

The Old Testament's Hidden Baptisms

By Ron Bailey

Extracts from messages published on SermonIndex.net
(by kind permission of Ron Bailey)

Table of Contents

Introduction.....3
The Flood.....4
The Crossing of the Red Sea.....5
Naaman's Baptism.....6
Isaiah's Baptism.....8
Ezekiel's Baptism.....9
Conclusion.....10

Introduction

In a series of posts to a forum on www.sermonindex.net Ron wrote about the “The Old Testament's Hidden Baptisms” with a view to trying to discover what the word 'baptism' means by just using the scriptures. Having re-discovered the meaning of the word 'baptism' he would then go on to see how this fits in to a definition of 'baptism in the Spirit'?

Here are extracts only to do with the “The Old Testament's Hidden Baptisms”.

The Flood

Peter tells us that the word baptism has a 'type'. A type is a template; it is something that defines a shape. In Romans Paul says Adam was a 'type' of Him who was to come. There is something about the 'shape' of Adam which is repeated in the accomplishments of Christ. It is not the reality but the shape; 'the print of the nails' that Judas wanted to explore is the word 'type'. He would see the shape in the wound. The scriptures also refer to 'shadows'; **For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh.** (Heb 10:1 ASV) Types and shadows have the same characteristics; they give the outward shape of the thing, but they are not the things themselves. They have no colour, no texture, no details, no life. But even so they can be useful as a starting point.

who sometime disbelieved, when once the long-suffering of God did wait, in days of Noah--an ark being preparing--in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water; also to which an *antitype* doth now save us--baptism, (not a putting away of the filth of flesh, but the question of a good conscience in regard to God,) through the rising again of Jesus Christ, (1Pe 3:20-21 YLT) The antitype is the reality of which the type was just the outline. This long introduction is to say that according to Peter Noah's Flood was a 'type' of baptism. So although Noah's Flood was a historical fact it was also a revelation of something that would come later. It was a picture of baptism.

Please forget everything you ever knew about 'baptism' and let's start from scratch. If Noah's Flood was the only definition of 'baptism' what would we think about. If your church were to announce a service of Believer's Flood what would you think about? If your denomination says it believes in the Flood of the Holy Spirit would that open up some new lines of thought? Go on, test the idea. If I said tell me what Noah's Flood/Baptism was all about what would be the first thought that entered your head. I suggest the first thought would be 'judgement'. Noah's Flood/Baptism was a death sentence on sinners. The corruption of sin was brought to a standstill by God's action. The old world was buried in water. It also had another effect. Every drop of water had the effect of lifting Noah higher. So the judgement of God on sin actually separated Noah from the sin that God was judging. It brought a whole creation to an end and started again with a new family. I sometimes wonder if Noah took off the covers and said to Mrs Noah, 'old things have passed away, behold, all things are become new'?

What can we learn then from the Bible's first baptism? Baptism is judgement on sin. Baptism is separation from sin. Baptism is the end of the old and the beginning of the new. Remember God is beginning to build a sense of what He means by baptism. Whenever He uses the word 'baptism' in the future we must remember that this is His first 'definition' of baptism.

The Crossing of the Red Sea

I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (1Co 10:1-4 ESV)

Who would have guessed that the events of the Passover and the Crossing of the Red Sea were really a baptism? These prepositions are fascinating too. 'in' the cloud and 'in' the sea have the word 'en' meaning 'in' (or in an instrumental sense.. by) The medium 'in' which they were all baptised was 'the cloud and the sea'. It doesn't say who the Baptizer was, although it was plainly God Himself, but it does have this phrase 'into Moses'. This is the preposition 'eis' meaning 'into' or 'towards'. This preposition is frequently used in the sense of destination and shows the destination of this baptism. The purpose of this baptism is to put the people 'into Moses'.

This is a wonderful facet of truth that we would never have seen if Paul had not used this amazing phrase of being 'baptised into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.' Let's see if we can do a similar exercise to the one on Noah's Baptism. If we were to ask questions about the Crossing of the Red Sea, what would our answers be? What are the main truths captured in this story?

In fact, there are surprising similarities to Noah's Baptism. This was God's final judgement upon the Egyptians; this was a death sentence on the sinners. The destructive power of the Egyptians was brought to a standstill by this event. Their old master was brought to death in the cloud and the sea. The cloud first separated Israel from the Egyptians and then the closing waters of the Red Sea sealed their fate. The baptism that ended the destructive power sealed their borders and left Israel on one side and their past on the other. So the judgement of God on sin actually separated Israel from the sin that God was judging. It brought a whole creation to an end and started again with a new family. I sometimes wonder if Moses paused on the other side of the water and said, 'old things have passed away, behold, all things are become new'? (I cut and pasted that from the last study!)

There is something else about this baptism that we could have mentioned in Noah's Baptism; this baptism united the destiny of a people with the destiny of the Covenant holder. Let me explain. If we had studied the story of Noah we would have discovered that God's covenant was with him personally, and others benefited as a result of their right relationship with Noah. They were united with Noah as a result of Noah's Baptism. Now a similar thing is seen in the story of Moses' Baptism; the people are identified with and united to Moses. Their destinies have become inseparable. This baptism has joined them to Moses. So we are beginning to see a pattern in these hidden baptisms.

1. Judgement on Sin/Our Enemy
2. Separation from Sin/Our Enemy
3. A decisive end of the old.
4. A solid beginning of the new.
5. A union with the the Covenant Holder.

Do we dare to begin to ask the question 'if this is what the word "baptism" means, how does this fit in to a definition of 'baptism in the Spirit'? The word 'baptism' can't signify one thing consistently in the types and another in the reality. Hold the question, we have two more hidden OT baptisms to consider.

Naaman's Baptism

As with many words used in the New Testament the word 'baptism' was not new. The Hebrew Bible had been translated into Greek somewhere around 250BC (the Greek LXX (Septuagint c 260 BC) was the bible used by the early Christians, and when NT quotations differ from their OT original it is usually because the quotations are from the LXX. This doesn't mean that the Greek LXX is to be preferred to the Hebrew behind our bibles. It means that in the times quoted there is truth visible in the Greek LXX which was not obvious in the Hebrew) For the Jews of the 1st century AD Greek was their everyday language, particularly in the area of Galilee where most of Jesus' disciples had their homes. These men knew the LXX better than the Hebrew text, and Greek OT used the word 'baptize' on at least three occasions.

The first instance was in a vivid story. The ASV translating from the Hebrew text has; **Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.** (2Ki 5:14 ASV) But the disciples had grown up with a text which, in the Greek said; **2 Kings 5:14 So Naiman went down, and *dipped* himself seven times in Jordan, according to the word of Elisaie: and his flesh returned to him as the flesh of a little child, and he was cleansed.** (LXX Eng Trans) where the word 'dipped' is ' βαπτισατο' - baptized.

Perhaps this is a good time to say more about the Greek words to explain what they mean. There are several associated words:

baptO means to dip, and sometimes 'to wash by dipping'

baptizO means to submerge, and which should not be confused with baptO.

The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. e.g. #Mr 16:16. 'He that believes and is baptised shall be saved'. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle! (Bible Study Magazine, James Montgomery Boice, May 1989). (the cooks will see immediately the distinction is between 'blanching' and 'marinading'.)

Naaman, then, marinaded/submerged himself seven times. Seven in the scripture is a number which often indicates perfection, thoroughness or completion. There could be no doubt about Naaman's 'baptism'. I think we can safely presume that the miracle took place not gradually but instantly as Naaman emerged from his seventh submerging. The consequence was that the battle scars and leprous scars of this gnarled old warrior were instantly gone and his **his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.** Remember that the ideas associated with baptism are perculating down into the nation's memory of what is involved in baptism. Naaman became 'new and clean'. Naaman's personal history recorded in his scars was gone, completely.

We can see some ideas here which link with the earlier 'hidden baptisms'. This marked the end of

the old and the beginning of the new. It is linked this time not with judgement but with cleansing. If we continue our speculation we might imagine Naaman saying 'old things have passed away, all things have become new.' This is the first Bible 'baptism' where the candidate got wet!! Noah and family and Moses and the Israelites were kept completely dry during their baptisms.

There is something else that this baptism effected. Naaman became an adherant of Jehovah. He was a changed man in more ways than his skin. This 'flesh as a little child' effect may have had future impact upon Jewish baptism as we shall see later. This links baptism with conversion and 'new birth'.

This is slow work and I hope you don't mind that, but it will be important to understand what the word 'baptism' means before we try to understand what 'baptism in the Spirit' means.

Isaiah's Baptism

Another portion of scripture which has 'bapizO' in the Septuagint is in Isaiah; **Therefore are my loins filled with anguish; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman in travail: I am pained so that I cannot hear; I am dismayed so that I cannot see. My heart fluttereth, horror hath affrighted me; the twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me.** (Isa 21:3-4 ASV) For the word 'affrighted' the Septuagint has **κα νομ αμεβαππ ζει** horror baptized me

The Greek word 'baptizO' is the word that classical authors used to describe a ship lost at sea; the ship was 'baptized' or overwhelmed. Irretrievably sunk. This is sense in which the LXX uses the word, but this passage is a terrifying passage of scripture. It is found in the section of Isaiah where God's judgements are coming upon the nations. All of these visions are terrifying but Isaiah singles this one out for a special introduction; **A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous man dealeth treacherously, and the destroyer destroyeth. Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.** (Isa 21:2 ASV) It is a grievous vision. In this vision he sees the judgements of God coming on Babylon. As a prophet he identifies with his prophecy and experiences, in the Spirit, the sense of the judgement upon Babylon. He uses the language of childbirth, and later refers to this judgement as; **O thou my threshing, and the grain of my floor! that which I have heard from Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.** (Isa 21:10 ASV) (We shall come back to the picture of the threshing floor later in these studies)

Experiencing the final judgement of God upon Babylon and its sin, Isaiah says 'he was baptized in horror'. He was utterly overwhelmed by the sense of God's righteous judgement upon sin, but even in the midst of this there is glimmer of hope represented in the picture of the travail that will bring forth.

Can we see any of our familiar traits in this use of 'baptize'? Well, it is God's destructive visitation of judgement upon sin, and the judgement will ultimately result in the freeing of Babylon's slave peoples. It is a separating experience that will leave people on either side of a divide. It is also one of the OT's most vivid pictures of Gethsemene and Calvary, but that will need to wait for a while in our studies.

The template for the idea of 'baptism' is remarkably consistent. It is a destructive act of God which separates men from their slave-masters. Are we beginning to get an idea of what 'baptism' signified to Bible reading 1st century Jews?

Ezekiel's Baptism

As far as I am aware this is the last OT reference to the idea of baptism. Again it is in the Septuagint, the early church's KJV, that the word is used. This time it is in Ezekiel; **Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity:** (Eze 23:15 KJV) I expect you are looking at the verse and wondering where the word 'baptism' could be hidden here. Well, it's not the word 'baptizO' but that word 'baptO' signifying to dip and it is the word translated 'dyed'.

Our Greek New Testament has this word too; **And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.** (Rev 19:13 KJV) That word 'dipped' could be translated 'dyed'. When ancient people dyed a cloth in their purple dyes, they 'dipped' the cloth in and it became 'united with' what it had been dipped into. The words they used were 'baptO' and 'baptizO'. This is why the New Testament speaks of 'the baptism' in this way; **Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,** (Rom 6:4-5 NASB) 'baptism' unites the thing immersed into the medium into which it was baptised. The two become inseparably one. Once you had two items cloth and purple dye, but now you have one item; purple- cloth.

There is no picture of judgement here, but the introduction of an idea that a baptism can effect a union. It is an irreversible event which leaves old things passed away and everything become new, or at least, purple!

Conclusion

This brings our little count of hidden OT baptisms to 5.

1. Noah's Baptism
2. Moses' Baptism
3. Naaman's Baptism
4. Isaiah's Baptism
5. Ezekiel's Baptism.

From Noah's Baptism we see that:

- Baptism is judgement on sin.
- Baptism is separation from sin.
- Baptism is the end of the old and the beginning of the new.

From Moses' Baptism we all see:

- A solid beginning of the new.
- A union with the the Covenant Holder.

From Naaman's Baptism there is the link with

- conversion.
- 'new birth'.

From Isaiah's Baptism we see again that:

- It is a destructive act of God which separates men from their slave-masters.

Finally from Ezekiel's Baptism we see that:

- A baptism can effect a union.

Having re-discovered the meaning of the word 'baptism', I hope it helps you in your definition of 'baptism in the Spirit'?

May God bless this study to you.