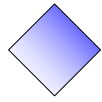


The Voice of Truth



April 13, 2014

After Baptism – What Then?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The Word of God tells us that there is one baptism (**Ephesians 4:5**), and this baptism is for all lost men (**Mark 16:16**). The design of baptism into Christ is for remission of sins, to obtain salvation (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**). Baptism changes ones state and relationship with God. One is out of Christ until he/she is baptized into Christ (**Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27**). Salvation is to be found only in Christ (**2 Timothy 2:10**); along with all spiritual blessings (**Ephesians 1:3**). Thus, one cannot have salvation or any other spiritual blessings out of Christ before being baptized into Christ!

Therefore, after baptism - what then? Baptism does not guarantee eternal life! Even after one is baptized into Christ, he/she can so sin as to be lost; and Paul told some: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace" (**Galatians 5:4**). They had fallen from grace! He had declared, earlier, that these had been called into the grace of Christ by the Gospel (**Galatians 1:16**). Here Paul plainly declared what so many in the religious world state cannot be done: They had fallen from grace! Baptism did not guarantee their eternal salvation (**Galatians 3:26-27**)!

Baptism does not guarantee eternal life; what then, after baptism? Let us make a list. After baptism you MUST:

- (1) Put the kingdom (the church) first (**Matthew 6:33**). Put God before pleasure, loved ones, company, work, etc. Like Paul, count all things loss for Christ (**Philippians 3:7-8**).
- (2) All of life is devoted to Christ (**Galatians 2:20**). We are to be living sacrifices for Christ (**Romans 12:1-2**). "For to me to live is Christ" (**Philippians 1:21**).
- (3) You must worship God every Lord's day (**Acts 20:7**;

Hebrew 10:25). Where else would a Christian want to be?

(4) You must live with care. Satan exists to make war with the saints of God (**Revelation 13:7**). Peter thus warned: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (**1 Peter 5:8**).

(5) Cease to practice sinful or doubtful things. Live as a new creature (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). The one who is baptized into Christ is raised up to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:4**). "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners" (**1 Corinthians 15:33**). "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (**1 Thessalonians 5:22**).

(6) Set your affection on things above. Don't put your trust in things of the world, for all will be burned up (**2 Peter 3:10**). "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (**Colossians 3:1-3**).

(7) Keep in touch with God. We must permit God to speak to us daily through the study of His Word (**Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15**). Never quit growing spiritually.

(8) Be doers of the Word (**James 1:22**). Show faith by works (**James 2**).

(9) We must be more concerned about obedience than sacrifice. To obey is better than sacrifice (**1 Samuel 15:22**).

(10) We must add to our faith (**2 Peter 1:5-8**). "For he that lacketh these things is blind, ... but, if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble" (**2 Peter 1:9-10**).

Brethren, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ ..." (**Philippians 1:27**). We must live the gospel to be ready for eternity. If you want to convince others of the value of Christianity – live it! ♦

Either the Bible will keep you from sin . . .

Or sin will keep you from the Bible. ♦

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“Obligations I Have To God”

By Jarrod Jacobs

The word “obligation” is defined as: “*something by which a person is bound to do certain things, and which arises out of a sense of duty or results from custom, law, etc. a binding promise, contract, sense of duty, etc.*” (Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language). I believe there are relatively few people today who realize that they actually have certain obligations toward God. Many in this country have been brought up to think that they are “owed” something merely because they were born. If anything, the opposite is true. Because we are born into this world, we have certain obligations we must meet.

As children, we have obligations to our parents to love, obey, and respect them (**Eph. 6:1-3**). Married folks have obligations to their spouses (**Eph. 5:22-33**), and children (**Eph. 6:4; Titus 2:4**). By being born in this country, we have obligations to pay taxes, and to follow the laws of this country (**Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 22:21**). We have obligations toward our employer (**Col. 3:22-23; Eph. 6:5-8**), or toward our employees, however the case may be (**Col. 3:22-24; Eph. 6:9**). These obligations are ever with us, it seems.

Yet, in our ever-hurried lives, we forget the One to whom we owe the greatest debt, and to whom we are the most obligated. Yes friends, we have obligations to God! When we forget this fact, we are sure to have problems. This is because it is God who must come first in our lives. We must love Him above all others (**Matt. 22:37**). We must serve Him and worship Him “*in spirit and in truth*” (**Jn. 4:24**). It is to Him that we owe everything. We belong to Him as slaves (**Rom. 6:16-18, 12:1-2**), being transplanted into “*the kingdom of His dear Son*” (**Col. 1:13**). Therefore, let us look to the Bible and consider some of our obligations toward God.

We Are Obligated To Worship God As He Directs.

Many have the attitude that one can simply worship God as he/she pleases, and it is acceptable with God. This is simply not true. God has always expected men to worship Him as he directs. A failure to worship God as He directed is the reason why Cain’s sacrifice was rejected (**Gen. 4:1-7**)! It was this same failure to worship God as He directed that condemned the nation of Judah. They thought they could worship God and be free to worship their idols, too. God said that such was not possible (**Jer. 7:8-10**). Please read what Christ said about worship. He told the Samaritan woman, “*God is Spirit: and those who*

worship him must worship in spirit and in truth” (**Jn. 4:24**). God has not changed His mind about worship! We are obligated worship as He directs, or we will be found worshipping Him in vain (**Matt. 15:8-9**).

Though the world tells us to “worship as you please” and tells us the way religion “ought to be,” we must respect God’s will and realize we are obligated to worship Him the way He directs, if we expect to please Him!

How has God directed us to worship Him? By reading the New Testament, we learn that God expects worship to Him to be done as we: sing praises to His name, preach His word, pray to Him, partake of the Lord’s Supper, and give as we have been prospered (**Acts 2:42, 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19**). All aspects of our worship must give glory, honor, and praise to our Creator, Ruler and Sustainer! We are not assembling (**Heb. 10:25**) to worship ourselves, nor to have a “fashion” show, nor for free baby-sitting!

Let us examine ourselves as to the true reasons why we gather together. If God is the focus and center of our worship, we’ll not be enamored at the possibility of adding instruments of music, games, prizes, plays, dramas, and other such nonsense. If God is the focus and center of our worship, we’ll realize that we are not the “audience,” as such, but we are the participants in worship wherein God Almighty is the “audience”! If God is the focus, we will be interested in what pleases Him in worship, and doing nothing more or less! (**Jn. 4:24**)

We Are Obligated To Repent Of Our Sins.

In his sermon on Mars’ Hill, Paul told the Athenians, “*The times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent*” (**Acts 17:30**). The phrase, “*All men everywhere*” includes you, and includes me! We are guilty of sin before God (**Rom. 3:23**). Because this is so, we need to be willing to repent of our sins (**Lk. 13:3**) and live our lives for the Lord.

The word “repent” means, “*to have another mind, to change the opinion or purpose with regard to sin. It is equivalent to the Old Testament word ‘turn’ ...*” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia). In literal terms, this word means, “about face, forward march.” It is a change of one’s mind which results in a change of one’s life. In the immediate context of **Acts 17**,

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people were expected to repent of following their idols. Another example of what repentance looks like is seen in the text of **Ephesians 4:25-32**. (Read that passage closely.) Friend, have you repented of following your idols instead of following God? You must, for he commands *"all men every where to repent"*!

Conclusion

To those who deny man's need for obedience to the Almighty, let them be reminded of our obligations! Our

obligations demand action, not inaction. We are not fulfilling our duty when we subscribe to the "faith only" philosophy. "Faith only" is false doctrine (**Jas. 2:24**)! We are obligated to our Lord, and bear responsibilities toward Him while on earth.

Let us consider well our obligations to God. Christians have these obligations we have studied above, and many others. Why is this? It is because Christians are to be the servants of God (**Rom. 6:16-18, 12:1-2**).

Credit: The Old Paths - 12/2/12 ♦

God's Two Laws Of Pardon By Heath Rogers

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Rom. 6:23**). We live in a fallen world—everyone feels the wages of sin. All the pain and problems that plague mankind can ultimately be traced back to sin. But, as the above passage points out, God offers a way out.

The word pardon means, "to release a person from further punishment of a crime" (Webster's). What man needs, and what God provides, is pardon. We have suffered enough for our sins. We want to be released from further punishment. We seek eternal life with God and Christ. The Bible is the best selling book of all time because it contains the message of pardon, or the forgiveness of sins. Man's greatest need—salvation—is found in the Bible.

God is able to forgive us of our sins because of the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ (**Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7**). But the fact that the blood has been shed does not mean that everyone is automatically forgiven. We chose to sin, resulting in our being lost. We must also choose to be saved. God has made a way for us to be forgiven, and this way can be referred to as a law of pardon.

God is not going to save us on the merit of our goodness. Cornelius is a great example of this (**Acts 10**). Cornelius was *"a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always"* (v. 2). Yet, he was told to send for Peter who would tell him what he "must do" (v. 6). The fact that he was told he must do something implies that a law exists which he had to obey in order to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 says, *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* God

wants to save everyone, but this is not possible until man comes to a knowledge of His law of pardon. Man is not free to choose HOW to be saved. There is a truth that must be learned, believed and obeyed before we are saved. Jesus provides the truth and points the way (**John 14:6**). He has been given all authority (**Matt. 28:18**). He is God's approved spokesman (**Heb. 1:1-2**). And He is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (**Heb. 5:9**). To learn God' law of pardon, we must listen to Jesus.

What has Jesus said we must do to be saved? Believe! *"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins"* (**John 8:24**). Repent of Our Sins! *"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish"* (**Luke 13:3**). Confess Faith in Christ! *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven"* (**Matt. 10:32-33**). Be Baptized! *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned"* (**Mark 16:16**).

Anything other than, or short of, what Jesus says is not the truth. It is through obedience to the gospel that we enter into Christ (**Gal. 3:26-27**) and enjoy every spiritual blessing in Him (**Eph. 1:3-14**).

We do not become perfect when we become a Christian. Even the most sincere Christians sin from time to time. Unforgiven sins have the same effect on Christians that they do on alien sinners—spiritual death, eternal Hell. So, the question of how Christians receive the forgiveness of their sins is also very important.

We Must Confess Our Sins! *"If we confess our sins, He*

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is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Confession is good for the soul. Our forgiveness is dependant upon our willingness to own up to the fact that we have sinned. God must see in us a heart like that of David who confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13).

sinned. To repent means to turn away from sin. God must see in us an effort to turn away from sin and back towards Him.

Pray For Forgiveness! Simon was also told to pray for forgiveness. God must hear from us that we desire to be forgiven.

Repent of Our Sins! Acts 8 tells of Philip the evangelist taking the gospel to those in Samaria. Among those who were converted was one identified as Simon the sorcerer (vs. 9-13). He sinned by trying to buy the ability to dispense the gifts of the Holy Spirit for his own personal gain (vs. 18-19). He was told by the apostle Peter to "repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you" (v. 22). Repentance is more than just being sorry that you have

God is ready and willing to forgive all people of their sins. But we must seek His forgiveness through the means He has made available. If you are not a Christian, the blood of Jesus will cleanse you of your sins if you will fulfill the requirements of God's first law of pardon. If you are a Christian, the blood of Jesus will cleanse you of your sins if you will fulfill the requirements of God's second law of pardon. God is faithful to do what He has promised if we will do what He requires of us. ♦

SUPPOSE - JUST SUPPOSE

Yes, just suppose that next Sunday Jesus stood at the end of the pew where you sit as you were about to place your offering in the collection plate, and just suppose that instead of the collection plate, he held out his hand, the hand that was nailed to the cross for you. Would you be willing to place your offering in that nail pierced hand?

Could you look upon that face stained with blood from the thorn pricked brow; see the body that was beaten and placed upon the cross, could you do this, look him in the eye and say, "Lord I'm giving all I can"?

Suppose as you looked upon Jesus, with the torn hands and feet, the beaten body, the pierced side and head crowned with thorns, he said to you, **This is how I showed my love to love.** ♦

*A faith that will not take us to worship will not
Take us to heaven! ♦*

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