

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Is Sprinkling Baptism?

By Frank Jamerson

Several years ago a visitor who believed in sprinkling asked me: “Why do not you ever quote any of the passages that favor sprinkling?” I had to confess that I did not know any such passages!

The English words sprinkle, pour, and immerse have different meanings, just as the Greek words from which they are translated. Let us look at each of these words and see if sprinkle or pour mean “*baptize*.”

“*Sprinkle*” is generally translated from the word *rhantizo*. It is found in several passages in the New Testament, but it is never translated “*baptize*” because it means “to sprinkle.” “*For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh...*” (Heb. 9:13). Moses took “*the blood of the calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people... Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood*” (Heb. 9:19, 21). There is another word, *proschusis* which is translated “*sprinkling*” in Hebrews 11:28. If the writer had meant “*baptize*” in these passages, he would have used a different Greek word.

There are five different Greek words that are translated “*pour*.” In John 13:5, we read that Jesus “*poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet.*” In John 2:15, Jesus “*poured out the changers’ money.*” Other passages use the word “*pour*” but none of them mean “*baptize*.” The conclusion must follow that to pour does not mean to baptize.

The word *baptizo* is transliterated (the Greek letters transferred into English letters) by the word “*baptize*.” W.E. Vine defines it as “*immersion, submersion and emergence.*” Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon says: “*to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge.*” It is found many times in the New Testament, but is never translated by the words “*sprinkle*” or “*pour*.” If the writers had intended to say “*sprinkle*” or “*pour*” they would not have used the word “*baptizo*,” because it means to immerse.

The context of the word *baptizo* also shows the meaning of it. When John the baptist was sent to baptize, we find him “*baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there*” (John 3:23). When John baptized Jesus, Mark says: “*And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him*” (Mark 1:10-11). John’s baptism was obviously immersion. When Philip baptized the Ethiopian, the context clearly indicates the action of baptism. They “*came unto a certain water,*” then “*went down into the water*” and he was baptized and “*came up out of the water*” (Acts 8:36-39). Twice the New Testament plainly calls baptism a “*burial*” (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

Why then, do people practice sprinkling? It originated as “*clinic baptism*.” Those thought to be too sick to be immersed were sprinkled instead. Gradually it grew in popularity, for it was much easier, and after all, if it would be acceptable for a sick man, why not for a well man?

The woman mentioned at the beginning of this article had in mind the passages that speak of baptizing “*with water*” (see Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; John 1:26; Acts 1:5; 11:16). She was assuming that “*with water*” means something other than immersion. The fact is that the Greek word *en* (translated “*with*” or “*in*”) usually refers to “*location*” (called “*locative*” in the Greek). Even if it were used in the sense of “*instrumental*” (the object used), it would still not prove sprinkling. We are immersed “*in*” water.

The meaning of the word, the context of the word and religious leaders who believed in sprinkling all testify that the word **“baptize”** means immerse. It is only immersion that is a **“likeness”** of Christ’s burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4). Sprinkling is a convenient substitute that originated in the mind of men, not from a careful study of God’s word. ■

What Happens In Baptism?

By Joe R. Price

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4).

This passage explains the subject, action, purposes, and results of baptism. It speaks of the Great Commission baptism (water baptism), the **“one baptism”** commanded of us all (Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:5).

The subject of baptism is the sinner, the person who is not **“in Christ”** (v. 3), without the benefit of His death (v. 3), and dead in sin (v. 4). Christ’s baptism is for the lost, not the saved.

The action of baptism is immersion, a burial in water (v. 4; Col. 2:12; Acts 8:38).

Three purposes and results of baptism are briefly enumerated here: (1) The sinner is **“baptized into Christ”** (v. 3). Until one is in Christ, he has not **“put on Christ”** and is not a **“new creation”** (Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:17). He is lost. (2) The sinner is **“baptized into His death”** (v. 3). Water baptism is how sinners reach the saving blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:7; Acts 22:16). (3) The sinner is **“buried with Him through baptism into death”** (v. 4). Sin is put to death when the sinner is baptized. God’s power raises the sinner to newness of life (Col. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:17). Before baptism, the sinner remains dead in sin. In baptism, there is a new birth, a resurrection from sin’s death to newness of life in Christ (John 3:5; Titus 3:5).

Christ commanded water baptism (Mark 16:16). So did His apostles (Acts 2:38; 10:47-48). Christ saves sinners who obey Him by being baptized into Him (Acts 8:12; 1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 5:9). By the gospel, God is calling sinners to be saved in Christ. ***“And now why are you waiting? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”*** (Acts 22:16). ■

“Teachers After Their Own Lusts”

By Hoyt Houchen

“For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3, 4).

It has always been true that there have been those who will refuse to listen to the truth of God’s word. It is an attitude of rebellion on their part. They do not respect the authority of God’s word and they are unwilling to be taught. Such was the condition in Isaiah’s day. Jehovah described His people in these words: ***“For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits....”*** (Isa. 30: 9, 10).

When people are determined to have their own way, follow their own sentiments and emotions, and refuse to be taught God’s will, they will rally around a preacher who will preach what they want to hear. ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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