



Why be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins?

Hebrews 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a (message of) salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifting with the Holy Spirit, 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 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 physical existence.

Those who are of 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.

The good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus the Christ in the New Testament texts is proclaimed in a manner that invites obedient faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, surrendering one's own thought or mind for the mind of Christ. (Repentance) ; faith in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins exercised by being baptized in His name.

The object being to receive the free gift of remission of (release from) sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit and live in the kingdom of God, right here, right now as priests and kings.

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).

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 – the apostles. This message of salvation from sins 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 sharing 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, His voice commanding even the wind and the waves. 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, bearing our iniquities in His own body on the cross. He who knew no sin becoming a sin offering for us all.

The object being that whoever believes on Him, this Jesus, and upon His name, would pass from death to life through having their sins washed away. Literally remitted, that is as a debt fully discharged – paid in full.

Luke 1:76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins,

This is the prophesy of Zacharias the father of John the Baptist regarding John's mission. John's mission was preparing the people for the One Who would come after him, Jesus, in whose name there would be remission of sins and who would baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Remission of sins may not be something we have a good grasp of.

Remission is not the same as forgiveness.

God was forgiving sins since the creation of mankind. He forgave His people Israel when they repented and returned to Him.

The Word of God became flesh so that as the Lamb of God He would hang on the cross, be cursed for our sakes, and shed His blood in full payment for our sins. For this reason remission of sins is in the name of Jesus the Christ.

If I lend you £20,000 because you desperately need it, you might avoid me whenever you can. If I come to your door, you might hide behind the curtains. You might cross the street if you see me coming. You have a conscience about the debt you owe me.

If I forgive you, because I know you can never repay the debt, you would be very happy that you no longer owed me the money. But you may still feel guilty about the fact that I never got the money back. You might still continue avoiding me when you had the opportunity. If however, my son, who loves you, sees your debt, and works and saves very hard so he has the £20,000; and he then gives me the £20,000 to pay your debt to me; you are free from the debt. I have my money owed to me. You owe me nothing. You no longer feel you need to avoid me. Your

conscience is clear. 1 Peter 3:21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

And you love my son for what he has done for you!

On the day of Pentecost, when the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 disciples of Jesus, Peter proclaimed this message of repentance and remission of sins in 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.

Acts 2:16 “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. and on my male slaves and on my female slaves I will pour out my Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show 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 the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’

In this good news declared by Peter, this prophecy of Joel had come to pass. In referring to ‘my male slaves and my female slaves’ the result of repentance is shown as the going from obeying one’s own will, to obeying the will of God. God gives His Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. 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; Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

The next part of the good news was the command to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. The prophet John had been sent by God with a baptism/washing of repentance for the remission of sins, preparing the way for Jesus who himself would make disciples, having them baptised in His name for the remission of sins as the first step in becoming His disciples. Jesus had his own disciples baptise other disciples in His name.

Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him:

‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’

Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

The result of Peter’s declaring this good news was;

Acts 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

It is written, by the mouth of two or three witnesses any matter shall be confirmed and established. In Acts 2 the hearers are clearly commanded to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

To this we may add witness number two:

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles who

were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Witness number three:

Acts 10:42 “And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, **through His name**, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Peter announcing the message of repentance and remission of sins through the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 10:47 “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. (SBL Greek text states name of Jesus Christ).

Witness number four:

Acts 18:24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

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 Christ. After which Paul laid hands on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, with them then speaking in tongues and prophesying. The lesson being that we cannot remove baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins out of the gospel and hope to have the same conversion experience as the first disciples of Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John's baptism.” Then Paul said, “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.” When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Witness number five:

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 Or do you not know, 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’. If we can receive with meekness the implanted word it will save our souls.

Can we call Jesus ‘Lord’ and do otherwise? All of God's commands are for our good.

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. When faced with the message of repentance and remission of sins through the name of Jesus Christ the reaction can be ‘Has God said.’

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 had 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 instead of 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 baptism in water and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. 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 scriptural practise of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. So I had rationalised that the actual 'terminology' mustn't have been important.

The end of Matthew 28 can be referred to as justification of some modern practises 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 make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the (one) name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: '

Here Jesus states that all authority and power is given to Him. If we compare this with a prophesy that the disciples were familiar 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, 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 Yah'ishua which means I AM Salvation), for He saves His people from their sins. Remission of sins is in the name of Jesus. Salvation from sins 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 the name 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 and implemented in that age.

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 only 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.

After some resistance due to my own pride and vanity I was persuaded by the Holy Spirit that I must be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins as otherwise, how could I with integrity share the message of repentance and remission of sins in His name? 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.

Ephesians 2:19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in 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 Jesus— 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 amongst the debris inside the temple.

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

Paul stated: Galatians 1:6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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.

The most valid reason for having our sins washed away by being baptised in the name of Jesus Christ? To avoid dying in our sins and being cast into outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

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Comments welcome by email to colin@followingjesuschrist.co.uk

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