

WHY ARE YOU WAITING?

Joe Slater

Whether you realize it or not, you need remission of sins more than you need anything else. *“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins”* (Hebrews 10:4); but Jesus’ blood can and does. For this very reason, He shed His blood as He hung upon the cross (Matthew 26:28). You are cleansed by His blood when you are baptized *“for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38).

In the New Testament, baptism carries an urgency almost totally unappreciated in the religious world. Since few religious groups respect the Biblical connection between baptism and remission of sins, we understand why they are in no particular hurry to baptize, assuming they do so at all.

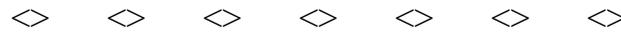
But why do people who have been taught the truth about baptism still put it off? One says, *“I want to wait until Uncle What’s-his-name comes so he can baptize me.”* Another affirms, *“I’m going to be baptized next Sunday.”* In the words of Ananias to Saul, *“Why are you waiting?”* (Acts 22:16). Do we no longer believe that we have no guarantee of tomorrow? Have we deceived ourselves into believing we will be saved anyway, even if we face judgment having never been immersed into Christ?

Throughout the New Testament, not one person ate a bite, drank a drop, or slept a wink from the time (s)he decided to be baptized until it was done. In Acts 2, Peter told his heart-pricked audience to *“repent . . . and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins”* (v. 38). *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized”* (v. 40). Nobody made an appointment to be baptized the next day, the next week, or the next month.

Philip preached the gospel to the Ethiopian queen’s treasurer, prompting him to ask, *“What hinders me from being baptized?”* (Acts 8:36). He did not promise to be baptized as soon as he arrived home, nor did he wait until reaching that evening’s camping place. Instead, they stopped the chariot right there, *“and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him”* (v. 38).

Saul of Tarsus had been praying and fasting three days before Ananias came and told him how to be saved. *“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins”* (Acts 22:16). Saul did not say, *“I’ll be baptized as soon as I’ve had something to eat.”* He was baptized immediately; then he *“took food and was strengthened”* (Acts 9:18, 19)

Baptism is urgent! In the New Testament, they didn’t delay. Do you need to obey the gospel? Why are you waiting?



Lessons From The Hammer

1. It keeps its head.
2. It does not fly off the handle.
3. It finds the point - and drives it home.
4. It succeeds by continuous pounding.
5. It makes mistakes, but when it does, it just starts all over again



**You may be only one person in the world;
but you may also be the world to one person!**

The Monday of Faith

The Way is not a Sunday-only religion. There is no church without the Sunday experience, but the proof of its validity is found on Monday, in the workplace, in the public square, where saints mix with sinners and faith engages the skeptic and the materialist.

The voice of edification in the Sunday assembly becomes the voice of proclamation at the Monday work-desk. The love of the brethren on the first day turns to the love for the world’s salvation during the work week.

The inward-only faith, however, jumps from Sunday to Wednesday night to Sunday without touching down in between. The selfish saint skips the tough blocks of time that call for speaking a good word for Jesus, content with the occasional boy-scout deed void of context. The disciple of in-house consumption frames the task of evangelism as a lost cause in the postmodern society of pagan morals.

If one conviction has been lost, it is that the Good News is for all in every age. The gospel still has power to save on Monday, as well as inspire on Sunday. The miracles that brought the divine working to the forefront may not be available today, but the providence of God that got a ram’s horns stuck in a bush for Abraham at just the right moment still moves subtly the currents of time and the affairs of the world for the benefit of his people and the advancement of his purpose.

Abraham looked up and saw behind him a ram caught in the bushes by its horns. So he went over and got the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place *“The Lord provides.”* It is said to this day, *“In the mountain of the Lord provision will be made.”* Genesis 22.13-14 NET.

To this day, it is not so much in the temple, but down in the work-week city of human concerns and up on Monday’s mountain of obedience where we discover the omnipotent hand of God.

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