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Pause Ponder Profit

Baptized Into The Name Of Christ

by Clark Dugger

I was once criticized for baptizing an individual "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). Well, actually I was criticized for using these words at the time I performed the baptism. The individual insisted that I should be baptizing "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). This brother failed to understand several important points of truth.

First of all, these passages do not teach some formalized word-formula that must be stated at the time of baptism in order to validate the action taken. Nowhere does the New Testament require a particular phrase used in connection with baptism, even in terms of what is being done. In fact, if nothing were said at all by the one doing the baptism the validity of the action would not be affected one way or another. It is not what the one doing the baptizing believes or says that determines the validity of baptism, but rather the faith of the one being baptized.

Second, the phrase "in the name of" is a phrase that indicates the authority by which the action is taken. "In the Hebrew way for thinking 'name' stood for the whole character, honor and personality of an individual. The term represented or stood for who a person is in himself. It included everything behind and involving the person referred to by the word" (Philippians, Weaver, p. 100). Is there a difference in the authority of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Father or the Holy Spirit?

While it is true that Jesus Christ was exalted "*far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and ever name that is named*" (Eph. 1:21), we must remember who it was that exalted Him to this position of preeminence. "*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name*" (Phil. 2:9). We must be careful about separating the godhead in such ways. Certainly all three persons of the Godhead accepted different roles relative to the scheme of redemption, but in matters of authority or revelation such distinctions should not be made. The word or authority of Jesus Christ is that of the Father and the Holy Spirit. All are Deity. It is by God's authority that one is baptized for the remission of sins.

Last of all, if the expression "in the name of" expresses an audible verbal pattern that must be said to validate an action we would have to repeat that phrase every time we did anything, for Paul said, "*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*" (Col. 3:17).



The Reality Of Hell

by Dan Richardson

“**H**ell” comes from the Greek word *gehenna*, occurring twelve times in the New Testament. Each time it refers to a future place of punishment (Matt. 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6). “Gehenna” is derived from *ghenna* (the valley of Hinnom), located south of Jerusalem. Here the abominable practice of offering children to the fire god Molech occurred (2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jere. 7:31; 19:2-6). We can see that “gehenna” suggested extreme horror and suffering, therefore being the word chosen by the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the eternal lake of fire.

A distinction should be made in our Bible study between “gehenna” and “hades”. Some versions of the Bible (cf. King James Version), fail to make this distinction, giving room for ideas that are not Bible based. For example, the belief that Jesus’ spirit went to “hell” (the lake of fire) after death (Acts 2:27,31), when in fact the word is “hades”, the unseen world of departed spirits. A textual study shows these words are not the same.

Some Facts

Hell will be eternal in duration. *“And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”* (Matt. 25:46). The same word used to describe the eternal nature of heaven is used to reveal the eternal nature of hell! Also, in Romans 16:26, the identical word describes the eternal nature of our God.

Hell will be a separation from God. To the pure in heart who love God this idea in itself is horrifying enough and is sufficient motive to avoid it. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), we are taught that life is filled with opportunities to obey and serve God, but

when life ends, so do the opportunities. The “great gulf” described separates the righteous from the wicked and cannot be crossed.

Hell will be a place for punishment. *“...but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek”* (Rom. 2:8-9).

Hell will be a place of darkness. *“And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth”* (Matt. 25:30). Darkness represents all that is fearful and horrible. In contrast, read the description of heaven in Revelation 21:23.

Finally, hell will be a place of unquenchable fire, *“...where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched”* (Mark 9:43-48). It is the “lake of fire and brimstone” where all there will be “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

Who Will Be There?

Those who find themselves in hell one day will not be in good company. Those there are described as, *“the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars”* (Rev. 21:8).

Let’s break it down further. 1) Some good, moral people will be there too (Acts 10:2,35; 11:14; 15:7-9). Cornelius was a good, upstanding individual but he wasn’t forgiven of his sins through the blood of Christ. He would have fell in the “unbeliever” category above, if he had not obeyed the gospel. 2) Some religious people will be there (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:14). One must be sure his religion is the one we read about in the Bible.

The End Justifies The Means

by Shane Williams

A very popular teaching in the world today is that the end justifies the means. What I mean by that is, as long as the end result is something good, positive, or beneficial, it matters little how we go about bringing this result. On the surface level this may sound fairly reasonable but as we bring this idea into religion, it falls far short of what God truly wants.

I would like to turn your attention to **I Corinthians 13:1-3**. Paul says, *"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."*

Just imagine being able to do the things Paul mentions in these verses. Just imagine, as an example, knowing all the mysteries and having all knowledge. Think of all that you could teach people. Think of all the questions in your mind that would be answered and how you would be able to answer the questions of others. The underlying theme, however, is that there is something more desirable than even the greatest act. The physical act of giving all my possessions to feed the poor is one of great sacrifice. But what if I had the wrong motive. What if I did this great act just so people would look at me and say, "Look at that godly man?" Maybe I want the glory involved in how people would think of me. Does this great act, in and of itself, make me a righteous person? If I give all my possessions and I don't do it out of love, what does it profit me? It profits me nothing. The end result (the

poor being fed) does not make each and every way of producing that result right. The sacrifice that I might make would certainly benefit the poor but it would not benefit me from a spiritual standpoint.

I am afraid there are going to be many people on judgment day who are very disappointed in the outcome. I encourage you to read **Matthew 7:21-23**. There are going to be many people who will claim to have accomplished great works. There are going to be people who claim they did all sorts of "good works" in the name of Jesus Christ. The conclusion, however, is that not all of these individuals are going to make it into heaven. Who is it that will make it to heaven? Only the one who does the will of the Father!

In our religious world today there are many who would do just about anything to get the desired result. Car washes and bake sales to raise money for their "church." Gymnasiums (along with various sporting events), kitchens and day care centers to try and get more people to attend their congregation. To them, the end result looks good. Why, what's wrong with raising money for the church? Nothing except for what the Bible teaches. The only authority given for the church to "raise money" is giving on the first day of the week as we have prospered (I Cor. 16:1-2). Anything else is foreign to God's word and is of man's origin. What's wrong with having more people attend our assemblies? Nothing except what God's Word teaches. After Jesus fed the five thousand in John chapter 6 many people came looking for Him on the next day. They spent a good deal of time looking for Jesus (vv. 22-25). Jesus knew their true motivation however. They had completely missed the point of His miracle. His miracle was not to show that the church is to be involved in feeding the hungry of the world. It was to show that He was the

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Christ. It was to show that He was the Son of God. These people came looking for another free meal and would have liked it on a continual basis, like God sending the manna to the Israelites (vv. 31-33). Jesus rebuked them for seeking after physical food instead of spiritual (vv. 26-27). People today make the very same mistake. They seek "the loaves and fishes" instead of the gospel. Jesus never tried to give people a watered-down version of the gospel so that He could get a bigger following. In fact, He did just the opposite because He wanted true disciples. After all these things, Jesus actually lost some of His disciples. **John 6:66**, "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore." Do you think we should try and tell people what they want to hear so that they will attend "our" church? What did Jesus do?

It doesn't matter how great something may be that I claim to do in the Lord's name, what does matter is, "Has God told me to do it?"

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