

TOM'S BAPTISM LESSON

By Darrell Farkas

Standing at the door of Mike's home, Tom waited as he heard footsteps approaching. A young man of thirteen enthusiastically greeted him, "Oh, Mr. Tom, thank you so much for coming. Please, come in."

After entering, and meeting with Mike's parents, they sit to discuss the reason for being called to their home.

Mr. Thompson, Mike's father, begins with, "As you know, Mike has come of age enough to understand what it really means to commit himself to Christ. He made known his desire to be water baptized, since he knows that is one of the first steps of the Christian walk. I've heard you talk on baptism and hoped you would share your understanding with Mike."

Mrs. Thompson brings coffee, milk and biscuits for the three men.

"Thank you Mrs. Thompson."

"You're more than welcome."

Tom looks toward the young man, "Mike, I'm glad to hear when a young man is concerned about following Jesus' commands and have matured enough to know what commitment really is.

"I understand you've been taught the basics of baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and that this baptism doesn't actually save you."

"Yes, Mr. Tom. The elder, Mr. Norman, talked with me about the need to follow my having become one of Jesus' disciples in the public testimony of baptism."

"So he told me. Let me ask you this, what are you counting on for your salvation?"

"Well, a hymn we sing all the time puts it, 'by His blood and righteousness'. I have called upon God the Father, in a heart of true repentance, to apply the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for my sins. Having done that, I have committed myself to follow Jesus as His disciple. I know He has forgiven and saved me, so now I am supposed to make a public confession of my, I think the word is consecration, through water baptism."

"Very good. You seem to have a clear understanding of what you're doing!" Tom replied with a joyful heart.

"When I was your age, I really had no understanding as to what water baptism was really all about. I was told it was a type of being buried in death, the laying back in the water part, then the coming out of the water being a type of Jesus' resurrection. I knew the things you mentioned, but really didn't see why being dunked was so significant. After all, John the Baptist came baptizing first and the Jews baptized Gentile converts to Judaism. So I didn't understand *why* it carried the death, burial and resurrection meaning. Certainly the Jews, or even John the Baptist probably didn't understand the death, burial and resurrection symbolism, but they used this symbol of water baptism."

Mr. Thompson chimed in, "I heard you talk about this at a potluck dinner and hoped you would share it with my son."

"Absolutely, I love to talk about these things. Great biscuits and coffee by the way Mrs. Thompson!"

"Thank you, Mr. Tom, would you like some more?"

"Sure, helps keep me going, thanks."

Mr. Tom continued his lesson, “Mike, to understand this, we have to think back to the Old Testament and come to an understanding of things the way they did. We are talking ‘water’ here. In ancient biblical thought, water carried a number of meanings.

“We know it meant ‘life’, for Jesus spoke of that often and we see it in the New Testament, but it also carried the symbolism of humanity as a whole. The Psalms makes this really clear. The seas, specifically, are humanity.

“In the Psalms we see the seas are locked in their confines, the sea-beds, by God’s command. These seas froth in mighty waves upward, i.e. heavenward.

“We also see that God sits as king upon the waters. He ultimately controls humanity. That is just a touch on the surface of water. I hope I haven’t lost you yet?”

Mike and his father answer jointly, “I think I’m following.”

Mr. Tom continued, “Good, that lays a foundation for the next step. Look in your Bibles in Genesis 1:6-8:

“6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

“Verse 9 continued the settling of the waters into seas, those bounds I spoke of.

“So here’s the clincher:

“Humanity is earth bound, as those seas. It rages against God in rebellion to His will. The waves roar heavenward, foaming, but fall back to their confines on earth. They can do no more against God in heaven.

“The saved of humanity are like the clouds. When we are saved, spiritually we are transformed. Before, we can only get as high heavenward as the waves can toss,

but never reach God. It takes a work of God to transform our nature, and like the water, exposed to the light of the sun we evaporate and ascend heavenward to become part of the waters above the firmament.

“That firmament is the big open space that is our atmosphere between the clouds and the sea.

“Having a new nature, we are heavenly minded and no longer rage against God. Being in the cloud perspective, we will now be part of those whom the waves of the sea, below, will be raging towards. Expect persecution for we are not yet fully cloud dwellers.”

“Wow, I never thought of it like that!” Mike rushed out.

“There is another step that makes the connection to the water baptism you will be fulfilling,” Mr. Tom continued.

“This step takes us to the rapture of God’s people. That’s when Christians, who are alive at His coming, will be caught up with the resurrected Christians who have died throughout history (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-6). This rapture happens at the first resurrection. That is where we go to be with Jesus and are with Him as He returns with ‘the clouds of heaven’. Those transformed ascended waters.

“So water baptism looks like this: Mike, you will be leaned back into the water. Physically, we are in the water of humanity. When you are brought up out of the water, that is to be literally fulfilled at the first resurrection, that rapture. We will be called upward, out of the seas of humanity. We are dead in the seas of humanity and ascend into life with Christ in the heavens. That baptism preaches our heavenly destination and the resurrection to come. All this made possible by Jesus’ resurrection.

“When we trust in Jesus for salvation, we are placed into Christ, like the ark, Noah made, that keeps us safe in

the flood, those seas. We stay in that ark until the time of the flood is over. At the end, we will find ourselves in a new world, like Noah did.

“Take a look at 1 Corinthians 10:1-2: 1 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;

“Do you see the parallel in these verses? The picture of Israel being redeemed from Egypt, a type of the world that rages against God’s people. They had to go through the sea, but were kept safe. Moses carried them through to safety; Noah’s ark kept him and his family safe through the waters and finally; Jesus carries us safe through the waters. That will be culminated at the fulfillment of the coming out of the waters at the first resurrection.

“I think I can catch my breath now. That was quite a mouthful to cover. So tell me, were you able to follow through that journey?” Mr. Tom asked, looking directly at Mike.

Mike’s eyes were clear and he had a big smile on his face. “Oh yes, that made perfect sense. That really helped me understand what water baptism is about. That’s neat!”

“Wonderful, that’s a relief. I know this can be confusing. Well, that is a pat on my back, I didn’t leave you more confused than before I came.” chuckled Mr. Tom

Mr. Thompson smiled and reached to shake Mr. Tom’s hand, “Thank you. I never could have explained it like that.”

“And thank you, I love to talk with others about the deeper things of heaven.” With that, Mr. Tom finished his biscuit and coffee.

Available at
www.basedintheword.org
as “Tom’s Baptism Lesson”



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