

It Is Easier To Go To Heaven Than Be A Member Of The Baptist Church

We have many friends who describe themselves as "Baptists." They deny baptism is essential to salvation, arguing extensively on the subject (contra Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; etc.), but insist that one must be baptized to become a member of the Baptist church. Indeed, their manuals teach such things. They also teach that a person is saved at the point of faith and from then on can never be lost (contra Galatians 5:4; 1 Corinthians 10:12; etc.). Here's the rub, according to Baptist doctrine it takes faith to become a child of God, but faith and baptism to become a Baptist. Also, when a member of the Baptist church becomes terribly immoral, he is disfellowshipped, yet still saved--kicked out of the Baptist church but not heaven!

Steven F. Deaton

The following is a reply we received from a Baptist after running an article in our local newspaper entitled, "It Is Easier To Go To Heaven Than To Be A Member Of The Baptist Church." You may read that article by clicking [here](#). A link to our answer is provided below.

Mr. Deaton,

I must say I was truly disappointed in the article you put in the Saturday Lufkin Daily News! It seems to me as Christians we should be about the business of reaching others for the cause of Christ and "being" a witness to His grace and mercy by the things we say and do. I believe that "slamming" another denomination for a difference in theology is totally inappropriate for one who claims to be a child of God. Rather than majoring on the differences in theology, you should look for the similarities and attempt to reach people for Christ. When harping on our differences, all that is accomplished is a dividing of the Church (all believers), and nothing could please satan any more than for the Church to be divided. We play right into satan's hand when we seek to major on differences in theology. John 3:16 tells us that Christ died for ALL. Not just Church of Christ, not just Baptist, not just Methodist, not just Lutheran, but for ALL who believe. I hope you will think about the damage an article such as yours can do to unbelievers who read it. Why would they want to become a Christian if all Christians do is fight among

themselves? That's no different than non-believers.

Perhaps next time you decide to put an article in the paper you had better think of all the ramifications it may cause.

Sincerely,
J.F.

The following is a response to a complaint received by a Baptist after we ran an article in the local newspaper entitled, "It Is Easier To Go To Heaven Than To Be A Member Of The Baptist Church." You may read the original article and the complaint by clicking [here](#).

Dear Mr. J.F.,

I appreciate your interest in spiritual matters and reading our newspaper article. Also, thank you for taking me up on the offer to make comments. I took no offense in your candid remarks and trust you will take none in mine. I appeal to you to consider the following and "search the scriptures" to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11).

Before I get to your specific complaints, I must point out you did not say I had misrepresented Baptist doctrine. It does teach that one can have faith alone, never be a part of any church (including the Baptist church), and go to heaven. It does teach that one must have faith PLUS be baptized to be a part of the Baptist church. It does teach that a member of the Baptist church can be turned out, disfellowshipped, and will still go to heaven (perseverance of the saints). So, IT IS easier to go to heaven than to be a member of the Baptist church, according to Baptist doctrine. Oddly, according to Baptist doctrine, the Baptist church has "higher" and "stricter" standards than God. Mr. J.F., that should cause you to question Baptist doctrine--all of it.

You said, "I believe that 'slamming' another denomination for a difference in theology is totally inappropriate for one who claims to be a child of God." May I point you to Christ who "slammed" the denominations of His day. He "slammed" the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes (Matthew 22:23-33; 23:1-36). Likewise, the apostle Paul "slammed" the circumcision denomination in his letter to the Galatians. In fact, he even said, "Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves" (Galatians 5:12, NASB). In Philippians, Paul described these

people as "dogs," "evil workers," and "the mutilation," and said they were "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:2, 18). Paul also "slammed" the denominations developing at Corinth. "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal?" (1 Corinthians 3:1-4).

Should we respond to such actions of the Lord and Paul by saying, "I believe that 'slamming' another denomination for a difference in theology is totally inappropriate for one who claims to be a child of God. Rather than majoring on the differences in theology, you should look for the similarities and attempt to reach people for Christ"?

Mr. J.F., you wrote, "When harping on our differences, all that is accomplished is a dividing of the Church (all believers), and nothing could please Satan any more than for the Church to be divided. We play right into Satan's hand when we seek to major on differences in theology." This defies logic and reason, let alone Bible truth. Pointing out differences does not divide, it shows the division which is already there! Division exists because men have departed from the New Testament of Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 4:1, 6). When we expose those differences we are not causing division. Rather, we are showing the error and striving to bring people back to the truth. Those who are honest of heart will see the truth and cling to it (cf. Proverbs 23:23).

Denominational division is what makes Satan happy, Mr. J.F. It angers him when it is brought to light, as we have done, because men may see the error of denominational division and decide to return to pure Christianity. Satan wants to keep men in the dark and thus damned (2 Corinthians 4:4; cf. John 3:19-21).

You wrote, "John 3:16 tells us that Christ died for ALL. Not just Church of Christ, not just Baptist, not just Methodist, not just Lutheran, but for ALL who believe." Indeed, Christ died for all. However, the Bible also says Christ died for the church--His church (Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28). The church belonging to Christ (the church of Christ) is not a denomination to be compared with that which men have established--that is blasphemy. The Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran churches are not what Jesus died for, they are not what He established. Those churches did not come into

existence until over 1400 years after the Lord ascended back to heaven. They were established by men upon the doctrines of men, not the doctrine of Christ. By the way, would you include the Mormons and "Jehovah's Witnesses" in the "Church (all believers)"?

Mr. J.F., you assume that men in all denominations are Christians. This is simply not so. The Holy Spirit revealed what is necessary to become a Christian (child of God). Included in the things necessary are hearing the word of God in order to develop faith in Jesus, confessing the Lord before men, turning from sin, and being baptized for the remission of sins (Romans 10:9-17; Acts 3:19; 2:38; 22:16). Men in the denominations have not done this. Therefore, they are not Christians.

Further, you assume that Christ approves of all the denominations. As we mentioned before, denominations have no authority from the New Testament, thus they are sinful. They foster division, something which Paul severely condemned (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). Also, if Christ approved of all of the denominations, He would be a hypocrite, because they promote different and contradictory doctrines. For example, the Methodists teach that baptism is sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, while the Baptists teach it is immersion only. The Methodists have bishops who oversee districts, while the Baptists have a congregational form of church government. Do you think Jesus supports these contradictory teachings? Rather, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, revealed only one mode of baptism and only one form of church government.

I will continue to point out differences between the Bible and what men teach, just as my Lord did (Matthew 15:7-9). And if they are disappointed, as you were, I know I am not the first to see such results (Matthew 15:12-14; John 6:60, 66).

I would be happy to study further with you, either through email or in person. Also, you are personally invited to attend one of our services (the times are listed in the newspaper articles).

For The Truth,
Steven F. Deaton

A "True Baptist" Responds

Below is a response from a man who objected to our newspaper article

"It Is Easier To Go To Heaven Than To Be A Member Of The Baptist Church." [Click here to read it.](#) Our reply follows.

Dear Sirs,

I have in hand a copy of the article which ran recently in the local paper. Please allow me to try to correct some apparent mistakes.

First, let me say that if you want to use your criteria to decide whether it is easier to go to heaven than be a member of the Baptist church, then you are most correct. Because it certainly doesn't take membership in any church to get into heaven. But it does take membership to be a Baptist. And of course if a person be born again, then he will go to heaven regardless of what happens after the fact. You cannot undo a birth; it is impossible. Once a son - always a son. Now as far as "faith alone" being the Baptist "sole" tenet for gaining access to heaven, that is not a true statement. Baptists (true ones) teach that repentance must precede anything else! Actually you should have said, " Repentance followed by faith..." Next, please allow me to clarify one thought made concerning the "specific words" that one (supposedly Baptist) person used in complaining. I shall not go to the trouble of typing them out; I am sure you have a copy. Those words of that person are the position of a Protestant (of which you are one.) They are not the words of a Baptist. True Baptists are not trying to get the whole religious world together. The ecumenical movement is not espoused by true Baptists.

Next, the "slamming" paragraph which you authored is right on! Christ did it and true Baptists will also. This may be the only area in which we can agree I have two good friends who are also Campbellites; neither of them like to talk about water baptism being essential to salvation. The reason is that both know Jesus and that being born from above is all that is essential to be an heir to heaven. My brother-in-law, who has been an elder in the C of C for many years, just recently joined a Baptist church due to the incorrect teachings of the C of C. Notice, it is A Baptist church, not THE Baptist church: there is no universal, invisible church. That type of teaching is laying the ground floor for the coming one-world church (and you will be part of it.)

Did you not get enough of R.L Vaughn in October of 1998? Some of us have not forgotten the outcome of that debate. And if it is a debate that you are interested in, let me call your attention to that upcoming one between Bro. Bobby Sparks of Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church of Greenville and Tom Wacaster, minister of a C of C in Mt. Pleasant, Texas.

The dates are November 26, 27, 29, & 30, 2001. This will be held in the Titus County Convention Center in Mt. Peasant. Maybe you could take all your aspiring leaders up there for an education.

Thank you so much for allowing me this opportunity to try to clarify matters. Remember everybody that tried to get to the Ark through the water drowned!

A true Baptist. Sincerely, Ddd Hhhh (I will respond no further due to the fact that I have never known a Campbellite, or a Baptist, that changed his mind due to a discussion such as this.)

August 14, 2001

Mr. Hhhh,

Thank you for taking the time to write me, even though it was to belittle, criticize, and insult me. I assume, however, that the reason you wrote is because our articles have touched a nerve with you (and others); you have been pricked in the heart. Though you stated your refusal to write again, and implied that I am dishonest, I will hold out hope that you will change your mind and give me the benefit of the doubt (1 Corinthians 13:7).

You said, "Because it certainly doesn't take membership in any church to get into heaven." Mr. Hhhh, your belief is not in harmony with the Bible. Jesus died for the church, purchased it with His blood (Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28). Those who are Christ's have been purchased with His blood (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). When people are saved, they are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). Therefore, it is necessary to be a part of the Lord's church. His church is called the "church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2); the "body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27); the church of Christ, singular of "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16); the "house of God" (1 Timothy 3:15). All of these terms describe the body, or group, of redeemed who belong to the Lord and Savior. Anyone who is saved is a part of the church--you must be a member of the church to go to heaven.

Further, you will note the church is the body, and there is only ONE body (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4). Just as surely as there is only ONE Spirit, Lord, and Father, there is only ONE body (Ephesians 4:4-6). Just as surely as men are reconciled to God through the cross, they are reconciled in ONE

body, the church (Ephesians 2:16). This ONE body, the church, is the one and only that will be presented to Christ (Ephesians 5:26-27). Try as you may, you will never get those passages out of the Bible.

You said, "But it does take membership to be a Baptist." Thank you for conceding the point that it is easier to go to heaven than to be a member of the Baptist church! You say it takes repentance and faith to go to heaven, but something else to be a Baptist, namely baptism. You have just affirmed the point of our article--according to Baptist doctrine, Baptists require more of man than God.

You wrote, "And of course if a person be born again, then he will go to heaven regardless of what happens after the fact. You cannot undo a birth; it is impossible. Once a son - always a son." Again, you contradict the Scripture. Paul said to take heed lest you fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). He also said that those who turned to the Old Covenant were severed from Christ and had fallen from grace (Galatians 5:1-4). You cannot be severed from that to which you were never joined. You cannot fall from a position which you never attained. Likewise, the apostle said he could become disqualified from the "race" in which he ran (1 Corinthians 9:27). Peter said, "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20). People had escaped the world, been set free from sin, but turned back. As for being "unborn" what do you make of Galatians 4:19, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you"?

You next said, "Now as far as 'faith alone' being the Baptist 'sole' tenet for gaining access to heaven, that is not a true statement. Baptists (true ones) teach that repentance must precede anything else! Actually you should have said, 'Repentance followed by faith...'" Mr. Hhhh, are you saying there is some work required of man in order to obtain his salvation? You are in disagreement with most of your Baptist brethren. As the Baptist Church Manual by J.M. Pendleton states, they believe justification is "solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood" (p. 48). Yet, if your belief is that repentance plus faith is necessary to salvation, you still fall short of what the Bible declares. The Holy Spirit revealed that a man must not only have faith and repent of his sins, but also confess Christ with his mouth and be baptized for the remission of sins (Romans 10:9-13; Acts 2:38). Saul of Tarsus had faith and repented of his sins (Acts 9:9-11), yet when Ananias arrived, he said, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the

name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

You accused me of being a "Protestant" and "Campbellite." I deny being either, and to charge me with such from this point on is dishonest and slanderous. I am a Christian, nothing more, nothing less (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). You, on the other hand, do gladly accept the name of "Baptist." This term is never applied as a title of a church or follower of Christ. John is the only one called the "Baptist" not because of any church affiliation, for there was no church during his day, but because of what he introduced to the people--baptism.

You said, "True Baptists are not trying to get the whole religious world together. The ecumenical movement is not espoused by true Baptists." You also closed your letter with "A true Baptist. Sincerely, Don Hhhh." Mr. Hhhh, what do "true Baptists" espouse? Are you and those with whom you associate the ONLY true Baptists? Are you the ONLY ones going to heaven? Are you narrow-minded? Are there false Baptists?

You mentioned two of your friends being "Campbellites" and "neither of them like to talk about water baptism being essential to salvation. The reason is that both know Jesus and and (sic) that being born from above is all that is essential to be an heir to heaven." Well, Mr. Hhhh, I am sorry to hear about your two friends, their membership in the church of Campbell, and their cowardice. You have heard the arguments for the necessity of water baptism before, but here are a few of them again. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). "There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

You asked, "Did you not get enough of R.L. Vaughn in October of 1998?"

Some of us have not forgotten the outcome of that debate." Are you serious? What outcome was there? Mr. Vaughn and I had an agreement to debate the issue of salvation. After I sent him my first proposition, he never wrote back. I followed up and he still failed to honor his agreement. It seems to me Mr. Vaughn, and others, know what the outcome of the depravity debate was.

In closing, you said, "Remember everybody tried to get to the Ark thorough (sic) the water drowned!" Thank you for declaring the necessity of being a member of the Ark in order to be delivered from judgment! Too, the water saved as well as condemned, as it separated the righteous from the unrighteous. It saved Noah and his family as they followed God's commands in reference to the water, and it condemned all who disobeyed God's commands. The same is true with water baptism--it separates the righteous from the unrighteous. Those who submit to God's command to be baptized for the remission of sins are delivered from judgment. Those who reject God's command to be baptized for the remission of sins are condemned. 1 Peter 3:21!

Mr. Hhhh, as for a debate, we seek one to be held locally and endorsed by a local Baptist church. It needs to be held in their building as well as ours. One in Mt. Pleasant will not do any good for our community. Do I assume too much by believing you are interested in our community?

I hope you will change your mind about further correspondence. If you can find a "true Baptist" man who is willing to defend his beliefs in a public debate, let us know.

In The Interest Of Truth,
Steven F. Deaton