

BAPTISM (with PowerPoint slide outline)

[Opening slide - date, or black, etc.]

[Slide titles of previous lessons on Faith, Repentance and Confession]

In our sermon series, we studied Faith, Repentance, and the Good Confession.

[Baptism]

It logically follows that our next sermon in the series should be on Baptism. It is very probably that in the minds of some is the question,

[Why?]

Why another sermon on Baptism? Some think that this subject has been discussed and debated for hundreds of years, and in the minds of many religious minded people, it has never been settled. Why then continue to disturb the minds of people with it? This objection involves a serious mistake.

[Man and woman thinking]

It may be true, that in the mind of many the issue is not settled; that is, everyone has not come to the same agreement in regard to baptism. But in another, and a very important sense, it has been settled thousands and thousands of times. It has been settled in the minds of men and women who realize they have to give an account to God in the great day of judgment. And let me say to those of you who are here today, there is a necessity laid upon you, and you cannot avoid it, that you must also settle the question in your own mind and for the sake of your own soul.

[Baptism required for membership]

Up until less than 50 to 75 years ago, when a number of religious bodies in the U.S. swept from 256 to today of over 3,000 different splintered religious groups, you could not become a member of any of those early 256 groups, with the exception of the Quakers, without submitting to an ordinance which that church called baptism. If you were ever to become a member of any church you were compelled to settle the issue of “baptism” as far as you were concerned.

Some may answer, “No, Brother Gann,” the question was settled for me by my parents when I was an infant, and they baptized me.” Even this does not enable you to escape the necessity for you to decide for yourself before God whether you will be satisfied with that as *your* obedience to this divine command from God. It is imperative that you consider it, because we will all give an account to God in the day of judgment.

[Baptism]

So, don't be impatient with me when I propose we look at this subject afresh. But be willing to open your mind, and just hear what is presented today. Whatever position a man may take, whichever side of this controversial question he stands on, everyone of us should be willing to listen candidly, to weight the issue fairly, and to decide the question intelligently.

[Greek New Testament and page]

But one man may say, “According to my understanding of this controversy, it requires some knowledge of a dead language called Greek, in order to render an intelligent decision as to what baptism is; and as I am no scholar, I think God will not hold me to an account if I should happen to decide in incorrectly.” Well, my friend, it is a mistake to suppose that it requires scholarship in any dead language to determine what baptism is.

[English New Testament]

And, friend, it is possible that every man who has ordinary common sense can take his own English New Testament, and learn from a careful study of it, what God requires of him in order that he may live a life well pleasing in the sight of our Maker.

What course then is a man to take, who knows only his English, to learn this subject and settle in his mind the issue of “baptism”?

[Picture of an older man (J.W. McGarvey)]

A good many, many years ago, I read of man who made this remark: “If my mind were unsettled in regard to baptism, I would take this course:

[Read All the New Testament]

–I would take my own New Testament, and beginning at the first chapter of Matthew, I would read it all the way through,

[Watch for the subject]

watching for that word “baptism”; and everywhere I found it,

[Examine the context]

I would examine carefully the passage in which I found it,

[Put it all together]

and learn all I could about it; and when I got through I would put all of this together, and I would make up my mind on the whole subject of baptism that way.

[This is the Lord teaching me]

Then I would feel sure that it was God teaching me, and that he would approve my decision.”

That remark has had a great impact on me through the years. I think it is a great way to study any subject, and the proper way. It does not involve arguments on the subject by other men. It involves nothing but listening to the utterances of God’s word, forming our own conclusions, and then following the course taken from the scriptures themselves.

[the Bible]

Now if that is not a safe procedure, I don’t know what is. You may imagine it a very big task to

read the book through and through, and noticing the passages we’re concerned with, but it’s not nearly a big a task as one may imagine. I propose that we study our subject today just this way, but you may think well the preacher is going to keep us here til midnight, but not so. I’ve looked in a concordance and I’ve marked all the passages, and now I propose that everyone of you take your Bible in hand, and read for yourself with what ever translation you prefer, as we follow this plain, simple, child-like search through God’s Word on our subject.

[Bible and a blank yellow note pad]

We are going to begin at the very beginning of our New Testament, but before we do, there’s one other thing we need to do to prepare our mind. If you want to investigate any subject without prejudice, we need to remove from our mind ALL that we think we know, or have heard from men, or have imagined about our subject, and come to this investigation as if the subject were absolutely a new one, which we have never heard a word about “baptism” in our life.

Come with your mind like a sheet of blank paper, ready for God to write on it whatever you find in His holy word. Let’s propose then, that we have never before heard the word “baptism” uttered before in our life.

[Greek lexicon crossed out]

When we come to the word, we will not turn to any Greek lexicon,

[Bible commentaries crossed out]

nor any commentary by men,

[English dictionary crossed out]

or any English dictionary, but we will pause, reflect upon it,

[Bible emphasized]

and see if the Book itself explains it to us; and if so, we will have God’s definition of it.

[Matthew]

Now we begin at the first chapter of Matthew, and after reading the long list of names, and the account of the birth of the Lord, and his childhood,

[Matthew 3:5]

in the third chapter the writer introduces John the Baptist; and in verses 5 and 6 we read this: “Then went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea, and the region round about the Jordan, and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.”

[“Baptized” underlined]

Why, there is a word here I’ve never seen before; I’ve never heard of it. I wonder what it means— that these people were baptized by that man in the river Jordan.

[“in the river Jordan” underlined]

I would like to know what it means, but I believe I will let the New Testament itself explain it to me. I do not know what was done to those people by John, but can I learn anything about it in this passage?

[Picture of the River Jordan]

Yes, they were baptized in the river Jordan; that tells me where it was done, and it tells me so plainly that there can be no mistake about it.

So let us read on and see if we can learn more.

[Matthew 3:11 “With water”]

In verse 11, the same John says to his audience,

[“with water”]

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” Here is our strange word again, and this time John says, “I baptize you with water.” Well, there is another thing we learn about it– that water and not wine, or milk, or honey, or any other liquid, but water is used in this ordinance.

[Matthew 3:13]

We read on, and in the same chapter, at verse 13 we read these words: “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?’ And Jesus said, ‘Suffer it now, John, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.’”

[“straightway from the water”]

Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water.”

Well, we see what he did when he was through with the baptizing– he “went up straightway from the water.” But that is all. It does not tell us what the baptizing was. As regards the act itself that is called baptism, we are still very much in the dark. From this whole chapter we learn only this– that when John baptized it was in the river Jordan; that he used– in some way, we don’t know how– water; and that after Jesus was baptized he went up straightway from the water, showing that he had been down in it, but that is all we learn, so we read on.

Our curiosity is aroused now, and chapter after chapter, page after page we turn, and we do not find our word again in its literal sense, until we come to the last chapter of Matthew,

[Matthew 28:18-19]

and in 28:18-19 we read: Jesus came to them and spake to them, saying, all authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?”

Here is our strange word again, and what do we learn about it here? Why, that those men were to baptize in all the nations.

[baptize in all the nations]

It was to be a universal thing.

[“into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit]

And they were to baptize those being made disciples into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[a universal thing, and a solemn thing]

Well, it is becoming interesting. We can see it was a very solemn thing, and it is to be universal. We wonder more than ever about this subject.

[Mark]

We are through with Matthew now. We will begin in Mark. We may have to read the whole New Testament through before we get our question answered.

[Mark 1:4]

We haven’t read but four verses in Mark til we read: “John came, who baptized in the wilderness and reached the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins.” Here is another report of John baptizing. In Matthew we found that he baptized in the river Jordan. Here, we read he baptized in the wilderness.

[baptized in the wilderness]

That puzzles us a little.

[map and picture of the Jordan in Galilee area]

But we remember something of the geography of the river Jordan, how that it flows from Galilee down through the area of Judea to the Dead Sea

[Jordan flowing through Judea]

that it flows through the barren wilderness of Judea.

[Mark 1:5]

Verse 5 tells us, “And there went out to him all the country of Judea and all they of Jerusalem, and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.”

[“river Jordan]

Yes, we were right, it is in the “river Jordan” and in the wilderness at the same time.

[Mark 1:8 - “with water”]

And in verse 8, John says to the people, “I baptized you with water” but we knew that before.

[Mark 1:9]

At verse 9: “It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth in 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.”

[“out of the water”]

Well, we learned from Matthew that he went up from the water, and now it says in Mark that he came up out of the water. So, Jesus, in being baptized, had been down in the water. It looks as if baptism takes place down in the water, but we still don’t know what it is.

[Mark 16:15-16]

We read on, and go all the way through Mark to the last chapter before we learn anything more about it.

[Scripture]

In the last chapter of Mark (16:15-16) verse 15 and 16 we read: “And he said to them: Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”

[universality and globe]

Here is that same idea of its universality which we learned from Matthew, and here is an additional thought connected with it, that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” and that adds interest to our investigation. Still, no light is thrown upon the act itself; and so we must patiently go on with our reading.

[Luke]

In the third chapter of Luke we meet our strange word again, verse 3

[Luke 3:3]

(Luke 3:3). Speaking of John, the text says,

[Scripture]

“He cometh to all the region round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins.” It was not only where the Jordan ran through the wilderness then, but in “all the region round about the Jordan” that John preached. And here we learn that he preached the “baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins.”

[repentance preceded -]

If it was a *baptism of repentance*, a baptism which required a man to repent before he submitted to it, and *unto the remission of sins* it must have been a matter of supreme importance. The importance of this subject then grows upon us by the words used in connection with it, but no light comes yet as to what the particular act itself was. Remember, we are approaching our study of this word as if we had never heard it before, and we want the New Testament itself to show us its meaning, so we read on.

[John 3:22-23]

We read through Luke and into the gospel of John without additional light. But in the 3rd chapter of John, vs. 22 & 23 we stumble upon it once again. “After these things, Jesus came and his disciples unto the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and baptized.”

[Jesus baptized]

So we find from this that not only did John baptize, and not only did Jesus command his disciples to go into all nation and baptize, but that Jesus himself baptized at one time.

“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salem, because there was much water there and they came and were baptized.”

[water]

We learned in Matthew, also in Mark, that John used water in baptizing.

[much water]

Now we learn that when he left the Jordan, he went to Aenon near to Salem, because there was much water there. This shows that he wanted “much water” with which to baptize. But this is still a vague expression, for a pitcher-full of water is much in comparison with a glass-full; a barrel-full is much compared with a pitcher-full; and a river is much compared with any of our vessels of water. But we are learning very slowly some things with regard to the act itself, but we must be patience when we are in search of the truth.

[Acts]

We read on through John without any further satisfaction, and into the book of Acts; and in the 2nd chapter of that book, and verse 41 we read,

[Acts 2:41]

“they that received the words of Peter were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about 3000 souls.”

[Acts 2:38]

In verse 38 Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remissions of sins.” And so we learn that the apostles did as Jesus told them– the went preaching the gospel and requiring men to be baptized to become disciples.

[Acts 8:12]

We read on in the book of Acts, and in the 8th chapter we there find Philip in preaching the gospel in Samaria, and “when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Nothing there however to explain the act itself.

[Acts 8:36]

In the same chapter, farther on, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch are riding in the chariot together,

and Philip is preaching Jesus to him. At verse 36 we read, “and as they went on their way, they came to a certain water.”

[water]

We have already learned that water was the element used. “And the eunuch said, Behold, here is water; what hindereth me to be baptized? and he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch,

[went down into the water]

and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water,

[came up out of the water]

the Spirit of the lord caught Philip away.” We learn something additional from this. We learn that before the baptizing, the Ethiopian went down into the water, and that while he was down in the water, the baptizing was done, and then he came up out of the water.

[What was Done? What Happened?]

We still have not found a precise answer to our question, “What is baptism?” but we feel we are getting it hemmed in.

[Review Sheet]

Let’s review what we have learned and put it all together.

[River Jordan]

John baptized in the river Jordan, and at Aenon

[Done with water]

Baptism was done with water.

[much water]

John baptized where there was much water.

[down into the water]

We read that the one being baptized went down into the water]

[Baptizing was done - whatever that was]

The baptizing, whatever that was, was done down in the water

[After baptism – came up out of the water]

and then we read of him coming up out of the water after it happened. But what Philip did to the Ethiopian eunuch in “baptizing” him in not answered to our satisfaction just yet.

[A solemn and universal thing]

We see that baptism a solemn thing, and a universal thing.

[Repentance preceded]

We see that it was to be preceded by repentance

[“unto the remission of sin”]

And we read that it was “unto the remission of sins.”

[Acts 9 - Saul or Paul]

When we get into the 9th chapter of Acts, we find that Saul of Tarsus was baptized, but nothing is said about it to indicate what the act was.

[Acts 10 - Cornelius]

And also in the 10th chapter we read of Cornelius being baptized;

[Acts 16 - Lydia]

and in the 16th chapter of Lydia,

[Acts 16 - Philippian jailor]

then the Philippian jailor being baptized.

So we can see assuredly that the gospel was being preached as Jesus had directed it should be, and that in order to become a disciple of Jesus, one was baptized. But we don’t find any words in these passages that indicate to us clearly just what was done in that act called “baptism.”

[Romans]

So we read on into Romans, the first epistle in the order in which they stand in our New Testament.

[Romans 6:3-4]

In the 6th chapter, the 3rd and 4th verses we read:

[Scripture]

“Are you ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”

Ah! There are two new thoughts.

[Into Christ]

When men were baptized in obeying Christ’s command, they were baptized “into Jesus Christ”

[Baptized into his death]

and were baptized into his death. The importance of this act called “baptism” then grows in our mind.

[Romans 6:4]

The apostles proceeds: “We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like

as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.” Now what was that–? What did the apostle say was done through baptism?

[“We were buried” underlined]

“We were buried with him through baptism into death.” Let us pause right there a moment and reflect on this.

[Review sheet again: Pointer at “went down into the water”]

We have learned before that the person to be baptized went down into the water; the baptizing was done with the water; then he came up out of the water.

[Pointer moved down to “Baptism” and pencil appears]

[baptism - a burial]

Now we learn that in baptism the man was buried; and if the water was the element, what conclusion can we reach than this, that he was buried in the water? This then, at last, explains what the act was.

[Bury a man in water?]

But if we had never heard of the matter before, we might ask, ‘Bury a man in the water?’ and if you leave him there, he will drown! But he is not left there; for Jesus came up straightway (immediately) out of the water.

[Pointer: came up out of the water]

Philip and the eunuch came up out of the water. Well then, that it was a temporary burial and not a permanent one, would be our conclusion.

[Baptism is a burial of a man in water]

But let us not allow anything to rest on mere inferences, however logical, let us read a little further and see if we can find any light on that particular point?

[Colossians]

[Colossians 2:12]

We read on then, and when we come into the 2nd chapter of the epistle of Colossians, and 12th verse we have this language:

[Scripture]

“Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead.”

[Picture: Jesus’ resurrection]

We recall that Jesus Christ was buried in the tomb and on the third morning he came out.

“Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him” makes our burial in water

[... buried with him in baptism; ... raised with him]

a representation of his burial in the tomb, and our rising from the water, of his rising from the dead.

[Review: using picture of the Jordan]

This burial explains some of the things that we met with before. It explains why a river like the Jordan was used instead of some smaller water.

[much water]

It explains why much water was needed and such found at Aenon– enough was needed to bury men.

[down into the water]

It explains why, before the act of baptism, the person went down into the water. A man could not be buried without doing so.

[baptism a burial with Christ]

Baptism then, is a burial with Christ.

[come up out of the water]

It explains why, at the termination of the act of baptism, we read of the person coming up out of the water.

[raised to a new life]

We learn then that baptism is an act in which a man is buried in water; and raised again in imitation of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is done by the command of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the blessing which follows is a resurrection to a new life.

[The blessing received]

Let’s look at the blessings associated with baptism in the passages we have read.

[A new life - Romans 6]

We are raised to a new life - Romans 6

[“unto remission of sins ”]

It is unto remission of sins, so it then coincides with a man having his sins forgiven just as Peter preached in Acts 2, “Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins.”

[Saved - Mark 16:16]

The blessings from the acts of baptism coincides then with remission of sins and salvation, just as

Jesus had said in giving the great commission in Mark, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

[Into Christ]

Baptism puts one into a new relationship with Christ.

[Into name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit]

It is an act that brings us “into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” as Matthew records. (Matthew 28:18-19)

[BAPTISM]

If this is all true my friends, it is the most solemn, interesting and precious command from the Lord. We can not overestimate the value of obeying this command from the Lord himself. We can not then speak of baptism as merely an external act which is not significant nor important, for it symbolized the very death of our Lord himself; his death wherein he shed his blood for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28) and it pictures our resurrection from the deadness of sin, to a new resurrected life with Jesus. Therefore, let my tongue praise the Lord, and let me not speak despairingly of this divine command for all men to be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[Picture of Jerusalem]

If you could make a pilgrimage and visit Jerusalem today,

[picture of a garden tomb]

And if we could find the garden and know for sure where the garden tomb of Joseph of Armathea could be found,

[Picture of the inside of the tomb]

and if you could stretch yourself out in that tomb, in the very niche where Jesus lay, upon that bare rock, and to have some friend roll a stone over the mouth of that cave and seal you there where Jesus himself laid, you could imagine yourself buried with there with the Lord himself. But we cannot do that.

[picture turned to back and slowly fades back in to a baptismal scene]

And we don’t have to take a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to find that tomb to do that. But in this act of baptism we are allowed to do the next thing to it. We are laid down in a grave of water in obedience to the Lord’s command to be buried, or to be baptized, and as we have repented and died to sin,

[Raised to a new life]

we are lifted out of that watery grave to start a new walk, a new life, just as our Lord started to walk in a new way when he arose from the dead. It is a sacred and blessed privilege.

[“Baptism” and Bible]

When we consider this command in the light of the passages that we have read, we not only see its connection with the burial and resurrection of our Lord, but we can see that it points to a new life that we are to live in. When one understand this, how can there be in the heart of any of us repugnance toward this command? Any feeling of disrespect toward it? But only the feeling of a most profound reverence for it, and for the God and Savior who appointed it?

[Man and woman thinking]

Is there anyone here this service who desires to submit to this command? My dear friend, you cannot be baptized unless you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, our Savior. You cannot be buried with the Lord in that holy and solemn way, unless you have repented of your sins, and have cast them behind you. If you have done this; if it is within your heart today to confess your faith in the Lord Jesus, then it is your privilege to be baptized into the name of the Father, and the son, and the Holy Spirit; to receive the blessings that comes with obedience to the Lord, to receive the forgiveness of sins, and to be enabled to walk in a new life– a life of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Does your heart long for this? Do you hear the voice of the Lord calling you today? Do you long for those blessings to which he invites you? Then my friend, I beg you to step out into one of the aisles, to walk down and met me, and let the desire of your heart be make known; and confess the glorious name of Jesus, and give your life to him in obedience to his command to be baptized!

[Faith]

Come in faith believing Jesus to be the Son of the Living God.

[Repentance]

Come in repentance, turning from sin to the way God wants you to live to His glory.

[Confession]

Come to make the good confession of your faith in Jesus.

[Baptized]

Come to put on Christ and baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

END