

Does It Matter Who Baptizes Me?

Some time ago David Martin, minister at the Solid Rock Baptist Church in Bartlett, TN, authored an article entitled "Common Sense Questions A 'Church Of Christ' Preacher Cannot Clearly Answer." This article contains 13 questions that address subjects such as the necessity of baptism and instrumental music.

Through much study and reading on these subjects I have formulated answers that cite "book, chapter, and verse" references showing what the Bible teaches regarding these questions. This article addresses Mr. Martin's second question.

It is my prayer that anyone who reads this article will study the verses cited with an open mind to truly learn what God's Word teaches. Obedience to God's Word, nothing more and nothing less, is what will get us to Heaven. We all want to go, but we have to remember that those who reach Heaven will do so on God's terms, not man's.

QUESTION

If a "Church of Christ" elder refuses to baptize me, will I be lost until I can find one who will? Do I need Jesus AND a Campeblite "preacher" in order to be saved? If I do, then Jesus Christ is not the only Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) and the Holy Spirit is not the only Administrator (1 Cor. 12:13) of salvation - the "Church of Christ" preacher is necessary to salvation for he is performing a saving act on me when he baptizes me! Is this not blasphemy against Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost?

BOOK CHAPTER AND VERSE ANSWER

First of all neither the Bible nor the Lord's church teaches that an elder has to baptize. The pattern in the New Testament is that of Christian men baptizing. This began with John the Baptist followed by Jesus giving the apostles instructions to go and teach and baptize.

Mar 16:15-16

(15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

(16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

There are several other examples as well. Philip baptized the eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). It is implied that Ananias baptized Saul (Acts 9:1-20, Acts 22:6-16) and that Peter or one of the Jewish elders baptized Cornelius (Acts 10). Paul indicated that he had baptized some (I Cor 1:14, 16), although that was not his main purpose (I Cor 1:17).

The Bible specifies who is to be baptized. It is those outside of Christ who believe the Word. We see this in Acts 8:35-37.

Act 8:35-37

(35) Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

(36) And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

(37) And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The Bible specifies how they are to be baptized. That is, in the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19-20). This means it is to be done in the way that they authorized. How did they say it should be done?

First of all, baptism is immersion in water. It is compared to the burial of Jesus.

Rom 6:4

(4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Col 2:12

(12) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

It is also done for the remission of sins.

Act 2:38

(38) Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Act 22:16

(16) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

When someone does these things in the right way, for the right reasons, then they are scripturally baptized, no matter who assisted them. If we place any importance on who does it, then we begin to make our salvation dependent upon man. That is not what God intended. It is the Lord who forgives upon our obedience and it is the Lord who adds to the church. In a nutshell, a scriptural baptism has the following elements:

The proper mode. It is a burial in water (Romans 6:3-4 and Col 2:12)

The proper authority – The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 10:48; 19:5 and Matt 28:19)

The proper purpose – For the remission of sins, not as an act of faith because one is already saved (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

The proper subjects – Penitent believers (Acts 2:38; 8:37 and Mark 16:16)

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