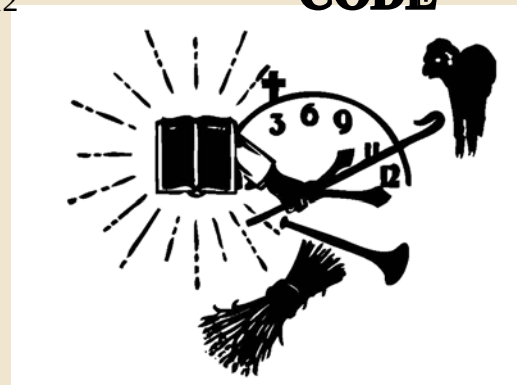
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BAPTISM WITH WATER, BAPTISM WITH FIRE AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

PURPOSE

This publication is dedicated to the mission of conveying to Davidian present truth believers, edifying news and articles of timely significance. This comforter freely gives its time to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, and neither collects fees nor charges for its service.

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Mt. Carmel Center Waco, Texas

BAPTISM WITH WATER, BAPTISM WITH FIRE AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

(The following sermon was given by Brother V. T. Houteff on April 24, 1943.)

When John the Baptist preached that the Kingdom of God was at hand, he also taught the need for repentance and baptism. The baptism that John performed was itself an object lesson that the people were sinful and unprepared for the Kingdom. We may gather, therefore, that the baptism he gave was to fit the people at that time to meet the Lord and be accepted into the Kingdom of God. Since John was preparing the way of the Lord, then all the saints should have been baptized and ready to meet the Lord by the time He came. But the facts are that when Jesus came He not only also baptized, but He baptized even more persons than John did. And when it was time for Him to ascend into Heaven He commissioned His apostles also to baptize as He had commanded. This commission, moreover, was to extend to the end of probationary time.

If baptism was a significant object lesson pointing forward to one's actually being cleansed and prepared to meet the Lord, then the event itself is still in the future, because the rite of baptism still continues to be performed. We therefore understand that the baptismal ceremony

which John instituted was not only for the people who were living at that time, but it is also for those who lived after him. Since those persons whom John baptized, and even many that were baptized later, are now dead they will not meet the Lord except they be resurrected, which fact causes us to understand that they were baptized for the resurrection. In other words, had they not performed their duty of baptism they would not rise in the first resurrection nor would they enter the Kingdom of God. We must bear in mind, however, that the Judgment precedes the resurrection. Then prior to the resurrection their cases are taken up in the Judgment and the decision is made which determines that they are worthy to be called forth in the resurrection of the just. After their resurrection they will meet the Lord and will receive welcome into His Kingdom. Their baptism, then, was for the resurrection of the righteous dead.

While John was preaching baptism with water he said in

Matt. 3:11, 12 -- "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Jesus, who was to follow after John was to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. But the fact is that when He came He, too, baptized with water just as John did. Therefore, we must conclude that the baptism of which John spoke is still future. If it is, when will it come to pass? That is the question before us now. For the answer, let us read again

Matt. 3:12 -- "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The time that He is to baptize His people with the Holy Ghost and with fire is when He comes to take away the tares and burn them with fire. And our message teaches that the time this purging will take place is at hand (Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 80). Yes, the Lord is to come to purge His floor, destroy the chaff and gather the wheat into His Kingdom. Since only the announcement of this most solemn event has been given, and it has not yet come to pass, therefore we still see the chaff and the wheat commingled. In the light of this fact, we must be standing in the same place John and the disciples stood in their time.

John the Baptist found his commission in Isaiah 40:1-5, which we shall now read and analyze.

Isa. 40:1 -- "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God."

This is the gospel of John the Baptist. He was sent to do this.

Isa. 40:2 -- "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

When we analyze this statement we find that this condition was not true in John's time, for Jerusalem's warfare was not accomplished and her sins were not at that time pardoned. Nor were her trials over. But she was to be comforted by these words. If John's preaching was a type of anything, it must be a type of the message that God wants His servants to preach today just before the Lord comes to baptize and purge His people with fire. If this be true, then this chapter most certainly says that we are in the time when Jerusalem's warfare is to be accomplished and her sins are to be pardoned, the reason being that she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. And we understand clearly that Jerusalem cannot mean anything other than God's church, His people.

What specific punishment did the church receive? -- The Lord took away her kingdom and then sent her into the wilderness where she was

to be fed 1260 days (Revelation 12). Though some may understand that the church was to be in the wilderness only for the duration of the prophetic 1260 days, it should be pointed out that Revelation does not say that. The Revelation only says that the woman was to be fed in the wilderness 1260 days; it does not say how long she would be there. Her warfare was to be in the wilderness. By the authority of other Scripture prophecies in conjunction with Revelation 12, we have learned that when her warfare is finished she is to journey out of the wilderness and return to the vineyard (Kingdom) which God is to restore unto her. We believe we are now approaching that very event when God's people must return and reestablish the vineyard -- God's Kingdom -- that is to constitute the "stone" of Daniel 2:44, 45.

When John the Baptist came he found the people deeply entrenched in sin, and therefore not at all prepared for the Kingdom of Christ. And if he and his work are a type of the message and work today, then it, too, must find the people in the same condition -- asleep and in sin and thus unprepared for Christ's Kingdom. Because of their low spiritual condition in John's time, he baptized them in water. If we are in the same condition today, then the message of today must baptize us, too. But the message is not teaching rebaptism and it most likely will not do so for the Bible teaches only one baptism. The message does say, however, that it finds

the people of God in a sad deception (Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 253).

John the Baptist came and baptized with water. Then Jesus came and He also baptized with water. It was not until the end of His ministry that Christ ordained the Lord's Supper among His disciples. Before they partook of that supper He washed their feet which He said they must let Him do for them if they would have part in the Kingdom. In the evening of this occasion, Jesus told the disciples that they were all clean save one. They were as clean as they could be at that time. The unclean one was Judas who was present among them and who also partook of that ordinance; but he partook of it to his own damnation. Because he allowed the Devil to be in Him he committed treachery against Christ and then hanged himself. This, though, actually was a great blessing to the apostles, because as a result of his own act, they were purified.

When the Lord instituted this ordinance He commissioned His people to celebrate it after His example, but a warning was also given that those who partook unworthily of that bread and wine which symbolize Himself, do so to their own damnation. In compliance with the commission, the apostles performed this ordinance with all who believed. Sometime after the ordinance of humility was given, the Pentecost took place. They were not, however, baptized with fire.

Since the proper form of baptism is by immersion, then those who are baptized with the Holy Ghost must be covered with the Holy Ghost. Likewise, for a person to be baptized with fire he must go through the fire.

John the Baptist preached repentance and baptism to show that they were in sin and needed to repent and be converted. We do not have the Lord's Supper among us now because we are not ready for it. We are still sinners, not yet clean. But now is the time we are to repent if we ever will, and when we do have the Lord's Supper among us it will denote as much as did John's baptism. But if we are ever to partake of it among ourselves we must first repent, we must be clean. Since we as Adventists have been in the habit of celebrating the Lord's Supper, it is clear that our not having this ordinance among us for the time being signifies that it is a temporary restriction peculiar to us. In order for us to become ready for this ordinance something must take place.

John said that He who would come after him would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. That baptism is still future. And if it is still future from John's time, it must be performed sometime before we get into the Kingdom, sometime when the Lord's fan is in His hand. We see, then, that after John's baptism comes the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire; therefore John's baptism must be a symbol of another baptism, that

of the Holy Ghost and fire. To find out more about what this means, let us turn to

Mal. 3:1-3 -- "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Jesus used this scripture to identify John as being the messenger who was to prepare the way for His coming. In studying these verses we find that there is no difference in the event mentioned here in Malachi and the event mentioned by John himself other than that another symbolism was used in Malachi.

We went through the baptism of water to show that we were sinners and have received forgiveness, but this baptism is a baptism of fire which is to purify us and cause us to emerge as silver and gold. Yes, we have been baptized with water, but when the Lord comes to His temple to baptize us with the purifying fire, who will be able to

stand? This experience must come to take away the chaff and to save the wheat and to cleanse those who are God's people.

Now let us turn to

Isa. 52:1, 2 -- "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."

These verses indicate that from the time the church, Zion, is called to awake and put on her strength, the announcement is also made that the uncircumcised and the unclean are no more to pass through her. At that time the church is asleep and the Lord is calling her to awake; she is weak and the Lord is admonishing her to put on strength. The second verse shows that she is also in the dust and a captive and must be made free from her yoke of captivity.

Isa. 52:7 -- "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

This is the time of the preaching of the

Kingdom over which God reigns. The good tidings are of salvation, indicating that they are proclaimed in a time when people can still be saved. For a similar statement in another scripture, let us read

Nah. 1:15 -- "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off."

In our study of this prophecy we learned that this happens when the Assyrian falls, but the Lord's call to the church in Isaiah 52 to awake comes first. After she awakes she is to behold something and she is to do something. What is she to do? -- She is to keep her solemn feasts. She is to perform her vows. From this we understand that at the close of the Assyrian period and in the time when the wicked no longer will be in the church, God's people in it are to keep their solemn feasts and perform their vows. The Lord's Supper being one of the solemn feasts, it will be celebrated next in the time when the wicked are no more to pass through the church. Do you not see that we are now closer to it than when we first believed ?

Now let us turn to

Isa. 4:1 -- "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own

bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by Thy name, to take away our reproach."

To learn the time this is speaking of we will read from the preceding chapter.

Isa. 3:25 -- "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war."

This verse places the time when the men of Zion shall fall by the sword, and the mighty in the war. Through Nahum we learned that it is the Assyrian war that is being fought in the day these things take place. The preceding verses in this chapter show that Zion is to lose her men and her mighty because her people are following after vanity.

Isa. 3:26 -- "And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground."

Since gates are not able to lament and mourn, they must represent people, those who let others come in and go out. Therefore they must represent watchmen, ministers. This verse says they shall lament and mourn. Besides this sad state of affairs, Zion is described as being desolate. If she at that time is desolate, it would mean that she is empty -- empty of sinners and sin. All of this, you see brings us to the time of the purification which comes also in a time of war. In that

day the gates will lament and mourn.

Now we are ready to reread

Isa. 4:1 -- "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by Thy name, to take away our reproach."

If these scriptures have brought us to the time of the purification of the church, then today there must be seven women taking hold of one man and wanting nothing but His name. The seven women in the spiritual realm are symbolical of the seven churches -- all the churches -- just as the seven heads on the leopard-like beast are symbolical of all the churches. And what does this say they want? -- They want only to be called Christians, but they do not want either His bread (Truth) or His clothing (righteousness). They want just His name. Then in the time when the purification is due there is to be a complete apostasy among all the churches. And that is the very condition that now exists. The very fact, moreover, that we are not yet observing the Lord's ordinance privately among ourselves shows that some of us as individuals may yet be in the very apostasy described in these verses, and perhaps even asleep. It is possible that some of us as individuals may want to be associated with the Davidian organization but refuse to fully imbibe its Truth or live its principles.

Isa. 4:2 -- "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."

We know the Branch to be Christ. A branch is a part of a tree, and in this instance the tree represents the kingdom of David which is to come from the stem of Jesse. In that day the Branch shall be beautiful and glorious, and through the beauty and glory of the Branch -- Christ -- the whole Kingdom is also to be beautiful and glorious, and "the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."

Isa. 4:3 -- "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."

Some are to be taken away from Zion and Jerusalem, and all who are left are holy. Then it is evident that those who were taken away were the unclean and the uncircumcised. At this time the church will be pure, every member of it being holy. What will purify them? -- The next verses give us the answer:

Isa. 4:4 -- "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."

When this verse has been fulfilled all could partake of the Lord's ordinance and bring not damnation to themselves; whereas if; the people should partake of the Lord's Supper before they were washed it would be a curse to them.

Isa. 4:5 -- "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence."

The holiness of the people constitute the glory. Moreover, there shall be a defence for all Zion's people, for the Lord will defend and deliver them.

Isa. 4:6 -- "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."

The admonition in this verse is not given to ancient Israel, but rather it is given to a modern people. We now are to turn to God from Whom the ancient children of Israel have deeply revolted.

Isa. 31:7 -- "For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin."

If we had no idols then this verse would not be written as it is. What are idols? -- A idol is anything that comes between us and God. As a simple illustration, if you knew that the right thing for you to do right now is to move this book from this place to that place, and if something stands in the way and you allow it to remain in your way, then you are either too lazy to remove the obstruction and thus you show that you love ease more than you love to do your duty, or else you love the obstacle itself more than you desire to fulfill your duty. Anything that keeps you from doing what you ought to do is your idol.

From our study today we are able to know and understand that we are in the days when God's people will cast away all their idols. The great question each of us must now settle is this: Are we personally going to be among those who have cast aside every idol? No one can decide this for you, you alone must decide it for yourself.

Isa. 31:8 -- "Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword not of a mean man, shall devour him: but he shall flee from the sword and his young men shall be discomfited."

When we cast away our idols then the Assyrian will fall and the Assyrian yoke will be broken.

Isa. 31:9 -- "And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid

of the ensign, saith the Lord, Whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem.

The "ensign" is the object of the Assyrians' fear. After God's elect go through the baptism of fire and come out purified and refined, the ensign or Kingdom is to be set up in Jerusalem for a place of refuge for the others who will afterwards come into It. This is God's schedule.

The important lesson for us to learn is this:

We are approaching the parting of the ways where we must decide whether we will be among the many of whom Daniel spoke that shall be purified, and made white, and tried and understand; or of those who shall do wickedly and not understand. If we would be among the wise and purified ones we had better without delay find out what our idols are and put them away, for that is the factor that will decide which of the two classes we will belong to. Since none of the wicked shall understand in the day of the Lord, it shows that the Truth will become deeper and deeper until finally the wicked will not be able to comprehend It. The point where they first lost out or became blinded, however, was when they met their idol and refused to tear themselves from it. The things we love and esteem more than God's Kingdom are our idols.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." -- Josh. 24:15. "If the Lord be God, follow Him. but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18:21. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6:24.

JESUS CALLS US

Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store;
From each idol that would keep us
Saying, "Christian, love Me more!"

Jesus calls us! by Thy mercies,
Saviour, may we hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thy obedience
Serve and love Thee best of all.

--Mrs. C. F. Alexander.