

SUNDAY MORNING

Announcements

Mike Davis

Song Leader

Daniel Allgor

Lord's Supper

Bill Rinehart Clay Morris
Hunter Byrd Pete Rowland

Prayers

Jerry Schnelle Wendell Mobley

SUNDAY EVENING

Announcements

Mike Davis

Song Leader

Jack Calvert

Lord's Supper

Bill Rinehart Pete Rowland

Prayers

Cory Easley Dave Massey

WEDNESDAY

Announcements

Preston Ellis

Song Leader

Jack Calvert

Prayers

W. H. McFerrin Bill Rinehart

Invitation

Jon Barry

ABOUT US

Elders

Jack Calvert Rodney Ellis

Deacons

Jon Barry Bill Brittenham
Mike Davis Dave Massey

Evangelist

Bryan Garlock

SERVICE TIMES

Sunday

Bible Study9:30 A.M.
Worship10:15 A.M.
Worship6:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

WWW.TXKCHURCH.COM

GOD'S PLAN FOR SALVATION

Hear the word of truth Romans 10:13-17

Believe the truth..... Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24

Repent from all sins Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38

Confess the name of Christ ... Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 8:35-30

Be Baptized in His name Mark 16:16;
1 Peter 3:21; Colossians 2:12

Walk in newness of life and **be faithful** unto death Romans 6:1-4; Revelation 2:10

Think On These Things

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• Baptism for the Dead

Bryan Garlock

When faced with a difficult passage, a good practice is to start with what it cannot mean by determining if any viewpoints contradict other Scriptures. If a contradiction is found, we cannot accept that interpretation regardless of how comforting or even logical it may sound.

Let us consider the following challenging verse. Paul wrote, "Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" (1 Cor. 15:29, ESV)

What It Cannot Mean

Mormons claim that 1 Corinthians 15:29 teaches that we are to be baptized for the dead. They believe that everyone ought to have an opportunity to obey the gospel and will often ceremoniously baptize individuals on behalf of their dead relatives, friends, and even famous individuals. This posthumous activity is believed to save those who died without being baptized. As one writer put it, "Mormons... are exploring every possible avenue to get the supposedly damned into heaven." (Joseph Walker) Interestingly, Mormons believe that baptism saves (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21); however, their attempt to

practice vicarious baptism – baptism by proxy – is completely contrary to Scripture.

One cannot be saved by another's faith or through a vicarious baptism. First, the Scriptures are entirely silent concerning any instructions on such a baptism, and secondly, biblical principles regarding salvation do not allow for this interpretation.

The Bible teaches that "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment." (Heb. 9:27) Once a man dies, his fate is sealed. Therefore, each man will be judged by the deeds done in the body whether good or evil and there is no partiality; the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done and the righteous will enjoy peace and eternal life (Eccl. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:6-11; Col. 3:25).

"And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us." This was Abraham's answer to the rich man who desired for Lazarus to pass from paradise to torment to quench his tongue with a drop of water. Jesus' point was that it cannot be done – our fate is sealed.

FAMILY TALK

Continue to remember and check on our shut-ins: **Willie Margaret Mobley, Bob Buls, Bonnie Allgor, Max Thomas, Maxine Burnham** and **Mary Alice Turner**. Cards, calls and visits are ALWAYS needed and appreciated.

Max Thomas has moved to Katy, TX. As of Wednesday, he is doing some better but he is still in serious condition. Please keep **Max, Ann** and **Mark** continually in your prayers. **Max's** address is now: Spanish Meadows, 1480 Katy Flewellen Rd., Katy, TX 77494.

Francine Davis is home but still quite sick.

Sonny Monaghan's heart cath was okay.

cont. from pg. 1

God never forces any man to obey the gospel. Each man has the responsibility to diligently seek Him (Heb. 11.6) and those who do not obey God will suffer eternally (2 Thess. 1.8-9). In the words of Paul, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2.12) However, baptism by proxy is a forced and false conversion on one who never desired to obey Christ in baptism while he had the opportunity. How can God save a person without their consent?

Possible Interpretations

There are interpretations that do not contradict the immediate context or Scripture in general. It may be the case that we simply cannot know what Paul's point was – though we know what his point is not. This author is satisfied with not knowing because if this teaching was necessary to

please God, the Holy Spirit would have made the matter explicitly clear. However, in an attempt to clear the muddy water, this author presents two possible interpretations that can be applied without damaging the context or contradicting Scripture.

First, that Paul was dealing with vicarious baptism is the reason why Mormons have adopted this view. However, taking these words at face value do not give credence to the practice. Stop and read 1 Corinthians 15 for the context. There were some arguing that there was no resurrection of the dead and Paul's rebuttal illustrates that if this is true, not even Jesus was raised. Apparently, some in the first century were in fact practicing what modern day Mormons observe and Paul was simply pointing out their inconsistencies. His point was simple: If they do not believe in a resurrection, why baptize people on their behalf? What will this accomplish? Their dead will not rise!

He was not teaching or endorsing this as a religious rite commanded by God; rather, this was a religious rite practiced by those who were teaching that there is no resurrection! This criticism is demonstrated in at least four ways. First, Paul detached himself and the Corinthian saints from those who believed this heretical tradition (note that it is not until verse twenty-nine that Paul switches to a third person plural indicating that it was not him or the Christians, but "they" or "their" who do this [depending upon translation]). Secondly, Paul admonished the Corinthians to avoid these heretics because "Bad company ruins good morals." (1 Cor. 15.33). Their perverted teachings would ruin any hope these Christians had of a resurrection and cause them to "eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," that is, "if the dead are not raised." (1 Cor. 15.32). Thirdly, as mentioned during the Mormon section above, Paul believed and taught that each man was held personally responsible before God; therefore, he would not contradict himself here. Finally, as discussed previously, Paul's rhetorical question absolutely destroys their error – by

drawing attention to their inconsistencies. In this, the Holy Spirit perfectly illustrated how the teachings were conflicted. How can one say that there is no resurrection while baptizing the dead for salvation? If there is no resurrection, all are still in sin and the dead will perish (see 1 Cor. 15.16-19)!

Interestingly, Paul used rhetorical questions throughout his writings to help his readers draw the necessary conclusions. Probably one of his most noteworthy examples is found in Romans 6.1 where he wrote, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" There were some perverting God's grace and claiming that the more we sinned, grace would just abound and cover it. However, God's grace teaches us to cease from sin (Rom. 6.2ff; Titus 2.11-12). His use of this question shows the absurdity of the perversion there as it does in 1 Corinthians 15.29.

Another point worth considering – which complements the entire passage – is an additional argument laid out to show another consequence if Jesus has not been raised and the inconsistency of being baptized for a dead savior.

Contextually speaking, it would be natural to question their baptism for a dead person. In other words, if the dead do not rise, then Jesus is dead and if Jesus was still dead, and we are baptized on behalf of Him, why is baptism even practiced at all? What's more, why be baptized into Christ and His body if those in His body are no better off than those who are yet outside of His body? If existence ends at death, then none will exist after death and all are equal in death. Simply put, those in Christ are no better off than those outside of Christ!

Remember, when one obeys God to be baptized he does so based on several facts and promises. For example, two promises are the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2.38) and the redemption of our bodies (John 5.28-29; Rom. 8.23; 1 Thess. 4.13-16, etc.) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ – as a matter of fact

(1 Peter 3.21; 1 Cor. 15.16-19). If we have not been united in a death like His (in baptism), we will not be united in a resurrection like His (Rom. 6). This demonstrates the relationship between baptism and the resurrection. Thus, Paul argues that if the resurrection did not happen, even baptism is ineffective – we are still in our sins and we will all likewise perish.

Since some Corinthians were being persuaded that there was no resurrection, Paul asked, "What do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" Simply put, we are either hopelessly baptized for the dead Jesus and His dead church, or are confidently baptized for the risen Jesus, who is the true and living Son of God, in hope that He will one day resurrect us; otherwise, spiritually dead people are being baptized to obey the teachings of a dead person – what a false sense of security!

The views presented do not contradict the immediate context or any other Scriptures; though this author believes the second view stated is the intended teaching because Paul lays out argument after argument intended to help the Christians see that their preaching, their faith, and even their baptism are fruitless if Christ has not been raised. Either way, we can confidently say that if Jesus has not been raised our faith is vain and we are still in our sins – this is what Paul was driving home to the Corinthians.

We would be remiss not to point out that Paul argues for the resurrection by employing their baptism. While many people believe that baptism is not part of salvation (Acts 2.38; Gal. 3.26-27), Paul shows its necessity when he connects it with Jesus' resurrection (cf. 1 Peter 3.21). Consequently, if baptism was optional, then Paul's argument is meaningless here. BG