

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

Church of Christ
371 W. Main Street
Greenwood, IN 46142
(317)888-8288

www.churchofchristatgreenwood.org

VOLUME 7 NO. 24

August 15, 2010

Into What Then Were You Baptized?

By Don McClain

We begin by asking our readers a very important question - "Have you been baptized?" If not, then in order to receive the remission of your sins, you must be, (Acts 2:38, Acts 10:48)! If your answer is yes, - I then turn to another very important question - "Into what were you baptized?" Does it matter? Paul thought so, and so did this certain group of disciples. (Acts 19:1-5)

Paul first asks these twelve "disciples" - "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" Had they received any miraculous gifts, and if not, he could lay hands on them. (Refer to Acts 8:14-17). The apostles alone had this ability, (Acts 8:18), and Paul, being an apostle was willing to provide these disciples with this important aide during the period of miraculous gifts. This in fact was done later in the text, (verse 6). (It is another study all together, but I will simply state here that the period of miraculous spiritual gifts have long since ended).

Their answer? "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." This set off the little light bulb in Paul's head - "Something is wrong with their baptism if they do not know about the Holy Spirit," so Paul ask yet another question - "Into what then were you baptized," (synonymous with "When you believed" above)?" If they had been baptized into Jesus Christ, they would have surely known about the Holy Spirit. Notice Paul did not ask them whether they had been baptized or not - for he knew the answer to that! They professed to be disciples - therefore the question was not "If" but "Into what?" Paul's question not only

2

implies the importance of baptism, but also what one "knows, understands, and believes" regarding his/her baptism is important.

Their answer? "Into John's baptism." What about John's baptism, was it sufficient? Would it be sufficient for you today? The apostle Paul pointed out to them - "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Consider what McGarvey had to say regarding the baptism of John in relationship to the text under consideration -

"This, then, forces us to the conclusion that they had been immersed with John's immersion after it had ceased to be administered by divine authority. Apollos had been recently preaching this obsolete immersion in Ephesus (Acts 18:24,25), and these persons may have been immersed by him. If so, they submitted to an institution which had been abrogated more than twenty years, and this was the defect that led to their re-immersion."

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance (Matthew 3:11), "For the remission of sins," (Luke 3:3), temporarily authorized by God, (Matthew 21:25-27), but not sufficient at that time because it was NOT in the name of Christ, or in other words, it was not authorized by Christ.

- Those baptized, but not according to the authority of Jesus Christ, has a need to submit to the Lord's commands and be baptized in the name, (authority) of Jesus Christ.
- Strong faith and honest convictions, when possessed in error, are not enough to be obedient and pleasing to the Lord.
- One cannot be taught error pertaining to one's salvation and particularly baptism; believe that error, and then be baptized right.

What about your baptism?

Your answer could be one of many possible answers - :

"I was baptized when I was a small child . . . I really don't remember." Baptism can only be obeyed by those who understand what it is that they are doing and why! If you were too young to remember then you need to be re-immersed. (Sprinkling or pouring does not constitute baptism at all - if you have not been immersed then you have never been baptized!)

"I was baptized to please my parents . . ." - You were not then baptized into Christ! You should be baptized again - and this time to obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

"I was baptized 'because' I was saved" - I am sorry, but I must tell you as humbly as know how, you were not baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is UNTO the remission of sins, (Acts 2:38). Paul was told to "arise and be baptized and wash away your sins," (Acts 22:16). Peter says "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:21), Jesus said – "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," (Mark 16:16).

"I was baptized into a denominational church," (Baptist church, Methodist church, etc.) - These are not churches of the Lord - He only built one and it is His! When one is baptized in the name of the Lord, he is baptized into the body (church) of Christ, (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Lord adds the saved to THE/HIS church, (Acts 2:47).

"I had the understanding when I was baptized that I was baptized unto the remission of sins, but I didn't know anything about the Lord's church." Would there be any significant difference between your baptism and the disciples Paul met in Ephesus? Remember Paul's question? "INTO WHAT were you baptized?" May I ask you again - "Into what were you baptized?"

If you examine yourself and come to the understanding that you were not baptized according to the teachings of Christ, our plea is for you to follow the example of these disciples . . . "5When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." They didn't hesitate to obey the Lord. They made certain that their baptism was acceptable to the Lord. Are you confident about your baptism? Are you confident enough to risk eternity?