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Only Bible Baptism Makes Christians

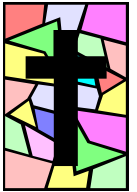
Upon one of several occasions the chief priests, scribes and elders came to Jesus asking Him, *"By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority to do these things?"* Jesus answered with a question revealing the motive of these men. *"The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"* (Matthew 11:27-30). Our disposition in matters of faith and godliness must be as the Bereans (Acts 17:11). All authority in matters of life and godliness will either be found *from heaven, or of men*. Since all Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16, 17), and man is subject to subjectivism turning to many sources, we turn to "the source," the Word of God, that authoritative standard for our study over the conversion of *certain disciples* - twelve in all of Acts 19:1-7. We will look at these passages in this order: v. 1, 4 and 5. Due to time constraints we will not deal with vv. 2, 3 and 6.

***"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."* (Acts 19:1).**

In Acts 18:24ff we are first introduced to Apollos. Luke, the writer of Acts, left the narrative of Paul's journey and recorded the incidents about Apollos. As we think about Apollos, one should remember he was not blessed with divine revelation in his preaching as were *chosen men* like Phillip and Stephen. Such were conferred with miraculous gifts (Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:4) thus, enabling them to preach by revelation (directly from heaven), and confirmed what they taught by the signs and miracles which they performed. Their confirmation was undeniable proof their message came *from heaven, not of men* (Mark 16:17, 18; Acts 6:8; 8:5, 13).

What did Apollos preach? He taught what he had learned! He learned well and very capably taught the message of the Messiah (Acts 18:25). It is my studied position Apollos at this time had been teaching the very thing that John the baptizer had taught i.e., things relative to the *coming Messiah* (Acts 18:28). Because he knew *only the baptism of John*, Apollos was not able to preach the souls need; the saving Gospel of Jesus. Nor was he able to preach fulfilled *things concerning the kingdom* as Philip did (Acts 8:12). Certainly he taught and spake diligently the things of the Lord. He preached truth in as much as He knew truth! Holy writ however, has him knowing *only the baptism of John* (Acts 18:25). Note the text calls attention to *certain disciples*. Someone has said, these *certain disciples* were Christians. This is false! These dozen men were by no means Christians! They were *certain disciples*. They were persons who had been baptized with John's baptism, who had embraced John's doctrine that the Messiah was soon to appear! (Acts 19:3, 4). A disciple is a learner. Disciple and Christian are not synonymous. (Matthew 9:14). Christians continue to learn however, there is a difference being a learner in prospect and a learner having obeyed that form of doctrine! (Romans 6:17). Responding to the answer given by the twelve (vv. 2, 3), Paul further imparts unto their knowledge:

"... John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they



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should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus” (Acts 19:4).

Apollos had been doing the work of John. This work was preparatory, a work which had been completed already. John's preaching was to turn the people from their sins and to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah (Luke 1:17). Apollos was preaching the coming kingdom when that kingdom had already been established now for about twenty years. John did not want to make disciples for himself rather, he wanted the people to believe on the *one that cometh after me* (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:15). Apollos was preaching truth, what he knew to be truth, yet he was in error! Since Apollos knew only the baptism of John what did he know? What did he not know? Here are some thoughts for consideration.

Some Things He Did Know. 1. He knew of John's baptism 2. He knew it was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 3. He knew the Old Testament scriptures, proving Jesus was the Messiah to come. However, he did not know the *whole counsel* (fulfillment of Jesus' coming) of God (Acts 20:27).

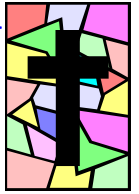
Some Things He Did Not Know. 1. Apparently he did not know the doctrine of the cross (1 Corinthians 1:18). 2. He did not know the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20) 3. He did not know the wonderful events of Pentecost (Acts 2). He did not know baptisms form of Christ death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). As he looked to the "coming of the kingdom" this was no doubt his message. It was John's message. Apollos could not preach the saved are added to Christ's church, which is that kingdom. (Matthew 16:18, 19; Acts 2:47). Apollos was indeed learned, *mighty in the scriptures* however, he needed to know more!

Like Apollos, Some Brethren Need To Know More!

We need to take a long look at these passages relative to what constitutes proper obedience to the Gospel. Apostate brethren in various places are arguing denominational (Christian Church) baptism is acceptable for membership in the Lord's church. One argument relates; "A number of well known gospel preachers have taught this doctrine." What does this prove? Nothing! The only well known gospel preachers who if they taught the doctrine would bind anything upon me would be the apostles and New Testament prophets! Brethren will quote from Campbell, Stone and others putting these men on par with the apostles! This is an argument from tradition (what men have taught and practiced since the age of inspiration). What a shame! The valid question is, do the Scriptures either implicitly or explicitly teach this doctrine? A resounding No is my answer! Certainly there cannot be found an example. Even with one trying to imply this doctrine will have a hard time since the denominations of today did not exist in the first century. Remember the introduction at the outset of this lesson? Our authority must come from heaven, not of men!

Additional Arguments Exposed

Another argument from erring brethren accepting denominational baptism, "Most people do not



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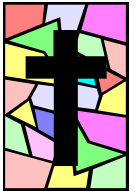
know every aspect of the purposes of baptism, therefore if they accept one reason the other reasons do not have to be accepted at the time of the baptism.” No doubt this sounds good on the surface however there are major flaws to this concept. Take for example Acts 2:38. One cannot be scripturally baptized without repentance. Do folks need to repent of the false teaching that one does not need to repent? Suppose one does not believe baptism is essential to salvation. Does this teaching need to be repented of? Of course it does! Therefore this error needs to be repented of prior to baptism! Take another example, the Oneness Pentecostal doctrine that Jesus is the Father. These baptize and say they do so “for the remission of sins.” Does this doctrine and other erroneous doctrines these folks teach need to be repented of? Indeed! It seems many want to accept their choice of denominational baptism and reject others. This will not work! Authority must come from heaven, not of men!

“When they heard [this], they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5).

As should be noted, it was necessary to “re-baptize” these men. However, they were baptized with John’s baptism, which required repentance. The “great commission” (as they just obeyed with Paul’s help), also requires repentance. (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19, 20). These men with John’s baptism were baptized “for the remission of sins” (Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4), as is also required under the authority of Christ which these men just obeyed. Denominationalism will not measure up to John’s baptism nor will it the great commission baptism! Largely denominationalism will not preach and baptize “for the remission of sins,” nor require repentance prior to baptism. Even those who baptize “for the remission of sins” if it had a wrong purpose or something else wrong with it, the baptism is of necessity, invalid. That is the very thing with the baptism of these twelve. Indeed they were immersed! Indeed they were immersed for the remission of sins! What was the problem with their baptism? What required these men to be baptized by Paul? They had the belief out of order! (Acts 19:4). The baptism of John was preparatory which *looked forward* to Christ’s first coming & death on the cross, not His resurrection and second coming. Being baptized with John’s baptism had these men looking back, not forward. Thus their problem was a lack of understanding and required Paul to baptize them after their knowledge increased properly. If denominational baptism won’t measure up to John’s baptism and since John’s baptism cannot be claimed as a valid baptism, certainly denominational baptism will not and cannot measure up.

What Else Is Wrong With Denominational Baptism?

1. Denominational baptism has a wrong purpose. Such a one before they are immersed believes their sins are already forgiven. Thus they cannot be baptized for the remission of sins.
2. Denominational baptism places one into a man made organization. Although it may have the right design, (immersion), and called baptism to put one into a denominational church, makes this baptism invalid as well. There is no basis to accept Christian Church baptism. One reason is their placement into a denomination as is the Christian Church. The aforementioned demonstrates the necessity to fulfill all scriptural prerequisites for baptism, in order for that baptism authorized by Christ to be valid. If one does not believe, he cannot be scripturally baptized



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(Mark 16:15, 16). If one does not repent, he cannot be scripturally baptized (Acts 2:38).

It shouldn't be thought from these few passages, this was the only thing Paul said to these twelve *certain disciples*. Each of the conversions recorded in the book of Acts, one or more of the commandments to become a child of God are not explicitly stated. Does this mean that one or more of those commandments do not need to be obeyed? Again, a resounding no! A diligent study of these passages, one will note the concept: *a part being put for the whole* may be understood. The word is *synecdoche*: *A figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole* (American Heritage Dictionary). Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Did Jesus mean believing alone one may have sins forgiven? No! From another passage Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). Certainly we can understand the necessity one must believe and repent! When we take the sum of His word only can we then say, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:17). What are *certain things* one must know and do to be scripturally baptized?

1. Hear the Gospel – Hebrews 1:1, 2; Matthew 17:5; Acts 8:12; Romans 10:17.
2. Believe Jesus is the Christ – Mark 16:15, 16; John 8:24.
3. Repent of past sins – Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3, 5; 2 Corinthians 7:10.
 - a. Must be aware having sinned
 - b. Must repent of past sins
 - c. Including the repentance of teaching/practicing error.
4. Confessing Jesus to be the Son of God – Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9, 10.
5. Baptism for the remission of sins. – Acts 22:16.
6. That one is added to the church for which Jesus died not some man made denomination – Acts 2:47; 8:12; 20:28 et. al.
7. Be faithful even in death – Revelation 2:10.

These are mandates. Anything less with the present trend of apostasy so prevalent in the Lord's church today should come under suspicion. May each of us who preach and teach, teach and preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 8:12; Acts 20:27). May each of us contemplate our Gospel obedience with the aforementioned in mind examining ourselves and make our calling and election sure (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10, 11).

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