

Question- When a person becomes a believer, is he born again at that moment, as most religious people teach?

Let us turn our bibles to Acts 19: 1-7 and read what the Apostle Paul has to say about this most important subject. Here are some things that we should learn from these verses.

1. These 12 men were Jews.
2. They had already been baptized unto John's baptism. So this means about 15 years has passed since they were baptized.
3. They were now believers in Christ.
4. How do we know they were believers? Because of the question that Paul ask them in verse 2.
He ask them if they had received the Holy Spirit, since they believed. The Holy Spirit had not been given to the obedient believer, until Jesus had died and ascended back to heaven. John 7:39, Acts 2:38. So Paul's question would have made no sense at all, if these 12 believers had not been believers in Jesus.
5. Notice, Paul did not tell these men that they needed to be baptized again for the remission of their sins. Question – Why didn't he? Because we read in Mark 1:4; Luke 3:16, where it says, John did baptize in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins.
6. After we have read and studied these 7 verses, what do we learn about the condition of these 12 men. (a) They had been baptized unto John's baptism. (b) They had their sins forgiven. (c) Now notice what these men had not experienced. They had not been born again. Jesus in John 3:3 says, `Verily, verily I say unto you except a man be born again, he can not see the Kingdom of God.' Jesus continues in verse 5 and explains unto us, how we can be born again. Here is what He has to say, `Verily, verily, I say unto you except a man be born of the water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Now let us read what John the Baptist said to the people of Jerusalem, Judea, and around Jordan, these were the ones, who he had just baptized in water. He says, " I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit. " Question- Doesn't this sound exactly like what Jesus was saying in John 3:3-5. Where He says that we must be born of the water and Holy Spirit, or we can not enter the Kingdom of God. These 12 men had been baptized with water for the forgiveness of their sins, but they had not been baptized in the name of Jesus, so by Jesus' own words they had not been born again. Which means that they were lost.

Please listen carefully to what I am going to say. There are millions and millions of people today who are hearing their preachers and teachers saying , (the moment that you believe, you are born again). Yet we have just read where Jesus and Paul is saying to the believers, no you are not born again the moment you believe. You must be baptized in the name of Jesus. Question- Why is this so hard for some people to understand? We need to follow Paul's example, and be bold and with love, teach others on this very important subject.

Now let us notice verse 5 of John 3. When these 12 men heard what Paul had to say, they were baptized in the name of Jesus, they received the forgiveness of their sins, and also they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 5:32, we read where the Holy Spirit is given to those

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who obey God. There are many scriptures that tells us that the Holy Spirit dwells in every obedient believer. Here are some of those verses. 1Thess.4:8, Rom.8:9,11,16, Rom.5:5, 1Cor.3:16, 1Cor.6:19, 2Tim.1:14, 1John 3:24, 1John 4:13. These verses make it very clear that all those who obey God's word, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

. Now notice verse 6 in Acts 19, when Paul laid his hands upon them the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Please notice there is a great difference in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous spiritual gifts.

We read in 1 Cor.12:8-10, where there are 9 of these miraculous gifts. These miraculous spiritual gifts were given by the Apostles laying their hands on someone who was an obedient believer { Acts 8:18-19}. And then the Holy Spirit would give to that person a miraculous spiritual gift as He willed 1Cor.12:11.

Miraculous spiritual gifts were to be done away with when that which is Perfect comes, 1Cor.13:10. I believe that which was Perfect is referring to the completed Word of God { the Bible}. James 1:25.

Question – Do you believe that the Apostle Paul was afraid he might offend those believers, when he told them the truth about their spiritual condition? Absolutely not. His mission was to seek and save the lost.

Question- What is the obedient believer mission today? Answer- The same as Paul's, to seek and save those who are lost.

John 8:32 And you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.

Question- What else should we learn from this verse?

Answer- We must learn that false doctrine will not make us free. If we are truth seekers, we will be sure that everything that we preach and teach harmonizes with all other scriptures on that particular subject.

Question- How serious do we believe Jesus was, when He said in John 12:48," The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day." Now let us remember the words that He spoke in John 3:3-5. He says that we must be born of water and the Holy Spirit, or we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Water here means baptism.

Question- How do we know this? Let John the Baptist answer this question. In Matt.3:11, He says," I have baptized you in water, but Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." To me this leaves no doubt that Jesus and John the Baptist are saying exactly the same thing.

If we want to be sure that we are teaching the truth, we must know when it is God's Word or man's word. Because the Apostle Paul said in Romans 3:4 , "let God be True and every man a liar".

Question- Do we let these words guide us in our teachings? In 2Tim.4:3- 4 , we read, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables". Let us never let our hearts get so hard that we cannot be open to hear the TRUTH.

Thank you for reading this lesson.

In Christian Love,

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Herb Trout

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