



Scriptures and Doctrine :: To immerse...or not to immerse?

To immerse...or not to immerse? - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2004/5/6 8:12

I'm reminded of the issue that arose with Finney, while opening this thread, between the Baptists and the Presbyterians, where he preached each argument equally, leaving them all to accept that it really is a non-issue. But I notice that his points weren't recorded.

I personally believe in immersion (based purely on the word BAPTIZO, meaning to immerse). I just want to hear the other side of the story, so I can understand the issue more clearly (Yeah, I know, not like me is it Greg :-P).

Re: To immerse...or not to immerse? - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/5/6 12:17

There is a book called the didache (I hope I spelled that right). It is one of the earliest instruction books as far as church liturgy is concerned that we know of. It's sort of like a minister's instruction manual today. In it it describes how baptism ideally should take place.

Baptism should, according to it, take place in "living water" that is a running stream or river. If that's not available, then a lake or pond or later a baptismal would work. If a person was bed ridden and could not make it to such a place and wanted to be baptized, then the minister could pour water over the person's head three times and that was acceptable.

Baptism was an entrance into the community of faith; a public profession of faith in Christ. The act of baptism is not as important as the profession is.

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

Re: The Didache - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/5/6 14:51

Hi Jeremy

I have The Didache here to hand so I thought I would quote your section in full...

Now concerning baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in running water. But if you have no running water, then baptize in some other water; and if you are you not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm. But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times "in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit". And before the baptism, let the one baptizing and the one who is to be baptized fast, as well as any others who are able. Also, you must instruct the one who is to be baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand.

The Didache, it means The Teaching, is thought to have been written in the early 2nd century ie 110 AD-ish. Even though it is not scripture it gives a fascinating picture of church life at this time with itinerant prophets and lots of movement between the churches. The instruction for the person being baptized to fast for one of two prior to the occasion pretty much rules out any thought of infant baptisms I would have thought. :-P

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/5/6 16:36

Philo wrote:

Quote:

-----I have The Didache here to hand

How come I'm not surprised that you have a copy :-P

I'm still waiting to purchase myself one. I remembered Professor Crabtree from CBC reading that section in my Church History class.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2004/5/6 16:51

I reluctantly added a section on ritual immersion in the Jewish Roots thread as I hope it will shed some light on some of the issues.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: To immerse...or not to immerse? - posted by gillian77, on: 2004/5/6 19:47

If your view on baptism is determined entirely upon the definition of a word, namely Baptizo, then might I suggest you rethink. What I mean is surely etymology cannot be used alone to determine doctrine/belief. The meaning lies in the context in which the word is set not simply in the word. Also the problem with the word Baptizo is that depending on the view of the person your speaking to you will be given a different definition for this word. The reason for this is clear enough it does have a wide range of meaning. If you had any specific texts that you wanted to discuss then perhaps that would be a good starting point in this area. And as far as discussion about the Didache goes surely the ultimate authority must be the Word of God. The Didache may be informative yet how much, if any, weight can be applied to it? After all Paul commands prophecies to be sifted yet the Didache forbids such, what do you believe?

I do hold to a paedobaptist position yet I do not think that the amount of water is the main issue. Surely the important point that needs to be made is that baptism is a sign of God's covenant faithfulness and discussion about how much/little water is necessary misses the meaning. What do you think??

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/5/6 21:20

Quote:
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While it is true that meanings of words do change over time, you are mistaken when you try to read a more current meaning of a word back into a time when it did not have such a meaning.

To make a short story longer I'll take the word hussy for example. If you call a woman a hussy today in America you will be slapped for insulting her; however, calling a woman a hussy in the 1700's and 1800's would be complimenting her on her integrity and character. Now if I use your suggested method of declaring the meaning of the word hussy I can only assume that now it must also be taken as an insult when I see it used in writings from the 18th and 19th centuries. In other words, it's all relative. But since relativity is self-defeating there must be another explanation. That would be that the meaning of hussy used hundreds of years ago still means a woman of high moral character today, and will mean the same thing for all time. A thousand years from now a person reading an 18th century writing containing the word hussy will find that it is still a compliment in that time setting.

You will find that the same is true for the word baptizo. The only meaning that scripture can have for us today is what it meant when it was written. If that is not the case then scripture is subject to change every time the meaning of words change. Baptizo in the time context of scripture meant to immerse or to go down. That is the only reading that we can logically and ethically take it to mean when we translate it today. If not then hermeneutics and exegesis means absolutely nothing.

Quote:
-----I do hold to a paedobaptist position ...

And as far as discussion about the Didache goes surely the *ultimate authority must be the Word of God.*

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My question then would be, "From what part of the Word of God did you develop a paedobaptist position?" My second would be, "Do you believe in baptismal regeneration?"

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

Re: - posted by gillian77, on: 2004/5/7 5:13

Quote;

..you are mistaken when you try to read a more current meaning of a word back into a time when it did not have such a meaning...

Hi Jeremy,

I think that you may have read my posting a little out of context. I do not seem to be able to find the part where I suggested reading a current meaning into a biblical word. The points that you make in reply to my posting were the very points I was trying to point out.

I am in absolute agreement that the meaning we must have for baptizo is what the word meant in the first century for the writers of scripture. The problem is however as I alluded to it does not have as clear cut a meaning as your suggesting. For instance Dr. Gale, who was a solid believer in immersion, was forced to say, and I quote,

"The word baptizo perhaps does not necessarily express the action of putting under water, as in general a thing's being in that condition, no matter how it comes to be so, whether it is put into the water, or the water comes over it,; though indeed to put into water is the most natural way and the most common, and is, therefore, usually and pretty constantly, but it may not necessarily be implied"

These are not the words of a paedobaptist but a baptist. What do you think??

Also in answer to your question, No, I do not hold to baptismal regeneration.

Every Blessing.

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2004/5/7 5:27

Firstly, for those interested in the Didache, it can be found at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html>. I would like to begin by saying that I intentionally didn't begin with a scriptural viewpoint on this issue to inspire open and frank discussion.

References to burial (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12), and the flood (1Pe 3:20-21), would seem to imply a total covering over with water.

This is really only a beginning. It is more important that the truth is settled in your heart than to be able to quote a scripture (wait before you boo and hiss :-)). I know this is a dangerous statement, and what I mean by it is that if the words that we read in The Bible are mere pieces of information, then they are of little value. But they need to be breathed upon by God and established in your heart as revealed truth. I'm not alluding to a utilitarian approach of "well of course it's right because I know", but a process where the Word becomes alive and can be spoken of as "fact" without the required chapter and verse references. It is important that all truth is established in scripture, and that scripture references can be given if requested.

I hope that I'm heard right, as the process of establishing doctrine, is not the point of this thread, but the actual doctrine itself.

Re: blancing or a marinade? - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/5/7 6:52

There is a fascinating distinction between baptizo and baptizo which will be found here.

Re: - posted by Nasher (), on: 2004/5/7 7:38

Ron, it's interesting that both bapto and baptizo both describe an object being placed into liquid, not liquid being placed onto an object. :-D

All, we should not underestimate the importance of symbols! There is a difference between + and - :-o

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/5/7 11:18

Hi Mark

The prepositions which follows bapto and baptizo are "in" or "into". If you use the equivalent English 'immerse' and test which prepositions go with that it is quite enlightening. eg. you would never say 'I immerse with water' but 'into' or, at the point of the baptism, 'in' water. It might have saved us a bit of difficulty if we had not begun with the phrase 'baptism with the Spirit'. Baptism in Spirit as distinguished from 'baptism in water' is the true rendering.

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2004/5/7 13:21

Gillian,

Good answer. I do not believe that for a person to truly be baptized that he must be immersed in water for it to be a real baptism. I think, however, that there is one constant that we can all agree on. True baptism is a baptism into Christ.

Rom 6:2-3

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

We were not baptized into water, but into Christ. The physical act is only a public profession of an inward act that should have already taken place. When the Hebrews were baptized at the Red Sea, they were not immersed in water but into Moses 1Cor10:2(the law). I think what the bible describes as baptism is that of putting men into an ideal state or position. i.e. Christ

So whether we sprinkle or dip it should be an outward reflection of an inward change.

But I was kinda hoping that you would have brought up some scriptures such as:

Ezekiel 36:25 Then will I **sprinkle** clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. :-D

In Christ,
Jeremy Hulsey

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2004/5/7 13:58

If I might paste over some paragraphs from the Jewish Roots thread:

Why would anyone want to be baptized in a similar manor to Christ? Because if we want to identify with Him we desire to emulate His ways. If I were able I would have been baptized in the Jordan; but that was not reasonable nor did the Lord require it. So what shall I do? I will do what I always desire to do. Shoot as close to the mark as is reasonably possible. If its time for baptism and I see a water jug and a baptismal tank; which is most like the Lord's method? When in doubt we should always take the most disciplined route. If I'm going to get wet anyway; why not just go on under? Would my desire not be as a believer to press toward the mark? Press presupposes opposition- the enemy would love to give every excuse in the book for falling short of what God asked. This is one of the definitions of sin by the way that Richard Owens Roberts mentions in "Sin is Crouching at the Door." What am I able to do? Is it opportunity or uncertainty stopping me or is it rebellion?

Jesus said "My MEAT (nourishment) is to do the WILL of Him that sent me." And in another place He said "I have meat to eat that you know not of."

He told us "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." That person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is a person BORN of the Spirit. New born babies don't have to be begged to eat. The come

out wanting something to eat and we best have it or its going to be a long night! (My 6 children all did at least). The milk of God's word are the simple things that are fit for a babe in Christ. What could be more 'simple' than to give a command "be immersed in water" in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Anyone no matter how much you know about God can do that simple thing.

The baptism of Christ is different from John's baptism- (Christ's baptism, as I see it is baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus). They can call the name of Christ also if they want- but everything we do (as Spirit Full believers) we are doing as unto Christ and in His name as His ambassadors anyway. The 'Jesus name only' (UPC) group miss this as a distinction between John's and Christ's baptism and baptise in "Jesus name only." They forget that there was only about 2 months or so between Mark 16 and Acts 2. The formula for baptism don't change in 2 months I suggest.

So then, baby is born and it desires to do the WILL of the Father because of their new nature. It used to be their "meat" to sin against God- now it is their "meat" to do the will of Him of whom they are born of. The first drops of milk (as it were) is to HEAR the commandment of baptism and then be a doer of the work. Not when they hear, but when their new nature desires to straitway obey (be a doer of) this command it is evidence of their regeneration. Phillip straitway baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch (the Messianics say he was not a Eunuch, but anyway), BECAUSE he says something like "There's some water, lets do it NOW." Phillip then left and He went by tradition and helped establish (along with Mark) the work in Alexandria Egypt. If he was good enough to go that he desired to OBEY Christ straitway- with an Isaiah scroll in hand he was good to go. That DESIRE allowed Phillip to leave the man to himself. Far different from us having to constantly beg people to obey a lot of times!?

How do we know that the Eunuch was good to go? He had an immediate hunger and thirst to fulfill ALL righteousness- even as Christ. So what I do is- when a person is saved I IMMEDIATELY offer water baptism- if they say YES lets do it- I feel confident that there was conversion- if not, I see no cause to look further as they have no real desire to do what Christ commanded. This is NOT to suggest baptismal regeneration; but I would have to wonder why a person would say NO to that offering of baptism if they believed it was their Lord's will. Some were never offered baptism. What shall we say to them? Do what the Holy Spirit is convicting. I have gone back and done a lot of things that had no real bearing on my salvation. I just wanted to be a doer of the work. It is my MEAT.

God Bless and Best Regards in Christ,

-Robert