

Another problem is that many commonly practice infant baptism by pouring or sprinkling water on the infant's head. Our English word baptism is borrowed from the Greek word baptizo meaning immersion. First Century Christians practiced baptism by complete immersion in water, not by pouring or sprinkling (which, by the way, have their own Greek words).

To briefly illustrate this, Luke tells us that Phillip and the eunuch "went down into" and "came up out of" the water, suggesting immersion (Acts 8:38-39). John tells us that John the Baptist baptized where there was "much water" (John 3:23). Paul likens baptism unto a

"burial" (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). Clearly, baptism by sprinkling and pouring is another innovation of men, further proving infant baptism devoid of any spiritual value.

Overall, the greatest danger of infant baptism is that many have been deceived into believing, based on their baptism as an infant, that they have obeyed the command of Jesus Christ to be baptized (Mark 16:16). Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and many more denominations teach this pernicious doctrine.

The truth is: if you were baptized as an infant you obeyed nothing. Your parents obeyed for you. Furthermore, you were not even

a proper candidate for baptism. Did you hear the message of the gospel before you were baptized? Did you believe (Mark 16:16)? Did you obey from the heart that form of doctrine (Romans 6:17)? Even if you could answer "yes" to these, were you immersed? What consciousness did you have of sin (1 Peter 3:21)? What sins did you commit as an infant that required repentance (Acts 2:38; cf. Ezekiel 18)? These, and many other questions could be asked—for none of which will you find a satisfactory answer.

Clearly, the practice of infant baptism is a prime example of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). Such worship, as the Lord tells us, is vain. ~

NAVARRE MESSENGER

Volume 3 Issue 72

December 28, 2008

The Foundation of Spirituality—Honesty

Larry Rouse

Why does the preaching of the gospel seem not to be effective in our society today? We know that God's word has not changed, nor has its power (Rom 1:16). We are assured by God that His word will never return to Him void, but it will always accomplish the purpose for which He sent it (Isa 55:11). Today, with this present generation, as it has in past generations, the word of God is able to expose hearts and allow men to choose light or darkness (Jn 3:19-21). This choice depends upon the kind of heart a man possesses.

When Jesus described the kind of heart in which the word of God would be received and would prosper, He described it as "good and honest" (Lk 8:15 KJV). Will a man choose light or darkness, honesty or dishonesty? If a man decides that he "hates the light" then God will let him "believe a lie" and will not do



anything further other than the presentation of His word (2 Thess. 2:10-11).

We must fight the temptation to be dishonest

The battle for honesty lasts a lifetime. God emphatically warns the Christian to guard his heart and to keep it pure. "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col 3:9). God has plainly told us: "He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence" (Psa 101:7).

The nature of man has not changed. Without continual exposure to the word of God, men's hearts will be pulled back to self-justification and blindness (Prov 16:2; Jer 17:10-11). Why do men prefer dishonesty? Psychologists suggest that men tend to make up the reasons for their behaviors after they do them, and that their "reasons" and behavior usually have nothing to do with each other.

King Saul was a prime example of a good man who gave in to dishonesty to his own destruction. Do you remember the various explanations that he made to Samuel when he was confronted about his direct disobedience to God's command (1 Sam 15:3, 15, 20-21)? "I was going to sacrifice them! No, wait, it was the people that did it!" Finally, after a spiritual wrestling match, Saul admits his sin, but without true repen-

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre.
Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109



Assembly Schedule Sunday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

If you know of someone who would like to receive this publication, please let us know.

For a free Bible correspondence course by mail, call us.

Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place
Stamp
Here

tance! Saul thought that his outward confession without a changed heart would put him right with God. In this he had deceived himself! This pattern would remain throughout Saul's life.

We must recognize dishonesty

God's love will lead us to look to the good in others. Indeed, we want to believe the best about others and not be quick to judge another's actions without sufficient evidence. Nonetheless, the Bible is filled with warnings concerning those who would deliberately mislead us and the kind of tactics they will use to accomplish this task. "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Eph 4:14). "These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage" (Jude 16).

It is a difficult thing for good and honest Christians to see the deceit and manipulation from those who have a hidden agenda to pull others into their circle. Flattery is first used to gain a closer association and trust. Then lies are told in secret to inflame emotions and close minds (Prov. 18:19). Finally, these men succeed in having their new disciples cut off association with their former brethren without so much as talking about these newly discovered "differences" over an open Bible (Gal 4:16-17).

A commitment to honesty will keep us from these "closed door decisions" that result in one "cutting and running." Instead we will openly discuss and test those who have beliefs that they say are of God (1 Jn 4:1). Also, we will not accept testimony about the personal actions of another without first giving that person a chance to defend himself (Prov. 18:17; Mt 18:15-17)!

Pride always leads to dishonesty

Those who do not know God cannot stand to look at themselves honestly. The driving force behind pride is the desire to be recognized and have praise because we wish to appear to be something that we are not. "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal 6:3). Those that follow this path must wear a mask. They must fight to "keep up appearances" and work to tear others down so that they can receive this vain and temporary recognition of men. There is a better way to live your life!

God's forgiveness allows us to be honest

God sees me as I am, and, in spite of that, He loves me and seeks my best. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). God sees the darkness of my sin and has provided a sacrifice that will wash away my sins and restore my relationship with Him (Rom 3:23; 6:23). What do I need to do? I need to be honest! I must see my own sin and make no excuses. The love of God

must move me to change my heart in repentance that will result in a changed life. I then will take the final step in water baptism, yielding my body to a burial and resurrection like the Lord's (Rom 6:3-5). I now am the Lord's, not because I am perfect, but because I am forgiven and have yielded my heart to Him (Acts 2:38-39).

The Christian life is characterized by the forgiveness of God. Rather than run from my shortcomings, I can now run to God for a greater sight and to seek His help in growing to be something more in His service. I come to love the truth, to love bold and honest preaching because it allows me to see what God already sees and what I need to know. Most of all, I am thankful that God's word is able to penetrate my heart when it drifts into dishonesty and point me back to Him. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Heb 4:12-13).

Be honest. Are you genuinely serving the Lord with all of your heart (2 Cor 13:5)?

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Prov 28:13). -

Infant Baptism: Of God or of Men?

By Jonathan L. Perz

Have you ever wondered what the Bible says about infant baptism? The truth is: the Bible is silent on this subject. This might seem strange, considering the practice is so prevalent today. Nevertheless, the practice cannot be proven as apostolic, nor can it be proven as originating in the first century. As a matter of fact, all scriptural and historical evidence leads us to believe the practice of infant baptism was merely an innovation of men, which began toward the end of the second century. As Jesus would say, "But from the beginning, it was not so."

In the first century, Jesus sent His disciples out with the commission to baptize penitent believers (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). It was through this commission, known as the Great Commission, that the disciples spread the gospel of Jesus Christ (as recorded in the book of Acts).

Regarding infant baptism, we note from the Great Commission, that for one to be baptized, they must first 1) hear the gospel, 2) believe, and 3) repent. What infant is capable of accomplishing these things? Thus, by whose authority do we baptize infants? Certainly not by the Lord's authority! The

practice of any baptism without regard to the Lord's clearly established precepts must be inherently false and vain.

Even so you might wonder, what about original sin—does not a baby need to be cleansed from the sin of Adam (cf. Romans 5:12)? Is not a baby born depraved and in sin, thus requiring God's forgiveness (cf. Ephesians 2:3)? I propose, and scripture and history support, that this false doctrine is merely the progenitor of the other false doctrines (e.g., infant baptism, and other doctrines that cover the infant who dies before baptism).

Indeed, the only thing original about sin is that it originates in the heart of a man (James 1:14-16) and that its consequences originate from God (Romans 6:23). Among other things, those who say an infant is born a sinner must explain why the gospel of our Lord teaches us that we are redeemed (Revelation 5:9), reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:18), and have returned to the Lord (1 Peter 2:25). The prefix "re-" means "again" and infers that each of us, at one time, enjoyed such a relationship with God. If each of us is born depraved, at what point did we enjoy this relationship with God?

Furthermore, if children are

depraved from birth, why did Jesus suggest that we become like little children (Matthew 18:3)? Did our Lord suggest we become like little "sinners?" I should think not! As we have already indicated, sin is born in man; man is not born in sin! Similarly, the doctrine of original sin was begotten of man!

You might also wonder, what about household baptism—were not whole households baptized in the first century (Acts 10:1-11:18; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:33; 1 Corinthians 1:16)? This argument assumes, with no evidence, that infants were members of each household baptized. To say the apostles baptized infants in each of these cases renders their obedience to the Great Commission null and void, as we have already proven. A candidate for baptism must first hear the word, believe, and repent (Acts 2:38; Acts 16:14; Acts 17:30; etc.). Since infants are incapable of such, they were not baptized.

We might also ask, if infants were baptized in the first century, why did Luke record not one such instance? Indeed, Luke tells of thousands being baptized, even specifying men and women at one point (Acts 8:12); yet, not one hint of infants. Why is this? Perhaps it is because infant baptism is not an authorized practice.