

Questions about Your Baptism

There are three important questions that need to be answered about our baptism to be sure it was valid.

(1) Was the action of my baptism proper; that is, was I buried in and raised up from a watery grave (see Acts 8:36-38; John 3:5)?

(2) Was I a proper subject or candidate for baptism, that is, had I been taught the gospel and was I a penitent believer in Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15,16; Acts 2:38)?

(3) And, did I understand that I was being baptized as a symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 6:3,4,17,18) and for the purpose of the remission of all of my past sins (Acts 2:38 Mk. 16:16) and into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13)?

If one can answer all these questions in the affirmative then he can be sure his baptism was valid.

It is possible for a person's baptism not to be valid. Paul baptized twelve men who had been immersed previously (see Acts 19:1-7) because they had not been properly taught and did not understand the purpose of their baptism. I have re-baptized some folks who, having been baptized while young, came to feel their understanding of the purpose of baptism at the time was inadequate. I have also baptized some who had only been sprinkled earlier, and others who had only been babies when they were "baptized."

There are several things a person does not need to be concerned about, though, with regard to the validity of his baptism. It makes no difference whether a person was baptized: in the ocean, a river, pond or tank; in either running or still water. If a person is immersed in water the action of his baptism is scriptural. I've known of some to be baptized in a bathtub when better facilities were unavailable. If the person was immersed in water, the action of his baptism is valid.

Another aspect of being baptized is a concern to some, but it is really of no consequence. It makes no difference who baptized you! My dad, a faithful gospel preacher baptized me and I'm glad of that, but it would still have been valid if I had been baptized by anyone else, even if it were not by a faithful Christian.

Who baptizes us cannot be important because we cannot know the heart of another (as to whether he is a faithful Christian) and we cannot know whether the person who baptized him was faithful. If who baptizes us is important (that is, if he must be a faithful Christian), we would have to be able to trace an unbroken line of faithful "baptizers" all the way back to the first century. If just one person in the "line" were not faithful, then everyone baptized afterwards would not have a valid baptism. Obviously, no one can do this, and the Lord does not require the impossible of us in obeying Him.

If one "obeys Christ" in being baptized, the one who does the baptizing is of no consequence to its validity.

- by Ben Shropshire

Consequences

Thoughts entertained, words uttered, and deeds done have consequences. Like seed that is sown, they bear fruit -- pleasant or bitter, good or evil. Decisions made, choices selected, steps taken, courses begun bring us, in time, to the goals, the destinies to which they inevitably lead. Many are traveling toward goals and destinies of which they seem absolutely unaware or foolishly unconcerned -- goals and destinies that will prove tragic and painful. Only God can see the end from the beginning; in His revealed word He tries to tell us.

- by Bill Crews

God's Plan

In the first century, God's plan for saving the lost and caring for the saved was made known through the apostles and put into practice by the disciples. God's plan was simplicity itself. And its success was the marvel of all the world. The gospel was sent to the lost. The poor and needy were cared for. And the church was edified.

How was the gospel sent to the lost? By congregations (I Thess. 1:2-8) and individual Christians (Gal. 6:6) supporting evangelists to carry the gospel message all over the world, and by every faithful Christian "who (would) teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

How were the poor and needy cared for? By each congregation caring for its own needy (Ac 4:34-35, 1 Tim 5:16) and receiving help from other congregations when needed (Rom. 15:25-26), and by each individual Christian "doing good unto all men" as there was opportunity (Gal 6:10).

How was the church edified? By the elders of each congregation "feeding the flock of God which is among them" (1 Pet. 5:2), and by Christians "exhorting one another" and "provoking one another unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24-25).

This plan is tried and proven. It worked in the first century, and it will work in the twentieth century. We do not need a new plan. We do not need an improved plan. But we do need renewed zeal for executing God's plan.

- by **Bill Walton**

They're Not Friendly . . .

They seemed very unfriendly to me. In fact, it would not be a stretch to call them downright rude. There was no greeting when I came through the door. No one offered me help or assistance. They acted as if they did not care if I was there or not. It was clear that they did not value my presence.

It crossed my mind that I might never go to that place again. After all, why should I be treated in this fashion? "I'll show them," I thought to myself.

But then it occurred to me that these folks have what I really need. It would be hard, if not impossible, to find it any other place. I would really only be hurting myself if I decided to never return.

Oh, yes, there are some other places that offer some of the same things. But this place has it ALL! One can come here and find every essential thing.

In the end I finally decided that I would continue to frequent this place because of what they have to offer. And, even though there are some things that I would like to see changed, it is still the best place to find what I really need. Maybe, just maybe, I can help them do better in the areas of friendliness and courtesy. Perhaps by saying and doing the right things myself I will be able to improve the overall situation. But the bottom line is this: what I get here is much more valuable to me than the minor annoyances that I must endure. I'll keep coming back again and again.

Where is this place? Oh, I forgot to tell you, didn't I? I was talking about the big discount store here in town. You know, that new 'super center' of a thing. What? You thought I was talking about the church? Well . . .

- by **Greg Gwin**