

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

1201 Meeks St. Corinth, Ms. 38834

Phone – (662) 287-2187

Visit Our Website at:

MeeksstreetchurchofChrist.com

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“Baptism: Who? How? When? & Why?” Pt.3

By Brian Meade

Although most of the Religious World around us downplays the need for water baptism—the disciples of the early church did not! When we carefully study the New Testament, we see the apostles carrying out the great commission by preaching the gospel and baptizing sinners wherever they went (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5).

With so much emphasis being placed on baptism, there is the great need for us to study this vital and important part of God’s ordinances for us.

Last Week, we looked at the *How* and the *When* one should be baptized and the great need that everyone has to obey God in being born again (John 3:3-5).

This week, we want to conclude our study with...

IV. Why should One be baptized?

The *Why* or the true purpose and meaning of water baptism has been one of the greatest debates among religious people of faith! A great number of people argue that baptism is completely not necessary to our salvation at all.

Some may even say that one should be baptized, but they really don’t have to— as if what Jesus gave His final instructions to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16 are optional commands.

Billy Graham, one of the most popular preachers of our day, said this about baptism, **“I believe baptism is important, and I have been baptized.”**

Baptism is a conclusive act of obedience and witness to the world that we are Christ’s. I believe in it wholeheartedly.” He went on to say, **“To one who has received Christ, baptism is a necessary and meaningful experience.”** (*Is Baptism Necessary For Salvation*, The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)

Mr Graham, and those who teach what he taught, take a view of baptism not founded in the Scriptures— all because they believe in a “faith-only” form of salvation that excludes baptism. But I want you to notice the assertion he makes without any proof given that baptism is a “*witness that we are Christ’s.*” This is what many call “an outward sign of an inward grace.” Nevertheless, that often repeated phrase is not found in Scripture!

But is that all that baptism is, a *showing* to the world that are already Christ’s and already saved? Is it merely a public display and ceremonial rite that really doesn’t have any other significance than that? And if it is an important, a conclusive act of obedience, necessary, and meaningful— why do many treat it as an option to do, or not to do? Especially, if it is an act of obedience to Christ’s command (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 10:48).

Many today look at baptism as a ceremonial rite that makes one a member of a particular denomination. Notice what THE STANDARD MANUAL FOR BAPTIST CHURCHES by Edward T. Hiscox says about baptism— **“Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of “baptismal regeneration”;**



but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body.” (Page 20, Article #8)

Thus, many look at baptism as key to church membership, but not for going to heaven. So by practice, it is harder to get into a denomination than it is to go to heaven! And that is where the disconnect really is on the *WHY* of baptism in denominationalism. When men teach that baptism is not necessary in becoming a Christian, but necessary for Christian fellowship—they show how inconsistent and hypocritical a position they have on the meaning and purpose of baptism.

Sadly, I have personally talked to once members of the church, who left the faith to go to denominationalism, and were re-baptized into a denomination, rather than into Christ (Galatians 3:27), which they formerly were in.

But let's turn our attention away from what men say—to what does the Bible say about *WHY* men and women were baptized in the New Testament.

The battleground for this topic is in some very basic and clear language of Scripture:

(1) Mark 16:15-16, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

As Jesus was about to go back to the Father, He gave us what is termed, the “Great Commission” to preach the gospel to all men and baptize them (see also Matthew 28:18-20). It is of great importance to note that Jesus connects faith and baptism together in salvation—something denominationalism doesn't want to do.

The conjunction “and” joins things together of equal importance and therefore, both are required for the sentence to be true to the outcome of salvation. Salvation is the *WHY* of one's belief and baptism.

I know very well that men try to lessen the clear teaching of the necessity of baptism by saying that in the last part of the verse, only a lack of faith condemns.

But when faith leads us to obey the gospel in being baptized, a lack of faith or an unwillingness to believe in Christ makes baptism pointless because it takes both to be saved. Jesus said in John 3:18, “*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*” (NKJB)

(2) Acts 2:38, “Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

In Acts 2, you have the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ being preached to men for the first time. The salvation offered that day through the gospel was by the blood of the New Covenant or Testament (Matthew 26:28). Forgiveness under the New Testament would no longer be from the blood of bulls and goats, but by Christ (Hebrews 9:13-15). All of humanity longed for this day to be free from the bondage of sin, and now it was here!

Peter convicts the Jews of murdering their Messiah in Acts 2:36, they then ask what they must do for this sin in verse 37, and verse 38 is the answer to sin's condition and guilt.

This passage is one of the major passages that shows us clearly *WHY* we should repent, but also *WHY* we should be baptized—for the forgiveness of sins.

It all comes down to what the meaning of “for” is in this passage, does it mean “because of” or “in order to” forgiveness? Many take the position that is because their sins were already forgiven and they had to be told of this new condition of forgiveness they were now enjoying. But is that right?

Jesus gave us the meaning of the “*eis*” in Matthew 26:28, when He said, “*For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*” Jesus did not shed His blood because our sins were already forgiven, but in order to the remission of sins.

The Greek word for our English word “for” in Acts 2:38 is the preposition “*eis*” which means “for, unto, into, with a view to, in order to.” (Vine's Expository Dictionary) Henry Joseph Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines it as: “a preposition governing the accusative and denotes entrance into, or direction and limit: into, towards, for among.” (Henry Joseph Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, page 183)

Even without such definitions for “*eis*” in the Lexicons of the Greek, the context clearly proves that the crowd was seeking, wanting, desiring the forgiveness of sins. And that is exactly what Peter gave them—the means to have the forgiveness of their sins and be free from the guilt of their sins by repentance and baptism.

Notice Peter's words in Acts 2:40, “*And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”*”

How were they to be saved? By repenting and the baptism spoken of in verse 38. If they were already saved (because of the remission of sins), then they didn't know it! But the response in verse 41 is key to see the change it made for them that day, “*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand*

souls were added to them.” It was clearly only those who repented and were baptized that, “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46)

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby’s Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Gaddy Hall, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry’s niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Katie Ward Coburn, Kathryn’s grandmother, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, & Allison (12 year old girl that received burns from a house fire/ 80% of her body was burned), Karey Trimble, Clois Wright (recent stroke).

Pleasant Plains Church of Christ is also having an event for young people July 19th-20th. (details also in the foyer)

A Different Speaker Gospel Meeting will be held next week at the Buckhorn Church of Christ (Details posted in the foyer).

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1. “The Christian’s Hope Pt. 1”

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Fred Johnson
The Book of Acts (Jason Longstreth)
Page 57 Question #13

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Jerry Kennemur
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Russell Briggs
Ephesians 2:11-13
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Lord’s Supper: Fred Johnson
Assisting: Dan Cottrell & Chris Callahan
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: “The Christian’s Hope Pt. 2”
Closing Prayer: Adam Harris

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

July 17th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Busby
The Book of Job (Mike Willis)
Page 16, Question #13
Invitation: Russell Briggs
Song Leader: Brian Meade
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade