

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

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Using the Berean Principle

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 (1Cor 15:29)?

The Berean principal will lead seekers to a place of truth and understanding that the commentaries could never do. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, obeying the rules of interpretation, and trusting by faith in the promises of God to understand His Word, every seeker will find the wonders and awesomeness of God revealed to him.

Acts 17:10-11

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

1 John 2:27

But the anointing which ye [the believers] have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you [Holy Spirit discernment]: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

To understand the meaning of *baptism for the dead* in 1Cor 15:29, let's ask ourselves a couple of questions.

1Cor 15:29

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?

What does it mean to be baptized for the dead in verse 29? To answer this question in view of the context, verses 28, 30-31 give the most revealing details. This entire chapter is a defense of the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of those who are saved by faith in His redemption. The words *else*, *they*, and *for* in verse 29 must be held to the context to achieve the proper outcome. Let's take a look!

Else = in regard to all that I (the Apostle Paul) have just said
They = believers in Christ's resurrection who are identified with Him by believer's baptism

For = Strong's # 5228; in (on) behalf of

At times, Jesus used the words *cup* and *baptism* to refer to His death and the death of His disciples. If you see this now, it will give you a broader understanding of how baptism can be used in different ways. Look at these verses here:

Matt 20:20-23

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.
22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup [death was in the cup] that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism [baptism of death] that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.
23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

All of Christ's disciples died a martyr's death with the exception of John. Each of them were willing to surrender all and follow Christ even unto physical death knowing that they would be resurrected. Romans 6 brings the truth of baptism for the dead, in two senses, into plain view.

When a saved person is baptized as a Christian, he is already dead. This is true because there are two ways that one can lose his life — figuratively and physically. Dying to self and becoming a follower (disciple) of Christ is an example of dying in a metaphorical sense. That is why Christian baptism in a figurative sense is a baptism for those who are already dead. It is a baptism of losing one's life — dying to self and surrendering that life to Jesus Christ and His gospel. It is death to sin and the old life. When one dies in a figurative sense, he raised up as a new creature in Christ and all things become new. He is like a caterpillar that turns

into a butterfly. It is a miracle. When a Christian dies physically, he will be raised up (resurrected) in the likeness of his resurrected Lord. The resurrection of the Christian is the victory over sin and death through faith in a new and everlasting life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here are the verses where Jesus spoke of dying in a figurative sense when one surrenders his life (loses is life) to Christ at salvation.

Mark 8:34-35

34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself [the pleasures of sin], and take up his cross [dying to self, mortifying the flesh], and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life [dying to self and surrendering his life to Christ] for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

When the Paul wrote Romans he expounded the point that he made in 1Cor 15:29 concerning baptism for the dead.

Rom 6:1-5

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin [we that have lost our lives], live any longer therein?

3 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.

The point given here is the key to understanding why someone would be baptized for (in place of) of someone who is already dead.

The main doctrine of Christianity is the resurrection. The main person of Christianity is Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God. God becoming *all in all* (in 1Cor 15:28) find its climax in Revelation 21 when Christ has defeated the final enemy which is death. Jesus then surrenders all His authority back to the Father and becomes subject to Him. When this happens, God is said at that point to be *all in all*. Here are the verses that present this truth.

Matt 28:18

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Now take a look at these verses in 1Corinthians 15:22-29 and see that His power given back to the Father.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end [Rev 20:15], when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

29 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?

Here is the connection to verse 29. In-other-words, the whole redemption plan makes no sense and has no victorious and lasting ending without the resurrection to eternal life in Jesus Christ. If there is no resurrection, why should anyone give up his life (good or bad) and be baptized for dead? The dead in verse 29 included Jesus Christ's baptism (dying in our place) and every true Child of God who has lost (died) his/her life for Christ's sake and His gospel.

Then Cometh The End

1Cor 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

These verses describe the end of this present world and the beginning of Christ's eternal kingdom of righteousness where there will be no more sin and death. At that time Christ's last enemy, death, will have been put under His footstool. From then on and forever there will be no more diversities of authority or different functions of the Members of the Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Christ being the fulness of the Godhead bodily will be enthroned in the New Jerusalem which has been prepared for His eternal glory.

Rev 20:15

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

2Pet 3:10;12

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be

dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

This is the beginning of Christ's kingdom of righteousness.

Rev 21:1

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Rev 21:22-27

21 And I saw no temple therein[no temple in the third heaven any more]: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk [walk in the city, not live in it] in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The key to all that has been said lies in these verses where Christ said: Mark 8:34, *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.*

No denying yourself, no salvation. No taking up your cross, no salvation. No following Christ, no salvation. No losing your life, no salvation. No gospel witness, no salvation. This may be why Jesus said, “Few be there that find it.”

Mark 1:14-15

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel [What gospel? The kingdom gospel].

When is the last time that you heard anyone preaching the gospel that Jesus preached — maybe never. That’s why people no longer have a longing to be in the kingdom of Christ on a new earth where all things will be made new. Maybe the Lord will open the eyes of those who long to be with Him and fill their hearts with the joy of His coming kingdom. To God be the glory for all He has done for the Children of His Kingdom.