



A Thought about Baptism (I Corinthians 1:17)

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For several weeks now, we have discussed the controversial subject of baptism. This was not done to attack anyone who denies baptism as a part of God's plan to save; but rather, to stir honest hearts to consider what God says about it in His Word. There have been many faulty arguments offered against baptism, all of which have been adequately answered. Let us honestly consider a passage (in its proper context) that has been offered as "proof" that baptism is not necessary.

Paul wrote, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (I Corinthians 1:17). Was Paul really saying that baptism is not necessary for salvation? We must consider the context of any Bible passage in order to properly understand it. Paul was writing to deal with the problems within the church at Corinth, such as that of division. Paul wrote, "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 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. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (verses 11-13). In verse 10, he pleaded with them, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that there be no divisions among you*; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Because of their attitude toward other men, Paul said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius" (verse 14). Why? "Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name" (verse 15).

In verse 17, Paul elaborated on what he had said. Paul did not mean that he did not baptize because it was not important, but rather, he had been commissioned to preach the Gospel,

which is God's power unto salvation (that is, by obedience to its commands). It was not Paul's commissioned simply to put people down into water; that is, to simply carry out the act of baptism. In preaching the Gospel, it was not up to Paul to make people respond to it. Baptism is part of the response, as well as faith and obedience to Jesus' commands for repentance and confession. We cannot honestly take this passage and conclude that baptism is not part of God's plan to save men and ignore all the other passages in the New Testament, which indicates that it is; such as, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; I Peter 3:21.

God has clearly given commands to save men. Now, are you willing to be honest with both yourself and God's Word to accept them for the purpose He has given them? By our faith in Him as the Christ (John 8:24), we must, by that faith, repent of our sins (Luke 13:3), confess Him as the Christ (Matthew 10:32-33) and be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16). If you would like to know more about what to do to become a Christian, or if you would like to enroll in a correspondence course by mail (no cost or obligation to you), please return this coupon to: Back To The Bible; 221 Barnett Street; West Jefferson, NC 28694 or visit us online at: www.wjchurchofchrist.org.

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