

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."

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AN INQUIRY INTO BAPTISM

by Jefferson David Tant Jr.

CONCLUSION

Although volumes could and have been written on this subject, perhaps it has been helpful to sift through the multitude of materials and collect some of the more significant and cogent thoughts for consideration.

Is it not noteworthy that the combined testimonies of authorities in the Greek language (the language of the original writings of the New Testament), of Biblical scholars and commentators, of Church historians, of the Church Fathers, of the encyclopedias, and of the Biblical text itself ALL agree? They all agree that the apostolic teaching was immersion, that our Lord himself was immersed, that the early Christians practiced immersion, and that sprinkling as a substitute was not generally accepted until the thirteenth century.

Therefore, if I am convinced that baptism is essential to my obedience to the Lord, which should I choose—that which all the evidence recognizes is the Biblical practice (immersion), or that which has been invented by men through the passing years (sprinkling or pouring)? Remember the words of the Lord, "*In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men*" (Matt 15:9). Furthermore, Jesus said, "*Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

Jesus said, "*He that believes and is baptized shall be saved...*" (Mark 16:16). If, as the evidence supports, a correct translation of that verse is "*He that believes and is immersed shall be saved...*" (and there have been some translations on the market so reading),

then what hope is there for those who have obeyed "He that believes and (is sprinkled) shall be saved..." If we are at liberty to change the *manner* (immersion to sprinkling), then why cannot we give approval to those who have changed the *element* (water to rose petals)? Or even to those who have changed the command *itself* to, "He that believes and is (not) baptized shall be saved?"

Finally, I want to make an observation on the quote from John Calvin on page 8, which reads: "**Calvin (Presbyterian)**: "Whether the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, is not of the least consequence: churches should be at liberty to adopt either, according to the diversity of climates, although it is evident that the term baptize means to immerse, and that is was the form used by the primitive church." (**INSTITUTES, 4:15:19**)

Notice that Calvin clearly states that "it is evident that the term baptize means to immerse." He is right on that. But notice that he said that "churches should be at liberty to adopt" whatever method they choose. **Where does he, or any man, get the authority to claim that what the Bible clearly teaches is of no consequence?**

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have I been baptized into Christ for the remission of my sins according to the Biblical pattern? (**Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4**) __Yes
__No

2. If I have had sprinkling or pouring administered to me, do I have any assurance from the Lord that this is acceptable to Him? __Yes __No
3. If baptism is an essential part of my salvation, can I have fellowship with a denomination or church that does not teach or practice the “teaching of Christ” in this regard? __Yes __No
4. Can I afford to allow men to tell me which of the Lord’s commands are important and which are unimportant? __Yes __No
5. Is it permissible for anyone to change or alter any of the teachings of the Word of God? **(Galatians 1:6-8)** __Yes __No
6. If it is possible to change the mode of baptism, would it be permissible to change the element? For example, an Oklahoma church baptizes by sprinkling rose petals. __Yes __No
7. If you answered “yes” to 5 and “no” to 6, then how do you explain the difference?

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Most Bible readers recognize this title from the beloved Twenty-third Psalm. The Psalmists relate experiences from their lives—lives of doubt, questions, despair, persecution, and pain. God’s word does not lightly pass by the troubles believers experience. The Lord often does help and solace in times of need. That encouragement is often expressed in the Psalms.

The Psalms speak to the inner longings and personal feelings that come deep from within one’s soul. Human feelings and emotions are emitted in times of great trouble. Readers of such human drama can easily identify with the cries of deep anguish. The Psalms can be treated as a hymnbook for those who want to live in the right way before God. Even during great problems, the Psalmists teach us how to give thanks, praise, and adoration to Jehovah. The Psalms invite us to trust in God.

Psalm seventy-three explains the suffering of those who are trying to be righteous—those who are trying to be faithful. Despite their efforts, they still suffer. Adding insult to injury is the fact that at the same time, the wicked prosper. Is this right? Is this unfair? Does God care about what is happening to His people; does He take note of the countless wicked who continue living with no thoughts of the Almighty?

“A Psalm of Asaph. Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart” (73:1). Space forbids

including more of the Psalm. By reading, though, we see the struggles of faith that Asaph had. He wants to be in fellowship with God; he wants to believe that God cares about his plight. Yet, Asaph wavers when he sees the wicked prospering **(73:4-5)**. Is his life of faith and purity in vain? Why is God so good to the wicked? Yet, when Asaph takes time to focus on God, he sees that ultimately the wicked will perish **(73:18-19)**. God’s justice will be meted out. Asaph concludes that it is better to be with God now, even in pain, and then, to be with God forever when life is over. The wicked have no such thoughts. Asaph determined to remain with God **(73:23-24)**. God’s presence in his life became the focal point for all living, struggles, both good and bad **(73:25-28)**.

If we envy the wicked, we may end up hating God. Our view of the world can be so skewed that we forget about God or deny Him altogether. We find little value in faith and purity. Yet, if we will find true delight in worshiping and serving God, we can live triumphantly, even in the midst of pain. We can live with the knowledge that God’s justice will win out. We can know that when we are with God, regardless of what happens, we in the best possible place to be. That is what the Psalms teach us.

Randy Harshbarger

FORGIVENESS AND THE DUCK

There was a little boy visiting his grandparents on their farm. He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit the target. Getting a little discouraged, he headed back for dinner. As he was walking back he saw Grandma's pet duck. Just out of impulse, he let the slingshot fly, hit the duck square in the head, and killed it. He was shocked and grieved. In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the wood pile, only to see his sister watching! Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing. After lunch the next day Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes."

But Sally said, "Grandma, Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen." Then she whispered to him, "Remember the duck?" So Johnny did the dishes. Later that day, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing and Grandma said, "I'm sorry but I need Sally to help make supper." Sally just smiled and said, "Well that's all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help." She whispered again, "Remember the

duck?" So Sally went fishing and Johnny stayed to help. After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's ... he finally couldn't stand it any longer. He came to Grandma and confessed that he had killed the duck. Grandma knelt down, gave him a hug, and said, "Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing. But because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

Thought for the day. and every day thereafter .. Whatever is in your past, whatever you have done...and the devil keeps throwing it up in your face (lying, debt, fear, hatred, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, etc.)...whatever it is... You need to know that God was standing at the window and He saw the whole thing..... He has seen your whole life. He wants you to know that He loves you and that you are forgiven. He's just wondering how long you will let the devil make a slave of you. The great thing about God is that when you ask for forgiveness, He not only forgives you, but He forgets.....It is by God's grace and mercy that we are saved.

Go ahead and make the difference in someone's life today. Share this with a friend and always remember: God is at the window!.... Isn't that wonderful! And remember - HE Loves you and I do, too!

(author unknown)

A faithful servant of God, a devoted Gospel Preacher passed from this life. A victory for him. A loss for us.

Sean Patrick Cavender, 36, of Wichita, Kansas, entered into His eternal reward on July 20, 2023. Sean was born on March 18, 1987, to Randy and Brenda Cavender in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He is survived by his wife Kristin Cavender and sons Xander and Zeke, parents Randy and Brenda Cavender, sister Savannah Rupp (Benjamin), nieces Olivia and Evelyn, and grandparents Aubrey and Kay Rodgers. Sean was preceded in death by his grandfather Joe Carpenter and grandmother Ouida Cavender.

Sean was a dedicated Christian, a committed disciple of Jesus, a devoted Bible student, and a kind soul. He spread joy to all those who knew him well. He loved the Lord, the people of God, and his dear family. He was a member of the Westside church of Christ in Wichita, where he served as an evangelist. He preached the gospel in Arkansas, Missouri, and presently in Kansas. Sean was passionate and zealous in his meditation on the word of God and was determined to proclaim the gospel in its purity, power, and fullness. He spent countless hours in his own

personal study of the Scriptures. He received a BS from Calvary University in Kansas City, MO, and MA in New Testament Studies from Harding School of Theology in Memphis, TN. He had an unwavering love for his wife, Kristin, and sons, Xander and Zeke. Sean coached his boys at every opportunity and was an active part of their lives. He enjoyed taking them on bike rides and sharing his love of comic books with them. His greatest desire was to exemplify the heart of his Savior in tenderness and compassion for his family.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

This is the question Pilate asked Jesus prior to His crucifixion. Pilate had just asked Jesus if he was a King as the Jews accused Him of teaching. *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."* Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. *Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.*" (John 18:36–37) Pilate then asked this question, ...*What is truth?* (John 18:38)

The implication of Pilate's question is no one thing is truth in any matter. There are so many things people believe that are in contradiction to each other. Therefore, truth is not verifiable. But ask yourself this question. Is it true there is no absolute truth? If that is true there is then, absolute truth. Otherwise that statement is not true. There are laws of science we would never deny because we see evidence of them every day. And we all agree about the verity of each of these. The rotation of the earth on its axis and its regular revolutions around the Sun. The consistency of the effects of gravity. And many more things someone with a stronger background in science could list. But in each and every thing such as this there is verification of its function. Yes, there is absolute truth. Every claim made by God or man is either true or false.

So, we understand truth can have no contradictions. You cannot be agnostic about these things we just mentioned by saying you still doubt them as being true. You cannot be pluralistic in your thinking by saying there are several different opinions and all are equal in value. If and when we investigate the word of God and find it to be true, we can no longer doubt it or replace it with alternate facts. We must, if we are honest accept it.

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:

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Bill Miller
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Bible Classes: Sunday Morning
Prayer - Ron Peck

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

Sunday Sermon: **Trusting in God's Justice**



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