

Baptism For The Dead

1 Cor. 15:29

Part 2

Introduction

1. Part 1 of this study revealed that the Bible clearly refutes the belief that the living can benefit the dead by being baptized for them.
2. It also revealed that the Bible teaches a bodily resurrection from the dead.
 - a. The Christian lives with the assurance he/she will be raised bodily and then this body will be transformed into a new spiritual body like the body of Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:49-58; Phil. 3:20-21).
 - b. See also 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
3. This lesson will discuss some of the various explanations of 1 Corinthians 15:29.

Various Explanations

1. Some believe this refers to **baptism for (in honor of) the dead (Christ)**.
 - a. It is suggested Paul is saying “Why are they being baptized in honor of Christ is there be no resurrection?”
 - b. The word "dead" cannot refer to Christ in this verse.
 - c. It is plural and means "dead ones," not "dead one" (Christ).
 - d. It is true baptism honors Christ.
 - 1) In baptism one obeys Christ.
 - 2) It is an indication one is dying to sin as a way of life.
 - 3) In baptism one arises to live for and to honor Christ.
 - e. Though one honors Christ in baptism, it is uncertain this is the meaning of this verse.
 - f. It does not seem to fit the context.
2. Some believe this refers to **a baptism “over” the graves**.
 - “**huper**” [hoo **pehr**] “for” can also have the idea of “over.”
 - a. It is suggested that some had been baptized over the graves of dead friends and loved ones.
 - b. This would have been done perhaps to denote the unity of the living and the dead.
 - c. This view falsely assumes that baptism was administered by sprinkling or pouring whereas the Bible teaches that baptism is a burial. (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12).

d. There is no command or example or implied approval for baptizing over the grave.

3. Some believe “dead” refers to the “old man” of sin. (Rom. 6:6).

Rom 6:6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with {Him,} in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

a. They state it is possible Paul was saying one is baptized to eliminate the “old man” of sin.

b. It is suggested Paul might be asking why one would be baptized to eliminate the old man of sin if there is no resurrection.

c. This might seem like a possible meaning, but it has a problem.

d. The Greek word “dead” in the Greek is plural and means “dead ones.”

4. Some interpret “they” in verse 29 to refer to the apostles and baptism [the suffering] of the apostles endured for preaching the gospel. (Mk. 10:38-39; Acts 9:16; 1 Cor. 4:9).

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

Mark 10:39 They said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; **and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.**

Acts 9:16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

1 Cor 4:9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

a. This makes Paul saying it was foolish for the apostles to experience suffering and even die for preaching the gospel if there is not an afterlife.

b. This is possible, but there is no evidence Paul is using “they” to refer to the apostles and is excluding himself by using “they” rather than “we.”

5. It means in order to **be united with those who have died to sin.**

a. This theory makes "dead" have a spiritual meaning.

b. Some say Paul was asking, "Why join the living or dead in death to sin if there is no resurrection?"

c. This interpretation makes sense, but Paul appears to be talking about physical death rather than spiritual death.

d. This interpretation does not seem to fit the context.

6. It means **remembering the pleas of the departed loved ones.**

a. Some have been baptized because they remembered the pleas of a mother, father, spouse, etc.

b. Being baptized remembering the pleas of the departed loved ones does not make sense if there is no resurrection.

c. It made no sense to become a part of a loss cause.

7. It means for (in hope of, in reference to) **joining the dead ones in bliss.**

a. The word "for" can mean "in reference to". (2 Cor. 8:23; 1:7).

2CO 8:23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.	2CO 1:7 and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.
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b. Some might be baptized in reference to, that is, in hope of joining the dead ones in bliss.

c. This makes no sense if the dead are not raised.

8. It means to **be baptized "for"** (in place of) **the dead ones.**

a. The Greek "huper" can mean "in place of, instead of." (Jn. 11:50; Gal. 3:13).

JOH 11:50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for [in place of] the people, and that the whole nation should not perish. "	GAL 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for [in place of] us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"--
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b. This is a military concept of this verse.

c. Why are they (the false teachers) baptized in place of the dead ones?

d. Why take the place of the dead Christian soldiers if there is no resurrection?

e. Why become a part of a loss cause?

9. It is possible Paul used an example of a false teaching without endorsing it.

a. Jesus did not mean the disciples of the Pharisees actually cast out demons. (Matt. 12:27).

MAT 12:27 "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges.

1) Jesus assumed their false claim of casting out demons to be true without affirming it to be true.

2) He did this to show it was fallacious to assume one must be in league with Satan to cast out demons.

3) Their disciples claimed to cast out demons, but they did not give Satan the credit for it.

4) Jesus was saying He could cast out demons without being in league with Satan.

5) Jesus and Satan are hostile enmities - Christ being light and the devil being darkness.

b. It is possible Paul used an example of a false teaching to prove a point.

1) Assuming, some who claimed to be Christians were baptized for the benefit of the dead, it did not make sense.

2) Why be baptized for the benefit of the dead if there is no resurrection.

Closing Comments

1. We may never know for sure which of the above interpretations is correct.

2. We can know for sure that there is not any way for the living to affect the eternal destiny of the dead.

3. We must obey Christ and live for Him now if we wish to be saved.
4. We reap what we have sown, and will be judged according to the things done in the body. (Gal. 6:7,8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12).
4. It is utterly false that someone can benefit us eternally or in any way after we are dead.
5. Paul is not arguing for a vicarious baptism, but is showing this practice made no sense if there is not a resurrection of the dead.
6. Men have tried numerous ways to save the lost who have rejected Christ.
7. Here are some false doctrines taught with the idea that the lost are not really lost, but can be saved by the actions of others or without obedience to Christ unto death.

1. Universalism - all will be saved	4. Saved because of good deeds or good intentions.	7. Saved after suffering in Purgatory.
2. Once saved always saved.	5. Saved by good morals.	8. Saved because of family.
3. Saved if never heard the gospel. (Ignorance is bliss.)	6. Saved by the baptism or prayers of others.	9. The lost or most of them will be given a second chance.

- a. The Bible does not teach any of these false doctrines.
- b. No one comes to the Father (is saved) except through Christ. (Jn. 3:36; 8:24; 14:9; Acts 4:12; Heb. 5:9).
- c. The Bible teaches there is no second chance.
 - 1) The Bible teaches we must give account for the things done in the body. (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 14:12).
 - 2) Salvation requires personal faith and repentance. (Jn. 3:36; 8:24; Lk. 13:3,5; Acts 17:30).
 - 3) Salvation requires one be personally baptized and be personally obedient. (Matt. 7:21-23; Jn. 3:36b; Heb. 5:9).
 - 4) Salvation requires one to “walk in newness of life” and “in the light.” (Rom. 6:4; 1 Jn. 1:7)

Rom 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism 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.

1 John 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin..

7. The saved are those who are “faithful unto death” and “die in the Lord” (Rev. 2:10; 14:13).

Rev 2:10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Rev 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

8. No one can change our eternal destiny once we are dead.

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