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Is Baptism Necessary For Eternal Life?

The question has been asked many times concerning the necessity of baptism in obtaining Eternal Life. There are those who believe one must be baptized into a Christian Church before they can go to heaven. The Bible is very plain as to the benefit of baptism. I Peter 3:21 says, **“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:...”** What a wonderful benefit to know you have done that which God commanded and well pleases Him. And, what peace it brings to our souls in having **“a good conscience toward God.”** There is a saving in baptism, but it is a temporal (timely) saving. It saves us from that feeling of condemnation we have when we do not those things which please the Lord.

The Apostle Paul did not spend his time actually baptizing new believers into the church. He only baptized a few. Paul said, **“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel...”** (I Corinthians 1:17). By the inspiration of the Spirit of God, Paul felt more compelled (impressed) to spend his time going about preaching rather than baptizing in a local church. Does that in any way lessen the importance of baptism? Of course not! He expresses his zeal to preach in I Corinthians 9:16, **“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”**

Notice what Paul said, **“Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel”** (I Corinthians 1:17). If baptizing was essential for eternal life, then why did Paul say that Christ didn't send him personally to baptize? Two reasons: 1 - Because it was a necessity for him to preach the gospel every opportunity that was afforded to him. 2- He knew that Salvation was of what Christ did, not what man could or would do. He desired for their eyes to be centered only on Christ.

Paul was addressing a problem in the church at Corinth. They were holding on to the name of the person who had baptized them. **“Now this I say, that every**

one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. vs. 13 - **“Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”** In view of such a perversion, the apostle was thankful that he had personally baptized only two plus one household of them (I Corinthians 1:14-16).

It was within that context that Paul said: **“For Christ sent me not to baptize.”** The word **“baptize”** here denotes “to administer the rite” of baptism. Paul was not sent to be an administrator of baptism; his primary purpose was to proclaim the gospel which contained the commandment to be baptized. The apostle was not dis-associating baptism from the gospel; rather, he was stating that no special adoration or attention was to be attached to the one administering or doing the baptizing. However, there is to be a proper administrator. He must be called as Aaron was called, spoken of in Hebrews 5:4, **“And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”**

Mark 16:16 can be easily taken out of context if it is not rightly divided. It says, **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;...”** We must notice that belief comes first and then the baptizing, and belief comes after being born again of the spirit.

To be baptized is to acknowledge and proclaim what Christ did for us in His death, burial, and resurrection. After we have been baptized with the Holy Spirit (born again, quickened), we should then be baptized (immersed) to show our obedience and love unto Him who has saved us by His Amazing Grace. Our conscience will then be good. Think About It!