

BAPTISM IN JESUS' NAME FOR CONSISTENT PRETERISTS

Fully accomplished remission of sins wasn't provided until the time of fulfillment.

God's people were promised an inheritance: Paul wrote that Jesus mediated "the new covenant ... so that those who were called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).

God's Spirit was the guarantee and thus guaranteed that inheritance: Paul wrote to believers in Ephesus that "you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise—the guarantee of our inheritance for redemption" (*apolutrosin*)" (Eph. 1:13b-14a).

That inheritance was at last bequeathed ca. the time of the events of AD 70.

In Hebrews (AD 63) Paul wrote of those who were *about to* receive their inheritance (1:14).

In First Peter (AD 65) Peter noted that the "inheritance" of those to whom he was writing was "ready to be revealed ... at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:3-7); a few paragraphs later he wrote that Jesus was "ready [to be revealed in order] to judge" them (4:5, cf. 4:17) and that their "glory" [i.e. inheritance] was "*about to be revealed*" (5:1). Earlier, in His *Olivet Discourse*...

In Mat. 25:34 Jesus declared that at His coming He'd say to His people, "Come ... inherit."

The AD 70 inheritance was redemption: Paul, again in Ephesians 1:14, wrote of "inheritance" being "*eis*," i.e. "for [cf. 4:30] redemption." Redemption is equal to remission or forgiveness of sins: Earlier in Ephesians (1:7) as well as in Colossians (1:14), Paul wrote that "In Christ we have redemption (*apolutrosin*)—the forgiveness (*aphesin*) of sins." So...

The inevitable conclusion is that forgiveness or remission (*aphesin*) of sins transpired ca. AD 70, fitting perfectly with the timing of Daniel 9:24, i.e. the "end of sins" would be simultaneous with the emergence of Jesus from within the most holy place (Heb. 9:28), having anointed it as the eternal temple of God.

Baptism in Jesus' name was merely another ritual pointing to the time of fulfillment.

Typically a ritual is something tangibly performed by a human to depict something intangibly performed by a deity on his behalf: it could picture some occurrence of the past which he believes affected him (thus a memorial); it could depict some occurrence he believes affects him concurrently with the act he performs; or it could depict some occurrence he believes will affect him in the future. 2 Kings 17:26ff refer quite often to the various God-given rituals of His Israelite people, which would of course include their various baptisms for various purposes.

Since we've always agreed that it has never been the act of immersion in water itself that saves—thus a ritual, I can move on with this point: Like all other baptisms historically carried out by Israel (as well as the water baptism of John the Baptist), in the case of water baptism in the name of Jesus, it was a ritual depicting an occurrence to transpire in the future of those who were commanded to be baptized.

In Mark 1:4 it says of John the Baptist's baptism that it was "for (*eis*) the remission (*aphesin*) of sins." The Greek preposition *eis* expresses a forward motion towards something future; as a result, John's baptism was a ritual ceremony depicting something in the future of the baptized ones. So one could interpretationally translate John's baptism as "pointing towards the remission of sins." (Besides, most folks I know don't believe people were actually forgiven at/by/via John's baptism. This brings up the thought-provoking question: What was the purpose of Jesus' baptism per John 4?)

Since the exact same language (*viz.*, "for [*eis*] the remission [*aphesin*] of sins") is found in Acts 2:38 relative to baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ," then what held true for the baptism of John holds true for baptism in Jesus' name, i.e. it was "pointing *towards* the remission of sins." And we already verified when the remission of sins occurred—at the end of the OC age ca. AD 70, after High Priest Jesus emerged from within the anointed MHP (cf. Dan. 9:24 w/ Heb. 9:28 & Rom. 11:26).

Notice what Paul said in line with this theology in Romans 6 in which he made the following remarks to some folks who were already Christians, thus already baptized:

The *Twentieth Century New Testament* renders verse 8 like this: "as we have shared Christ's death, we shall also share His life." Paul built up to this statement by repeating himself in verses 4 & 5: The NKJV reads, "we were buried with Christ through baptism into death, that just as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be [future tense] in the likeness of His resurrection." (I.e., the subjunctive "should" of verse 4 is clarified by Paul in verse 5 as definitely being "future" aorist subjunctive, just in case he would be misunderstood.)

But you say, "Wait a moment. You were talking about baptism's connection to remission of sins; now you're referring to its connection to resurrection." Right. But the thing is, like so many other "re" terms (e.g. regeneration, reformation, restoration, redemption, reconciliation), resurrection-life was provided concurrently and logically with remission of sin (which, btw, is mentioned in 6:7); interestingly, God revealed to Daniel that his part in the inheritance involved resurrection (12:13), obviously the resurrection just mentioned previously in 12:2 to transpire at the time of the shattering of the Old Covenant people at the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem (v. 7). Furthermore...

Compare Acts 3:28 with 3:19, this latter verse more literally reading, "Repent, and turn toward the to-be-blotted-out sins of yours." When paralleled, these statements of Peter sure sound like their baptism was that which pointed toward their future aorist remission of sins. So...

Like other ritual baptisms of that day, the baptism in Jesus' name (like John's baptism) was with a view to the AD 70 fulfillment of the prophesied remission of sins, something that logically coincided with the establishment of the new covenant (cf. Heb. 10:9). Speaking of covenant, note the connection between water and covenant and thus water as a corporate sign of a new beginning (like new life coming forth after a pregnant woman's water breaks):

Inaugurating covenant with Adam (and of course those who followed) involved water and the light and darkness related to it in Genesis 1:1-5.

Inaugurating a covenant with Noah (and of course those who followed) involved water separating elected ones (the light) from wicked ones (the darkness) in Genesis 6:18 (cf. 8:20ff). And...

Inaugurating what we call the old covenant with Moses (and again of course those who followed) involved water that separated Yahweh's people from those not His people in Exodus 14:26ff. In 1 Corinthians 10:1ff Paul even brought up the incident with Moses and the waters of the Red Sea indicating that by that event God's people were (or that corporate body was) baptized into that particular covenant relationship with Him under the authority He gave Moses.

The point is that water baptism was a sign of the creation of a covenant, not an individual; so in the case of baptism from John the Baptist—who introduced the beginning of the final phase of the new covenant kingdom of the Messiah (Luke 16:16)—until that final phase of the kingdom with its consummated new covenant was completed ca. the events of AD 70, that application of water to all who comprised the bride-remnant signified her betrothal-purification for her marriage to the Lamb, after which she would no more forever have need of such purification (cf. Rev. 21:27). Furthermore...

The ritual of baptism denoted/pictured immersion in suffering; the book of Mark, the theme of which is known to be "Christ, The Suffering Servant," immediately begins with the idea of Jesus' baptism by John (after which, of course, He went to be tested in the desert for 40 days).

When some of Jesus' disciples (via their mother) asked to sit at His right hand in the kingdom, Jesus employed this cultural knowledge of baptism in Matthew 20:22-23 in His reply, viz. that they would be baptized (immersed in His sufferings) because they, like Him, would suffer at the hands of their own for their decision to accept Jesus as the Messiah and die to the old covenant mode of existence (cf. Col. 1:24); as any well-versed Bible student knows, Paul wrote often of this concept in his writings. And...

It isn't hard to see how our first-generation brethren fulfilled the role of the birth pangs Jesus & Paul spoke of while being born into a full-fledged/mature body of reconciliation (cf. John 3:1ff). Besides...

One of the purposes of Jesus was to eliminate the need or purpose of ritualism.

Transitioning His people out of a ritual-based religion (which had proven to be more detrimental to man's spiritual well-being than helpful to it) into a solely faith-based religion, God's Son (primarily through His inspired apostles' work and writings) disparaged rituals, especially so when it came to binding them.

Galatians deals with the observance of days, months, seasons, years, and circumcision, concluding that he was afraid all his labor among them was in vain (4:10-11) and that "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything" (6:15).

Colossians deals with the observance of foods, drinks, festivals, and sabbaths, concluding that such "things perish with the using" and that they "have an appearance of wisdom ... but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh" (2:22-23).

Romans deals with the observance of some of these exact same things, concluding however that God's kingdom isn't about foods and drinks (14:17), which leads us to Hebrews which is almost exclusively devoted to such ceremonies and rituals and how that they were all for the purpose of pointing toward (as is *eis*) something better in fulfillment of them. In fact...

Colossians 2:17 even indicates that to keep rituals like those is to deny their fulfillment: they "are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." So...

Hebrews 9 supplies us with some important information pertaining to the entirety of this outline: speaking of various ceremonies that many were still observing (even at that time ca. AD 63), Paul wrote in verses 9-10 that they were "symbolic for the present time" and were "concerned only with foods, drinks, various *baptisms*, and fleshly ordinances imposed [by God, of course] until the time of reformation." NOTE: even all the differing types of pre-reformation (pre AD 70) baptisms were included as being imposed until what they pictured was fulfilled. (Just add "baptisms" to the Romans 14:17 list and see how you feel about it.) So...

All those, dare I say, Old Covenant baptisms that (like numerous other types & shadows) looked forward to something real, spiritual, and eternal later obviously weren't expected to be continued, and especially not bound, after all things were fulfilled and accomplished around the time of the events of AD 70.

(Tony E. Denton, 7/13.)