**“Things Baptism Does”**

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Baptism is a subject that deserves our study and obedience. It is a Bible subject that is discussed often in the New Testament. What does baptism do for man? What purpose does it serve?

The New Testament makes it clear that baptism forgives sins (Col. 2:12-13). When Jesus told His apostles to go preach the gospel to all nations, He said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:16). The apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, told folks, “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” (Acts 2:38). Yes, baptism saves us from our sins (I Pet. 3:21). To deny this is to deny very plain Bible teaching.

Simultaneous with the forgiveness of sins, we also find folks being added to the Lord’s church when they are baptized. This is stated in Acts 2:47. Notice that those who were baptized were saved (Acts 2:38), and those who were saved were added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:47)! When we understand this, it ought to help us appreciate what it means to be a part of the Lord’s church. Truly, we would have none of this if it were not for God and the sacrifice of His Son (Jn. 3:16).

Baptism also gives us a new name. The name “Christian” is a special name. It is a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. 56:5, 62:2, 65:15). Acts 11:26 shows the fulfillment of this prophecy when we read, “the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” The phrase “were called” means they were divinely called of God. Now we ask, “How did they become disciples?” This happened when they submitted to the Lord’s plan for salvation (Acts 2:38, 47)! In so doing, these people (disciples) were called Christians by God, thus fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy.

Therefore, when folks today do the same thing that those folks did, we know that God also considers them Christians. The question we must ask is, “Would God consider YOU a Christian?” Have you been baptized for the remission of sins?

The Bible teaches that if one wishes to belong to God, he must be “born again” (I Pet. 1:23). In other words, through the teaching of the word and our obedience to it, we are born again. We become God’s children. Jesus stated that unless we are “born again” or are “born of water and the spirit” we cannot “see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3, 5). Therefore, to be “born again” means to be “born of water and the spirit” and vice versa. Jesus was not describing a baby being born of his mother, but a man being born again! Jesus said such action results in him entering the kingdom of Heaven. Such obedience results in a soul becoming a child of God!

In like manner, we read of the Romans, who, having been baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-6, 16-18) were called, “children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:16-17). Yes, baptism makes us children of God.

May we thank God for His simple and beautiful plan of salvation. May we rejoice at what this does for us when we lovingly accept God’s gracious plan, and follow it by faith. Spiritual blessings can be ours, and Heaven can be our eternity if we will just do as He says to do!

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