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object by saying, "There is no power in the water." He knew that the power was of the Lord and he needed to obey to receive the blessing. Likewise, there is no power in the water of baptism, but one must go to the water to receive the blessing. To be cleansed of leprosy, Naaman was told, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times..." (2 Kings 5:10). There was no power in the water of Jordan, but if Naaman had not obeyed, he would not have been cleansed. Similarly, if one does not obey in baptism, he will not be cleansed.

One is not lost just because he is not baptized. He is lost because he is a sinner. If someone who can't swim falls into a lake and a boat is sent, but he won't get into the boat, is he drowning because he won't get into the boat? No, he is drowning because he is in the water. Likewise, one is not lost just because he is not baptized, but because he is in sin. Just as the boat is the means of rescue and one must get into it, the gospel is the means of salvation and must be obeyed (baptism included) to

rescue from sin.

Who has the right today to label baptism as "non-essential" or in anyway minimize any of the commands of Christ? Aren't all of the commands of the Lord essential? He said, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). As Lord, He has the right to make baptism an important step in the plan. He is the Savior and His will must become our's. He is the "author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (Heb. 5:9).

If when baptized, you put one Christ (Gal. 3:27), wash away sins (Acts 22:16), have remission of sins (Acts 2:38), are saved (Mark 16:16), benefit from Christ's death (Rom. 6:3-4), enter the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), what is your condition without baptism? Why not repent and be immersed in the name of Christ for the remission of sins? Let no man deceive you. Humbly obey the gospel today.

Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs>

The Nature Of The Kingdom Of God

IS NOT

1. Of This World (John 18:36).
2. Eating and Drinking (Rom. 14:17).
3. In Word (1 Cor. 4:20).
4. With Observation (Luke 17:20).

IS

1. In Power (1 Cor. 4:20).
2. Righteousness (Rom. 14:17).
3. Peace (Rom. 14:17).
4. Joy (Rom. 14:17).
5. Within You (Luke 17:21).
6. Unshakable (Heb. 12:28).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
 Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
 Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
 Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
 Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
 Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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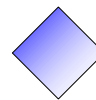


Schedule of Assembly

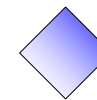
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
 Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
 Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



February 26, 2012

"Is Judging Wrong?"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Many in the religious world convey the idea that judging is wrong, and that no one has the right to JUDGE but God. The favorite verses used are Matthew 7:1-2, which read: "Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged ..." The other verse is found in John 8:7, which reads: ". . . He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." These two verses are used to impart the idea that judging is wrong. But notice what John says, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment," (John 7:24). We are faced with a dilemma. IS JUDGING WRONG OR RIGHT?

A careful study of the Bible on this subject will be that God has delegated the judgment of certain matters to men. Matthew 7:1-2 are similar to the words of James in James 4:11-12. Is it possible to go through life without making judgments? If we deal with others do we not have to decide something of their character? In fact, is not James himself guilty of this very thing which he prohibits? In this section of the book he uses such expressions as "Ye lust ... ye kill . . . and covet . . ." (James 4:2), "adulteresses" (James 4:4), "ye sinners ... ye double minded" (James 4:8). James was not prohibiting the moral appraisal which is necessary in human relationships. He is concerned with hypercritical, self-righteous, loveless judgment. This passage in James, as well as Matthew 7, does not forbid all kinds of judging.

God has delegated the judgment of certain matters to men. The New Testament gives authority to saints to judge in Christian matters (Read 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; 6:2-4). Jesus does not forbid the judgment of the church upon disorderly members (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Individual judgments we must make of wrongdoers and evil people (Titus 3:10-11). We judge those who teach false doctrine (1 John 4:1). God has delegated the judgment of certain matters to men.

Let us remember that judgment is always according to a standard. Moses and the judges of Israel were warned,

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor," (Leviticus 19:15). "Thus hath Jehovah of hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgment," (Zechariah 7:9). The standard for Christians today is "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment," (John 7:24). The standard of righteous is the commandments of God (Psalm 119:172). Paul, in Romans 1:16-17, points out that in the gospel is the righteousness of God revealed, and it will be used at the final judgment (John 12:48).

Jesus stated, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," (Mark 16:16). If one has not believed and has not been baptized, a judgment is made upon him, the person is lost. I have the right to look in God's word and judge this to be so. I can say if you are not in the ONE BODY, THE CHURCH in which Christ is the Saviour (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23), you are lost! That is what the Word of God teaches. Jesus has not promised to save any religious body other than His church!

Sadly, a dangerous attitude toward judging has developed. An attitude has developed within the church which denies that one may judge anything. What are they saying? How can we know who will be saved? How does anyone know that God won't save one who has not been baptized? We can know that not all men will be saved (read Matthew 7:13-14), although Christ died for all men (Hebrews 2:9). We know that the unbeliever cannot be saved since it is impossible for him to please God (Hebrews 11:6), and Jesus (John 8:24). We can know that all those outside of Christ are separate from Christ (Ephesians 2:12). We can know that those who ". . . know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus shall suffer punishment . . ." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). We can know that baptism is the avenue into Christ

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where salvation is found (**Galatians 3:27; 2 Timothy 2:10**). Therefore, God has drawn a line, that we recognize the fact that those in that condition are lost!

"You Can Be A Christian, Just Like People In The New Testament"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Are you troubled by religious division? If you are, we want you to know that we are too! In fact, we believe that Jesus Christ is displeased with religious division. We believe this because Jesus said so in the Bible.

Jesus Prayed for Unity

Jesus prayed that all His followers would be united. Hear Him as He prays to the Father as recorded in **John 17:20-21**: *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* This scripture shows that Jesus is displeased when those who call themselves "Christians" – followers of Christ – are divided. And we can learn also that it is possible for all Christians to be united. If it were not possible, Jesus would not have prayed for it.

Unity Was Commanded

When division among Christians developed during Bible times, Paul, an inspired apostle of Christ, charged them that there be no divisions among them. From **I Corinthians 1:10** we hear him as he says: *"Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* The solution for division specified here by the apostle was for everyone to speak the same thing and to be of the same mind and judgment.

The Bible is not divided. The Bible does not contradict itself. It does not teach conflicting doctrines. So, we can end all religious division if we will let the Bible, and only the Bible, be our guide. Consider this: Many times, we find that men are not divided over what the Bible says; rather they are divided over what the Bible does NOT say.

Christ Is Not Divided

The Bible clearly tell us that Christ is NOT divided, and that division is the result of following men instead of

So, in answering the question, "**IS JUDGING WRONG?**"; we conclude, **NO!** We judge only in the areas authorized by God. ♦

following Christ. We read in **I Corinthians 1:11-13**, *"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, 'I am of Paul'; and 'I am of Apollos'; and 'I of Cephas'; and 'I of Christ'. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"* Friends, the cause of religious division today is the same as it was then: people following various men instead of following Christ. Christ is not divided, and neither should Christians be divided. When we follow men, instead of following Christ, the Lord Jesus said that our worship is unacceptable to God. Hear Him, *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (**Matthew 15:9**).

Today We Can Have That Same Unity

Certainly we are able to understand the Bible alike because the apostle Paul commands us to keep the unity that the Holy Spirit revealed. *"Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all who is above and through all and in you all"* (**Ephesians 4:1-6**). This scripture shows us that Christians in the Bible were united because they were told to **keep the unity**. One cannot keep what he does not have. If we will all follow the **Bible**, and only the Bible, we today can have that same unity which Christians had in the Bible.

We Can Be Like Christians In The Bible

It is possible to be just what Christians were in the Bible if we will believe and obey the Word of God – the Bible – like they did. In **Luke 8:4-8**, the Lord Jesus used the sowing of seed to describe how some people will believe and obey the Bible while others will not. In **Luke 8:11-15** the Lord Jesus told what the parable meant. He explained that

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"The seed is the word of God." A fundamental truth is that a certain kind of seed will always produce its own kind. When we plant a seed of corn, we know we will always get corn, not beans or squash or something else. In like manner, the word of God – the Bible – when it is planted in our hearts – when it is believed and obeyed – will always produce Christians, not anything else. So we can be Christians just like Christians in the Bible, if we receive that same seed in our hearts – unmixed with the commandments and doctrines of men – and we believe and obey the Bible like they did – nothing more and nothing less.

How People Became Christians In The Bible

It is easy to understand how people became Christians in the Bible. The Lord's instructions are plain, and the numerous examples God has given in His Word are simple.

1. They Believed in Christ - The Bible tells us that the Philippian jailor brought them, Paul and Silas, out *"and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway"* (**Acts 16:30-33**).

2. They Repented of Their Sins - *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, 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 ... they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about*

3000 souls" (**Acts 2:37-41**).

3. They Confessed Christ - *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him"* (**Acts 8:35-38**).

4. They Were Baptized - *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (**Acts 22:16**).

How Christians Were Joined Together In The Bible

When they became Christians, they were not part of any denomination because denominations did not exist in the Bible. Denominations resulted when men began teaching "perverse things" – things not found in the Bible, and "drew away disciples after them" (**Acts 20:30**). We read in the Bible that Christians in each local area joined together to worship God, and every group of Christians was just alike in their faith and practice. They worshipped the same way; they taught the same doctrine; they did the Lord's work in the same manner; they had the same organization. They were independent churches which all looked to the Lord Jesus Christ alone as their head. They had no sub-head under Christ over them. Such as this resulted from the "perverse teachings" of men long after New Testament times. We encourage you to follow the Bible, and be a Christian just like the people in the New Testament. Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

BAPTISM - URGENT AND ESSENTIAL

By David Riggs

In New Testament times people were baptized as soon as they heard the gospel and had faith in Christ (**Acts 2:41; 8:35-39; 16:30-34**). There were no postponements or delays; there was no such thing as waiting for a "baptismal day." It was always "straightway," "the same day," "the same hour of the night," etc. They thought baptism was urgent and essential.

Furthermore, the inspired men of the New Testament did not take baptism lightly. They never poked fun at it saying, "There's no power in the water," neither did they accuse some of trusting in "water salvation." They taught

that Jesus made atonement for sin in His death, and they commanded all to believe, repent, and be baptized in order to receive the benefits of His death (**Rom. 6:3-4**). They viewed baptism as an act of faith in and submission to Jesus Christ, the Savior, who has all authority (**Matt. 28:18-20**).

All would freely admit that there is no power in the water of baptism. The power is of the Lord. Jesus healed a blind man by anointing his eyes and saying, *"Go wash in the pool of Siloam."* (**John 9:6-7**). The blind man did not

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