

What Do You Walk Away With?

Conversations, “a talk, especially an informal one, between two or more people, in which news and ideas are exchanged” (Oxford), are always interesting if each party walks away considering what “news and ideas” have been “exchanged:” what is said, and what is heard. The analogy is often given setting the image of the words of one person getting on the bus, and the what the other person heard when the words get off the bus. Thus, the importance of definitions.

When speaking with a person about baptism, for example, what gets off the bus will be determined by an individual’s background, i.e., “the religious rite of sprinkling water onto a person’s forehead or of immersion in water, symbolizing purification or regeneration and admission to the Christian Church. In many denominations, baptism is performed on young children and is accompanied by name-giving” (Oxford). In many cases the former, i.e., “the religious rite of sprinkling water onto a person’s forehead,” is understood. Even individuals that have had no training in spiritual matters, what they have seen in the media leads them to their conclusion. When viewed from the etymology of the term, i.e., “baptisma (G908), "baptism," consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence (from bapto, "to dip")” (Vine’s).

Baptism has various usages, i.e., “(a) of John's "baptism," (b) of Christian "baptism," see B. below; (c) of the overwhelming afflictions and judgments to which the Lord voluntarily submitted on the cross, e.g., Lk. 12:50; (d) of the sufferings His followers would experience, not of a vicarious character, but in fellowship with the sufferings of their Master” (Vine’s). However, in each application baptism is “overwhelming,” i.e., “very great in amount” (Oxford): “process of immersion, submersion and emergence” (Ibid). With the variety of definitions available it is essential for the person speaking, and the person hearing to have the same understanding and agreement to selected definition.

When selecting a proper definition, it is essential that a legitimate definition is chosen, i.e., a recognized authority. When selecting the appropriate definition individuals must separate a definition given from a recognized authority from a commentary view, i.e., From Vocabulary.com, “The word baptize comes from Greek baptizein which means, "to dip in water." That's what happens when you get baptized — you get sprinkled with or dunked in water by someone official from a church. Christian parents often choose to baptize their babies, but adults can get baptized, too.” In this “definition” baptism “means, ‘to dip in water.’” The commentary adds “you get sprinkled with or dunked in water.” Another attempt to convolute the definition is, concerning baptism, stated at www.opc.org: “The simple answer is that the word baptize does not mean ‘immerse’! Those who maintain that the Greek verb bapto means “to dip or immerse” are generally correct.” My question: does it, or does it not? The objector says it does, then it does not: even the writer appears to be confused about his own answer.

Within the scriptures: 1) John’s baptism required “much water” (Jn. 3:23). 2) When Jesus was baptized, “he... went up straightway from the water” (Matt. 3:16). 3) When the Ethiopian was being taught from the book of Isaiah. From this text “Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus.” What Philip preached, concerning Jesus, included baptism. Therefore, “they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?... And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:36, 38-39): they “went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch...they came up out of the water,” and the eunuch “went on his way rejoicing.” Figure it out. ret