

Chapter 6: A Virtual Baptism for James Thomas McMichael.

Some may not realize that the first name of “James” comes from his grandfather on the Steelman side, James Riley Steelman; and the middle name of “Thomas” from his grandfather on the McMichael side, Thomas Madison McMichael. Like James and all of us they had their human weaknesses. But rather than those, we at this point must dwell on the future of great hope, and how James, always kind to others, began to create a hope in all of us during the last months with a request to be baptized in the Weatherford Lake behind his house. Sadly, we were too late for that as after his request I asked, “Good, if you are ready”, to which he replied yes; and then to the question “When do you want to do it”, James said “when I get my strength”. We all know that did not happen, except with the no pain, much strength and joy and happiness Jim has now in heaven with Jesus, Mom, and Mr. Steelman. So as a memorial to Jim, we now have a virtual baptism for him at the Lake.



What better way for a virtual baptism than with those at the Memorial service for his Mom, and the Lake behind his house in the background. Thanks all for your participation. Strange you see, well not as we have virtual for everything else in

life, why not for what is described about baptism below in Scripture. (From the Berean Study Bible)

[Dead to Sin, Alive to God](#)

...3Or aren't you aware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4We therefore were buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may

walk in newness of life. 5For if we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection... (Romans 6:3-5)

Even water baptism is not only following the example of Jesus Himself, and is like He said, "IN obedience to his command" that fulfills the righteousness of obedient works, but it is also a virtual reality of what has already happened in the believer like Jim before they ask to be baptized.

We think of Philip the evangelist and the Ethiopian, after Philip had explained to him the passage about Christ he was reading from Isaiah, when the Ethiopian naturally ask, like Jim, and always a good sign of faith, "Here is water (at Lake Weatherford behind Jim's house), what does hinder me from me baptized. Many of us know the historical reply of Philip the evangelist:

Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. ²⁷So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

³⁰So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer *is* silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

³³In His humiliation His justice was taken away,
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth.”

³⁴So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. ³⁶Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

³⁷Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

³⁸So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

It is impossible to explain why there was so much passage in time from the first profession of faith by Jim at Oakridge Baptist Church where I was preaching a revival meeting, and when Jim requested to be baptized within a couple of

months of his passing to be heaven with Mom June 19, 2020; and I am not sure it is important at this point. (All of us agree, Jim could in no way be fit into any kind of standard mold. He was a little bit of his Mom, a little bit of his grandfathers Steelman and McMichael, a little bit of me no doubt; but mainly a special personality and character called Jimmy McMichael.) Even as we can not explain many things, sins, and wrong doings, or procrastinations in our lives—and let him without sin cast the first stone. We are just grateful that he did, and almost too many times to number during his last few months, Jim gave testimony to his faith in Christ.

We could see evidence of the spirit working in his life when he told us how Ephesians 5:16 had stuck in his mind while in the garage, and he could not explain that, further asking of the meaning of it.

[Children of Light](#)

*...**15**Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16**[redeeming the time, because the days are evil.](#) **17**Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is...*

[Berean Study Bible](#)

We can easily think he was given warning by the spirit of Christ in his heart that both he had a short time, and in keeping with the passage from Scripture we all have a short time to buy back or redeem our time before the Second Coming.

My Son, James Thomas McMichael, I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.