

11-14 These questions are intended to show that the Bible makes some definite statements about baptism - it is not just a sign but an effectual sign - it does what it says. But the power of baptism does not rest in the water but in what it represents and conveys. Here the point is not that baptism saves, but that baptism saves through the resurrection of Jesus. It is not the washing of water that saves, but the inner work - the answer of a good conscience towards God. Yet baptism is what we are commanded by Jesus to do, the call to repent and be baptised is part of the gospel message and we are told that baptism is the means God uses.

14. The first passage from Mark 16 says explicitly that he who believes and is baptized will be saved. It says explicitly that he who does not believe will be condemned. Therefore baptism without true faith is ineffective.

What Jesus doesn't deal with here is when a person believes and is not baptised. Given the weight attached elsewhere to faith, and the example of the thief on the cross, we assume was not baptised, it seems that baptism is not essential, but we are told to make disciples and baptise them so it is not optional either.

16. I hope you will do this carefully. It is easy with some of the more difficult passages in the Bible to focus on the problems and disputes and ignore some of things that are radiant and clear and Christ shines through what Peter writes.

It would be good to keep your answer to this question in mind as you turn to prayer.

*David Phillips,
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The First letter of Peter

LEADERS NOTES

Week 7 (1 Pt 3.10-22)

1. Beware that the first question covers verses 10-12 as well, which is why that is included in the reading, but that was part of the previous study.

If anyone has an aunt Agatha then hopefully she lives up to her name. Agatha derives from the Greek *agathos*, meaning good which occurs 6 in these verses plus once in verse 21.

In verse 16 the NIV has "clear conscience" which is the expression we use in English. It illustrates the merit of a translation like the NIV which might read better in English but at times misses repetition of words which is so important in the Bible.

(A note on words for those who are interested:

The word good is significant in the Bible and generally carries a moral quality just as does our word goodness. You will remember that Jesus said that God alone is good - Mk 10.18 etc.

In English translations of Genesis God repeatedly describes the creation as "good". The ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament used a different word in Genesis 1, which is a bit more like our word beautiful and we can see why they would choose that word to describe the creation.

However, 1 Peter 3.10-12 quotes Psalm 34 where the Hebrew uses the same word (*tov*) as in Genesis 1 and where the ancient Greek translation did use the word *agathos*.

From Genesis 1-3 in total it does seem that we should understand that God is not just declaring His creation to be beautiful but to be pure, unstained and unspoiled physically, morally, spiritually. This seems to be what Jesus means in saying that God alone is good. Even though we can display goodness, and can see the goodness of the creation, yet we and it are spoiled, by sin and the fall.)

3. We looked at five ways in which we are encouraged to rejoice though grieved by trials (Study 2 questions 3-10)

- we are guarded for salvation through faith (v5) and suffering purifies faith so as to show it is genuine (v7)
- we don't see Jesus now in the flesh but we can run with endurance the race before us looking to him (v8 & Heb 12.1-2)
- we are receiving the outcome of faith, that is the salvation of our souls (v9)
- we see that trials are part of God's good purpose for us
- the end in view is glory, to receive glory and to bring glory to God.

4. The verses don't quite answer these questions but the "but" at the start of verse 15 suggests there is a link.

Part of honouring Christ as holy means recognising He is Lord and therefore that He is in control and his purposes are not unholy. That should help us to have confidence in the midst of troubles.

Some manuscripts have "God" rather than "Christ" in verse 15 and hence some translations (KJV & NKJV for example) have "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts".

7. In Acts 24 Paul was before Felix the Governor of the province. In Acts 25 he was before Festus the Governor and then later in the chapter before Festus and King Herod Agrippa.

Verses 19-20 have been considered by some as one of the most difficult passages in the Bible to understand. I think there are at least five main views:

- After his death Christ preached to those who had died since the flood giving them a second chance. However, there is no other support in the Bible for the idea of a second chance.
- When Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pt 2.5), spoke, it was Christ who spoke through him and so the gospel was proclaimed in Noah's day. Augustine of Hippo made this idea popular but it doesn't seem a natural reading of the words.
- At His death Christ went and released from limbo those who

- repented before the flood. This is part of the medieval idea of limbo but doesn't fit well with what Peter says here.
- Christ was preaching to specific fallen angels, called "sons of God", who had married "daughters of men" (Gen 6.2). This is a relatively new idea but relies on a speculative interpretation of another difficult passage.
- After the resurrection Jesus proclaimed his victory to fallen angels ("the spirits") who were bound until the judgement (see Jude 6 & 2 Pt 2.4). Some of these had resisted God in the days of Noah as at other times. This also seems to be a relatively new explanation.

As explained in the notes however obscure the meaning of the verse it provides a link between the suffering of Christ as an example to us and the benefits of His suffering for us.

Incidentally some today refuse to accept that the death of Christ accomplished anything other than giving us an example of godliness through suffering. These verses, like many others, show how false that idea is.

10. It is important to get the idea of type and antitype the right way around not least because we tend to think of anti- something meaning the opposite.

The flood was the type of baptism, just as David was a type of Christ and so on. That is they gave people in the past a rough idea of something else that was yet to be.

Christ is the antitype, he was the thing foreshadowed by David. In the same way here baptism is the antitype, the finished product. The flood gave a rough idea, and still does, of what baptism would be about.

In the Prayer Book baptism service, and those that follow its reformed theology (which does not include the modern CofE series) we refer to this correspondence, and likewise with the rescue through the Red Sea.