

Preacher's Pen points

An In-depth Look at Ac. 22:16



In Acts 22 Paul recounts to his Jewish brethren how he became a follower of Jesus. He reports a mid-day vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus and the instruction to go into the city where he would be told what he must do. Later Ananias, God's chosen messenger, comes with the needed words, "*And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name*" (Ac. 22:16). This simple statement suggests several things about baptism.

Baptism is Urgent!

Many religious groups have a casual attitude about baptism, often postponing it for weeks. This is based on the belief that baptism is not necessary for salvation. But notice, in contrast, the urgency of baptism according to the prophet of God. His words to Saul were, "*And now why do you delay?*"

Baptism is Immersion!

The word "*baptize*" translates a Greek word meaning in the original language "to immerse". Many religious groups have changed the meaning to include sprinkling one with water or pouring water upon one. But if such were Scriptural, then Saul could have been "baptized" where he was; but instead the prophet urged him to "*arise*". Even this simple instruction points to the need of Saul to go where there was sufficient water for immersion!

Baptism is Necessary for Forgiveness!

The religious world commonly believes that baptism is "an outward sign of an inward grace", a

way of showing that one has already been saved. If that were true, Ananias' words would make no sense at all! Instead he states that baptism has a part in washing away sins. Clearly, it is not the power of water that removes sin; but instead it is the power of the blood of Jesus. However, the cleansing power of Jesus' death is applied when we obey from the heart the command to be baptized (Rom. 16:17-18)!

Baptism expresses faith in the Name of Jesus!

It has been interesting to note how that in virtually every denominational "invitation" the audience is urged to "call upon the name of the Lord" by saying the "sinner's prayer". Yet, this text accompanies the action of calling upon Jesus' name with baptism.

When we respond to the gospel in baptism we are not merely putting away the filth of the flesh, but instead we are making our "*appeal to God for a good conscience*" (1 Pet. 3:21).

Have you obeyed this command?

Amazingly one verse in the Scripture answers virtually all errors taught on baptism in our diverse religious world. But more importantly, it makes clear what each of us must do if we are to be saved from our past sins. The Holy Spirit guided Paul in his message to the Jews and likewise Luke in its recording. Thus, the truth of Acts 22:16 is twice confirmed. Do not allow others to persuade you otherwise! Instead obey God's command to be baptized while you can! Let us help you do that! —Johnny Felker

