

Why I was baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape if we neglect (do not pay attention to) so great (message of) salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The Kingdom of God is within us. But that does not mean that it is ephemeral, 'airy fairy' or subjective in any way. On the contrary, because it is God's kingdom, realm or domain then it must transpire that God reigns within us by the indwelling Holy Spirit and His rules and commands are to be obeyed in the outward world in which we have our temporal being.

Those who put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are in the world, but do not belong to it, that they should be subject to the world's rule, ideas, traditions and ways. Especially the world's religious customs and traditions.

We have been bought with a price. Born from above, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God.

The good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus the Christ in the New Testament texts was proclaimed in a manner that invited obedient faith in the Lord Jesus the Christ, faith in His name and surrendering one's own thought or mind for the mind of Christ. (Repentance in the sense of the Greek text.)

The object being to receive the free gift of forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and live in the kingdom of God, right here, right now.

Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins cannot be viewed correctly outside of the context of the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (the things which we have heard in Hebrews chapter 2 verse 1). Neither can a version of the good news be unadulterated unless all of this is included in the message.

Hebrews 2:2 talks of not neglecting, being careless about, this message of salvation that was first announced by the Lord Himself (Jesus), then by those who had been with Him. This message of salvation having been confirmed by signs, miracles and wonders and the giving of the gift of the Holy Spirit. (The Greek word for gifts here is not the usual *xarismata* but *merismos* meaning shared out.)

This good news begins with showing the identity of Jesus the Christ, that He is Immanuel, God with us, that God was in Christ on the cross reconciling the world to Himself. That His identity was confirmed with mighty signs and wonders, with His voice commanding even the wind and the waves. Declaring His atoning death on the cross, making peace for us with God through His own blood, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world into His own body on the cross. He who knew no sin becoming a sin offering for us.

The object being that whoever believes on Him, this Jesus, and upon His name, would pass from death to life through having his sins forgiven. Literally remitted, that is discharged.

On the day of Pentecost, when the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples of Jesus, Peter proclaimed this message of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. He demonstrated that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed both Lord and Christ (Anointed King), God having raised Him up from the dead.

Act 2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

In this good news declared by Peter, this prophecy of Joel came to pass. In referring to 'my male slaves and my female slaves' the result of repentance is shown as the transference from one's own will, to the will of God.

Transferring from being under the authority of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God.

Slaves wait for the command of their master and carry it out. Paul in Romans chapter six writes;

Rom 6:16 Don't you know, that to whom you yield yourselves as servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.

The next part of the good news was the command to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

Water baptism was familiar in a Jewish culture where being baptised/immersed was a common event. The prophet John baptised with a baptism/washing of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, preparing the road for Jesus who

himself would make disciples, having them baptized also. Jesus had his own disciples baptise His disciples in His name.

Act 2:22 You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be held by it. For David speaks concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because you will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you shall make me full of joy with your countenance. Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. **Act 2:30** Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this, which you now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he said himself, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make your foes your footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The result of Peter's declaring this good news was that;

Act 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *to them* about three thousand souls.

It is written, by the mouth of two or three witnesses any matter shall be confirmed and established. In the above the hearers are clearly commanded to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

To the above we may add witness number two:

Act 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Witness number three:

Act 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Witness number four:

Act 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

This passage is followed by the episode in Acts 19 where Paul is at Ephesus and finds disciples like Apollos, possibly having had teaching from Apollos. They too knew only the baptism of John and so Paul baptised them in the name of Jesus. After which Paul laid hands on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and prophesying. The lesson being that we cannot remove baptism in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins out of the gospel and get the same resultant conversion experience.

Act 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said to them, Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And they said to him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said to them, In to what then were you baptized? And they said, into John's baptism. Then said Paul, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Also by implication Saul of Tarsis:

Act 22:16 and now why are you waiting? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

In Romans chapter six, Paul writes;

Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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.

In the manner of baptism recorded throughout Acts and the letters of Paul it is shown that those believing on Jesus were baptised into Jesus, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins.

All those who are willing to do the will of God can expect to be enlightened as to the teaching of Christ, where it is coming from. We don't have to be scholars of scripture, we just need to be willing to do whatever God commands us, and like Saul of Tarsis, we will be 'told what we must do'.

Can we call Jesus 'Lord' and do otherwise? All of God's commands are for our good and to build us up in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately this complete good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ is not commonly heard in many Western evangelical circles. It has long become watered down, adulterated and compromised.

By the grace of God I was born of the Spirit without hearing this good news and afterwards I became influenced by the traditions of the group of believers I joined, thinking they would perhaps teach me 'what I should do'. Accordingly I was eventually baptised in a religious building by religious leaders in the manner of their religious traditions. I never felt convinced about this being that which occurred in the scriptures. But like those folks themselves, I knew no better. After I had repented of being a disciple of the good folks I was with and not a disciple of Jesus, (1982) I was impressed with the need to see the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ as a simple announcement of facts and commands, including immersion/baptism in the name of Jesus. Whilst being uneasy at the formula enforced by Constantine; 'In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen', I never encountered anywhere the practise of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. So I had reckoned the actual 'terminology' mustn't have been important.

The end of Matthew 28 can be referred to as justification of the modern practise and may genuinely be difficult to align up with the practise demonstrated in the rest of the New Testament, so we should look at it.

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, **All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**

Here Jesus states that all authority and power is given over to Him. If we compare this with Isaiah 9:6; For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

What is the name of the One who is called the everlasting Father, the Counsellor (Holy Spirit), The Son? Yes, His name is Jesus! Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one God. The Father is a role, not a name. The Son is a role, not a name. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of the living God, the mind of Christ, not a name. His name is Jesus (in Hebrew Yeoshua which simply means God our salvation), for He saves His people from their sins. Forgiveness of sins is in the name of Jesus. Salvation in the name of Jesus. Demons flee at the sound of the name of Jesus. There is Healing and deliverance through faith in the name of Jesus. The Good news is the good news of Jesus!

It can be a good practise to read the new testament through the lens of the book of Acts. In Acts the outworking of the gospel by the apostles, evangelists and others are catalogued and with this background we can read the Gospels and letters of the apostles knowing how it was actually realised in the age of the Gospel.

One effect of replacing the name of Jesus Christ with 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost', together with calling the disciples of Jesus 'Christians' is a device of Satan to diminish the name of Jesus, the name above every other name. The name

besides which there is no other name given in heaven or in earth whereby we must be saved. The name in which there is remission of sins.

No wonder so many who happily affirm they are 'Christians' are confused about whether they are actually disciples of Jesus Christ or not!

I was persuaded by the Holy Spirit that I should be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins as otherwise, how could I with integrity proclaim baptism in the name of Jesus Christ as integral to the good news of the kingdom of God? How could I baptise others in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins if I hadn't been so immersed myself? Also it was important that I be baptised by a member of the body of Christ.

Eph 2:19 Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together grows into an holy temple in the Lord: In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. There is continuity in the body of Christ, faithful men pass on the Word of Christ, the baptism in Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Besides imparting the knowledge that my sins are washed away by the name of the Lord – resulting in a clear conscience towards God, it makes a clear statement that my faith is in Jesus Christ, that I belong to Him, that I have become His disciple.

The history of Israel teaches many lessons of the slippery slope of disobedience to the Laws of God. Of the adaptation of the Laws of God to fit current perceptions and practises. Ending up with the state of the temple at the time of King Josiah. Full of rubbish, heathen idols and artefacts and emptied of the Holy furnishings and equipment. And the king was oblivious to much of this until the book of the law was found.

The message of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ has been attacked since the beginning.

Paul stated: **Gal 1:6** I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ to another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2Co 2:17 For we are not as many, which corrupt (peddle – water down) the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

2Co 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully (adulterating, manipulating it); but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

The integrity of the message of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus is of critical importance to the lost.

Jesus asked the religious leaders a question when they questioned His authority. The baptism of John, is it of heaven or of men? These folk had spent a lot of time debating this question. As they had not obeyed John's preaching to be baptised with a baptism of repentance for remission of sins then it was obvious they had dismissed John's authority. They then debated among themselves how to answer the question without aligning themselves either with or against the authority of John. Jesus did not ask about the teaching or preaching of John, just his baptism. Baptism was concrete. Either you submitted to it or you did not.

Let me ask you a question:

The baptism in the name of Jesus for remission of sins preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost, is it from heaven or of men?

The baptism in the name of Jesus performed by Phillip in Samaria, is it from heaven or of men?

The baptism in the name of Jesus by Paul of the twelve disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus, is it from heaven or of men?

The baptism of Saul by Ananias, washing his sins away, calling on the name of the Lord, is it from heaven or of men? The integrity of the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ is vital to the complete salvation of souls and the work of evangelism.

If the good news is hid, it is hid from those who are perishing. Will we personally humble ourselves before God and ask for His word on the matter?

At our time, there isn't much left that resembles the life or teaching of the early disciples of Jesus Christ as described in the book of Acts. Without the foundational message of the apostles and prophets it can't be any different. What is stopping us from reclaiming what we can?

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