

12-15-1967

Correspondence between Chalk & Joe Shoe

Joe Shoe

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December 15, 1967

Mr. Joe Shore
Southwest Baptist College
Beasly Hall
Bolivar, Missouri 65613

Dear Joe:

Please excuse my very, very tardy reply to your last three letters. You asked such a large number of questions in your previous two letters that I simply had put them back for a later time when I would have more time to spend on answering them. However, I have just gotten all three letters together and decided to stop and take the necessary time to answer them.

First of all, I see no contradiction between the Philips and the Williams translations of Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3. It is obvious that baptism is not a symbol. Certainly the action of immersion does illustrate Christ's death, burial and resurrection (See Romans 6:1-6). Baptism is that point at which God does save man according to Acts 2:38, I Peter 3:21, and other passages. Therefore, it must be more than just a symbol.

Your question regarding what would happen to a penitent man who was unable to receive baptism is one that I cannot answer. This to me is totally within the province of God, the just judge of all men. I know that the Bible teaches that only those who upon penitent faith are baptized into Christ can have new life and forgiveness of sins (see Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38, Galatians 3:26-27). To deal in such speculative questions is beside the point. God will deal with the specific cases. We must simply follow His word and since neither of us have been involved in such a case, we are obviously under the immediate obligation to be baptized into Christ if we have not so surrendered to Him.

It is true that it did not take more than a hundred to a hundred fifty years for local elderships to begin to corrupt so that one in the group was designated bishop to the exclusion of all others. There is universal agreement, however, among historians that in the beginning, according to I Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-9, that all elders were bishops of the local church. This corruption is certainly no indication of Biblical authority, but is rather in contradiction to Biblical teaching for the pastor system used in many denominational churches today.

Mr. Joe Shore
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The words "sheol," "hades," "gehenna," and "tartarus" are all translated as hell in the King James Version which is extremely misleading in both the Old and New Testaments. Sheol simply refers to the other world, that is the world opposed to this one, the world to which all dead men go; therefore, death, grave, hell, are all proper translations of sheol. The problem involved in paradise concerns whether there will be a universal judgment of all men or whether those who die immediately go to heaven. It does seem more plausible according to Luke 16:23 and Luke 23:43 that paradise is the state of the righteous dead, a pleasing state where God is not unknown, or a state otherwise known as Abraham's bosom. Paradise in no sense of the word could ever suggest separation from God but rather the state of the righteous dead.

Your second letter dealt at length with baptism of John. This baptism has been a source of great discussion through the years. The baptism of John 3:5 is obviously the baptism in water. The parallel passage is Titus 3:5 which makes this very clear. All commentators almost without exception of every denominational background suggest that both of these passages refer to baptism in water.

There seems to be no question but that John's baptism was a baptism of preparation for the coming Kingdom. His very message according to Matthew 3:2 was a message of preparation for the Kingdom, and a message regarding the coming new way of the Lord as quoted in John 1:23, and also in Mark 3:2. A quotation from Isaiah 40 regarding the coming kingdom, also stresses this idea.

It was a baptism in water, unto repentance (Matthew 3:11) that is, signifying or completing, or expressing repentance. It was a baptism in which the properly prepared candidates confess their sins (Mark 1:5, Matthew 3:6). The remission of sins here obviously referred to the moral, ethical, and spiritual preparation of the Jews of John's day for the coming Kingdom, for the appearance of Christ.

There is only one case where those who were baptized by John's baptism were rebaptized and that is in Acts 19:1-5. The common opinion, however, is that these were men who had been baptized by John's baptism after the death of Christ and after the giving of the Great Commission and the full preaching of the gospel for the first time in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. Therefore, we really have no examples of any who had been baptized by John's baptism being rebaptized in the name of Christ. Certainly the apostles and other disciples close to Jesus who waited in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost in

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Acts 1 would have been baptized again and there would have been some mention of it. However, this is simply an opinion of mine and since it does not apply to anyone living today, it is a matter simply for discussion. The real fact that applies to us is that Christ does make it clear that salvation is only for those who believe and are baptized (Mark 16:16). I would strongly urge that you read carefully the parallel accounts of John's ministry and baptism (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-17; and John 1:19-34). The context of these parallel passages makes it clear that John's baptism was one of preparation of the Jews for the coming of the Kingdom. There had been no major prophet for some several centuries before the coming of John among the Jews. John's ministry was necessary to awaken Israel to the coming Kingdom, to prepare Jews for the message that Christ would preach and live and die. Therefore, there is an ethical significance, an eschatological significance and a moral significance to John's baptism as it stood for the way that Jews in his day could respond to his cry of "Make straight the way of the Lord" (Isaiah 40:3).

In your latest letter to me, you suggest the problem that you have been having with your teachers and classmates regarding the difference between the Old Testament law and the New Testament law. Jeremiah prophesies clearly in 31:31-34 of the New Testament or the new covenant. This is the subject of the Hebrews author in Hebrews 8. Please notice the words "copy" and "shadow" in Hebrews 8:5, a better covenant, Hebrews 8:6, a first covenant, Hebrews 8:7, a new covenant, Hebrews 8:13, and the first covenant which is clearly defined as Moses' covenant in Hebrews 9:1-10. On the basis of the reading of Hebrews 8:8-12, Hebrews 9:15-17, Romans 10:4, and Romans 3:21-25 along with many other passages, it is clear that the Old Testament system, the law of Moses, was fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18) with the death of Christ and certainly with the preaching of the gospel according to the Holy Spirit's direction on Pentecost in Acts 2. I have located Alexander Campbell's famed sermon on the law which I am sure will provide much more material than I have given in this very brief answer to the question you raise.

Let me commend you for your tremendous interest in Bible study, for your cogent arguments, and your very logical reasoning about the several questions discussed in my letter. I hope that these hasty suggestions will be helpful in your continued study of God's word.

Mr. Joe Shore
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Let me know if I can ever be of any further help to you.

Fraternally yours,

John Allen Chalk
Radio Speaker

JAC/dw

Enclosure



SOUTHWEST BAPTIST COLLEGE

Joe Shore
Beasley Hall
SWBC
Polivar, Mo.

John Allen Chalk
Box 2439
Abilene Texas

Dear Mr. Chalk:

The Phillips translation of the New Testament reads as follows concerning

the passages Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 :

"He went into the whole country round about Jordan proclaiming baptism as a mark of a complete change of heart and of the forgiveness of sins..."

The Williams translation reads however, "And he went all over the Jordan valley preaching a baptism conditioned on repentance to obtain the forgiveness of sins..."

Is there not a contradiction here? If baptism is merely a mark or "symbol" of forgiveness it surely can't be the time of forgiveness as indicated by the Williams translation both in text and in footnote which reads concerning the phrase "to obtain forgiveness of sins...", ("Descriptive genitive setting forth the quality of the baptism.")

Also, in your opinion, do you believe that

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SOUTHWEST BAPTIST COLLEGE

Does (lack of ability) annul responsibility?

By some it is held that before the close of the first century the term elder or bishop had become a designation for the one leader of the local church. Proof of this is offered in the case of James at the church at Jerusalem. Does this justify the modern day "pastor" as head over the church and the absence of elders?

Do you consider Sheol-Hades the intermediate state of the soul apart from the body? If so how can you account for the fact that Sheol is also rendered as grave, death and even hell in the Old Testament?

If the disembodied soul of the righteous does not go to be with God how could this be considered paradise (cf. Luke 23:43)?

Could separation from God ever be considered paradise? In speaking to the

thief Christ did however say that the thief would go with Him. Yet after His resurrection he said, "Touch me not for

I have not yet ascended to my father".

Can any clear exegesis be drawn from the Biblical statements concerning the intermediate state?



SOUTHWEST BAPTIST COLLEGE

Joe Shore
Beasley Hall
SWBC
Bolivar, Mo.

Mr. John Allen Chalk
Box 2439
Abilene, Texas

Dear Mr. Chalk:

I should like to discuss with you the nature of John's baptism. First of all we will agree that the term John's baptism is correct for our Lord himself used it when He asked the Jews, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men." Therefore it was distinctively the baptism of John and not that John was merely an administrator of baptism. Certainly, then his baptism had certain definite characteristics apart from Christian baptism.

not John's baptism
John 3:5 seems to be a reference to water baptism. This is the most likely exegesis though at least one more that I know of is at least plausible to the exegetical mind. The problem then arises, to whose baptism does it refer? Since Jesus is speaking of the oncoming kingdom and entrance into it it surely can have no other reference than to Christian baptism yet to be established even as the kingdom was yet to be established.

Furthermore we realize that pardon is to

T. John 2:1-2

of sin is the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
Christian baptism draws its efficacy from
the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Remission of sins is effected only through
the infusion of the merits of Christ's aton-
ing work and cleansing blood. How then, could
one be baptized into a death that had not
taken place yet. But this is what one is
drawn to if we would avow that John's baptism
placed its subjects into the remission of
their sins the same as Christian baptism did
and does. John's baptism could not have had
the same spiritual significance to Jews
before they knew the Christ much less hanged
him on a tree. How then can one dare say
that John's baptism was as efficacious as
Christian baptism.

In his debate with T.J. Fisher, brother
Benjamin Franklin stated in one of his ad-
dresses that, "John never baptized anybody
into the Kingdom of God." Brother Franklin
being one of the most ardent workers for
the restoration movement and also because
I happen to agree with him, I consider as
authoritative in most any matter of New
Testament Christianity with this as no
exception. How then, could those same Jews
that John baptized enter into the Kingdom
of God when it came on the day of Pentecost
without being baptized into it, the one body?
The baptism into it was certainly Christian
baptism (I Cor. 12:13) John certainly baptized

not like animal sacrifices

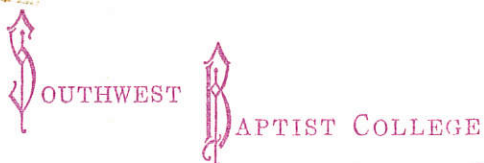
mission of sins but was the remission the
full remission that Christian baptism pro-
missed through the blood of Christ or was
it a "covering of sins" as in earlier Old
Testament days. If John's baptism could
offer the same blessings that Jesus' did
what was the need for Jesus' baptism. In
regard to the law the apostle Paul says that
if the first covenant had been without fault
or defect there would have been no need for
a second. (Heb. 8:7) I say then, if John's
baptism could offer the very same blessing
of forgiveness that Christian baptism what
is the use of having Christian baptism? If
the Jews baptized by John (into his baptism)
entered into the Kingdom without Christian
baptism then there were a lot of people
within the kingdom that never had the gift
of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.
For in John's baptism no one was baptized
into the name of the Holy Spirit neither
were they baptized into the name of Christ
or, as far as that goes, into Christ. Too, the
apostle Paul said in that wonderful 8th
chapter of Romans, the ninth verse, that if
any man hath not this Spirit of Christ, he
is none of His. There can be no other meaning
than that if one does not have the indwelling
presence of the Holy Spirit of Christ he is
not within the Kingdom. I should be glad to
hear your comments upon this exegesis Mr.
Chalk. It seems to me that we cannot Biblically

subjects of Christian Baptism. Also that
entrance into the kingdom cannot be reconed
as a blessing of John's baptism of preparation
for the coming messiah.)

Sincerely yours,



Joe Shore



Bolivar, Missouri

Joe Shore
Beasley Hall
SWBC
Bolivar, Mo.

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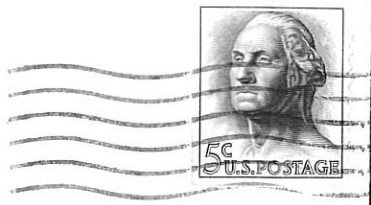
Dear brother Chalk:

I write to you in regard to a problem I am personally involved in, in hopes that you will answer as your schedule permits. Recently I wrote an article in the school paper in which I declared that Christians were not under the Law of Moses but solely under the Law of Christ as revealed in the New Testament. I quoted some scripture in proof never anticipating that anyone would challenge what I considered a catholic subject. (However, I found that the chairman of the division of Christianity had eventaken time in a Pauline epistles class to "set right" his students thinking that Christians really are under the law.) Since then I have had many discussions with individuals here in effort to show them why I consider Christians to be only under the Law of Christ and not the Law of Moses. Of course my job is toughened when the faculty itself takes opposition. I was wondering if you have any suggestions as to manner of effective presentation of this doctrine, pertinent scriptures especially convincing, or any other helpful comments. (Perhaps you know of books written on this subject that are especially helpful.) I have ordered, The Two Covenants by Ashley S. Johnson as it comes highly recommended. Perhaps, also, you might know where I might locate a copy of A. Campbell's sermon, The Law. I doubt that it is now available published separately but I thought that it might be within a larger work. Any comments or advice that you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,

more
HALL

Mo. 65613



SEP 25 1967

MR. John Allen Chalk
Box 2439
Abilene, TEXAS

orig to JAC.

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