

*In search of...*

# Truth & Right

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## The Baptize Question

Is there a contradiction between Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 and the Great Commission as given by Christ in Matthew 28:19? If not, then how can we harmonize the commands of Christ, as found in Matthew 28 and Luke 16:15-16 where the disciples are given the command to teach or preach the Gospel to the world and to baptize those who believe, with Paul's statement that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the Gospel?

The Great Commission, in general, and Paul's commission, in particular, will be discussed first. In Matthew 28:18-20, Christ sent his Apostles into the world to teach the Gospel to all nations and baptize them. In Mark 16:15-16 it is stated that they were to preach the Gospel to every creature and baptize those who receive the Gospel and believe it. In both of these passages, the preaching or the teaching comes

before the baptizing. The preaching or teaching is given greater emphasis than the baptizing. That does not diminish the need for baptism. "Clearly the Great Commission envisioned baptism, but as a response to the preaching of the Gospel (Mk.16:15, 16). And, that is Paul's point: The object is not to get men into the baptismal waters, regardless of their convictions, motives and intents." (Bill Jackson; A Commentary on First Corinthians)

Paul's specific commission was in keeping with the Great Commission, but was very specific as far as to whom it was to be taken. Paul's stated purpose as given him by Christ is recorded for us in Acts 26:16-18. "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee

from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Paul was given the task of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Gentile world, in general, was totally and willfully ignorant of the existence of the true and living God. (Acts 17:22-31) They were wholly given over to the works of darkness and to the power of Satan. (Rom. 1:18-32) The task of finding a willing audience that would listen to the Gospel, much less receive it, was monumental. Paul spent the bulk of his time teaching and preaching the Gospel, as it was the reason Jesus sent him. But notice in Acts 26:18, the reason Paul was sent to preach the Gospel was that the Gentiles might receive the forgiveness of sin and an eternal inheritance in Heaven.

The "Good News" of the Gospel is that man's sins can be forgiven. That man can obtain the remission of sins by coming into contact with the blood of Christ shed upon the cross. In Acts 2, Peter preached the Gospel to the multitude on the day of Pentecost. Thousands of people were convicted of their sins by this great sermon and responded in Acts 2:37 by asking this question, "What shall we do?" Peter's response was "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name Jesus Christ for the remission of

sins..." In this example, we see the means by which sins are remitted – baptism. The preaching of both Peter and Paul was meant to convict men of sin, cause them to repent, and to effect the remission of sins through baptism.

Paul simply states that his purpose in Corinth had been the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. He had not gone there to immerse people in water. He was sent there to preach, but there was no guarantee that there would be a response. There was no guarantee that anyone would want to be baptized. If he had come there simply to baptize, without first preaching the Gospel, he would have been baptizing those who were without faith. Immersing in water cleans the outer man, but without faith in the Gospel, it won't clean the inner man.

Baptism is a physical act with spiritual significance. The spiritual significance of it can only be taught by one who understands the Gospel. The New Testament had not yet been written, so inspiration was needed to preach the Gospel effectively. Paul, as an inspired man, had been the only one qualified to preach the Gospel when it was initially proclaimed to the Corinthians. There was no one else to do it. When the initial response to the Gospel took place, he could well have been the one who baptized those first converts. In fact, he did say in 1 Corinthians 1:14, 16 that he baptized Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas.

Paul only mentions baptizing a few people in Corinth. Yet many had been baptized. If Paul was not performing all the

baptisms who was? This brings up the question of who can baptize a penitent believer. It has already been stated in this document that Paul had initially been the only one qualified to preach the Gospel in its fullness. But, what knowledge or skill was necessary to immerse a person in water?

"Very little is said in the scriptures about who did the baptizing. Paul said that he did but little at Corinth, and the presumption is he did but little at any time. His mission was to preach the Gospel, not to baptize. This would indicate that baptizing was not necessarily to be performed by those who preach it. Saul is said to have been baptized by a 'certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias.' The church at Jerusalem 'were scattered abroad,' 'and went everywhere preaching the word.' The presumption is they baptized. I think it clear that no persons were specifically commanded to baptize. I think a baptism performed by any disciple, if the subject is right, would be accepted by God." (David Lipscomb; E.G Sewell; Questions Answered)

The command given by Christ in Mark 16:15-16 is that believers shall be baptized. In Greek, as well as in English, the phrase "and is baptized" is in the passive tense. Passive tense indicates that the action is done to the subject, not something the subject does to himself or another. Therefore, we know that someone has to administer the baptism. If not the preacher, then any other Christian could administer it.

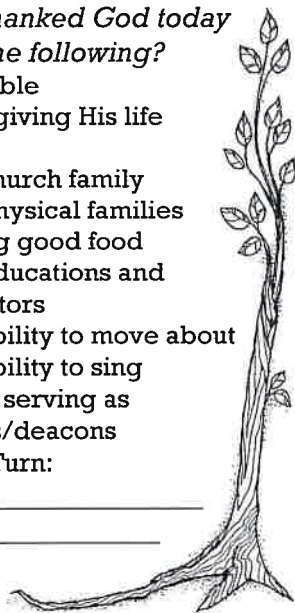
Jack McNiel

God gave you a gift of  
**86,400**  
seconds today. Have  
you used one to say  
**THANK YOU?**

*Have you thanked God today  
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Our physical families
- Having good food
- Our educations and educators
- The ability to move about
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:

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# Moses in Egypt

S A X P C H A B U L R U S H E S Q O G C  
 C K F S Y M Y K L K M F F W R R D A N H  
 J P I K V I L W C L B S I K F R A H P A  
 X U J B F D F N D K M N R S X Q D Z T S  
 L A P M B I I T P W D L S T R Z D Z L H  
 S Z M J D A M R A M I C T C D J Q F Z W  
 V G L S H N Z H A K L H B E G T I Q L G  
 E Z W T U J X R R Y U U O C H D R Z L K  
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 O H Z P O T S C N B U R N I N G E M E W  
 H W J X P H W I W F K I M Y G T W O B A  
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 M G W N Z C K R G G C U Q S X I L V X M  
 C M Y D I W Y C Q J H K I S H Q A U P I  
 S U B F P A I L I V E S T O C K T G M T  
 U R L O P L T K S R V P R V V Z M L B G  
 O W L B O N K J O C H E B E D T H E O L  
 P R C K R K C R J H P A B R Q I F V F Z  
 A R R A A X S Q W A W U G J G S T I R L  
 Q W I S H Z U X S Y B B R L E J I F F G

**DIRECTIONS:** Look up the scripture in the Bible, and find the answer in the crossword above.

Ex. 2:3, Moses was in a basket made of these

Ex. 2:1, he was of this tribe

Ex. 2:21, she became his wife

Ex. 3:2, he saw a bush doing this

Ex. 6:20, Moses' father's name

Ex. 6:20, Moses' mother's name

Ex. 9:3, the fifth plague killed these

Ex. 9:26, only in this land was there no hail

Ex. 12:11, he was there when this observance was instituted

Ex. 12:29, at midnight the Lord struck down all of these

Ex. 2:15, Moses fled to this land

Ex. 3:1, Moses' father-in-law

Ex. 4:14, he was Moses' brother