

## **Some Questions about Your Baptism**

**HOW WERE YOU BAPTIZED?** An English dictionary defines baptism according to how the word is currently used in the religious world, not according to its usage in the New Testament. However, even an English dictionary will tell us that the word "baptize" came from a Greek word which had the meaning of "dip, immerse, wash." John 3:23 tells us that John the Baptist baptized "in Aenon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." Matthew 3:16 says: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from (out of) the water." Matthew 3:6 says: "And they were baptized of him in the river Jordan." Both Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12 show that in being baptized one is both buried with Christ and raised with Christ -- baptism being a reenactment of the burial and resurrection of Christ. Is this how you were baptized? If you had water poured or sprinkled upon you, you were not baptized.

**WHAT PRECEDED YOUR BAPTISM?** In the New Testament baptism came after people were taught (Matt. 28: 19); after hearing the gospel and believing it (Mk. 16: 15-16); after hearing the word, being convicted of their sins, and repenting (Acts 2:36-38,41); after hearing Jesus preached, believing it, and confessing that faith (Acts 8:35-38); after asking what to do, being told to believe, and hearing the word of the Lord (Acts 16:30-31); hearing the word and believing (Acts 18:8). Really, all of these heard and believed and obeyed the same truth. These prerequisites clearly rule out infants. If you were baptized as an infant, you were not ready, you were not following New Testament teaching.

**WHY WERE YOU BAPTIZED?** In Acts 2:38 baptism is "for the remission of your sins." In Matthew 28: 18-20 it is for discipleship or becoming a disciple. In Mark 16:15-16 it is for salvation. In Acts 22: 16 it is for the washing away of sins. In I Corinthians 12:13 it puts one into the body or church of Christ. In Galatians 3:26-27 it puts one into Christ. In Romans 6:3-4 it puts one into Christ, into His death, into death (to sin). I Peter 3:21 teaches that just as eight people were saved in the ark through water, so now baptism, as the true anti-type, saves us. If you were taught that you were already saved before you were baptized and were baptized because you had been saved, you were not following New Testament teaching.

**WHEN WERE YOU BAPTIZED?** In the New Testament when people expressed a desire to be baptized, they were baptized immediately. In no case was anyone brought before a congregation for a vote of approval before he could be baptized. No one was ever asked if he believed or felt that he was already saved before he was baptized. There is not one example of baptism being put off, or delayed, or planned for some time in the future. Consider these examples:

*Acts 2:41 - "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls."*

*Acts 8:12 - "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."*

*Acts 8:38 - "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."*

*Acts 9:18 - "And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight: and he arose and was baptized."* The command he was responding to is found in Acts 22:16 where Paul was recounting his conversion.

*Acts 16:33 - "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately."*

When you were baptized, did you follow these Bible examples? The reason that most churches today have those who desire to be baptized to wait for several days or even a few weeks before they will actually baptize them is because they do not deem the act that important. They are not following Biblical examples in their practice.

**- by Bill Crews**

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## **"Who's On First?"**

Abbott and Costello, the famous comedy team of the previous generation, are most

remembered for their hilarious routine about baseball. It was a classic example of the confusion that results when people aren't communicating "on the same wave-length." It's not uncommon, even today, to hear people remark "who's on first?" – an allusion to that comedy duo - when confronted with a confusing situation.

This brings to mind some lessons we need to learn - lessons concerning our efforts to teach the Bible to lost people. It is very possible that we will begin teaching folks at a level they are not prepared to receive. We ought to be careful about assuming that a student knows certain fundamentals. If we start with a faulty foundation of knowledge, we are certain to run into difficulty as we try to move our students on to the things that are *"hard to be understood"* (2 Peter 3:10). We should follow the example of Philip, who determined his student's level of understanding and *"began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus"* (Acts 8:35).

We need to be sure that we are 'using Bible words in Bible ways'. If we are careless in this matter, we are opening the door to unsound conclusions. For instance, if we talk about the birth of a baby and refer to it as a 'miracle', we may later be confronted by the argument that all the true Bible miracles can be dismissed with a natural explanation. A birth is, in fact, a marvelous thing, but it is not a miracle in the Biblical sense. (Only the virgin birth of Jesus would be accurately proclaimed a miracle.) So, again, we must learn to be careful with terminology.

Finally, we should be cautious about using phrases and jargon that are very familiar to us, but may leave a student in utter confusion. It would be a shame to waste a good teaching opportunity simply because we weren't careful about analyzing our student's ability to comprehend the message. There is a *"time when ye ought to be teachers"* (Hebrews 5:12). And good teachers *KNOW* their students.

Pray that God will help us find the good and honest hearts, and that He will give us wisdom to use every opportunity to the fullest.

**- by Greg Gwin**