

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF JESUS

The New Testament consistently emphasizes the importance of baptism performed in the name of Jesus Christ. In Acts 2:38, Peter instructs, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” Similarly, in Acts 8:16, it is noted that the Samaritans “had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 10:48 recounts Peter commanding Cornelius and his household to be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.” Furthermore, Acts 19:5 describes disciples of John the Baptist being baptized “into the name of the Lord Jesus.”

These passages underscore the apostolic practice of baptizing in the name of Jesus, aligning with Jesus’ command in Matthew 28:19 to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The apostles, guided by the revelation of Jesus’ identity, understood the singular name that encompasses the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be Jesus. Thus, they baptized in His name, reflecting the unity and authority of the Godhead.

The act of baptism in Jesus’ name signifies the believer’s identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Romans 6:3-4 states, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism

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into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” This passage highlights baptism as a means of participating in the redemptive work of Jesus, symbolizing the believer’s cleansing from sin and the commencement of a new life in Him.

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF INFANT BAPTISM

Infant baptism is a practice observed in various Christian traditions; however, the New Testament does not provide explicit examples of infants being baptized. Baptism, as depicted in Scripture, is closely associated with personal repentance and faith. In Acts 2:38, Peter calls individuals to “repent and be baptized,” indicating that baptism follows a conscious decision to turn from sin. Similarly, in Acts 8:37, the Ethiopian eunuch professes, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” prior to his baptism. These instances suggest that baptism is intended for those capable of personal faith and repentance.

Furthermore, the New Testament emphasizes the necessity of personal decision in matters of salvation. In Romans 10:9, Paul writes, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be

saved.” This confession and belief presuppose an individual’s ability to understand and respond to the gospel message. Since infants are incapable of such understanding and decision-making, they do not meet the criteria for baptism as outlined in Scripture.

Additionally, the practice of infant baptism lacks direct biblical precedent. While some interpret passages like Acts 2:39, which speaks of the promise being “for you and your children,” as supporting infant baptism, this interpretation is debated. The context suggests that the promise is for all who are called by God, not specifically for infants. Therefore, the absence of explicit examples of infant baptism in the New Testament implies that the practice is not biblically mandated.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the New Testament presents baptism as an essential step in the believer’s faith journey, symbolizing repentance, identification with Christ’s death and resurrection, and the reception of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is to be administered in the name of Jesus Christ, reflecting the unity and authority of the Godhead. Infant baptism, however, lacks direct biblical support and does not align with the scriptural pattern of baptism following

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personal faith and repentance. Therefore, for those seeking to align closely with New Testament teachings, baptism should be administered to individuals who are capable of personal faith and repentance, and it should be performed in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sources

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