



Contact Us:

3201 4th Street
Brownwood, TX 76801
325-646-7102
www.4thstreetcoc.org
office@4thstreetcoc.org

Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:45 AM
Worship..... 10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service..... 2:30 PM
Worship..... 6:00 PM

Tuesday:

Redstone Class..... 9:30 AM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class On Break
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Jim Moore

Don Smith..... James Thomas

Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
House to House, Heart to Heart
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

What About the Thief on the Cross?

(Why Baptism Matters Series)

By Chris McCurley

One of the most divisive issues within the realm of Christendom is that of baptism. For 1300 years immersion was accepted as the universal practice for baptism, but today there is anything but unity on the subject. The debate primarily persists over how it is administered (i.e. sprinkling or pouring vs. immersion), and what it means to the sinner. Many sincere individuals have conjured up a myriad of arguments to support their ideology but at the expense of Biblical truth. It seems, in many cases, that folks are clinging more to a religion than the word of God. For if we search the scriptures without denominational bias or personal prejudice and preference, we will see more clearly what our Lord intended for us to grab on to. That being said, even a cursory look through the New Testament reveals a strong emphasis on baptism. Dig a little deeper and it's impossible to miss. Baptism was essential to the first church (Acts 2:37-47). It was vital to one becoming a child of God. There was no salvation for the sinner without it (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). And there was no church without baptism (Acts 2:41). The church is made up of those who have been washed in the blood of Christ. Jesus purchased the church with His own blood. He bought it, member by member (Acts 20:28). One is added to the church when, by faith, he/she repents, confesses, and submits to water baptism for forgiveness of sins.

So how have we arrived at the point where so much confusion exists surrounding this topic? The answer, I believe, can be attributed to a lack of knowledge and/or a strict allegiance to a religious affiliation. Whatever the reason, there is no question that baptism has been watered down. Over the next few weeks, I want to examine some of the more popular arguments proffered on behalf of those who deemphasize the vital importance of this soul-saving act.

Any debate on the essentialness of baptism will typically turn to the thief on the cross. It is often argued that since Jesus pardoned the thief who was crucified with Him (Lk. 23:42 & 43), that this proves baptism is not a requirement for salvation. It must first be noted that no one can dogmatically state that the thief on the cross was not baptized. In fact, it is completely within the realm of possibility that this thief had been a disciple of John the Baptizer. It is not out of the question that this man had submitted to the baptism of repentance administered by John (Mk. 1:4). I concede that this cannot be proven, but neither can the argument that he was not baptized. No one can say definitively either way.

(Continued on page 3)



Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ... (Jesus replied) "and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 16:16,18

Dare To Stand Alone

By Stan Mitchell

When the steel-studded boots of Hitler's forces crushed Europe, where was the church?

This is one of Christianity's saddest hours, for while Jews were being interned by the truckload, and while racial arrogance reached new heights (or is that "depths"?), churches in Germany remained silent. There was an exception to this rule, however, a man who stands out because he stands alone.

When scores of German clergy signed their loyalty over to Adolph Hitler, Dietrich Bonhoeffer refused to do so. He spoke out against Nazi atrocities, and ultimately became one of its victims. Most of his writings were undertaken in prison camps, including his "Letters and Papers from Prison" and "The Cost of Discipleship."

Bonhoeffer knew what the latter term meant. He was killed in the last, climatic days of the war by his captors, a modern-day martyr.

I wonder how it was that so many churchmen failed to identify the wickedness of their time, and to speak, with God's authority, against it?

Why was professor Bonhoeffer so utterly alone in his opposition? One would have thought that the errors of the Nazi regime were so plain that they could not be ignored. Perhaps these issues were not as clear as they seem.

Germany was a civilized, "Christian" nation. While our society is a far cry from Nazi Germany, it is still a society that purports to be "Christian." We cannot afford to accept the dictates of society at face value. We must

measure ourselves against a more reliable and timeless standard.

Fear played a role in the complicity of church leaders. Germans in the years 1930-1945 knew only too well the consequences of opposing the little man with the moustache. Bonhoeffer's courage stood out like a cowboy in New York City.

Churches had lost their Biblical moorings. Churches and seminaries in Germany had been in the vanguard of "liberal theology," where the historical accuracy of the Bible was questioned.

Professors spoke of the "Jesus myth" and the notion that the miracles of the Bible were merely embellishments on the stories of Biblical heroes. The inspiration of the Bible was denied, and the writing of scripture was considered to be nothing more than a human endeavor.

So when Germany entered her period of crisis, when she needed moral guidance from churches, churches were not there because they had abandoned their moorings. How could they appeal to the authority of scripture, when they had done so much to destroy that authority?

I do not believe we face so horrific a challenge as Hitler's Nazis today. I do think, however, that Christians need to distinguish between the dictates of society and the teachings of scripture. I can see signs of Christians "caving" to society's moral demands already. Can't you? I believe that a "high" view of scripture is essential. And we must have the courage to speak for Christ when it becomes necessary.

Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)
Sunday @ 7:00 am on KTAB
In Search of the Lord's Way
Sunday @ 7:30 am on KTAB
Gospel Broadcasting Network
Online: 24/7 @ gbntv.org and on Roku
TV: Sunday @ 6:30 am on
Dish: 267, DirectTV: 376

Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)
Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

God's Plan for Redeeming Man

Hear Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).
Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)
Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)
Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)
Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

Bible Study Schedule

Week 102
Psalm 129-134
& Titus 3 - Philemon

Study sheets are available at the back of the auditorium.

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
(2 Timothy 2:15)*



(Continued from page 1)

Nevertheless, the point is moot because the New Covenant had not been established. It is an egregious error to conclude that baptism is not essential for salvation based on an incident that occurred during Jesus' earthly ministry. Our Lord had the authority to forgive anyone based on any terms He chose. In the second chapter of The Gospel of Mark we find a paralytic man who was seeking healing. Four friends bring him to Jesus, but the crowd was so large that they could not enter the building. Not easily deterred, the friends cut a hole in the roof and lower their friend down on his pallet. Jesus witnesses their faith and says to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mk. 2:5). Christ forgave this individual without requiring him to be baptized. Does this mean Jesus didn't hold baptism in high esteem? If so, then we would have to conclude that He didn't consider repentance to be of much value either because no mention is made in the text of this man being exhorted to repent of his sins.

Ask virtually any adherent from one of the major denominations in our country if a belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is essential for salvation and the answer would be a hearty, "Yes!" A belief (faith) in Christ is often the primary, if not the only, condition of salvation in the world of Christendom. Seldom would any sincere religious person argue that a belief in Jesus Christ as the risen Savior was not essential to salvation. **THE THIEF ON THE CROSS COULD NOT HAVE BELIEVED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**, because it had not happened yet. Therefore, should we dismiss such a belief as a condition of salvation?

My friends, I hope and pray you receive this post in the manner in which it is intended. This is not meant to be polemic or antagonistic. It is not my goal to be abrasive or mean-spirited. I'm not even concerned with winning an argument. I want to win souls. Please take an honest and open-hearted look at the Bible and what it says about baptism. We are diluting it at our own peril.

May the Lord bless you and keep you!

Visitation Meeting

Remember our visitation meeting each Sunday night following the evening worship to sign cards and discuss the work going on. Last week **27 contacts** were made.

Spring Gospel Meeting

Mark your calendars now for our spring Gospel Meeting, May 11-14, 2014. Our speaker will be **Loy Mitchell**. Loy spent most of his adult life working as a missionary in Zimbabwe. He is still very active in the work in Zimbabwe, as well as keeping a busy schedule of gospel meetings, lectureships, and missions seminars. He has a great love for the Lord, His church, and for the lost, that is contagious to those around him. He preaches the truth with a simplicity that all can understand. You will want to plan to be here for every service!

Celebrate

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)

December Birthdays: Freda Cox (05), Estelle Guthrie (07), Laverne Thomas (13), Veneta Nolen (17), Kaci Churchwell (18), Priscilla Smithey (18), Linda Griffith (20), Mia Stroope (22), Joyce Hill (24), John McCaghren (27).

December Anniversaries: Linda & Allen Griffith (20), Phyllis & Horace Hooper (24), Jo & Ken Maninger (25).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Johnny know...



Records

	Nov. 24, 2013	Dec. 1, 2013
Bible Class	46	53
AM Worship	59	77
PM Worship	49	43
Wednesday PM	35	46
Contribution	\$1491	\$1883

Privileged To Serve

"...be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1)

	Next Week: 12/8/13	Next Week: 12/15/13	December 2013	
Sunday AM:	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Song Leader: Mike Bannister	Make Announcements: Joe Dennis	
Greeters	Mileen & Ashley Kalich	Jim & Peg Moore	Prepare Communion: Jim & Peg Moore	
Opening Prayer	Billy Chism	Allen Griffith	Clean Building: Jessica Stultz	
Communion	Jim Moore*, James Thomas Garrett Barnum, Gene Bannister	James Fuller*, Don Smith John Barnum, Caleb Dennis	Keep Grounds: Tom Wilcox	
Closing Prayer	Don Smith	Kevin Wilcox	January 2014	
Attendance Cards	Caleb Dennis	Caleb Dennis	Make Announcements: Ken Maninger	
Sunday PM:	Song Leader: Ken Maninger	Song Leader: Joe Dennis	Prepare Communion: Don & Darlene Smith	
Opening Prayer	Mike Bannister	Jim Moore	Clean Building: Jim & Peg Moore	
Scripture Reading	John Barnum	Tom Wilcox	Keep Grounds: James Fuller	
Communion	Jim Moore	James Fuller		
Closing Prayer	Allen Griffith	Gene Bannister		
Wednesday Devotionals:	December 4 Kevin Wilcox	December 11 Garrett Barnum	December 18 Don Smith	December 25 Jim Moore

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

Studies for the week of December 8, 2013	Sunday Class The Birthday of the Church Wednesday PM.....Mark: Background and Ch. 1
<p>The Christian is a Member of God's Family on Earth</p> <p>Does the Bible teach that God has a family on earth? If so, can it be identified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Family of God in the light of Bible teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scriptures plainly teach that God does have a family on earth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ "the whole family in heaven and earth" (Eph 3:14,15) ◆ "the household of faith" (Gal 6:10) ◆ "members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19) ◆ Identification of God's People on Earth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All accountable persons must obey the gospel (Heb 5:9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Faith in Christ (Jn 3:16; Rom 10:17) ◆ Repent of sins (Lk 13:3; Acts 17:30,31) ◆ Confession of Christ (Rom 10:9,10) ◆ Baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27) • Worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partake of Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7) ◆ Give (1 Cor 16:1,2) ◆ Sing (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19) ◆ Pray and Teach (Acts 2:42) • Live according to God's Word (Jas 1:15) • Names that identify the family <p>Are you a member of God's family? If not, why not become part of the family today?</p>	<p>Unleashing God's Word In Your Life Lesson 1</p> <p>Mankind has always sensed the existence of an ultimate power. Christianity, unlike other religions, serves a God who has revealed Himself to us through His Word.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ When God Is Silent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of our own rebellion and refusal to listen and obey Him (1 Sam 28:6; Jer 14:11,12; Pr 1:23-28) • God freely shares Himself, but if we finally reject Him, He will reject us. ◆ God Is Personal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex 3:14) • God is not an "it" - He is a "person" • He is tri-personal (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) ◆ God Is Moral (Ex 34:6,7) ◆ God Is the Beginning, the Maintainer, and the End of All Creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul describes "The Unknown God" to the Athenians (Acts 17:22-27) • Man's search for God must begin and end in the Scriptures ◆ God Is Available—He wants us to know Him <i>We begin with the premise that God is, that He can be known, and that He has something to say to us.</i>