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## The Sin Of Selfishness

By Harold Turner

Someone has said that selfishness is the greatest curse of the human race. A selfish person is disliked by all, and in reality he becomes his own worst enemy. A life controlled by selfishness is lonely and unhappy. While the selfish person longs for others to show friendship toward him, he turns them away by his self-interested ways. The selfish person has little, if any, understanding of the Lord's words, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matt. 7:12). The selfish person defeats himself and robs himself of the blessings enjoyed in giving, serving and helping.

The story is told of a man who was given a rice field. It is said that the first season the irrigation water covered his field and made it fruitful, and then flowed on to his neighbor's fields, bringing fertility to them. But the next season the selfish man said to himself, "This water is wealth, it is liquid harvest, I was a fool to let it escape to my neighbor's fields." He stopped the water from flowing on to his neighbor's fields, and spoiled his own crop. For the water was a blessing while it flowed, but when it became stagnant it bred a marsh. This story illustrates the blindness of the heart which cannot see beyond its own desires.

The lessons Jesus taught about man's problem with selfishness were not designed solely for the purpose of improving human relationships, or just to bring about greater happiness to the individual. Jesus taught that selfishness is a barrier between man and God that one must overcome if he is to be saved. In Luke 9:23 Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Before one can become a Christian he must die to himself. The apostle Paul pictured this idea in his own conversion, saying, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ

(Continued on Page 4)

## The Importance Of Repentance

By Glynn V. Purdy

Is repentance necessary to salvation? Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3, 5.) In Acts 2 we read of many who heard the gospel and inquired of Peter and the other apostles what they should do about the salvation of their souls. Peter told them to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38.) This shows that repentance precedes the remission of sins. Too, in Acts 3:19 Peter said to others, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...", showing that repentance comes before conversion. Repentance is a command of God to "all men everywhere." (Acts 17:30.) There is no way one can be saved unless he repents!

There are several words which have been translated as "repentance" in the Bible. The Greek word "metamelomai" is used in the case of Judas, Matt. 27:3. This word means to be "careful or concerned with, to regret, to care after." Judas was regretful of his deed, but his regrets were worldly sorrow, and rather than turning to God he went and hanged himself. The Greek word "metaneo" is the word used in Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19. This word is defined as "a change of attitude, change of mind, change of heart." It is a change of heart that leads one to a change of will, Matt. 21:28-32.

There are four things involved in Bible repentance. First there is the right attitude toward sin. An attitude that makes one sorry for his sins, as seen in 2 Cor. 7:9-10, where Peter said, "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner... For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Godly sorrow is not repentance, but with godly sorrow comes the right attitude toward sin, the attitude to give it up! To turn from sin to God in repentance.

Repentance also involves the right attitude toward God, to turn to God. In Matt. 21:28-30 Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not." The attitude of the first son was, "I will not go." Then he "Repented and went." His attitude at first showed no love, respect, honor, and no obligation to his father. He would not obey him. He was selfish. But he changed his mind, his attitude, and his will. He repented and went to do his father's will. This is what must take place in the heart of the sinner. The sinner has been selfish without respect or regard for what God desires. When his attitude changes toward God he will turn and obey God.

Repentance also involves an attitude toward self - humility. The sinner is self-righteous, disobedient and self-willed. He must "come to himself," and realize that he has been created to worship God, and to serve both God and man. He must further realize that he can not live for himself alone, but that he is his brother's keeper. His attitude must change, like that of the younger son in Luke 15:18-19, who came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." This is an attitude of genuine humility.

Too, repentance involves the right attitude toward others, an attitude of restitution. When Zaccheus stood before Jesus, he said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusations, I restore him four fold." (Luke 19:8.) When one repents, he not only gives up sin, but is willing, as much

(Continued on Page 2)

## FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
and Harold Turner

### The Importance of Repentance (Cont.)

as is humanly possible, to make restitution for the sins of the past. When the Philippian jailor was brought to repentance, he took Paul and Silas and "washed their stripes." (Acts 16:33.) Before this he had locked them in prison without concern for their wounds, and had retired to his quarters where he slept soundly. But, now, though he had not caused the stripes, he was showing forth the fruits of repentance. Godly sorrow that worketh repentance demands that we spend the rest of our lives "washing the stripes" of others, whether we administered the stripes or not. Have you shown forth the fruits of your repentance? Do you continue to repent when you sin? It means the difference between being saved or being lost.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### Churches of Christ

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Agnos     | \$ 5.00 |
| Big Pond  | 12.00   |
| Elizabeth | 5.00    |
| Forsyth   | 50.00   |
| Garfield  | 15.00   |
| Jeff      | 5.00    |
| Sitka     | 5.00    |
| Viola     | 5.00    |
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### Individuals:

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Joseph T. & Edith Robinson    | \$20.00 |
| Clyde & Delphia Smith         | 5.00    |
| Vernon & Emma Flynn           | 5.00    |
| Georgia Ragsdale              | 10.00   |
| Mrs. Ethel Pratt              | 1.00    |
| Vernie Cook                   | 1.00    |
| Elsie L. Holland              | 10.00   |
| A friend                      | 2.00    |
| Nursery Class, Mammoth Spring | 9.00    |

# Questions About Baptism

By Harold Turner

Through the past there have been numerous questions asked about the subject of baptism. These questions have related to most every aspect of this subject. Questions have been asked about who should be baptized, who should do the baptizing, how one is to be baptized, the purpose for which one is to be baptized, and which baptism one is to receive.

The New Testament makes frequent reference to the subject of baptism. But does the Bible fail to discuss this subject with sufficient clarity that all can understand it alike? Few Bible doctrines have undergone more controversial discussions than has this one. Where is the problem, with God, or with man? The Bible states that God is not the author of confusion, and yet, there is much confusion about this subject of baptism. Since God is not the author of confusion, then obviously man is to blame. Let's look at some of the questions about this subject and see how God has answered them.

### WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Probably the first thing that we would need to consider is just what is meant by the word, baptism. Usually in our efforts to define words we turn to the dictionary. Webster defines baptism, first from the Greek word, baptisma, which is defined as a dipping under, immersion. Webster then gives the modern usage of the word as, "The ceremony or sacrament of admitting a person into Christianity or a specific Christian church by dipping him in water or pouring or sprinkling water on him." When we study some word from the Bible we should be concerned with what the word meant when first written, not with our modern revisions of word definitions. W. E. Vine, in his "Dictionary of New Testament Words", defines baptize from the Greek, saying, "To baptize, primarily a frequentative form of bapto, to dip, was used among the Greeks to signify the dying of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, etc."

But, how does the Bible define baptism? Baptism is first mentioned in the work of John. John baptized the people "in the river of Jordan", Mark 1:5. When Jesus was baptized in Jordan, he came "up out of the water", Mark 1:10. When the eunuch was baptized, he went down into the water, and came up out of the water, Act 8:38, 39. In Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12 Paul states that

baptism is a burial. The New Testament never refers to or pictures baptism in any way other than immersion. Sprinkling and pouring for baptism are without scriptural support. They are only the innovations of men. God does not leave us in confusion about the meaning of baptism, but rather men have confused the issue by remodeling God's plan.

### WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Is baptism for infants or adults? Is it for sinners or for Christians? Why is there confusion over who should be baptized? Did God fail to give clear instructions here? Again, let's look for a Bible answer to this problem.

Should infants be baptized? If so, by whose authority are they to be baptized? There is no Bible record of such a practice. In the Bible record, before people were baptized they were taught the gospel, and those that received this teaching were baptized, Acts 2:41; John 6:44-45. In Acts 8:36-37 the eunuch asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" The answer Philip gave shows another prerequisite to baptism. He said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The man then confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This man was taught, he understood and believed the teaching, and confessed this fact before being baptized. In Acts 2:38 people were instructed to "Repent, and be baptized..." Before one is ready to be baptized he must first repent of his sins. Until one has been taught the gospel, expressed his faith in Christ and repented from sins, he is not qualified to be baptized.

Baptism is for adults not infants. Is baptism for sinners or Christians? Let's answer this question under the following question.

### FOR WHAT PURPOSE SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED?

There is a wide range of difference in the answer to this question. Many are strongly convinced that one must be saved before he can be baptized. Others are just as strongly convinced that one must be baptized in order to be saved. Has God left us with insufficient teachings about this matter? Or have men, by their interpretations, only confused what God has said?

In Mark 16:15-16, Jesus instructed the apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Then

(Continued on page 3)

## Questions About Baptism

he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." These instructions are universal, they were for every creature in all the world. Can we understand the Lord's statement here? Does it need to be interpreted? Did Jesus place salvation before or after baptism? The confusion over this passage is not over what the Lord did say, but over what men contend that he did not say. Men contend that because Jesus didn't say, "He that is not baptized shall be damned", baptism is not essential. "And" is a linking conjunction. It links belief and baptism together as requirements to reach the results. If either is left out, the results cannot be reached.

In Acts 2:38 we again have two requirements linked together to accomplish one result. "Repent, and be baptized." "And" links together both repentance and baptism to reach some results. The results is "For the emission of sins." Therefore, to reach the goal of remission of sins, one must both repent and be baptized. When Peter told these people to be baptized, they were not already saved. They had expressed faith by asking what they must do. In verse 40 Peter encourages them to "Save yourselves". So they are not already saved. And in verse 41 we learn, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." Look at what Peter has instructed here. "Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins." "Save yourselves... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." What conclusion do you reach from this?

In 1 Peter 3:20-21, Peter first speaks of the salvation of Noah and his family, telling us that "eight souls were saved by water." Peter then states, "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)..." Can any explanation or interpretation of this passage change Peter's statement, "Baptism doth also now save us", to mean "Baptism doth NOT save us"?

From these Scriptures, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38; 40-41, 1 Peter 3:21, and others (Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3, Colossians 2:11-13) we should conclude that the purpose for which one should be baptized is in order to receive the remission of sins, or to be saved.

### WHO IS TO ADMINISTER BAPTISM?

Here again is a controversial issue. Some will accept only the baptism administered by the ordained clergy of their distinctive denomination, while others feel that it isn't important who does the baptizing.

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus told the apostles, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." From this it seems clear that those who have been taught and baptized are to teach and baptize others. In the New Testament there was no "ordained clergy." This, too, is an innovation of men. The significance of baptism does not hinge on the person administering the baptism, but upon the faith of the one being baptized.

### WHICH BAPTISM IS ONE TO RECEIVE?

There is a question with many as to which baptism (the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or baptism in water) one is to receive. When we read about baptism in the Bible, how can we know which baptism is being referred to? How can we distinguish between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism in water?

There are two things to keep in mind about which baptism is being referred to. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a promise, not a command. It was something one received, not something to be obeyed. And it was administered only by the Lord. The baptism in water was not something to be received, but rather to be done, and it was a command rather than a promise. It was to be administered by men rather than by the Lord. Whenever baptism is referred to as an action on the part of man, it is baptism in water.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not promised to all people. This was a promise primarily to the apostles, Acts 1:4, 5. All obedient believers are promised, the "gift of the Holy Spirit", Acts 2:38, 39; 5:32. This gift was promised, along with the remission of sins, to those who repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. At the time that Paul wrote the book of Ephesians, he stated that there was but one baptism, Eph. 4:5. At that time there wasn't two baptisms being administered, one in water and the other by the Holy Spirit. Either the baptism in water, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit had ceased at that time. Sometimes people refer to 1 Cor. 12:13 to suggest that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was being administered at that time. Here Paul said, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." Notice, Paul did not say, "In one Spirit", or "With one Spirit", but "By one Spirit". In 1 Cor. 12:3 Paul said, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." We cannot confess Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." We cannot confess Jesus as Lord but BY the Holy Spirit (Ghost). Does this

mean that every person who admits that Jesus is the Lord has received the Holy Spirit? Many unsaved people will confess that they believe that Jesus is the Lord, the Son of God. We cannot know of Christ apart from the knowledge revealed by the Spirit in the word of God (John 20:30-31). We know that Jesus is the Lord by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. And when we confess this truth, we do so by the knowledge imparted in the word. This same principle is true in verse 13. We are baptized into the one body by the command given by the Spirit in the word. This can be seen in Acts 2:4; 41. The apostles spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The Holy Spirit gave the command for these to be baptized, and they obeyed it. They were baptized by the Spirit into one body, the church.

### CONCLUSION:

Who should be baptized? The penitent believer (Acts 2:38). For what purpose should one be baptized? For the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), to be saved (Mark 16:16, 1 Peter 3:21), to get into Christ (Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27). Who should administer the baptism? The effectiveness of baptism does not depend upon the person administering the baptism, but upon the faith of the one being baptized. How should one be baptized? By immersion in water (Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12). Which baptism is for us today? The one commanded for us to obey, the one administered by men (Matthew 28:19-20).

Have you been baptized with the baptism described in the New Testament. If not, may we encourage you with the words of Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

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"If life looks cloudy, maybe the windows of your soul need washing."

"If you have to be careful of what you say maybe you shouldn't say it."

"People who expect salvation at the eleventh hour often die at ten-thirty."

"Almost any system will work if the people behind it will."

"When you kill time just remember it has no resurrection."

"No farmer ever plowed a field by turning it over in his mind."



## The Sin of Selfishness (Cont.)

liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Christ cannot live in the heart that has only self in its interest.

Living the Christian life demands that we grow out of selfishness into generosity. True happiness comes through interest in others rather than interest solely in self. Never is a person more unlike Jesus than when his life is controlled by selfishness. Thus, as a Christian our interests must be changed. We are taught to "bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Rom. 15:1.) In Phil. 2:3-5 Paul wrote, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." How can we claim to be true followers of Jesus when our interest lies solely in self? The apostle John asks the question, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him." (1 John 3:17.) God's love cannot exist in a heart of selfishness. There is no way to live the Christian life when our life is self-centered. We can neither serve God or others when our interest lies first in self.

How can one overcome selfishness? One must first put forth the effort to fight this problem. As Jesus said, one must "deny himself." He must then give himself to the Lord. After all, if we are a Christian we are not our own, for we have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). We must learn to give of self. There are many people who are lonely, who would appreciate a visit, we can give them some of our time. There are people who need help in times of sickness, we can give of self at such times. There are hundreds of ways that we can give of self to help others if we look about us. But, the key word to overcoming selfishness is love. The Bible states that "Love seeketh not its own." (1 Cor. 13:5.) Does this characterize our life? Love gives, it serves, it helps where ever the opportunity is.

Let's keep in mind that selfishness is our enemy. An enemy that will rob us from friendship with others, from personal happiness, and from a life with God. Selfishness is an enemy that we must fight, he doesn't flee easily, but he can be defeated when we apply God's instructions to the battle.

# DIVORCE

By Ted Knight

There are several words in the English language that brings a shudder to my soul when I hear them. When I think of the word "cancer" it brings a chill up my spine because it always brings with it thoughts of heartache and sorrow.

Another word which I believe brings a tremendous amount of misery to the lives of men and women is the word "divorce". There is never anything pleasant connected with divorce. It reminds us of broken homes and children who will suffer, maybe even for a lifetime because of it. Nothing good is associated with divorce.

There is only one cause for divorce given in the word of God. In Matt. 19:9, Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." In the absence of fornication there is no scriptural grounds for putting away a marriage partner and marrying another. When one does so that person is guilty of adultery. Only the innocent party is free to remarry and that innocent party had better be sure that he or she is not guilty of contributing to the guilty person's fornication. I am thankful that God did make an exception and that when there is an innocent party that individual may get a divorce, if that is the best course to follow, and seek a happier atmosphere in which to live. If it is possible for the marriage to be saved, even if there is fornication involved, it is good to do so. But, that is a choice that each person must make for themselves.

It was reported last week in the Arkansas Gazette that almost 50% of the young people born in 1978 will live with only one parent sometime before reaching the age of 18. The major reason for this is not death but divorce. How shameful that such a thing could exist!

There is only one answer to the problem and that is for us to begin teaching what the Bible says about the subject of marriage and divorce, even if it is unpopular to do so. Then the leadership of the church must begin to exercise discipline when it is called for in cases of this nature and not allow the church to continue to be a hot-bed of adulterers. Until we begin to hate divorce and do all that we can to prevent it, we are going to reap the sorrows that always come with it.

"A religion that won't take you to worship won't take you to heaven."

## The Heart Of Christianity

By Levern Stewart

To whom did God give the task of preaching the Gospel? It was to the church, both as an institution and as individuals. If one understands the job given to the church, he understands Christianity.

This is what Paul means in 1 Tim. 3:15, "... in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the PILLAR and GROUND of the truth." This means the same as what Jesus said in Mark 16:15, "Go preach the gospel to every creature." It is doing what the church in Thessalonica did, 1 Thess. 1:8, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place..." The very spirit of Christianity is "Go and tell." Our Lord said this to a man whom he had blessed, Mark 5:19.

Even in Old Testament times God commanded His people to spread the good word, Psalms 107:2, "Let the redeemed say so." The very heart of Christianity is that we have been saved TO SAVE OTHERS. This is the mind of Christ. He came to seek and to save, Luke 19:10.

It was a love for lost souls that caused the Father to send His Son, John 3:16, 17. It was a love for lost souls that caused Jesus to willingly come and die, 2 Cor. 5:14. It will be this same love for lost souls that will cause a Christian to minister to the lost. Paul felt a great compulsion to save others, Rom. 1:14-16, because his thanks to God was great for His gift to him.

"Don't lose your head, your brain is in it."

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