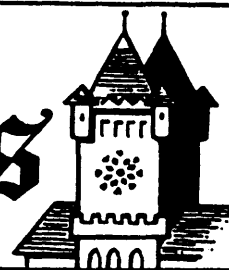


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STUDIES IN BAPTISM

by Ray R. Sutton

No. 14: Baptismal Resurrection

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6:4-5).

Baptism and resurrection are two ideas that are often found together in Scripture. Paul uses these concepts in direct relation to each other with such ease that we are motivated to study this connection. The battle between Protestants and Romanists has been over **Baptismal Regeneration**. In the process, Protestants have lost sight of an obvious union between baptism and resurrection. Therefore, first we want to see how these ideas are drawn together. Then we will be able to examine the parallels between them.

First, the relationship between these ideas is found in the "breath of God." When God created man He "breathed into him the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). As a result, the man became a "living soul." Life comes from God, and the specific means for imparting that life is by God's breath. This establishes an important pattern in Scripture. The most notable reference where God breathes again is after Christ's resurrection. While Jesus is with His disciples, the text says, *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost (Jn. 20:22)*. Here, we see that the breath of God is associated with the Holy Spirit.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Hebrew and Greek words that translate "spirit" can also be translated "wind" or "breath." God's breath which proceeds from the Father and the Son, as we have seen in the passages above, is the Holy Spirit. This observation enables us to see why the coming of the Holy Spirit is called a baptism (Acts 1:5). God breathed, in a biblical-historical (cf. Vos's **Biblical Theology** for this distinction) sense, at Pentecost, and the disciples along with the others were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Second, certain events in history are viewed as baptisms as well as points of resurrection. The Apostle Peter calls

the Flood a baptism. And by its comparison to Christian baptism, the Flood was a resurrection. He says, *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:21)*. Thus, our answer of a good conscience was in Christ's resurrection. And it would follow that since the Flood is analogous to the baptism-death of Christ, the Flood is also comparative to the Resurrection. This explains why the great water events of the Bible (e.g., crossing the Red Sea, 1 Cor. 10:2 calls it a baptism) are spoken of at points where the people of God were saved.

Third, lexically, death in the Bible is referred to as being dried up (Ps. 36:9). The word from which we derive the English word "skeleton" means "dried up." This word is often used to mean "hardened" (Rom. 9:18; note that the **Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament** by Abbott Smith, p. 409, says that the word translated "hardened" comes from the word which means "dried up."). Thus, one who is dead, the reprobate, lacks God's water. In Ezekiel 37 we find that it is the breath of God which raises the dry bones. This is a resurrection which fits with our previous conclusions.

Thus, baptism is resurrection. The two should not be viewed separately. Having established that Scripture connects these ideas, we should look at them together. One will sharpen our understanding of the other. They have parallel features. An analysis of these will fructify our comprehension of both ideas. Let us proceed to the specific parallels.

First, both resurrection and baptism refer to **purification**. In Numbers 19 we read of the Old Testament process of resurrection. If one touched or came in contact with a dead animal, he was unclean. To be unclean was the same as being ceremonially dead. The unclean thing or person was to be cut off (Lev. 14). The only way to be brought back to life was through the purification water referred to in Numbers 19:17ff. The washings herein described are defined as baptisms in Hebrews (Heb. 9:10). Thus, the Old Testament baptism was a resurrection.

This meets with agreement in the New Covenant. In the great resurrection passage of the entire Bible, 1 Corinthians 15, Paul refers to the baptism of Numbers 19. He says, *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead (1 Cor. 15:29)?* Given the problem of the church at

Corinth with Judaizers (1 Cor. 8 & 9), and the Old Testament practice of being baptized ceremonially for the dead, it is clear what Paul was talking about. And this is the only interpretation that fits the resurrectional context. Every time some Judaizer came in contact with a dead relative he had to be purified (baptized). This was a resurrection. And Paul argues that if Christ were not raised from the dead, which all the ceremonial washings pictured, then their baptisms (resurrections) are in vain.

Second, both baptism and resurrection are **re-vivifying**. One who is baptized is alive (Acts 22:16). The Scripture speaks of life as coming from the water and the Spirit (Jn. 3:5). Here is another passage that cannot be interpreted fairly unless one sees the place of baptism correctly. The same Trinitarian concept of not separating but distinguishing the work of the Spirit from baptism must be applied. The two are one, yet distinct. Nevertheless, we find the relationship between life and baptism. Life comes only from the resurrection of Christ. Thus, re-vivification is part of both ideas.

Third, baptism and resurrection are **familial**. That is, they have application to families. When people are resurrected, the resurrection comes in multiples. One often sees the resurrection of the first born son (Lk. 7:12, note "only son;" 1 Kgs. 17:17ff.) in Scripture. This kind of resurrection typifies the Resurrection of Christ who was the true first-born. When He is raised, His whole house (the church) is brought to life. But these resurrections of the first-born son are not just pictures of the death of Christ. They portray a redemptive-historical process. For example, when the son of the woman at Nain (Lk. 7:12) was resurrected, her whole family was resurrected. If he had died, then her family would have ceased to exist with her own death. Thus, God saves households (Acts 16:32-33). And this explains the rationale behind God's claim (Acts 2:39) through baptism on those households. Baptism and resurrection are family oriented.

Fourth, baptism and resurrection are **cosmic**. 1 Corinthians 15 clarifies the cosmic thrust of the resurrection of Christ. Paul says that the resurrection of Christ means that eventually the entire world will be raised (vs. 20-28). This does not mean every single individual shall be saved; that would be a universalism that is not taught in Scripture. But it does mean in the words of the writer to the Hebrews that the Old Creation will be resurrected like the changing of a garment (Heb. 1:11-13). This same cosmic emphasis is brought out in Ezekiel 47. The chapter concerns water. It is purification water from the temple. God's cleansing water is spoken of as a flowing out and covering the whole world. The same effect we saw in 1 Cor. 15 confirms the cosmic parallel between the two concepts under study.

In conclusion, the one who has been baptized into Christ has been resurrected. The Bible treats the one who has been baptized as a new creation. It appeals to the believer as a new person transformed through the power of the resurrected Christ (Eph. 4:17-24). Thus, we must appreciate our baptism as a baptism unto Christ that has resurrected us unto life.

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

by Gary North

No. 15: The Possible Dream

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver (Prov. 8:17-19).

The Bible does not promise all men riches, fame, or power. It does not promise health or wealth to all men. But it does promise wisdom to all those who will seek it. This is one quest which will always be rewarded, and rewarded with treasures greater than gold or silver. But wisdom in Proverbs 8 is an anthropomorphic representation of God. We do not discover wisdom, meaning God, by means of some trial-and-error inductive reasoning process. We must begin with God (wisdom) as our operating first principle. The New Testament proclaims: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). To get wisdom, we must first have wisdom. We must believe in order to exercise faith. We must be regenerate in order to seek salvation, for the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit; they are foolishness (anti-wisdom) to him (1 Cor. 2:14).

Solomon is famous for his request of God. Like the pagan stories of the man who is offered a wish by a genie in a metal lamp, Solomon asked in a dream for a gift from God, the greatest of all gifts, wisdom. Because he asked for wisdom rather than long life, riches, or victory in war, God granted him his request (1 Kings 3:6-14). But the lure of idol-worshipping women — wisdom's feminine antithesis described in Proverbs 7 — finally overcame his wisdom (1 Kings 11). Which feminine principle of life will men worship: the harlot's invitation or God's wisdom?

Men seek after economic long-shots. They gamble rather than work. They pan for gold rather than set up stores to sell other miners the pans. They hope for the miracle and neglect the productive. They seek out the "big deal" and forfeit numerous little deals that would equal the pay-off of the big one, given enough time. They chase rainbows and ignore the sunshine. They "bet against the house" and pass by a sure thing.

God's wisdom is personified as a woman who loves those who seek her. The pagan's "lady luck" is also female, but she loves no one. She "smiles" on some men, but she is as capricious as her name implies. She simply cannot be trusted. God is not an impersonal, capricious force in the universe; His words can be trusted. Seeking after Him is not an exercise in futility. The universe is not impersonal, or "rigged" against mankind. It is rigged against ethical rebels, but it is simultaneously rigged in favor of those who seek God.

Proverbs 7 and 8 personify the two masters, God and Satan, by means of anthropomorphic language: the two

women. The great harlot of Babylon — the antichrist's world order — is female (Rev. 18). The universe is not impersonal, but radically personal; men serve one of two masters, not impersonal forces, whether inevitable (fate) or random (luck). Men inescapably seek after one woman or the other, the harlot or wisdom. Both call to men: the harlot from the twilight (7:9), and wisdom from the high places and the gates of the city (8:2-3).

How soon should men seek wisdom? Early. By seeking wisdom early, men are guaranteed success. The harlot calls to men in the twilight, to spend the night illicitly. Wisdom calls early, as at daybreak: the day is to be given over to seeking wisdom. He who is diligent in the quest will be rewarded.

By comparing the treasures of wisdom with the precious metals, Proverbs drives the point into the minds of men: *the most valuable asset of all is wisdom*. Solomon was already wise when he asked for wisdom; he recognized that he was asking for the most valuable of all assets. Wealth subsequently flowed to his kingdom (I Kings 10:14-21). The fame of his rule spread everywhere (I Kings 4:31). The powerful and wealthy came to him for counsel (I Kings 10:1-13). In short, he achieved indirectly, through wisdom, the goals that other men seek directly through intrigue, magic, and violence.

God speaks clearly to men. They can understand His words because they are made in His image. He communicates to them by means of analogies and metaphors. When He compares the value of wisdom with gold, He speaks a universal language. Like the "pocketbook parables" of Jesus, the economic language of wisdom personified can be grasped by anyone, in the days of Solomon or late in the twentieth century.

The universality of gold and silver as desirable assets to lay up in one's treasury reinforces the words of wisdom. When men think about the universal forms of wealth, they think of gold and silver. Across the globe, men understand the value of the precious metals. Abraham's wealth was counted in these metals (Gen. 13:2). When men speak out against the economic importance of gold and silver, they speak nonsense. When John Maynard Keynes spoke of gold as a "barbarous relic," and when Lenin promised that the Soviets would someday use gold for public urinals, they proclaimed utopianism ("utopia": no place). These two spokesmen of our age spoke for both sides of the Iron Curtain, and both men had contempt for Christian society. Keynes the homosexual and Lenin the atheistic revolutionary knew enough about Christianity to prefer the harlot of the twilight.

The quest for wisdom is man's only "sure thing." Achieving wisdom is better than achieving gold and silver. Thus, the pay-off is very high, and the risk of failure is zero, if men continue to seek wisdom's face. Solomon ceased the quest and went to the harlot in his later years. He died, and his son — the son to whom the Proverbs were addressed — rebelled and lost the kingdom. The quest must be begun early, and it must not end as twilight approaches.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CALENDAR

by James B. Jordan

No. 20: Rationalism and Reductionism

When God set up the world, He made it complex. The fact that the world is unified, and can be understood, testifies to the Oneness of its Creator, but the fact that the world contains many different separate and irreducible elements testifies to the Threeness of its Creator. Sinful man, however, does not like to have to live in a world which is too broad and complex for him to master intellectually. Man wishes to reduce the complexity as much as possible, so that he can rationally grasp it as a whole. Thus, rationalism as a sinful tendency in mankind always involves reductionism as a methodology.

Let's take a look at some of the separate and irreducible cycles of time God has placed in the world. First of all, there is the week of seven days. Our modern calendar leaves the week alone, so that our weeks plow along unadjusted to the day of the year. This is because 7 does not divide into 365 evenly, and additionally there is an extra day in leap years.

Based on a fundamental misinterpretation of Leviticus 23, Curtis Clair Ewing in his booklet *Israel's Calendar and the True Sabbath* (long out of print) argued that certain sabbath days were fixed in the Jewish solar calendar. Ewing believed that the seven extra festival sabbaths of Leviticus 23 were the same as weekly sabbaths, so that the weekly cycle shifted and began anew when these days came around during the year. Ewing held that the months and weeks of the Old Testament were adjusted to the year, with extra days struck in to make up the difference. (A summary of Ewing's position is found in R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, pp. 134ff.)

Ewing's arguments are unconvincing. He says, for instance, that the day before Passover could never have been a weekly sabbath day, since the work of house-cleaning (to remove leaven) was required on that day. In answer, we may say that the house-cleaning was done two days before Passover in such years. There is no good reason to believe that the Old Testament week was any different from ours, except for the shift from Sabbath Day to Lord's Day.

It is a testimony to the strength of the Christian faith that the unadjusted week cycle was not accommodated to the appointed-rest-day pattern of the Julian calendar, and that it has withstood the assault of attempted rationalistic calendar reforms since then.

Second, there is the *month*, regulated by the phases of the moon. God appointed the moon to govern time and seasons (Gen. 1:14, 16), and established worship on the days of the New Moon (Numbers 28:11-14). Holy convocations were not required, but they did develop (2 Kings 4:23). Civic occasions also developed around the New Moon (1 Sam. 20:5, 18, 24). The New Covenant is pictured as involving sacramental worship on the New Moon (Is. 66:23; Ezek. 46:1-6). Some kind of sabbathing grew up around the New Moon (Amos 8:5). (The new moon is the

appearing of the crescent.)

The cycle of lunar phases is about 29.53 days. Thus, the lunar cycle is wholly incommensurate with days and weeks. A year of alternating 29 and 30 day months comes to 354 days, with eleven days left over. It is not known how the Jews accommodated their lunar months with their solar year; had they not done so, the months would have shifted through the year until Passover was celebrated in autumn instead of spring. It makes most sense to hold that later Jewish practice reflects earlier, and that an extra month was added at the end of the year from time to time to make up the difference.

Our modern calendar has arbitrary months, which pay no attention to the phases of the moon. Thus, God's ordinance of the moon to govern time is completely ignored by our civil and church calendars, though agriculturalists still pay attention to the phases of the moon. Is reformation needed in this area? We shall discuss the lunar cycle in detail in the next essay in this series.

Third, there is the year. The year is governed by the sun, as well as the day. The early essays in this series explored the Biblical symbolism surrounding the march of the sun-clock through the year. At this point we simply wish to observe that the solar year is not compatible with solar days, or with weeks, or with months, being 365.24 days, roughly, in length. Thus, every four years we have to insert an extra day, except that every hundredth year is not kept as a leap year (1800, 1900, 2100), except every fourth hundredth year (2000). Uh, that's right; it's known as the Gregorian Reform of the Calendar (simple leap years were the Julian Reform). Got it?

The Bible presents a solar day, and a week of seven solar days, with a lunar month, and a solar year. Even in Biblical times, rationalistic groups were unwilling to live with this complexity; the *Book of Jubilees* divided the solar year into sections, so that months and weeks fit into prescribed slots. (The *Book of Jubilees* was a pseudographical commentary on Genesis generated by one of the heretical sects within inter-testamental Judaism.)

Finally, we might call attention to a *stellar* cycle, for the stars are mentioned in Genesis 1:16, though they are not said to be appointed as seasonal governors. The precession of the earth is its oscillation on its axis in relation to its rotation. Imagine a gyroscope as it begins to slow down; it starts to sway in a circular motion. The earth sways in its precession in a period of 25,800 years, approximately (From the earthly standpoint, it is the stellar sphere which precesses.) When the rising of the sun coincides with the line of the equator in the spring, we have the vernal equinox. As the sun rises on that day, it comes up through a constellation of stars. Because of precession, the starry sphere is constantly shifting. The equinox has shifted 70° since the year 3000 B.C.

The Bible refers to constellations in Job 9:9, 38:31, and Amos 5:8. Assuming that common translations are correct the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades are referred to. At least we know that the Pleiades and Orion were known in the ancient world as the heralds of spring and autumn respectively. At the same, the Bible nowhere keys events to the procession of the heavens, or to the precession of the earth.

We are left, then, with three separate calendar systems: a solar week, a lunar month, and a solar year. No one of these can be reduced to either of the others. To do justice to God's creation we must reckon with each, and with all together.

Sinful man wishes to avoid this complexity, however. Thus, the Church has tended either to magnify the year to the exclusion of the sabbatical week, or (as in Puritanism) to isolate the week to the exclusion of months and years. Historically, perhaps because of the influence of the Roman Julian calendar, which had arbitrary solar months, ignoring lunar phases, the Church has ignored the Biblical testimony concerning the lunar month. Generally speaking, however, the Church has preserved the sabbath pattern in the way it observes the Lord's Day, and has preserved the seasonal (annual) Biblical patterns in the Church Year. We shall have to look at what the Bible says about lunar patterns in the next essay in this series.

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