



A Spiritual Encouragement Message October 2, 2020

What Did They Do That For?!?! by Andrew Lemus

Over a decade ago I watched a guy get dunked in water in front of hundreds of people at a Baptist Church I was visiting with my cousin. The people clapped, said amen, and were very excited. Me, I was puzzled. I knew a little about Jesus, about the Bible, and about Christianity but what had taken place that day was pretty bizarre. I had heard about baptism but this was the first time I had ever witnessed someone getting baptized firsthand. So I don't believe it was to unreasonable that the next words out of my mouth after seeing this guy get dunked in water in front of hundreds of people was, "*what did they do that for?!?!?*" While in the moment it was all pretty bizarre, I am excited to say that this question I had about baptism eventually lead me to the truth about baptism, where it originated, and what it is for.

Before we look at what baptism is for, I believe it is important to figure out where baptism originated. Is baptism a tradition developed by men or is it an act that came from God? In Matthew 21:23-27 we learn that Jesus used this very question to stump those that challenged His authority. He knew that if they were unwilling to accept the authority by which baptism had come they wouldn't accept the authority by which Jesus came. Baptism didn't originate with the subjective principles of men, rather it is an act that has been instituted and commanded by God (John 1:33; Matthew 28:18-20). Since baptism came to men from God, it would be wise for us to look to God to answer the question "why be baptized?". Sadly, if we look to men to answer this very important question we will probably receive as many answers as there are churches. That is why I would strongly suggest that you first look to God and the Bible to answer such an important question (and others like it!).

Through baptism our sins are forgiven. According to the Bible, we are all sinners (Romans 3:9-18, 23), have violated God's laws (1John 3:4), and as a result are separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). The only way to be reconciled to God is to receive forgiveness of the sins we have committed. The Jews understood this simple fact as they appealed to the Apostles asking them "*what shall we do?*" (Acts 2:37). The Jews had killed their Messiah and recognized the horrific sins that they had committed. What did Peter the Apostle tell them to do to receive forgiveness? He said,

"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

Peter told the Jews to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. This is in harmony with what Ananias told Saul, later known as Paul the Apostle, to do to receive forgiveness of his sins or to have his sins "washed away" (Acts 22:16). According to the Bible, through baptism our sins are forgiven by God and we are reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:4-6).

Through baptism we are added to God's church. The Bible teaches that those that have not been reconciled to God reside in the "domain of darkness" (Colossians 1:13) and are slaves to sin (Romans 6:16-18). When a person is baptized, they are transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God. There are two places in the Bible that use the phrase "into Christ." We get into a car, walk into a house, go into a hospital, so how do we go or get "into Christ?" God, in His Bible states that we are "baptized into Christ."

Or do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** have been baptized into His death? Romans 6:3

For all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ. Galatians 3:27

We are added to God's church through baptism. This is in harmony with what Luke stated in Acts 2, that through baptism men were added to the number of those that are saved (Acts 2:40-41).

Through baptism we obey the gospel. The Bible teaches that all of those that have not obeyed the gospel are going to be eternally punished (2Thessalonians 1:6-8). That is a big deal! It is a sobering reality that if you haven't obeyed the gospel then you have no hope for eternity in heaven with God, so we need to be those who are all ears when God tells us how to obey the gospel. The Bible teaches that the gospel that saves men is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 15:1-4) and that we are reconciled to God through the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10). How is one saved through the death, burial, and resurrection or how does one obey the gospel?

Read what God has revealed to us through Paul the Apostle...

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been **baptized into His death**? Therefore we have been **buried with Him through baptism** into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Romans 6:3-7

And also...

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you were also **raised up with Him through faith**

in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions, Colossians 2:9-13

It is great how the Bible interprets itself. Through baptism we get into or obey the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through baptism we obey the gospel.

“What did they do that for?” That was the question I had when I watched a guy get dunked in water in front of a couple hundred people. It was a puzzling event but an event that eventually lead me to know the truth that through baptism our sins are forgiven, we are added to the church of God, and can obey the gospel. Now, when I witness someone getting baptized it isn't a puzzling or bizarre event but rather it is an event that causes me to rejoice and glorify God (1Peter 3:21).