

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

Human Philosophy

The philosophy of GENERAL EVOLUTION has reduced man to an accident of nature and a highly developed animal, governed by no fixed code of ethics, accountable to no one. The philosophy of HUMANISM has removed God from the picture, deified man, removed restraint, and made fleshly pleasures the highest goals in life. Both hate God and God's word and labor with a passion to destroy man's belief in them. *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."* (Colossians 2:8).

- ***selected***

Heaven & Hell: Most Believe, But Few Think They Will Go to Hell

The Gallup pollsters regularly conduct surveys about the religious beliefs of people in America. Some of the most interesting statistics have to do with the views of people regarding heaven and hell. Typical results are like these from a previous survey:

- Believe in heaven----- 78%
- Among those who believe in heaven, the percent that think they have a fair, good, or excellent chance of going there----- 94%
- Believe in hell----- 60%
- Among those who believe in hell, the percent that think they might go there:
 - probably will go----- 4%
 - uncertain ----- 19 %
 - little chance of going----- 77%

These numbers are particularly interesting when viewed in light of what the Bible clearly teaches. Jesus said,

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13,14).

It is not difficult to see why so few are really committed to a diligent pursuit of Christianity - they simply don't believe they need it - they're going to heaven anyway! It's time people began to wake up and realize that they are lost and doomed to hell unless they obey the Lord!

- ***by Greg Gwin***