

The Old Paths

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“Christ Did Not Send Me To Baptize.”

Jarrod Jacobs

“**F**or Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel” (I Cor. 1:17). This passage is a favorite among those who teach that baptism is not necessary for salvation. This verse can be confusing if we listen to men’s “twist” (II Pet. 3:16) and do not handle it “rightly” (II Tim. 2:15). At first glance it seems to be in contradiction with such passages as Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, and I Peter 3:21, but this is not the case.

Knowing that Satan himself (mis)quoted Scripture at times (Matt. 4:1-11), it should not be surprising to see men in religious error doing the same thing. Let us study this passage and learn what Paul was saying. When we do this, we will learn that I Corinthians 1:17 is NOT in contradiction with passages such as Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, I Peter 3:21, and others, but is in harmony with them.

Grammatically

When studying the phrase of I Corinthians 1:17 (“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel”), we must understand that this is an elliptical sentence. Paul was literally saying, “For Christ did not (only) send me to baptize but (also) to preach the gospel.” For this phrase to mean anything else makes Paul a liar! He said earlier in the text that he

had baptized Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanus, and others that he couldn’t remember, v. 14-16.) Paul not only baptized others, but also spent much ink writing about the necessity of baptism. Before that, he had submitted to baptism for the remission of sins, himself (Acts 9:17-18, 22:16, 16:14-15, 30-34; Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26-27; etc.)!! Therefore, he can’t be saying that he was sent to preach and NOT sent to baptize, for clearly he did both. He was sent **not only** to baptize folks, **but also** to preach Christ (See also: Gal. 3:26-27).

Contextually

In considering the context of this passage, let’s begin by reading I Corinthians 1:11-17: “For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

The point in this text is that

some were taking the names of the men who had baptized them (pure denominationalism!). Thus, some said they were “of Paul” or “Apollos,” etc. When Paul asked who was crucified for them, and in whose name (by whose authority) they were baptized, he was trying to focus their attention on Christ and not men. He was not condemning baptism, or saying it was not necessary, but reminding them that their focus and allegiance was to be on Christ and not on men. When we understand this, we can see why Paul “thanked God” that he had not baptized any more than he did. Several people were taking men’s names, like folks often do today! Thus, he was glad he didn’t baptize any more than he did “so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name” (I Cor. 1:15).

Answering A Popular Argument

From time to time some folks (especially Baptists) will cite I Corinthians 1:17 in a vain attempt to say that baptism is not necessary for salvation. Since they are misusing this passage to try to disprove the need for baptism, they usually say something to the effect: “See, Paul said he did not come there to baptize, only to preach the

“The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16).

Are you praying daily for our work here at Caneyville? Are you constantly asking for God’s blessings on our elders, deacons, preachers, Bible class teachers, our elderly, the widows, the spiritually weak, and every brother and sister in Christ? We have a great and powerful tool in prayer. Use it!

gospel..." When our Baptist friends say this, they need to be reminded that according to Baptist doctrine one cannot be a Baptist without being baptized. Therefore, if their statement about Paul is correct, and he really didn't come to baptize folks, then Paul also didn't go to Corinth to make Baptists out of them, and then "thanked God" that he wasn't making Baptists (I Cor. 1:14)!

Conclusion

Now that we understand this passage, let us not shy away from it. Paul never taught that baptism was not necessary for salvation. In fact he submitted to baptism, himself! Let us not be afraid of Satan's arrows that he shoots at us in an attempt to get us to question such basic Bible truths as baptism (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:16). Let us put on the whole armor of God and take up the shield of faith against such attacks against the Biblical record (Eph. 6:13-17). Let us be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" (I Pet. 3:15). Let us approach all Bible study in this way.

I Corinthians 1:17 is not a difficult passage to understand when we examine it in light of it's grammar and context. I Corinthians 1:17 is not contradictory to such passages as Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, I Peter 3:21, and others like it. Let us respect what is said in this passage, and let us encourage folks to become Christians by being baptized into Christ, just as the apostle Paul did!!

Predestination

Jarrold Jacobs

Predestination is a popular doctrine. This doctrine basically states that God has predetermined who will be saved and lost eternally before the world was created. Therefore, one has no control or choice in his eternal destiny. "What saith the Scripture?" The Bible teaches that Christ died for all people, not a select, predestined few. Jesus came, "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). In Hebrews, we read that Christ would, "taste death for everyone" (Heb. 2:9). Peter told Cornelius, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him, and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35). God's predestination is not something forced upon certain people without their knowledge or consent!

The word "predestinate" means to set boundaries or limits beforehand. God's predestination is seen in that He has already established the way by which people can come to Him in order to be saved and remain His children. Paul said the predestinated people are the called people (Rom. 8:30). How are men

called? They are called through the gospel of Jesus Christ (II Thess. 2:14)! Hearing the gospel produces faith (Rom. 10:17). This leads to repentance and then baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Yes, the Bible teaches predestination, but not what the denominations teach! Man is a free moral agent. Therefore, God has predetermined the way by which man can be saved. He *has not* predestined/predetermined certain ones to be saved or lost eternally without their knowledge or choice! (Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17)

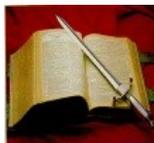
Pointed Paragraphs

R.L. Whiteside

"Instead of recognizing that God was working out through them his plan for the redemption of the world, the Jews concluded God cared for no other people. The promise to Abraham and their own prophets should have taught them the truth, but they were too much wrapped up in themselves to see the truth."

- Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy, p. 31

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"A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew"