
a *Grace Notes* course

Doctrines of the Christian Faith

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Doctrine 209

Baptism
Servants of God
Suffering

Grace Notes

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Doctrines of the Christian Faith
Doctrine 200, Lesson 9

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Baptism

Introduction

The word "baptize" (from the Greek baptidzo) means "to identify" or "to be made one with". In early Greek, the word had both religious and secular meanings. In general, it refers to the act of identifying one thing with another thing in such a way that its nature or character is changed, or it represents the idea that a real change has already taken place.

As a reference to identification, "baptize" means to place a person (or thing) into a new environment, or into union with some one or something else, so as to alter his (its) condition or relationship to the previous environment.

There are seven types of baptism mentioned in the Bible. Four of these are real baptisms and three are ritual baptisms.

Real Baptisms

- The Baptism of Moses
- The Baptism of the Cross (or Cup)
- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit
- The Baptism of Fire

Ritual Baptisms

- The Baptism of John
- The Baptism of Jesus
- The Baptism of the Christian Believer

These seven baptisms are described in the sections below.

Real Baptisms

A baptism is called "real" if it involves actually identifying a person with something or someone.

The Baptism of Moses

The baptism of Moses was a double identification, the children of Israel are identified both with Moses and with the cloud (Jesus Christ) as they passed through the Red Sea. There was no water involved (remember, they went through the sea on dry land when the waters were parted). 1 Cor. 10:1,2.

The Baptism of the Cross (or Cup)

Jesus Christ "drank" the Cup filled with our sins. Another way of expressing it is that all the sins of the world were put into one cup and poured out on Christ while He was on the Cross. God the Father judged our sins while they were on Christ. Christ was identified with our sin and He bore our sins on the cross. He was made sin for us. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24.

In Matt. 20:22 Jesus speaks of the cup he is to drink as he makes a reply to the mother of Zebedee's children. In Matt. 26:39, He prays to the Father to "let this cup pass from me". Nevertheless, He determined to drink from the cup, as seen in John 18:11, "the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink from it?"

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a real baptism. When a person accepts Christ as Savior, he is placed into the body of Christ. He is identified as a believer. The mechanics are given in 1 Cor. 12:13.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur in Old Testament times. The first occurrence was on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit placed the new believers into the body of Christ.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the basis for Positional Truth. Believers are placed "in Christ", and in this position have access to many kinds of privileges and blessings. Ephesians 1 has a good description of what it means to have "all blessings in heavenly places in Him."

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was prophesied by John the Baptist, Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16. And it was prophesied by Jesus Christ, John 14:16,17; Acts 1:5.

The implications of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for all believers in the family of God, are given in Gal. 3:26-28.

The principle of retroactive identification with Christ is brought out in Rom. 6:3,4 and Col. 2:12.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an experience. It is not accompanied by speaking in tongues or any other kind of feeling or behavior. The things that happen to believers at the moment of salvation are accomplished by the Holy Spirit, not by us, and these things are not experiences.

The Baptism of Fire

There is a judgment coming at the 2nd Coming of Christ when all nonbelievers are taken from the earth. They will join the rest of the unbelievers in Torments (Sheol-Hades-Hell) to wait for the Last Judgment (The Great White Throne Judgment of Rev. 20) at the end of the Millennium. This removal of unbelievers for judgment is the baptism of fire.

Fire is a symbol for judgment all throughout the Bible. Examples are the fire which burned the sacrifice on the Hebrew altar, and the fire from God which burned the watered down sacrifices of Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

The doctrine of the baptism of fire is stated in Matt. 3:11,12; Luke 3:16,17; and 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

The Lord Jesus taught several parables regarding the end times when believers and unbelievers will be separated. The believers are to go into the millennium, the unbelievers are "cast off" into fire. These parables are analogies to the baptism of fire.

Wheat and tares - Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43.

Good and bad fish - Matt. 13:47-50.

The wise and foolish virgins - Matt. 25:1-13

The sheep and the goats - Matt. 25:31-46

Ritual Baptisms

A baptism is called a ritual baptism, or a ceremonial baptism, when water is used as a symbol for something else. It is a representative identification. The individual is placed in the water, which means, symbolically, that he is identified with that which the water represents.

The Baptism of John - Matt. 3:6-11.

Here the water is symbolic of the Kingdom of God which John was preaching. When a person was baptized by John, he was testifying to his faith in the Messiah and his identification with Christ's kingdom. The new believer was "identified" with the water, but the water represented a spiritual identification.

The phrase "Kingdom of God" is a general term referring to all believers from the time of Adam until the end of the Millennium. At the time of John the Baptist, all believers were pre-Church Age Christians, although many lived on into the

Church Age (which began at the Day of Pentecost).

The Baptism of Jesus

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist, the water was symbolic of God's will in salvation, namely that Jesus would go to the Cross.

Servants of God

God commands Christians to be faithful and obedient servants.

Deut. 10:12 "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

Micah 6:8 "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord required of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Psalm 100:2 "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing."

JOSH. 24:14,15

SERVICE IS TO BE RENDERED AS UNTO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

JOHN 12:23-26

Col. 3:24 "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

THE BELIEVER'S SERVICE IS TO BE RENDERED TO PEOPLE.

Christian service makes life noble.

Mark 10:43,44 "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

Christian service exemplifies neighborliness.

Luke 10:36,37

Christian service is Christ-like.

John 13:1-17

Christian service demonstrates love.

John 21:15-17

Christian service lightens life's burdens.

Gal. 5:13-15

Gal. 6:1-10

Acts 20:17-20

Heb. 10:23-25

The place of worship and the place of service. We also "assemble" for service. The Body functions as a congregation.

As God's servants, believers have specific responsibilities.

Christians are to leave all to follow Christ.

Phil. 3:7,8 "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ."

Believers are to render undivided service.

1 Chron. 15:10-15

1 Sam. 7:3 "And Samuel spoke unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only."

Believers are to serve with humility.

ACTS 20:18,19

Believers are to serve with courage.

Deut. 1:17 "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's; and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me [Moses], and I will hear it."

Prov. 29:25 "The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

EXAMPLES OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

The Lord Jesus Christ served men.

Phil. 2:7 "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Godly men served the Lord by serving other men.

- Peter and Andrew, Mark 1:17,18
- Zaccheus, Luke 19:6 ff
- Paul, Acts 9:20

THE REWARDS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

The faithful servant gains spiritual knowledge.

Hos. 6:3 "Then shall we know, Lord; his come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

The faithful servant gains divine viewpoint.

John 8:12 "Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The faithful servant has spiritual guidance.

John 10:27 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me."

The faithful servant receives honor from God.

John 12:26 "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

The faithful servant has a life of joy.

Psalm 40:8 "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

John 4:36 "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

Suffering

Introduction

This paper is an outline study to give you a start in thinking about the subject of suffering and to provide a catalogue to the many scripture passages relating to suffering. You would think that such a subject would be dreadful to study, but in the wonderful plan of God, the worst things are always the best things. As you read this article, look up the Bible passages that are indicated and ask the Lord to give you insight into His viewpoint on the issues raised.

We don't have to look far to see that there is a lot of suffering going on in the world. The media provide us with endless information on the plight of unfortunate people all over the world. We are certainly aware that in America most people don't suffer as do people in third world countries.

But we are also aware that we are members of the human race, and that some disaster, small or great, can come at any time without warning, something that makes us one of the statistics. Auto accident, cancer, tornado, volcano, falling airplanes...in fact we can suffer a lot just worrying about all the things that could happen to us. The Fickle Finger of Fate can zero in at any time with some kind of prime suffering - loss of job, loss of money, house burns down, etc.

The Whole Human Race Suffers

It is a startling fact that part of God's plan for every human being includes a certain amount of suffering. All people suffer: rich or poor, smart or dumb, American or African, Christian or non-Christian. Suffering of some kind is part of God's Plan of Grace, if you can imagine that.

Suffering can be defined as the removal or reduction (some curtailment or loss) of one or more of the things that make up the good things of life as we know it, things we call details of life. Details of life are any of dozens of features that make up a person's life, things related to his personal life, family life, social life, or community and national life. Things like loved ones, friends, money, cars, health, marriage, sex, job, house, possessions, social life, etc., are all details of life;

and when you lose one of these things that you enjoy, the result is suffering.

We identify two types of happiness in life. The first type is human happiness which is happiness derived from any of the details of life. The other type is divine happiness which is the inner joy produced as part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the advancing believer in the Christian Way of Life.

Human happiness is temporary and *dependent*. It lasts only as long as the thing that provides the happiness. It depends on a detail of life to sustain it.

God's happiness is *independent* of anything in this world; it is possible, the Bible says, "to be content in whatsoever state I am", that is, to have a deep inner happiness and contentment that does not depend on other people, material possessions, or circumstances.

One way of describing suffering is to say that suffering comes from the removal of the human happiness. You can see, then, that if a person possesses God's joy (+H), the loss of human happiness is much more tolerable.

Suffering occurs by several means in human life, both for Christians and unbelievers, including the following:

- Suffering by loss of health - physical pain, illness, accident, loss of function, etc.
- Suffering by privation - the lack of something necessary such as food, shelter, clothing, transportation.
- Suffering from the weather - freezing weather or hot, storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, as well as earthquakes, volcanoes.
- Suffering from mental anguish - worry, sorrow, anguish, fears, phobias, bitterness, jealousy, not the least of which is "suffering by anticipation".
- Suffering from justice, the long arm of the law, deserved or undeserved.
- Suffering caused by other people. As long as there are two people in the same location...well, you know what I mean.

What About My Rights?

Many of our cares come from somebody's trampling on our rights, or what we think of as our rights. Don't you feel that you have a right to

- Privacy
- Possessions
- Courteous treatment
- Dignity
- Consideration
- Equal treatment
- A fair share
- Equal opportunity
- etc, etc?

But where does it say that I have any rights at all? Do I have the right to be an American, to be in a good family, to be educated, to have enough food every day, to have a house, to be married to a fine person, to have good children, to have enough money?

It is clear from the Scriptures that we really have no rights whatsoever. The Lord has placed us in an environment with a certain supply of the gifts of His grace, and we didn't earn any of them. Everything we have, and everything we are able to obtain, comes as a result of the Grace of God; we have deserved nothing!

One of the most useful practices in the Christian way of life is to "cast all care" on God, as He invites us to do. You can think of this as the act of turning all your rights over to God, which amounts to a practical reliance on God for total provision, including giving to us those rights which He sees fit.

We suffer needlessly because we demand our rights. We have no rights. We have only our just deserts, "the wages of sin is death", which, by the grace of God, have been taken care of by the work of Christ. We are aware that one of the best things we can teach children is to be thankful for what they have, and to stop fretting about what they don't have. Children complain about things not being fair or not being divided equally, but when these traits show up in adults, it is a sign that more growth in grace is needed.

PHIL. 2:1-8

COL. 3:12-17

These passages indicate that the more relaxed a person is with regard to the details of life, the less he will experience the ill effects of some types of suffering. Often the amount of suffering can be limited through having a relaxed mental attitude toward a person or situation. Even severe privation or emotional trauma caused by the sin or hatred of another person can be reduced remarkably by the use of principles of Faith Rest, forgiveness, by relying on the Father for all provision, by allowing God to protect your reputation, etc.

The Suffering of the Unbeliever

An unbeliever will have his allotted portion of suffering as a member of the human race as described above. He, of course, has no concept of "all things working together for good." His main goal in life is to reduce his own suffering to a minimum, even if it means making other people suffer to do it.

God intends, as part of His Plan, for suffering to awaken the unbeliever to the reality of the existence of God, to motivate positive volition at the point of God consciousness. Whatever the immediate cause of his suffering, the ultimate reason is that of directing his attention to the person of Jesus Christ. Suffering has a tendency to slow people down, to reduce their arrogance, to reduce their self-righteousness, their self-satisfaction, their self-reliance.

Think about it -- where would you be today if everything had always been rosy, and you were unfailingly prosperous in all areas of life? Would you be going to church, taking in the Word, trying to figure out God's answers to life's dilemmas?

What about people who are suffering great deprivation because of locale (Bangladesh or the Sahel), or because of war, or because of cruel ideologies? Are these things part of the grace of God? An important fact is that God knows the spiritual needs of every person in the world, and He knows every person's mental makeup. Only He can decide what combination of blessing and suffering is the best recipe for encouraging a person to become a Christian. He does not force

man's volition; but He will allow circumstances to develop around a person which will direct his attention toward Himself.

Why Believers Suffer

Christians suffer for many reasons, sometimes through no fault of their own. A Christian will experience a normal amount of suffering as part of human existence. But if a believer stays in fellowship with God and grows in Christ consistently, this type of suffering can be a great blessing and an opportunity to witness to other believers and to the unsaved.

Suffering that the Christian Can Avoid

To the backslidden Christian who is out of fellowship and already quite miserable, however, suffering never brings blessing, and everything he touches turns to misery. Even the details of life don't make him happy; and he wastes his years in empty living.

ECCL. 2:1-12

A lot of a Christian's suffering can be avoided, however, and God has provided many remedies for reducing the distress a person causes himself.

You can avoid suffering caused by divine discipline.

Heb. 12:1-15

Psalm 38

Chastisement is avoided by staying in fellowship, confessing sin, forsaking sin, laying aside every weight...that is, choosing to obey God.

You can avoid suffering from failure to isolate sin, resulting in "chain sinning". An example is the failure to forgive an offense. This leads to mental attitude sins such as anger, bitterness, desire for revenge, judging. These, in turn, lead to sins of the tongue, maligning, gossip, false accusations. The offended party suffers worse than the original offender. But the whole chain can be broken by forgiving the other party and confessing the sins in the chain.

You can avoid suffering due to a guilt reaction to sin; the maintaining of a guilt complex.

Remember that Christ died for all our sins; He bore the guilt for us. (1 Pet. 3:18; 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21). One may have confessed sin biblically and

be in fellowship and still labor under a heavy load of guilt. But this is unbelief. A guilt complex itself is sinful, because one says by this that the Lord has not forgiven. But, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgression from us."

You can avoid suffering which comes from maintaining a lifestyle like the unsaved. This is a life of callousness in the soul, emptiness, blindness, as shown in Eph. 4:17-32. The cure - Bible teaching every day while maintaining fellowship with God.

You can avoid suffering due to the rejection of authority, such as parental authority, school authority, civil authority, military authority, etc.

READ Judges 19 and 10, Matt. 7:29 to 8:13, Jer. 7, and Prov. 30

You can avoid suffering caused by making decisions outside of the plan of God.

- Don't follow a career that takes you away from the Word.
- Don't reject divine principles of marriage (marrying an unbeliever, getting a divorce, etc.)
- Don't follow any "greener pastures" leading or make changes in your circumstances because you think you will be happier in the new situation.
- Don't raise children by human viewpoint instead of doing it God's way.
- In general, don't reject the Word of God, either through neglect or willful disobedience.

You can avoid suffering from failure to have your armor on.

EPH. 6.

The Believer's Undeserved Suffering is Intended for Blessing

The following is a list of reasons why believers in fellowship suffer undeservedly in order to bring blessing to themselves or others.

1. Suffering for the glory of God: Book of Job; Isa. 48:9-11
2. Suffering to comfort others: 2 Cor. 1:3-6

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| <p>3. Suffering to demonstrate the power of God, the provisions of grace: 2 Cor. 12:8-10</p> <p>4. Suffering from spiritual growing pains; the testing that strengthens faith: Deut. 8:1-10; James 1:1-6; 1 Pet. 1:7,8; Rom. 5:3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Faster growth means more frequent testing; there is a refining process: Job. 23:10; Isa. 1:18-27; 1 Pet. 1:7</p> <p>5. Suffering to keep down pride: 2 Cor. 12:6,7; Matt. 26:31-75 (the scattering of the disciples)</p> <p>6. Suffering to illustrate doctrine (for advanced believers: Book of Hosea)</p> <p>7. Suffering by association occurs when we have some relationship with someone who is suffering: Rom. 14:7; 1 Cor. 12:26; 1 Chron. 21</p> <p>8. Suffering to show the fruit of the Spirit and the results of edification: 2 Cor. 4:6-11</p> | <p>9. Suffering to learn the value of doctrine: Psalm 119:65-72</p> <p>10. Suffering as a witness to Christ: 2 Tim. 2:8-12; John 15:18-21; Acts 5:40-42; 1 Cor. 4:9-16</p> <p>11. Suffering as a result of exercising a spiritual gift; illustrated by the life of the Apostle Paul</p> <p>12. Suffering from involvement in spiritual battles, the angelic conflict: Eph. 3:8-13</p> <p>Promises to Believers Who Suffer</p> <p>Psalm 34:19,20; Isa. 43:2; 2 Cor. 4:17 and 12:9; 1 Peter 5:10</p> |
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