

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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LESSON FOR JULY 13

BAPTISM.

LESSON TEXTS—Matt. 23:23-29, Acts 8:26-39.

GOLDEN TEXT—For so many of you as have been baptized, the Christ have you as Christ.—Gal. 3:27.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL—Matt. 23:23-29, Acts 8:26, 28-39; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Jesus Christ Baptized by John.

JUNIOR TOPIC—The Baptism of Jesus Christ.

INTERMEDIATE TOPIC—The Pledge of Christian Fellowship.

SENIOR AND ADULT TOPIC—Significance and Importance of Christian Baptism.

I. The Apostles' Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

1. The authority of Jesus (v. 18). God gave him all authority in heaven and on earth. As mediator and coming king he possessed all authority. This authority extends over all the material world, angels, wicked men, devils, and his own people. God highly exalted him and gave him a name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9). There is no other way of salvation for the entire matter of redemption is in his hands (Acts 4:12). Since God has so highly honored him it is extreme folly to expect to be saved while disregarding him.

2. The obligation of the apostles (v. 19-20).

(1) It was to teach, that is, make disciples of all the nations (v. 19). They were to make known to the whole world that Christ had died to save sinners and that God had committed to Jesus the redemption of the world. Those who are Christ's disciples are bound to proclaim him to others.

(2) Baptize those who believe (v. 19). This is the divinely appointed way of making a public confession of faith in Christ. The disciples must publicly take a stand for Christ. The application of water symbolizes the purifying effect of the blood of Christ and solemnly dedicates to the service of God. This baptism must be in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, showing that the believer has been brought into definite relationship to each member of the Holy Trinity.

(3) Teach the disciples obedience (v. 20). Obedience is not enough, it must be in sincerity. Faith must result in works. To call Jesus "Lord" and do not the things which he says is to be a hypocrite.

4. The obedient promise (v. 20). The Lord had told the disciples what would happen to them after he had gone away. He made it plain that none of us should expect, though the situation may seem most favorable, as long as they had the presence and fellowship of the all-powerful Father and Lord.

II. The Baptism of the Eunuch (Acts 8:24-39).

1. Philip preached Jesus Christ to him (v. 26). At the invitation of the eunuch Philip joined himself to the eunuch and found the eunuch reading from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Beginning with this Scripture he preached Christ. He did not preach Christ as a great teacher, but as a savior who had suffered and died instead of the sinner. He preached him as one who had offered himself as a ransom for many. The fact that the eunuch, a great statesman, needed an interpreter of the Scriptures, even such a plain passage as the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, shows the absolute need of a preacher. The printed page is valuable, but there will always be the need of a preacher. The gospel needs to be experienced before one can be a witness of its saving power.

2. The eunuch requesting baptism (v. 30).

When Christ is truly preached men naturally desire to confess him in baptism. In many quarters baptism has been unduly emphasized, but in others it has been disregarded. It is highly important that an intelligent understanding of its meaning be possessed; for that of which Jesus Christ gave an example and a command is highly important.

3. Philip baptizing the eunuch (v. 36). Having secured from the eunuch the proper confession, Philip baptized him. It is faith in Christ that saves, but those who have genuine faith desire to seal it in baptism.

4. The eunuch rejoicing (v. 39). Confession of Christ brings joy. Those who obey the commandments of the Lord can go on their way rejoicing.

Jesus Saves.

As a child walking over a slippery and dangerous path cries out, "Father, I am falling" and has but a moment to catch his father's hand, so every believer goes home when only the hand of Jesus comes between him and the abysses of destruction.—Ogley.

Wise in Time.

"Nine-tenths of our wisdom lies in being wise in time," says a great statesman. As far as results are concerned, the wisdom that comes too late is often little better than folly. "If only I had thought of it when the chance offered, I might," is the pride to many of our unwise regrets.

Self-Distrust Causes Failure.

In the assurance of strength there is strength; and they are the weakest, however, strong, who have no faith in themselves or their powers.—Boyer.

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