

# GOSPEL GUIDE

UNDERSTANDEST THOU WHAT THOU READEST?  
HOW CAN I, EXCEPT SOME MAN SHOULD GUIDE ME? (ACTS 8:30,31)

## *In This Issue:*

Baptizing Them • 1

Saved Like Noah • 3

A Portrayal of the  
Crucifixion of Christ • 4

The Gift of God • 5

Jehosaphat,  
King of Judah • 6

Differences Between  
Orthodoxy  
and Romanism • 7

Parental  
Responsibility • 8



## Baptizing Them

**IT DOES SEEM STRANGE** that with all the information which God has given in His word that there should be so much misunderstanding concerning baptism. Some say that it is no part of the gospel. Yet, in the great commission Jesus said, “Go ... preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15,16). One would have no more right to deny that baptism is a part of the gospel than he would that faith is a part of the gospel. Jesus has commanded both.

**I. What is baptism?** Whatever it is, it is something done by the disciples of Christ. Here the administration and act of baptism are involved. Christ said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:18-20). The disciples had the responsibility of going, teaching, making disciples, and baptizing these disciples—learners—in the

name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is further seen that whatever baptism is it is something done to disciples, (learners) by disciples. Here the subjects of baptism are involved. It is something done in the name of, or by the authority of, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Here the purpose of baptism is involved. Whatever it is, it is something done either in water, or the Holy Ghost, or fire. (Matthew 3:11). Here the element of baptism is involved.

**II. What is the element of the baptism of the great commission?** Whatever the element, this is the

After 33 years of publication in printed form, GOSPEL GUIDE now appears in electronic form. It is an eight page publication designed to teach basic principles of the gospel of Christ.

Mail Address:  
PO Box 1109  
Athens, AL 35612 US

e-mail Address:  
Gospel-Guide@MyWay.com

web page:  
www.gospel-guide.org

Editor: Billy Norris

## BAPTIZING THEM

baptism that the apostles preached from Pentecost on. On the day of Pentecost when Peter preached the first gospel sermon in fact, and the people asked what to do to be saved, Peter answered, "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" (Acts 2:38). This is the baptism enjoined by the great commission because both Christ and Peter specified that this baptism is a prerequisite for salvation, or remission of sins. It turns out that this baptism is baptism in *water*. When Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius and his household, he said, "Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, and as they went on their way, and came to a certain *water*, the eunuch said, "See, here is *water*; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). The sole purpose of baptism could

not be for entrance into a religious denomination, for religious denominations came later, a product of men, not God. Since Philip and the eunuch were the only ones present on this occasion, there were no others present to follow the later practice of voting them in or out.

The baptism commanded in the great commission could not be Holy Spirit baptism because baptism in the Holy Spirit was administered only by Christ; whereas the baptism of the commission was to be administered by the disciples. John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*, and with *fire*" (Matthew 3:11). The baptism of the great commission could not be Holy Spirit baptism because baptism in the Spirit was a promise, while baptism in water is a command. Jesus promised the apostles, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). At the household of Cornelius, when Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?" he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:47,48). The baptism commanded in the great commission could not be Spirit baptism, for this baptism was to reveal and confirm the word of God, while baptism in water was for the remission of sins. Read the following scriptures: John 16:13; Acts 1: 5; 2:1-18; Hebrews 2:3,4; Acts 2:38.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred on only two occasions. The

apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in fulfillment of the promise of Christ to them, to enable them to carry on the work of the Lord, and so to speak that day that all the people gathered in Jerusalem from many countries could every man understand in his own language what was being said (Acts 2). The second occasion was also to bear witness. This time Cornelius and his household were baptized in the Holy Spirit in order that Peter and the other Jewish Christians could understand that the Gentiles were also subjects of the gospel.

The baptism of the great commission could not be fire baptism because that also is to be administered by Christ (Matthew 3:11). It is the baptism of punishment for the disobedient. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15).

**III. What is the form of the baptism of the great commission?** How did the disciples go about baptizing people? The conversion of the eunuch shows the action of baptism. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38,39). Though this passage tells us that they both went into the water and both came up out of the water, it does not tell us what took place in the water. However, other passages tell specifically what

## BAPTIZING THEM

takes place in baptism. In describing the action of baptism, Paul says that we are “buried with him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:4). Baptism in water is a burial and a resurrection from the watery grave, whereby one is raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

### **IV. What is the purpose of the baptism of the great commission?**

It is for the remission of sins, for Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter said, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ...” (1 Peter 3:21). Bap-

tism is the act that brings us into Christ, where is every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3), into the death of Christ and to the blood of Christ, wherein we have our redemption (Ephesians 1:7), into the body of Christ, or the church, of which He is the Savior (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:23; 1:22,23). “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

### **V. Who are the subjects of the baptism of the great commission?**

People of “all nations,” guilty of sin,

who are willing to hear and learn the gospel. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them...” (Matthew 28:19.) People who believe: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16: 16). People who repent: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Therefore, all accountable people must be baptized for the remission of their sins; but it is to be understood that infants are not subjects of the baptism of the great commission because they are not guilty of sin “...for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:14). — BN

# Saved Like Noah

**WE READ OF NOAH** saving his house. “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Hebrews 11:7).

### **By Faith**

Noah saved his house by faith. This is a chapter on faith (Hebrews. 11:1). Noah is an example of faith. This verse illustrates Noah’s faith. From this we can learn, not only the importance of faith, but also what it is and what it does.

### **Being Warned Of God**

Noah was warned of God. God told him that he would destroy man He had made

together with all beasts and creeping things and the fowls from the face of the earth (Genesis 6:7). That was a most solemn warning, but it was no greater warning than we have today. We are told that the time will come when the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all her works will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10). Do you think Noah had a greater warning?

Noah was given a message of escape. He was told how to escape this dreaded calamity. Men today are told how to escape that which the Lord has promised for this universe. Christ is that escape. He is the savior (Matthew 1:21). His gospel gives the instructions and thereby saves (Romans 1:16). When people obey the gospel (Mark 16:16), they are expected then to live in such a way as to be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless (2 Peter 3:14). As it was up to Noah to either heed or reject the message, so it is up to us to decide which we will do.

### **Concerning Things**

#### **Not Seen As Yet**

There never had been such a flood as God promised (Gen. 6:17). Eyes had never seen anything like that. This was not

## **A PORTRAYAL OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST**

The Galatians to whom Paul was writing had obeyed the gospel but were being persuaded to return to the law of Moses. "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?" (Galatians 3:1). There was something that portrayed to the Galatians the crucifixion of Christ. When they were baptized, or they had seen others baptized they had clearly seen a portrayal of the crucifixion of Christ. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3,4). Many claim that baptism is not essential to salvation. Weird indeed, for baptism is a portrayal of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the only way God has provided for the alien sinner to reach the blood that cleanses from all sin.

## **SAVED LIKE NOAH**

a matter of experience with Noah. Thus Noah acted on faith, not on sight, in doing what God told him to do.

Our warning has to do with something which concerns things not seen as yet. We have never seen the earth burning up. We have never seen the heavens passing away. But we believe that will take place, and we prepare in view of that. We walk by faith and not by sight. We do not even have a sign to tell us when these things shall be, for the Lord will come, effecting this without any announcement, like a thief in the night comes (2 Peter 3:10). If we believe as Noah believed, we will react as Noah reacted. He got busy doing that which he was told to do.

### **Moved With Godly Fear**

The record says that Noah moved with godly fear. He respected God enough to believe that he meant what he said, and so he moved. Noah moved to save himself just like he would have moved if he could have seen the waves coming in the distance when the Lord told him to prepare.

If we respect God enough to believe Him, we will do what he tells us to do in view of what he is going to do with this earth. We will obey the gospel that we may have remission of sins (Mark 16:16). Once having done this, we will continue to follow his instructions for godliness even as if we could see the earth catching on fire and the heavens beginning to pass away in the distance right now (1 Peter 3:14).

### **Prepared An Ark**

Believing what God told him, Noah prepared an ark like he was told to do. He did this by faith. He did it just as

if he would have done it had he been able to see the waters coming (Genesis 6:14-16,22).

If we believe that the Lord will do as He has said He will do, then like Noah, we will prepare. We will confess our faith in Christ, repent of our sins, be baptized for the remission of our sins, and then live as righteously as we can. We will begin now even as if we could see the fire and the passing of the heavens. That is the nature of faith. It causes people to obey. The faith that saves is a faith that works (Galatians 5:6).

### **To The Saving Of His House**

Noah saved himself and his house from the flood. This was by grace, faith, and works. It was by grace (Genesis 6:8). It was by faith (Hebrews 11:7). It was by works in that he did what he was told to do. He was even saved by water (1 Peter 3:20). This was so in that the water which drowned others bore the ark safely.

Like Noah, we look for salvation. We too are saved by grace, faith, and works. We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8). We cannot save ourselves without God's provisions. We are saved by faith (Acts 16:31). We are saved by works. (Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12). We have to do what we are told to do. Even faith is said to be a work. "Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:28,29). After saying that Noah was saved by water, Peter said we are saved by baptism (1 Peter 3:21). We are saved by grace, faith, and works. This is being saved like Noah.

— Curtis E. Flatt

# The Gift of God

**“THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).**

I suppose a more accurate way of stating the theme of this lesson would be “The *Gift(s)* of God,” and those growing out of His love and grace. Although the apostle Paul does mention only one in our text. I want to call your attention to some four other “Gifts” in addition to that crowning gift.

## Physical Life

We are told that the life of the first man resulted from God “breath(ing) into his nostrils the breath of life ...” One of the clearest and forthright statements of the origin of our physical life, which most of us take for granted, is Paul’s statement to the Athenians (Acts 17:25): “... seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things,” and then again in verse 28: “... in Him we live and move and have our being.” We should be constantly aware of this great fact: that *every breath* of our lives comes from God! Then we should use it in doing His will.

## Material Blessings

Although God never intended that material things come to be so important as they do with most people (even many “Christians”), He is well aware of our physical *needs*, and has provid-

ed for them. James 1:17 tells us that “every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights ...” “I conclude that the “good” gifts refer to the material necessities of life. Jesus assures the faithful, dedicated child of God that all his essential needs shall be supplied. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things (material, as shown in the context) shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33). He had instructed, in His model prayer, that we pray, “... give us this day our daily bread ...” (v. 11).

Surely, as “the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib” (Isaiah 1:3), we should recognize that every good material blessing we receive comes from the God of heaven; and this should move us, out of gratitude, to use those blessings in harmony with the Giver’s wishes.

## “Every Spiritual Blessing”

Far beyond the importance of our material blessings, even “our daily bread,” are those blessings which have to do directly with the eternal welfare of our souls—our spiritual blessings. Again, and of necessity, these are *gifts of God*. There is no other source from whence they could come!

The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 1:3 that He “hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing ...” “All necessary spiritual provisions have been supplied by Him who made us “in His own image,” and thus in need of spiritual blessings. Since it is our *eternal* welfare which is of most concern with God, He would have us be more concerned about these spiritual blessings than with the material.

## “His Only Begotten Son”

God’s *greatest gift* to man was His blessed Son, that He might be the sacrifice for our sins. God had decreed that “the soul that sinneth, it must die” (Ezekiel 18:20); and “all have sinned ...” (Romans 3:23). The only way man (you and I) could escape “the wages of sin” (Romans 6:23) was that some sacrifice be substituted in our stead. Animal sacrifices, although ordered by God for hundreds of years, could not take away sins. “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:4). Thus, according to the will of God, He “gave His only begotten Son” in our stead. The apostle Paul tells us that “God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). This was God’s *supreme gift!*—for you, and for me!

The apostle Paul saw it (as each of us should) as a *personal*

## JEHOSAPHAT, KING OF JUDAH (2 Chronicles 17)

1. *The Lord was with him, for there was a reason.* “Now the LORD was with Jehosaphat because he walked in the former ways of his father David... sought the God of his father, and walked in his commandments...Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehosaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD (vv3-6).

2. *He saw a great need, and supplied it.* He sent out leaders to teach the people the word of God. “So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people (v9).

3. *Jehosaphat’s leadership brought security to Judah.* “And the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehosaphat. Also some of the Philistines brought Jehosaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks” (vv10,11).

Our country today desperately needs men of *great faith in God* to lead like Jehosaphat.

## THE GIFT OF GOD

gift. In Galatians 2:20 he says, “... who loved *me* and gave His life for *me*.” Christ gave his life on “The Old Rugged Cross,” that you might have remission of sins. Did He die in vain?

### Eternal Life

In our text we read, “... the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Eternal life has been made available for every accountable creature. Although Satan would have all *perish!* (1 Peter 5:8), God “is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). He has, therefore, made it possible that all might escape that “second death” (Revelation 21:8) and have “life everlasting” (Matthew 25:46).

Since it is our *eternal welfare* that God is most concerned about, I believe we can conclude safely that *all* that He has done, is doing, or shall do for us is with that goal in mind—that we may be with Him eternally.

### Conclusion

An oft asked and much debated question is, “Are God’s gifts, or blessings, *conditional* or *unconditional*?” We noted that He “gave His only begotten Son” for the sins of the whole world (cf. 1 John 2:2). Thus, eternal life is offered by God to all, without “respect of persons” (Acts 10:34).

This being so, why will not all men be saved? The Bible abundantly teaches to the contrary

(cf. Matthew 7:13f). It is simply that, although salvation is the “free gift of God,” God has stipulated some *conditions* which every accountable soul must meet if he would have His “gifts.”

The alien sinner must *believe* that Jesus is the Christ (John 8:24), *repent* of his sins (Acts 17:30), *confess* his faith in Christ before men (Matthew 10:32f), and be *baptized* “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). The child of God must be “faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10); and when he sins he must repent of those sins and ask God’s forgiveness (Acts 8:22), or else he will again be in danger of “death” (James. 5:19f).

Now when man meets those conditions and receives God’s blessings—even eternal life in the world that is to come—he has “nothing of which to boast.” He has acted *by faith* (which comes from hearing God’s instructions—Romans 10:17); and thus “boasting is excluded” (Romans 3:27).

Through the “Amazing Grace” of God you may have all his “gifts.” They are available for you. Will you reject them by refusing to meet His conditions—to *obey His commandments*? Christ is the “author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey Him*.” (Hebrews 5:8,9). You may have His *gift* of eternal life *if you will meet His conditions*.

— Charles G. Maples, Sr.

# Differences Between Orthodoxy and Romanism

**THE CATHOLIC WORLD** is divided into two major branches. The largest of these is the Roman Catholic Church. The other, composed of several independent national churches, goes under the banner of Eastern Orthodoxy. Both developed during the Middle Ages from the ashes of the apostasy from the New Testament church which occurred during the first centuries of the present era. They traveled a common road for many years, but in 1054 A.D., after almost two centuries of controversy, they officially divided and went their separate ways.

Because of their common origin, Romanism and Eastern Orthodoxy have much in common. However, there are a number of sharp differences which make the modern ecumenical movement a hopeless effort among Catholics. These differences center in three areas.

**1. Administrative Differences.** Eastern Orthodoxy does not recognize the pope as the head of the church and they reject his claim to infallibility. At the time of the great schism the bishop of Rome was regarded by the Eastern churches as simply the head of one of the five great patriarchates of "the one church." They regard him as no more than this today. The papacy is one of the greatest obstacles to fellowship among the Eastern and the Roman churches. But while Orthodoxy does not recognize the papal monarchy, they have an oligarchy of "patriarchs" that is no more scriptural than the papacy. And while the Eastern churches reject the pope's claim

to infallibility, at the same time they claim the church itself is infallible. Thus, the decrees of the ecumenical councils (the last of which was held in 787 A. D.), oral traditions accepted by the church as a whole, and such like are accepted as infallible. The fact of the early church's apostasy (1 Timothy 4:1-3) is proof that the church is not infallible. The only thing infallible in this world is the inspired word of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

**2. Doctrinal Differences.** The Roman church holds that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, whereas the Eastern church says He proceeds from the Father only. This "filioque" controversy was one of the major causes of the division between the two branches of Catholicism. The Roman church "corrected" the Nicene Creed by adding the word "filioque" (and from the Son) to the original creed which said the Spirit proceeded from the Father. The Eastern church has always pointed to this revision of

the creed as the most significant sign that the Roman church deviated from the orthodox faith.

The Eastern church rejects many cardinal doctrines of the Roman church. They reject the doctrine of purgatory and the doctrine of "the immaculate conception of Mary" (that she was conceived without "original sin"). They hold that Mary was born without "original sin" and that she was cleansed from "actual sin" at the time Christ's birth was announced to her. Orthodox Catholics do not believe Mary was bodily assumed into heaven. They reject all "saints" canonized by the Roman church after 1054, unless they are also proclaimed "saints" by Orthodox synods. They do not believe the pope has power to grant indulgences (to transfer the surplus of good works by Christ, Mary, and the "saints" to others living or dead).

There are two significant differences between Romanism and Orthodoxy in regard to marriage. Whereas the Roman church permits divorce and remarriage upon no ground, the Eastern churches allow members to divorce and remarry upon the grounds of adultery, treason, and unbelief. Christ permits divorce and remarriage upon one ground (Matthew 19:9). Roman clergymen are forbidden to marry, but Orthodox priests are permitted to marry. However, Orthodox bishops cannot marry. Paul said, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled." (Hebrews 13:4).

**3. Ritualistic Differences.** Among the differences in ritual that

## PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

In all three dispensations of time God has placed the responsibility of moral and spiritual training of children upon the parents. He was pleased with Abraham for meeting this responsibility. "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him" (Genesis 18:19). In the Mosaic Dispensation this responsibility was also given to parents. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7). Parents have the same responsibility today—to bring up their children in "the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Today many parents have forsaken their responsibility. Godless parents are bringing up godless children, who in turn are bringing up godless children. The problem is exponential. This multiplying of evil destroys nations and consigns the guilty to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:41).

## DIFFERENCES

are most noticeable are those concerning baptism and communion. The Roman church withholds communion from members until the age of 12, but in the Eastern church it is given to babies. The Roman church serves bread and wine to the clergy only; in the Eastern church both elements are served to clergy and laity. An Orthodox priest may offer only one liturgy on the same altar in one day, but Roman priests may offer many masses (the equivalent to the Eastern liturgy) on the same altar in one day. The Roman church pours water on the head for baptism, while the Eastern churches immerse the candidate three times. The Eastern church also practices chismation (anointing with oil) at the time of baptism (usually infants), but the Roman churches administer it to children between the ages of 7 and 11.

In these doctrinal matters the Roman and Orthodox churches not only differ with each other, but both differ with the Bible. Infant church membership is unknown in the New Testament. The doctrine of "original sin" upon which the practice of infant baptism is based is itself a false doctrine (Ezekiel 18:20). Baptism in the New

Testament is an immersion in water. It was performed upon penitent believers who confessed their faith in Christ and was for the remission of sins committed by the ones being baptized. The Lord's Supper in the New Testament was not a liturgy or a mass, but was a simple memorial of Christ's suffering for us on the cross. It was observed by early Christians upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). And since all Christians were priests, there was no special priesthood to stand between the worshippers and God or to give validity to their communion.

The differences between Romanism and Orthodoxy, while important to us in dealing fairly with what each teaches and practices, are of no particular importance with God. One error replaced by another would not please Him. Man is not necessarily benefitted spiritually when he is converted from one error only to embrace another. The alternative we must strive always to offer is not a choice between two errors, but the choice between error and the truth of God. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

— Earl Kimbrough

### Contact Information: