

The BEACON

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A Baptist Speaks Concerning The Baptist Church

by Thomas G. O'Neal, Butler, Alabama

On November 19, 1959, the following appeared in the *Birmingham* (Alabama) *News*.

MY ANSWER - by Billy Graham

I have heard the argument that John the Baptist was a Baptist. Will you please tell me if he was, and if so, where do you find it in the Scriptures? — I. V.

John was called "the Baptist" because he baptized with water. I do not think that many Baptists would say that he was the first member of the Baptist Church. The Baptists as a distinct denomination date from the time of the Reformation in the 16th Century. The first Baptist Church in America was founded in Providence, R. I., in 1639 by Roger Williams. Unfortunately, it is the tendency of some religious people to push back their origin to the Apostles of Christ, thus establishing that they are the "original" Christians and the only real church.

The important thing, whether you be Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or whatever, is to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ. When we get to heaven, I don't think we will all have little "dog tags" telling which denomination we were members of on earth.

When John saw in Revelation the great company of the redeemed, he asked who they were. The Angel said: "These are they which have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. The question which will be asked on entrance to heaven

is not; Of what sect are you?" but "Have you been redeemed by the blood of Christ?" — ©

This is a very significant article. Its author is Billy Graham, the world-famed Baptist evangelist. Coming from a recognized source, a Baptist preacher, we shall pay our respects to the words of this Baptist. I've heard the old Baptist argument in attempt to prove that the church of the New Testament is a Baptist Church. The argument is as follows: 1) John was a Baptist, 2) He baptized Christ, making Jesus Christ a Baptist, 3) Christ established His church, 4) Conclusion: The church belonging to Christ is the Baptist Church. Graham says, "I do not think that many Baptists would say that he was the first member of the Baptist church." "Many Baptists" may not take this position, but "some Baptists" take it. If some Baptists don't take that position, where did I hear this argument? Surely not from the Catholics. John was not "a Baptist." He was "the Baptist." He was not one Baptist among many, but the *only* Baptist. Because he baptized people "for the remission of sins" based upon their confession and repentance he was called "the Baptist." (Mk. 1:4-5; Jno. 3:23.) The fact that John was not a Baptist religiously is seen in Graham's next paragraph. "The Baptists as a distinct denomination date from the time of the Reformation in the 16th Century." Thus, Graham has admitted that which gospel preachers have been telling people all the time. The Baptist Church is of HUMAN origin and not of divine origin. Since the

Baptists did not start until after the 1600s, how could a man be a Baptist in the first part of the first century? Something else to note is: Graham has admitted the Baptist Church is not mentioned in the Word of God. The Word of God, the Bible, was completed by the year 100. The Baptist Church was not known until after the year 1600. How could it then be mentioned in the Bible.

Graham attacks a group by saying, "Unfortunately, it is the tendency of some religious people to push back their origin to the Apostles of Christ, thus establishing that they are the "original" Christians and the only real church." There may be others, but the only groups known to this writer that attempt the above are the Baptist and the Catholics. The Baptist claim is: Baptist churches can be traced back through Baptist churches to their origin in the first century. They try to establish it by a chain of Baptist churches. Graham tells us the Baptist church was produce put out in the "16th Century." The other group is the Catholics, claiming to trace their origin through Popes back to the Apostle Peter, who they claim was the first one. At this point the Catholics have a little difficulty. You see, the New Testament never mentions Peter being in Rome. Which group did Graham have in mind?

Graham thinks the thing that is important, regardless of your affiliation with some group, "is to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ." In Antioch "a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21). Thus, they were following the Lord. But in so doing, they were not called Baptist, Methodist, etc. They were just simply called Christians, (v. 26.) Following the Lord today will make the same thing that it did in Antioch. Graham doesn't believe upon entrance into heaven "we will all have little 'dog tags' telling which denomination we were members of on earth." His thinking is correct. There will be no denominations in heaven— only the faithful of the church. (Eph. 5:27.) What the world needs to do is take the "dog

tag" labeled "Methodist", "Baptist" etc., and throw them away. Then, wear the name Christian. (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16.)

Upon entering the gates of pearl, Graham says that the question one will be asked is not, "Of what sect are you?" but, "Have you been redeemed by the blood of Christ?" About this Billy is correct! But I raise the question, How is one redeemed by the blood of Christ? The answer to the above question can be found completely in the Bible, the Word of God. First, to benefit from the blood of Christ, it is necessary to get in contact with the blood. Second, we need to know where the blood is. And, third, it is necessary to know how to get into the blood. The Bible answers these questions for us. Jesus Christ shed His blood in His death. (Jno. 19:34.) Therefore, to get the benefits of the blood, one must come in contact with the blood, one needs to get into His death. Paul tells us in Rom. 6, that he and the Romans "were baptized into his death." (v. 3.) He also makes the affirmation that they "were baptized into Jesus Christ." (v. 3.) So, to be baptized into Christ is the same as being baptized into His death. I Cor. 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." That body is the church." And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22-23.) To be baptized into the body is equal to being baptized into the church. To be baptized into Christ is equal to being baptized into the church of Christ. Put all these passages together, and one sees that baptism into the death of Christ, baptism into the body of Christ, and redeemed by the blood of Christ means all one and the same thing. Thus to be redeemed, one must be in the body. To be out of the body means unredeemed. Baptist doctrine is redeemed at the point of faith only, baptism is not necessary to redemption. So the conclusion is: redeemed *without* the blood of Christ. I didn't say that; the Baptists did. Paul said, ". . . and he is the

saviour of the body . . . That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," (Eph. 5:23, 26, 27).

From Searching the Scriptures - Vol #1; # 2; Feb. 1960 pg. 7-8

The Bible - Its All Sufficiency

by Thomas O'Neal, Butler, Ala.

Paul wrote Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." **2 Tim. 3:16-17**. These words reveal three things: (1) The Bible's origin, (2) the Bible's functions, and, (3) the end to which the Bible leads.

ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is from God! Paul said, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God . . ." This includes both the Old and New Testaments. Peter and the eleven other apostles spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance." (**Acts 2:4**). Later, Peter said, **I Pet. 1:12**, that the gospel was preached "with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven," and that "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (**2 Pet. 1:21**). The Bible being a product of God is therefore divine in its origin.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BIBLE

1. *The Bible is "profitable for doctrine."* One can learn nothing of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Christ's church except the Bible reveals it! Everything that is to be taught religiously can be found in the Bible; to fail to find it in the Bible means it must *not* be taught. Peter said, "His divine

power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (**2 Pet. 1:3**). 2. *The Bible is "profitable for reproof."* To reprove one is to convict, prick, or cause one to see his sins, to see himself as God sees him. If the Bible will not accomplish this in one's life, then that person is beyond the reach of reproof. The Bible is adapted to everyone's need! It is written for men in all walks of life. 3. *The Bible is "profitable for correction."* All sin. (**I Jno. 1:8**). These sins need to be corrected. The Bible is completely able to do this. Every sin and error has a remedy in the Bible! Before one *can* be corrected by the Bible, he must *want* to be corrected by the Bible when he goes astray. 4. *The Bible is "profitable for instruction in righteousness."* In the Bible is found heaven's plan for making men righteous. (**Rom. 1:16-17**). The Bible contains all the commands of God so that man might obey these commands and be made righteous. (**Rom. 6:16-18**).

END TO WHICH THE BIBLE LEADS

Paul said, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What more can be given when a thing is *perfect*? The Bible furnishes one completely, or thoroughly "unto all good works." What more could one want than to be guided perfectly and thoroughly in every work that God has authorized? The Bible contains all of this!

THE APPLICATION

1. Since the Bible contains the Word of God, man should respect it by obeying it completely. 2. The Bible being perfect and complete, man should accept the Bible as complete by rejecting all human manuals, catechisms, disciplines, confessions of faith, and all other human creeds. 3. The Bible informs man of two places after death, telling him how to gain one and avoid the other. If you possess but one book, let it be the BIBLE. To be happy in this life and the one which is to come, read, study, believe, and *obey* the Bible! - From **Searching the Scriptures**; Vol 1; # 6; June '60

***** The last thing we learn to believe is that God's plan for us is better than our own. Yet none of us ever finds his highest blessedness until he gives up his self-chosen life and falls into God's perfect plan. *****

***** Many people permit themselves to be taught more by man than they are taught by the Lord, which accounts for the many differences in religion to-day. *****

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR



On a warm Sunday morning the minister noted that the head of one of his parishioners was beginning to droop; in a few minutes the man was asleep. Thinking to apply a little discipline the minister said softly: "All those who want to go to heaven, rise." Everyone stood except the peacefully dozing member. When the congregation had again been seated, the minister called, in a much louder voice: "All those who want to go to hell, stand!" The startled sleeper jumped to his feet. Noting that he was the only one standing, he turned to the minister: "I don't know what we're voting on, preacher," he said, "but it looks like you and I are in the minority."

— *Via. Healthways.*

Mark Twain said: It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either.

* * *

Thomas J. Curran said: The moment our democracy ceases to respect God it will cease to respect your value as an individual. The moment it ceases to respect your value as an individual, it ceases to be democracy.

WHAT IS PREJUDICE?

It is the lock on the door of the closed mind. It is the ignorance we usually mistake for reason. It is the first enemy of information and progress. It is intellectual astigmatism. It is the perfect combination of conceit and ignorance. - Borrowed.

Bible Study 9:30am

Worship 11:00am

Bible Study 7:00pm