

WAS JESUS A REGULAR BAPTIST?



Lesson Ten – Jesus Gives Individual Christian Responsibility

The Baptist Distinctives

- **Biblical Authority** (Lesson 7)
- **Autonomy of the Local Church** (Lesson 11)
- **Priesthood of the believer** (Lesson 10)
- **Two Ordinances: Baptism** (Lesson 8) & **Lord's Supper** (Lesson 9)
- **Individual Soul Liberty** (Lesson 10)
- **Saved, Baptized Church Membership** (Lesson 9)
- **Two Offices: Pastors & Deacons** (Lesson 11)
- **Separation of Church and State** (Lesson 12)

Individual Christian Responsibility

Baptists believe that every Christian has received tremendous privileges and consequently bears tremendous responsibilities. Baptists typically discuss these privileges, responsibilities, and competencies under two rules: the *priesthood* of the believer and the *soul liberty* of the believer.

Priesthood of the Believer

- The Priesthood of the Believer is the belief that: Christians require no separate priesthood (separate from the community of believers) other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Because Christ is the only mediator between humans and God, each believer has the privilege and duty of direct access to God.

The Functions of Priests

- To represent humans before God – a mediator (Hebrews 5:1).
- To secure forgiveness on behalf of those he represents by offering sacrifices (5:1-3).

- To offer gifts of praise and worship to God (5:1).

The Priesthood of Christ

- The Old Testament system was incomplete – a shadow of things to come (Hebrews 10:1-4).
- The body of Jesus Christ was the once-for-all perfect sacrifice for sins (10:5-10).
- Jesus is the perfect High Priest *and* the perfect sacrifice for sins (10:11-14).

Access to God

- Each believer has the highest privilege of the priest – to enter the Holy of Holies with confidence (Hebrews 10:19-20).
- With Jesus as our High Priest, we are commanded to draw near to God (10:21-22).
- Since we have access to God in Christ, we hold fast the confession of hope (4:14; 10:23).
- Since we have access to God in Christ, we consider one another (10:24).
- Since we have access to God in Christ, we gather together and exhort one another (10:25).
- Since we have access to God in Christ, we approach His throne to find mercy and grace (4:15-16).

One Mediator

- Jesus is the only human mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5).
- He gave Himself to pay for everyone's sins and desires all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4, 6).
- Thus, we should pray for all (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Sacrifices of Believer Priests

- Presenting their bodies to God (Romans 12:1-2).
- Spending themselves on behalf of others (Philippians 2:17).
- Sharing the gospel (Romans 15:16).
- Giving material gifts (Philippians 4:15-19).
- Praising God (Hebrews 13:15).

Jesus first taught about the priesthood of believers.

- He taught about access to the Father in His name (John 16:22-24, 26-27).
- He taught about our being one, in Christ, with the Father (John 17:20-21).

Individual Soul Liberty

Soul liberty is the responsibility that all believers share to understand and obey God's requirements for themselves.

Personal Responsibility

- Each believer is responsible to read and to understand the Scriptures correctly.
- Soul liberty is not liberty to believe whatever one wishes to believe.
- It is liberty to believe what Scripture teaches.
- It is liberty to obey God.

Spiritual Competence

- The believer has nothing to boast in except Christ alone (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).
- The gospel message does not rely on human wisdom, but the Spirit of God and power (2:1-5).
- In the gospel message, the Spirit reveals the wisdom of God (2:6-10).
- God has given each believer His Spirit so we can know the things of God (2:11-12).
- Every individual believer is accountable to God to know and obey the Scriptures (2:13-16).

How does the Spirit help us understand the Word?

- The Spirit does not do what we are responsible to do:
 - Read the text.
 - Interpret the text, including identifying parts of speech, parsing verbs, diagramming sentences, and studying context.
- The Spirit does what we cannot do – He helps us to:

- Embrace the truth of the text – to see it as true and order one’s life around its truth.
- See the lies of sin.
- Love the God the Scriptures reveal.
- Apply the Scriptures to life.
- This work of the Spirit is called Illumination.
 - He takes the meaning of Scripture and helps us grasp its relevance.
 - Thus, every believer is accountable to comprehend and obey God’s Word.

Teaching and Learning

- While there is one Judge to whom we each must give account, we do have authority to help one another by teaching, admonishing, warning, and rebuking (many passages).
- God has ordained teachers in the church, and they are to be followed (Hebrews 13:7, 17).
- We can grow in our ability to study, understand, and obey Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:1-2).

Jesus first taught about soul liberty.

- Jesus taught that we would all be individually judged by the Son of Man (John 5:26-30; 12:48).
- He opened their understanding of the Scriptures and encouraged them to look forward to the Spirit’s coming help (Luke 24:44-49).
- He taught that we each have personal responsibility to Him (John 21:21-22).

Conclusion

- Jesus taught – and the apostles confirm in the New Testament - that every believer is granted the privilege and duty of access to God in Christ.
- Jesus taught – and the apostles confirm in the New Testament – that every believer is enabled by the Holy Spirit, is responsible to understand and obey the Word of God and will give account to Christ for his or her actions.