

Despising the Severity of God

David Halbrook

The goodness of God is far more pleasant to consider than His severity, but we must accept it, too (Rom. 11:22).

God has shown glimpses of His severity when He sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden for eating *that* fruit, burned Nadab and Abihu for doing what He had not commanded, and did not permit Moses to enter Canaan for striking a rock with his rod (Gen. 3:24; Lev. 10:1; Num. 20:12). Do those things seem minor to you? God does not view sin the way we often do. He sees the dangers we do not see.

Paul warned about *doctrines of demons*. What are those doctrines—sorcery or human sacrifice? Paul said they include *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received* (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Those don't sound so bad until we realize the problem of man creating his own commandments. Jesus has all authority so no man or church may create "vows of celibacy" or command people to fast on certain days or avoid certain foods. Is this being done today? (see Colossians 2:20-23)

The severity of God warns against excusing or minimizing sin. He will forgive, but you must turn. How may we help?

Editor's Note: *Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men* (2 Cor. 5:11)—will you?

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

Church of Christ—Quail Valley
4104 E. Harrison St.
Batesville, AR 72501
Office- (870) 793-6700

Evangelist:
David Halbrook 569-4491

The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

church of Christ--Quail Valley

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A Baptist Speaks Concerning The Baptist Church

Thomas G. O'Neal

On November 19, 1959, the following appeared in the Birmingham (Alabama) News. *MY ANSWER* (Billy Graham)

"I have heard the argument that John the Baptist was a Baptist. Will you please tell me if he was, and if so, where do you find it in the Scriptures?" — I. V.

John was called "the Baptist" because he baptized with water. I do not think that many Baptists would say that he was the first member of the Baptist Church.

The Baptists as a distinct denomination date from the time of the Reformation in the 16th Century. The first Baptist Church in America was founded in Providence, R. I., in 1639 by Roger Williams. Unfortunately, it is the tendency 'of some religious people to push back their origin to the Apostles of Christ, thus establishing that they are the "original" Christians and the only real church.

The important thing, whether you be Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or whatever, is to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ.

When we get to heaven, I don't think we will all have little "dog tags" telling which denomination we were members of on earth.

When John saw in Revelation the great company of the redeemed, he asked who they were. The Angel said: "These are they which have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. The question which will be asked on entrance to heaven is not; "Of what sect are you?" but "Have you been redeemed by the blood of Christ?"— (c)

This is a very significant article. Its author is Billy Graham, the world-famed Baptist evangelist. Coming from a recognized source, a Baptist preacher, we shall pay our respects to the words of this Baptist.

I. V. has heard the old Baptist argument in attempt to prove that the church of the New Testament is a Baptist Church. The argument is as follows: 1) John was a

Baptist, 2) He baptized Christ, making Jesus Christ a Baptist, 3) Christ established His church, 4) Conclusion: The church belonging to Christ is the Baptist Church.

Graham says, "I do not think that many Baptists would say that he was the first member of the Baptist church." "Many Baptists" may not take this position, but "some Baptists" take it. If some Baptists don't take that position, where did I. V. hear this argument? Surely not from the Catholics. John was not "a Baptist." He was "the Baptist." He was not one Baptist among many, but the only Baptist. Because he baptized people "for the remission of sins" based upon their confession and repentance he was called "the Baptist." (Mk. 1:4-5; Jno. 3:23.) The fact that John was not a Baptist religiously is seen in Graham's next paragraph.

"The Baptists as a distinct denomination date from the time of the Reformation in the 16th Century." Thus, Graham has admitted that which gospel preachers have been telling people all the time. The Baptist Church is of HUMAN origin and not of divine origin. Since the Baptists did not start until after the 1600s, how could a man be a Baptist in the first part of the first century? Something else to note is: Graham has admitted the Baptist Church is not mentioned in the Word of God. The Word of God, the Bible, was completed by the year 100. The Baptist Church was not known until after the year 1600. How could it then be mentioned in the Bible?

Graham attacks a group by saying, "Unfortunately, it is the tendency of some religious people to push back their origin to the Apostles of Christ, thus establishing that they are the "original" Christians and the only real church." There may be others, but the only groups known to this writer that attempt the above are the Baptist and the Catholics. The Baptist claim is: Baptist churches can be traced back through.

Baptist churches {point, *dh*} to their origin in the first century. They try to establish it by a chain of Baptist churches. Graham tells us the Baptist church was produce put out in the "16th Century." The other group is the Catholics, claiming to trace their origin through Popes back to the Apostle Peter, who they claim was the first one. At this point the Catholics have a little difficulty. You see, the New Testament never mentions Peter being in Rome. Which group did Graham have in mind? Graham thinks the thing that is important, regardless of your affiliation with some group, "is to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ." In Antioch "a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21). Thus, they were following the Lord. But in so doing, they were not called Baptist, Methodist, etc. They were just simply called Christians, (v. 26.) Following the Lord today will make the same thing that it did in Antioch.

Graham doesn't believe upon entrance into heaven "we will all have little 'dog tags' telling which denomination we were members of on earth." His thinking is correct. There will be no denominations in heaven— only the faithful of the church. (Eph. 5:27.) What the world needs to do is take the "dog tag" labeled "Methodist", "Baptist" etc., and throw them away. Then, wear the name Christian. (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16.) Upon entering the gates of pearl, Graham says that the question one will be asked is not, "Of what sect are you?" but, "Have you been redeemed by the blood of Christ?" About this Billy is correct! But I raise the question, How is one redeemed by the blood of Christ? The answer to the above question can be found completely in the Bible, the Word of God. First, to benefit from the blood of Christ, it is necessary to get in contact with the blood. Second, we need to know where the blood is. And, third, it is necessary to know how to get into the blood. The Bible answers these questions for us.

Jesus Christ shed His blood in His death. (Jno. 19:34.) Therefore, to get the benefits of the blood, one must come in contact with the blood, one needs to get into His death. Paul tells us in Rom. 6, that he and the Romans "were baptized into his death." (v. 3.) He also makes the affirmation that they "were baptized into Jesus Christ." (v. 3.) So, to be baptized into Christ is the same as being baptized into His death. I Cor. 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." That body is the church. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22-23.) To be baptized into the body is equal to being baptized into the church. To be baptized into Christ is equal to being baptized into the church of Christ. Put all these passages together, and one sees that baptism into the death of Christ, baptism into the body of Christ, and redeemed by the blood of Christ means all one and the same thing. Thus to be redeemed, one must be in the body. To be out of the body means unredeemed.

Baptist doctrine is redeemed at the point of faith only, baptism is not necessary to redemption. So the conclusion is: redeemed without the blood of Christ. I didn't say that; the Baptists did. Paul said, ". . . and he is the saviour of the body . . . That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," (Eph. 5:23, 26, 27).