

Title: **THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

Text: Exodus 14:19-31

Subject: *Baptism Symbolized at the Red Sea*

Date: Tuesday Evening — March 11, 2008

Tape : Exodus #69

Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and Larry Criss*

Introduction:

When I announced to you Sunday morning that my subject tonight would be **THE OLD TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**, being good Baptists, I am sure many of you thought to yourselves, “Baptism is a New Testament ordinance. Baptism is not taught in the Old Testament.” If so, you were both right and wrong. Baptism is a New Testament ordinance; but it is taught in the Old Testament.

BAPTISM NOT CIRCUMCISION

However, contrary to the opinion of many, it is not taught in the Old Testament rite of circumcision. In fact, there is no evidence in the Word of God that there is any correlation at all between the Old Testament rite of circumcision and the New Testament ordinance of Baptism. **Circumcision in the flesh in the Old Testament was symbolic, not of baptism, but of the new birth, regeneration, the circumcision of the heart, that circumcision made without hands by God the Holy Spirit.** As circumcision in the Old Testament ceremonially sealed to the circumcised child all the blessings of God’s covenant with Abraham, by the new birth the Holy Spirit seals to the heaven born soul all the blessings of God’s covenant grace in Christ (Romans 2:28-29; Ephesians 1:12-14; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:10-12).

(Romans 2:28-29) “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: (29) But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.”

(Ephesians 1:12-14) “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

(Philippians 3:3) “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

(Colossians 2:10-12) “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (11) In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (12) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

So baptism is not taught in the Old Testament rite of circumcision. **Baptism is not a sacrament**, a means of grace, or a ceremony by which grace is conferred to a person. **Baptism is not, as we are often told, “an outward sign of inward grace.”** But baptism is very clearly taught in one place in the Old Testament. It is taught in Exodus 14:19-31. That is our text.

(Exodus 14:19-31) “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and **the pillar of the cloud** went from before their face, and stood behind them: (20) And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but it gave light by night *to these*: so that the one came not near the other all the night. (21) And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and **the waters were divided**. (22) And the children of **Israel went into the midst of the sea** upon the dry ground: and **the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left**. (23) And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, *even* all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. (24) And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

the Egyptians, (25) And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. (26) And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. (27) And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. (28) And **the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.** (29) But **the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.** (30) **Thus the LORD saved Israel** that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. (31) And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.”

You might be scratching your head and saying to yourself, “Bro. Don, there is no mention of baptism here.” But it is; and we know that it is because God the Holy Spirit tells us plainly, in 1st Corinthians 10, that this passage is talking about baptism (1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Romans 15:4).

(1 Corinthians 10:1-4) “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (2) And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (3) And did all eat the same spiritual meat; (4) And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

(1 Corinthians 10:11) “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Those things recorded in Exodus 14, the Spirit of God tells us, happened to the children of Israel as examples to us, that we might learn from them.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

(**Romans 15:4**) “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

What was involved in Israel’s baptism unto Moses? What does their baptism teach us about the New Testament, gospel ordinance of baptism? Israel was “*baptized unto Moses*” in a manner typical of our being “*baptized unto Christ*” (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). **The word translated “unto”** in 1 Corinthians 10:2 is the very same word that is translated “*into*,” when the Spirit of God speaks of our baptism with reference to Christ.

(**Romans 6:3**) “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”

(**Galatians 3:27**) “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

UNTO, NOT INTO

Obviously, the word is better translated “*unto*.” The children of Israel were not baptized into Moses, but “*unto Moses*,” with reference to Moses; and we are not baptized into Christ, but unto Christ, with reference to Christ. **Baptism does not put us in Christ.** We are in Christ by the grace and power, by the operation of God (1 Corinthians 1:30-31). **We are baptized unto Christ, with reference to him and his work for us** (Romans 6:2-7).

(**Romans 6:3-7**) “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (4) 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. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection: (6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (7) For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

TYPE AND ANTITYPE

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

Now, let's look at both the type and the antitype, the typical picture here at the Red Sea and its fulfillment in believer's baptism.

First, we will consider **the physical picture**. I want us to look at this first, because those who teach sprinkling as a substitute for baptism tell us that the outward sign is not important, but only the spiritual meaning. That sounds very pious; but **if the sign is corrupt the meaning is corrupt**. Baptism is truly a spiritual act; but it involves a physical act. Israel was "*baptized ... in the cloud and in the sea.*" They passed through the sea with Moses, under the cloudy pillar; and the sea became the grave of Israel's enemies.

Our baptism unto Christ also, of necessity, involves a physical act. Just as Israel was baptized in water, we are baptized in water, according to the commandment of our Lord (Matthew 28:19). **Our baptism is always portrayed as a burial in a watery grave**. We are baptized with Christ symbolically, buried in the watery grave with reference to Christ and our salvation by him.

PICTURE OF DEATH

Second, baptism, then, is **a picture of death**. When Israel walked into the Red Sea, they walked into a grave; and God's children today, by their baptism identify themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.

- Baptism **separated** Israel from Egypt; and baptism symbolically separates believers from unbelievers, truth from error and true religion from false religion.
- Israel's baptism in the Red Sea was an act of utter **commitment** to Moses; and our baptism is our publicly avowed commitment to Christ.
- Israel came out of their watery grave as a **resurrected** people; and we come out of the waters of baptism to walk with Christ, as a resurrected people, in the newness of life.
- Israel came up out of the Red Sea **in hope** of entering into and possessing the Land of Canaan; and the believer comes up out of the watery grave in hope of eternal life with Christ in heaven.

AN INITIATION

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

Third, Israel’s baptism unto Moses was **an initiation into an entirely new state of existence**. Here is a mob of unruly people led out of Egypt by Moses. Until they came to the edge of the Red Sea they were nothing but that, just a mob. They had no organization and no government. They were simply a mass of people who were following a leader out of bondage, out of slavery, into what they hoped would be freedom. All they had to unite them was the fact they were fleeing from something they did not like.

Then they went through the sea; and as they came out onto the other side they were no longer a unruly mob. — They were a unified nation under the leadership of one man. They belonged together. They were made a unit, a body under the direction of Moses. Moses was their leader; all that Moses stood for, they stood for. From then on Moses was the recognized authority and the spokesman for God unto that people. **Now, they are called “the church in the wilderness”** (Acts 7:38).

- Their baptism **united the whole nation to one man**, even Moses, just as our baptism unites all believers to one Man, the God-man our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- And as they were all united to Moses, they were all **united to one another**. So it is with God’s church. We are united to one another as one body, because we are all united to Christ our Head.

Israel’s baptism unto Moses was a baptism **experienced by none except those who had just been delivered** from what is called the “*house of bondage*” (Exodus 13:3, 14). It is first in the list of things Paul cites, an initiation into a new state of existence. Similarly, baptism unto Christ is an ordinance reserved for believers, for those who have been delivered from the “*snare of the devil*” (2 Timothy 2:26), for those who have experienced God’s saving grace. In a word, baptism is reserved for believers only. It is **the first act of obedience** required by the Lord Jesus. It is our **initiation into the church and kingdom of God** (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41; 22:16).

(Matthew 28:19) “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

(Mark 16:16) “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

(Acts 2:38-41) “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. (40) And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (41) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.”

(Acts 22:16) “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Israel’s baptism unto Moses was immediately followed by their eating “spiritual meat” and drinking “spiritual drink” from Christ the Rock. So, too, the believer’s baptism unto Christ is followed by his partaking of the Lord’s Supper, in which we feasts upon Christ’s body and blood, symbolized by the bread and wine (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

DECLARED ALLEGIANCE

Fourth, Israel’s baptism unto Moses was a declaration of their allegiance to Moses. Following Moses into the Red Sea, they became his disciples, obligated themselves to acknowledge him as the only mediator between themselves and God in that day (Deuteronomy 5:5; Galatians 3:19).

In the same way, by our baptism unto Christ, God’s elect declare their allegiance to Christ. We declare ourselves to be his disciples, men and women voluntarily obligated to him, as the only Mediator between us and God (1 Timothy 2:5).

Passing through the Red Sea at his command Israel defiantly renounced Pharaoh and committed themselves to Moses, and voluntarily bound themselves to obey him. And our baptism, if it means anything, is a line

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

drawn across our lives, and proclaims that we are now the pledged servants of the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.

THUS SAVED

Fifth, now, look at **Exodus 14:31**. Remember, this whole thing is talking about Israel's baptism unto Moses. And in verse 31 we read, "*Thus the Lord saved Israel.*" Does that mean that baptism is saving? Let's look at another passage — 1 Peter 3:21.

(1 Peter 3:18-22) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: (19) By which (***By the Spirit of God Christ preached through Noah to those of his generation.***) also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; (20) Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (21) 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 a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (22) Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

"*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.*" — **What does that mean?**

- As Noah's ark was a picture of Christ and salvation by him, it was also a picture of baptism and our salvation by Christ.
- As the ark was God's ordinance, and not man's, so baptism is the ordinance of God, not the ordinance of man.
- As in the ark Noah and his family were immersed in the wrath of God, in baptism the believer is immersed in the watery grave, the symbol of judgment, death and wrath; but never experiences that judgment, death and wrath.
- Baptism does not save by putting away sin, the filth of the flesh, but it is the figure (the picture) of salvation and the answer of a good conscience toward God, by which we profess and portray our salvation in, by ad with Christ.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

A SOLEMN WARNING

Sixth, now, if you will turn to 1st Corinthians 10 again, I want you to hear this solemn warning: — Many who were baptized unto Moses in the Red Sea perished in the wilderness, being overcome with temptations they faced in their pilgrimage.

(1 Corinthians 10:1-17) “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (2) And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (3) And did all eat the same spiritual meat; (4) And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (5) **But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.** (6) **Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.** (7) Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. (8) Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. (9) Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. (10) Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. (11) Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (12) **Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.** (13) **There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.** (14) Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. (15) I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. (16) The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (17) For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

In all these things, the children of Israel are examples to us.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM**

- Examples to warn us of danger, the dangers of this world, of covetousness which is idolatry, and the danger of unbelief.
- Examples to warn us against presumption.
- Examples to assure us of God's faithfulness.
- Examples to remind us that we are one in Christ. — Let us deal with one another as the members of Christ.

That is, if I am not mistaken, the Old Testament doctrine of baptism, and the New Testament doctrine of baptism, too. May God the Holy Spirit give us grace, day by day, to walk with Christ according to the profession of our baptism in the newness of life: — *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”* (Romans 6:6).

Amen.