is our task to bring to our Father a true heart. It is His task to redeem His trusting child, and He is liable to *do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think* **(Ephesians 3:20)**.

But what if I study God's word and do all I know to do to serve Him and still can't find peace in my heart about my salvation? Remember that *"if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things"* **(1 John 3:19-20)**. Put confidence in His promises, not your feelings.

God intends that the heart of every humble child of His be guarded by a peace which passes understanding **(Philippians 4:7)**. The assurance of our hope comes to us moment by moment as we live our lives in faith. But it is not an assurance which is arrogant, cocky or heedless. No true servant of God, trusting Him, loving Him, ever dealt fast and loose with temptation or sin. The same one who said that nothing *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God"* also said, *"I buffet my body and bring it into bondage lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected"* **(1 Corinthians 9:27)**. The assurance of God is a holy confidence joined to a sober vigilance, in order that what we now assuredly hold, by His grace, may never be lost.

***Via The Auburn Beacon***

## **WHERE IS GOD WHEN WE SUFFER?**

*"As with a breaking of my bones, my enemies reproach me, while they say to me all day long, where is your God?"* **(Psalm 42:10)**. Adversaries often taunt

those who believe in God; the Psalmist faced such derision and questioning. Others ask: *"You have wearied the LORD with your words; Yet you say, in what way have we wearied Him? In that you say, everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, And He delights in them, or where is the God of justice?"* **(Malachi 2:17)**. Even the people of God questioned what God was doing.

Where is God when a child suffers and dies? Where is God when tragedy strikes? These are not new questions. Those stricken with grief seek answers. Some ask in anger, but they still ask. Unbelievers ask: "Where is God," using such questions as an excuse for not believing. A believer in anguish cries for help. The question: "Where is God," can be an attack on the existence of His being. Sometimes, whether believer or not, the question poses a serious challenge to one's trust and faith in an all-powerful God. Sometimes Christians wonder: "Well, I have been a faithful servant all these years; yet why am I now suffering?" Is "God a good God?" If so, why is there so much suffering in the world today? These are old and complex questions. Perhaps we cannot think seriously about the question of suffering because we have not thought enough about the problem of suffering! That is, we wait until something bad happens to us and only then begin to try to unravel the mysteries and complexities of life. For example, have we thought deeply about God, His control of this world, and our trust (or lack of the same) in Him? If we have not thought deeply about suffering and about God and about our place in this common and human facet of life, then when tragedy does strike, we are sent reeling away from God in unbelief. We need to be exposed to God and His Son for our walk of life to be in step with divine will.

It may be that we don't want to study about or think about suffering. After all, we want to live pleasant, prosperous lives that are free of pain and trouble. Such cannot be. *"Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble"* **(Job 14:1)**. So, before the storm clouds come, before the roof falls in, before our lives unravel in unbelief, let us try to think and study soberly about human suffering. We need to examine God's role in this aspect of human existence. We need to know what our response at least can be when trouble strikes. Human suffering is not a neat and tidy subject; there are no clear-cut answers coming forth. Can we gain help from God's word?

***Randy Harshbarger***

**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

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- Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled 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