



The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ
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Confidence Corner John F. Board

In this week's Confidence Corner we want to examine the question, "Is Baptism really that important? In order to answer this question, I simply want to find some answers from those who lived

during or close to the time of Christ. In other words, if I asked Jesus, Paul, or Peter, what response would they provide?

First, let us examine what Jesus tells us. In Matthew 28:1-20 Jesus reveals that disciples were to be made by "baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." In Acts 11:26, the disciples are called Christians; this indicates that making disciples is the same as making Christians. Therefore the way one makes a disciple/ Christian, is by baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This obviously appears to teach that Jesus is saying that baptism is important.

Consider a second, perhaps even more clear statement of Jesus from Mark 16:16. Here Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not will be condemned." Notice Jesus said that a person must believe and also be baptized in order to be saved. It appears again that Jesus viewed baptism as extremely important!

When Paul is recounting what he did to become a follower of Jesus, he notes that he was told "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Again Paul obviously viewed baptism as something that washed away his sin. I do not see how anyone could argue that Paul did not view baptism as important.

And lastly consider Peter. In 1 Peter 3:21 Peter wrote, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us..." Please realize that the passage does not say "baptism doth also NOT save us." The passage says baptism doth also NOW save us! Again it is clear Peter viewed baptism as important!

So is baptism really important? If we look to those of Jesus day, the answer is quite clear—YES!

jfb

Elizabethtown Church of Christ Live Righteous Youth Rally

Devoted

Acts 2:42-47

July 28-29, 2017

**Keynote Speaker:
Matt Cook (Henderson, TN)**

**Class Teachers:
Nathan Ferguson (Franklin, KY)
Spencer Clark (Louisville, KY)
Nick Secula (Smiths Grove, KY)**

**Registration Times:
Friday @ 6:30 p.m.
Saturday @ 9:00 a.m.**

**Please RSVP or call for more information
at 270-765-6446.**

Limited Housing Available

Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — Are You Exalting Jesus?
Philippians 2:9-10**

**P.M. — Is That the Christian Attitude?
Romans 3:12-18**

JESUS' CLAIM TO BE DEITY

“Yahweh” (or Jehovah ASV 1901) is the spelling given to the tetragrammaton or designation for God (YHWH) in the Old Testament. This word for God is spelled with all capital letters in the English Old Testament of the King James (1611) and Revised Standard versions (1952), namely, L-O-R-D. The American Standard Version (1901) transliterated it as “Jehovah.” In every case these terms refer to deity.

Unlike the word *adonai* (usually translated “lord”) which sometimes refers to men (cf. Gen. 18:12) and other times to God, the word LORD (Jehovah) always refers to God. So sacred was this name, YHWH, that devout Jews would not even pronounce it. Many take the word to mean “underived existence” or “He who is” from the “I AM” of Exodus 3:14, but the meaning of the term is hard to completely convey in English.

It is known for sure that YHWH is the I AM of Exodus 3:14 and that for the Jews He alone is God. Everything else is an idol or false god. Nothing else was to be worshiped or served, nor were sacrifices to be made to them (Exod. 20:5). Jehovah was a “jealous God” and would not share either His name or His glory with another. Isaiah wrote, “Thus saith YHWH ... I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God” (44:6). Again, “I am YHWH, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images” (Isa. 42:8; cf. 48:11).

In view of the fact that the YHWH of the Hebrew Bible would not give His name, honor, or glory to another, it is little wonder that the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth drew stones and cries of “blasphemy” from first-century Jews. The very things that YHWH of the Old Testament claimed for himself Jesus of Nazareth also claimed, as the following verses reveal: Jesus said “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11), but the Old Testament declared “YHWH is my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1). Jesus claimed to be judge of all men and nations (John 5:27 f. and Matt. 25:31 f.) but Joel, quoting YHWH, wrote: “for there I will sit to judge all the nations round about” (Joel 3:12). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12) whereas Isaiah says, “YHWH will be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory” (60:19). Jesus claimed in prayer before the Father to share His eternal glory, saying, “Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made.” But Isaiah quoted YHWH vowing, “my glory will I not give to another” (42:8). Jesus spoke of Himself as the coming “bridegroom” (Matt. 25:1), which is exactly how YHWH is depicted in the Old Testament (cf. Isa. 62:5; Hos. 2:16). In the Book of Revelation Jesus is quoted by John as saying, “I am the first and the last” (1:17), which are precisely the words YHWH used to declare that there was no other God besides Himself (Isa. 42:8). The Old Testament declares that “YHWH is our light” (Ps. 27:1), but Jesus said “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

Perhaps the strongest and most direct claim of Jesus to be YHWH occurs in John 8:58 where He said to the Jews, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” The Jews’ reaction left no doubt as to how they understood His claim. They knew He had claimed not only preexistence before Abraham but also equality with God. They promptly picked up stones to stone Him (cf. John 8:58 and 10:31–33). Jesus had clearly claimed to be the “I AM” of Exodus 3:14 that refers to YHWH alone. The claim was either blasphemy or else an indication of deity.

*John F. Board
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