

## **BAPTISM IN JESUS' NAME FOR CONSISTENT PRETERISTS**

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

First-generation Christians 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).

The Spirit was the pledge and thus guaranteed that inheritance: Paul wrote to believers in Ephesus that they "were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise—the guarantee of [their] inheritance for redemption" (*apolutrosin*)" (Eph. 1:13b-14a).

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

In Hebrews (AD 63) Paul wrote of those who were *about to (mello)* 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*...

Jesus, in Mat. 25:34, declared that at His coming He would 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 around 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 an 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. Second 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 executed 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; in fact, a year after I came to my conclusion presented in this study, a non-preterist writer & brother in Christ wrote, "John's baptism was a forward-looking act in that it anticipated the Coming One; the baptism in water practiced later by the disciples of Christ was a visible acknowledgement of the fact that He Has Come and that He atoned for our sins at the cross and washed us clean in His blood—a gift we accept by faith and evidence in a participatory act reflecting a death, burial, and resurrection. In neither dispensation was/is the act itself sacramental; it was/is, rather, symbolic." The entire article can be found here: <http://www.zianet.com/maxey/reflx627.htm>. And this brings up the thought-provoking question: What was the purpose of Jesus' baptism per John chapter 4?) Anyway...

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 Old Covenant age around 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 water-immersed Christians:

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., almost as if he might be misconstrued, the subjunctive "should" of verse 4 is clarified by Paul in verse 5 as definitely being "future" aorist subjunctive.)

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. Similarly...

To Hebrew Christians scattered about the Roman Empire, this same Peter wrote in First Peter 1:3 of how that they had been "begotten" (as Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus in John 3) to ... What? ... "a living hope." See, since the hope of Israel had gone unfulfilled for 40 generations, it had become essentially a dead hope—one so many, perhaps most, doubted would ever come to pass, which is perhaps what was in Solomon's mind when he wrote that "hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Prv. 13:12). BUT, once Messiah Jesus came and then sent His disciples the Spirit to go around preaching the at-hand fulfillment of all things (Luke 21:22), they were discipling folks by baptizing them (Mat. 28:19), "begetting" them "to a LIVING hope"—YET still merely a "hope." The point is simple: They were begotten into "hope," not into hope-*fulfilled*; as with Paul in Romans 6, their begotten-baptism was "toward" fulfillment, "toward" the reality of the hope, "toward" resurrection, etc. (Personally, I don't want to be a restorationist who teaches first-generation baptism into a mere "hope." [And, no, I don't refuse to baptize folks.]) 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 First 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 around 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 would logically no longer be necessary (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 their Husband-Messiah and die with Him to the Old Covenant mode of existence (cf. Col. 1:24). As any well-versed student knows...

Paul wrote often of this concept in his writings; besides, it isn't hard to see how our first-generation brethren fulfilled the role of the birth pangs Jesus and Paul spoke about 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 typological "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 in *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 shadows 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 and 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.

Let me share something else to ponder upon in conclusion: Just as baptism placed Old Covenant Israel into a relationship with Moses (cf. 1 Cor. 10:2) right before their 40-year cleansing to enter the promised land, so baptism placed the remnant-bride of Old Covenant Israel into her betrothed, Jesus (the Second/Last Moses) right before her 40-year period of cleansing, aka purification (cf. Mat. 13:41). Is it not easy to see how water baptism pictured the cleansing concept for the bride in preparation for her wedding to the unblemished Lamb? Once the bride was sanctified, whole, complete, etc., she was then presented to the Father for approval (1 Cor. 15:24), after which she became Yeshua's wife, and the two were then assimilated into God's consummated kingdom, from then on being considered the kingdom of God AND Christ (Rev. 11:15 & 22:3). With First Corinthians 15:24 and context in mind, in fact, consider that being in a relationship with Christ before the fulfillment of all things when God became "all-in-all" didn't necessarily mean that they were in their intended relationship with Yahweh, for that couldn't actually be considered a consummated concept until after the Messianic High Priest fulfilled Hebrews 9:28 and all that accompanied it.

A The-End Question: When we were futurists, what did we believe would happen to baptism after Jesus returned?