

DO YOU KNOW: IMMERSION'S ROLE IN SALVATION?

David Halbrook

Different churches have different teachings about baptism. That is a problem since the Holy Spirit says there is one baptism, not many (Ephesians 4:5). Ideas like “outward sign of an inward grace” and “a symbol of salvation” are often associated with baptism but absent from Scripture. Study these verses--

Mark 16:16 “*He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.*”

Acts 2:38 “*... be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*”

Acts 22:16 “*... be baptized and wash away your sins...*”

Romans 6:3 “*... baptized into Christ... baptized into His death...*”

1 Corinthians 12:13 “*... baptized into one body...*”

1 Peter 3:21 “*There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism...*”

If this is not what you have been taught, then open your Bible and *understand what the will of the Lord is* (Eph. 5:17).

-- *Editor's Note:* In controversy, the simplicity of the text will often “speak for itself.” Having repeatedly heard these passages, let us not forget how powerful they are when contrasted with modern teachings today. Whether neighbor, stranger, or friend, help someone to find our article this week in *Arkansas Weekly*. (Starla and I will begin our travel home tomorrow and look forward to working with you again in body and not just in spirit, as we have been. Thank you for your prayers!)

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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THE FATHER DRAWS... BUT HOW?

Jerry Fite

Jesus said, “*No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him*” (John 6:44). No one comes to the Father except through Jesus (Jn. 14:6), and here, we know definitely that the process is initiated by the Father: He draws him.

The question is, how does the Father draw us to Him through Christ? Some teach we are moved along by Divine impulse through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. If the initial impulse is by the Holy Spirit, is it a direct operation on man’s heart apart from any means? As always, we go to Scripture for God’s answer.

Respecting the context of Jesus’ statement, we see teaching is the means by which the Father draws us. Jesus says, “*It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me* (John 6:45). Teaching plus learning results in people drawn by the Father to Jesus. It is therefore not a direct Divine impulse, but the Divine working through means of teaching to create a drawn learner. God’s Holy Spirit is definitely the source of the teaching, but He works through the word to draw the learner to Christ.

For example, Jesus in referring to His death on the cross said, “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this He said, signifying by what manner of death he should die*” (John 12:32-33). Are people drawn to Christ by some mystical power inherent in a suspended body on a cross? No! We understand the meaning of Jesus dying on the cross. The love behind His willing sacrifice draws us to Him.

We learn this through the Holy Spirit’s teaching. Paul writes, “. . . *because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us*” (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit sheds God’s love in our hearts. He does so

through the Word. Paul explains, “*For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while were yet sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:6-8). Paul explains with the introductory preposition “for” how the love of God has entered into our hearts via the Holy Spirit. It is through the words that emphasizes God’s love toward us through the death of Christ. He died for us when we were sinners and ungodly; when we were neither good nor righteous before Him; when we were helpless to commend ourselves. How do we know this? Through words revealed to us through the Holy Spirit.

How much of the love of God do you know or even feel apart from the words revealed by the Holy Spirit? Paul connecting the Holy Spirit with Spirit inspired words illustrates Jesus’ statement of how the Father draws one to Christ. The drawing power of the sacrificial love of God is accomplished through teaching. Learning the teaching of God’s love draws us to Christ. God’s drawing power is in the Gospel!

NON-TRADITIONAL MARRIAGES

Heath Rogers

In Matthew 19, Jesus was asked a question concerning divorce. In responding to this question, Jesus went back to the beginning (Gen. 2) and taught God’s law concerning marriage. “And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate”’ (vv. 4-6). Notice the application of Jesus’ teaching to some common practices among us today.

Same-Sex Marriage. A couple of years ago, a handful of states began to recognize same-sex unions. While we acknowledge the fact that individual states may define and redefine marriage from a legal standpoint, the Bible teaches that marriage is a right that is given to us by God-not the state. As such, God has the final say concerning what constitutes a marriage. Jesus said that God “made them male and female.” God intended for marriage to be between a man and a woman, not between two members of the same sex. Same-sex or homosexual marriage is contrary to God’s law. As such, it is a sin.

Polygamy. This is the practice of having two or more wives at one time. In the passage quoted above, Jesus showed that polygamy was not a part of God’s marriage plan either. Jesus said that a man shall be joined to his wife (singular) and that the two (not three or more) shall become one flesh. Thus, marriage is between one man and one woman.

I have had people challenge this conclusion by pointing out the fact that there were men in the Old Testament who had multiple wives. King David was a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), and he had multiple wives. Solomon was the wisest and wealthiest king of Israel, and he had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). How can one claim that polygamy is against God’s will? For one, the Law of Moses clearly stated that the kings were not to multiply their wives (Deuteronomy 17:17). The fact that some of them disregarded this instruction does not mean that it was right before God. Secondly, the example of Solomon is far from an endorsement of the practice. Solomon’s wives turned his heart away from God. Third, when we go back to the beginning, we are told that God designed marriage to be for one man and one woman.

Living Together. While this arrangement is not recognized as a marriage from a civil point of view, it takes the place of marriage in the lives of many people today. A man and a woman live together as husband and wife, enjoying all the pleasures and benefits of marriage, sometimes even raising children in their home, without actually being married. It is so common today that one struggles to remember why we used to think it was wrong. Jesus taught that such was wrong. He said that a man was to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, not live with his girlfriend outside the bonds of matrimony. Sex outside of and prior to marriage is sinful (1 Cor. 7:2). The practice of living together makes a mockery of God and his divine marriage law. Such will not go unpunished. “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

The non-traditional “marriages” that we have discussed in this article are growing in popularity. However, when examined in light of Scripture, we can see that the word “non-traditional” could (and should) be replaced with the word “sinful.” The moral foundations of our nation are being chipped away piece by piece. The elemental building blocks of our society (marriage and family) are being redefined to please a perverse minority, and our nation is paying the price. Jesus said that marriage is one man joined to one woman for life. That settles the matter.

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