

The Old Paths

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"Christ Did Not Send Me To Baptize"

Jarrod Jacobs

For Christ did not send me not 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 intimidating if we do not handle it "accurately" (II Tim. 2:15). At first glance it seems to be in contradiction with such passages as Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, and 22:16, 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 those 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 it is NOT in contradiction with passages such as Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16, 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 already said 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 baptized people. 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 read I Corinthians 1:11-18: "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. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The point is that some were taking the names of the men who had baptized them (pure denominationalism!). Thus, some said they followed Paul, Apollos, Peter, 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 our Lord. 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 see why Paul "thanked God" that he had not baptized any more than he did. The others did not have the proper understanding, and were taking men's names, like folks often do today!

Answering A Popular Argument

From time to time some (especially Baptists) will cite I Corinthians 1:17 in a vain attempt to say that baptism is not necessary for salvation. Since they misunderstand this passage, they usually say, "See, Paul said he did NOT come to baptize, only to preach the gospel..." When our Baptist friends say this, they need to be reminded that according to Baptist doctrine one cannot be a Baptist without baptism. Therefore, according to that reasoning, Paul was not making Baptists out of the Corinthians, and he "thanked God" that he wasn't making Baptists (I Cor. 1:14)!

Conclusion

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 Bible truths like baptism (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:16). Let us use the shield of faith against such attacks against the Biblical record (Eph. 6:13-17). Let us be ready and willing 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). I Corinthians 1:17 is not a difficult passage when we examine it in light of its grammar and context.

The Holy Spirit

Aric Russell

There is likely no Bible subject that people are confused about more than that of the Holy Spirit. There are a number of things taught today in regard to the Holy Spirit, and sadly many of these things are taught in error. Our goal is to determine the truth in regard to the Holy Spirit.

In introducing the subject of the Holy Spirit, it needs to be mentioned that the Holy Spirit is a person. Just as Jesus Christ is a person and just as God the Father is a person. In fact, notice the use of personal pronouns in John 16:13 in regard to the Holy Spirit. The text reads, *"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."* Understanding the Holy Spirit is a being, consider some other things about the Holy Spirit that are commonly misunderstood.

The first thing that is misunderstood is the miraculous workings of the Holy Spirit. This is not a question of whether miracles were performed in the first century. All who believe the Bible know miracles were performed. Rather, the question is, are miracles still being performed today? The answer is no. The reason some have difficulty in understanding that miracles have ceased is that they have not learned the Bible purpose of miracles. The purpose of miracles was to confirm the message that was taught by Jesus and the apostles (Mk. 16:15-20; Acts 8:5-6; Heb. 2:1-4). When the New Testament

was completed and confirmed through the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:13), the miracles ceased. They had served their purpose. Those who claim miracles are being performed today are attacking the completeness of the New Testament.

The next thing that is misunderstood is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There are a number of references to the Spirit's dwelling in the Christian in the New Testament. What does it mean that the Spirit dwells in us? Is this a physical or spiritual dwelling? Perhaps, to better understand the meaning of these scriptures, we should look at the scriptures that reference the fact that God and Christ dwell in the Christian. I John 4:15 states, *"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."* If this means God literally dwells in my body, then it must also mean I literally dwell in God. Notice as well what is said in Ephesians 3:17. The text reads, *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."* This passage reveals how God and Christ dwell in us. It is by faith. The same is true with the Holy Spirit. He dwells in us by faith.

The final misunderstanding we

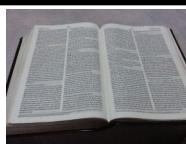
will consider in this article is in regard to how we are led by the Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* We understand we are led by the Holy Spirit. However, the question is how? There are some who mistake their own subjective feelings for the leading of the Holy Spirit. There are some who think whatever they do is because the Spirit led them to do it. There are also some who interpret their experiences as messages from the Spirit. We need to realize that if the Spirit of the Lord leads in such ways, one could never be sure of the will of the Lord. However, this is not how the Spirit of God leads. When we are following the teaching of the New Testament, we are being led by the Holy Spirit.

There is much error that is being taught in regard to the Holy Spirit. As in all things of a spiritual nature, let us go back to the scriptures to learn of the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that you allow the Spirit of God to lead you in all righteousness through the written word of God.

"A pessimist is someone who complains about the noise when opportunity knocks."

- Leslie E. Sloan

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