



# The Voice Of Truth

A weekly publication of the

## Hillcrest church of Christ

1621 Hillcrest Drive  
Green Bay, WI 54313  
(920) 499-5677

[www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com](http://www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com)

March 30, 2003

## Search the Scriptures (2)

By Bill Echols

In our last article we pointed out sufficient reason for obeying the Lord's injunction to "Search the scriptures." It is our purpose in this article to point out the proper attitude to be possessed in doing this searching. If we approach the scriptures with the wrong attitude, our searching will result in something other than finding the truth that will make us free. We cannot over emphasize the importance then of having the proper attitude in our study of God's word. If our attitude is one of selfishness or prejudice, we will not learn the truth. Needless to say many hundreds read their Bible regularly yet have not come to a knowledge of the truth. Their attitude has perhaps had a great deal to do with their failure to learn the Lord's will.

We would suggest first of all that any Bible study be entered into with a feeling of deep reverence. As the Bible is the word of God, given by inspiration, or as Peter expressed it, "Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" 2 Peter 1:21, we should study it with the attitude of reverence and godly fear. It is God's message, and we should give it the greatest respect just as Moses was to remove his shoes on holy ground, likewise, we should remove all things of a worldly nature from our minds and study with awe.

I have used this illustration of this point, and although all illustrations fall short of God's perfection, perhaps it will help to show what we mean. Suppose you were to receive a personal letter from the President. You would not just scan over its contents but you would read it carefully. The Bible is more than just a "note" from man; it is the inspired word of Jehovah. Let us always in searching it have the proper respect in our hearts for its source and message.

Also in studying the Bible we should realize that we need the guidance found in its pages. Jeremiah adequately expressed this in these words, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23. We must never become satisfied with ourselves as we are, but realize a constant need for God's word as a lamp and light to our pathway. Such a realization will result in a sincere desire on our part to know His will. Christ pointed out that willingness to know His will is essential to knowing the doctrine of God. John 7:17.

Paul, in giving the command to study, said that we should study "to show thyself

approved unto God." When we study God's word our purpose should be to learn the message that will help us to be what God wants us to be. There is no promise to that person who searches the Bible for evil purposes. I once worked with an infidel who very often read the Bible. His purpose was not, however, to learn what he should do to "be approved unto God," but rather to find something he thought he could use to disprove the Bible. Many times he would come across a scripture which he thought I either didn't believe or didn't practice and would use it against the truth. The true Christian will be just as diligent in his search of the scriptures, but will do so for an entirely different reason. That is to be approved of God. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6.

This leads to another attitude we should possess in our search of the scriptures, and this is love for the truth. No one is going to learn the truth if he is not possessed with a sincere love for the truth. Anything less than true love for what is right and true in God's sight will lead to deception. The apostle Paul warned its: ". . . they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thess. 2:10-12. In searching the scriptures we must be honest enough to admit that which is true. We will if we love the truth. A person with an honest heart will not let conceptions stand between him and the truth. Even some preachers of the gospel need to restudy some ideas they hold so they might know the truth. If we are honest, we are always ready to learn truth that we have before overlooked. Too many times when our beliefs are questioned, we attempt to justify them rather than study to see if they are true. When a person says in face of scriptural teaching, "I just can't believe that God requires me to do this," he is manifesting a lack of love for the truth. Too many times we read a passage and ask, "How does this apply to my neighbor or to my, brother?", when we should ask, "How does this apply to me?"

Joined with the love for the truth is the willingness to search for the truth. Any lover of truth will seek for the truth. The Lord promised, "Seek, and ye shall find." Has God ever allowed one who was honestly seeking the truth to remain in ignorance? Why are so many lost in darkness? Is it not because they are not seeking? When a person is seeking the truth, he will take all that God says and will never be satisfied with having merely a part. As truth-seekers, no group is a better example than the noble Bereans of long ago. Of them Luke says, "They

received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily." Acts 17:11. Why? They were seeking the truth in what Paul had preached to them. If every one hearing a sermon, reading an article or tract would do this, religious division and confusion would end. Likewise, the troubles in the Lord's body would vanish.

The Lord said in John 8:31, 32, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free." We must be willing to know His will and be desirous of continuing in His word; that is, we must be seekers for truth to be free.

In searching the scriptures let us always have the attitude that we want to obey the truth as we find it. We must never try to change the scriptures to fit our present way of living, but rather change ourselves to fit the scriptures. Let us not be guilty of reading into a passage what we would like for it to teach. All study of God's word thus must be entered as objectively as is humanly possible. The teachings of the Bible are not popular with the masses. If we read the Bible with an eye to our standing with others, our study will fail. I recently read of a father who was concerned because his son was preaching and taking the "unpopular side" of the "institutional question." His reason for concern was that it might be hard for the boy to find a place to preach. Only God knows how many have been led to compromise their convictions because of the pressure of popularity; not only on this issue, but others is well. One who loves the truth will not "line up" with any one save Jesus Christ and the apostles, regardless of the pressure applied.

James 1:22 reads, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Unless we are willing to surrender our will to that of the Father, our reading of the Bible will profit us little. Again we refer to the Bereans who searched the scriptures. Luke says further of them, "Therefore (that is because they received the word and searched the scriptures) many of them believed." Acts 17:12. They did what God commanded.

Our study of the Bible must be conducted with determination. Often times some are discouraged in their study by a passage of scripture that is difficult to understand, those difficulties are there to test our moral character. They determine whether or not we are willing to truly seek and search. If we have no determination to know the truth, no love for the truth, no reverence for God's revelation, and these difficulties in the Bible will separate us from those who possess these characteristics. Like those during Christ's lifetime, we will turn back because of His hard saving; See John 6:53-66.

We pray that everyone reading these words will possess in his heart the attitude toward God's word that will cause him to search it and accept it as his final and complete authority in things spiritual.

(In our next article we will discuss some rules for Bible study.)

*Truth Magazine*, III: 10, pp. 8-9  
July 1959

## What Baptism Will Not Do!

By Roger L. Hillis

Even a person whose mind has been poisoned by the false doctrines of denominational error, can understand Bible teaching about baptism. Baptism:

- Is for the forgiveness of sins—**Acts 2:38**
- Results in newness of life—**Romans 6:3-4**
- Puts one into Christ—**Galatians 2:26, 27**
- Brings salvation—**I Peter 3:21**

While not wanting to deny the power of scriptural baptism, we must be cautious not to overstate the power. This article examines what baptism will not do.

**1.) Baptism will not remove temptation.** Perhaps the greatest temptation in the life of Jesus came immediately following His baptism (see Mt. 3:13-4:11). The same temptations that Satan used on a person before baptism will be present after baptism. Each Christian will continue to be faced with numerous temptations throughout his or her lifetime that must be overcome. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14, 15). We do have, as Christians, a promise that with each temptation God will provide a pathway of escape (I Cor. 10:13). But, if we do not take that escape route, we will sin.

**2.) Baptism will not solve all of life's problems.** Some people seem to have the idea that baptism is a "cure-all" for the problems of life. And so when these problems—whether they are marriage problems, money worries, bad habits, etc.—remain after baptism, many give up, thinking that the Lord has failed them. But, again, the difficulties of life that were present before baptism will still exist after one is baptized in obedience to the Lord. However, one's attitude toward these problems should change, and that will be a step in the right direction. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought (do not worry, NKJV) for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:25, 33). A shift of priorities in one's life helps to put problems in the proper perspective.

**3.) Baptism will not assure eternal salvation. Baptism puts one into Christ, but through disobedience, that state of salvation can be forfeited.** There are too many clear passages of scripture to deny that fact. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 3:17). See also I Cor. 10:12, Gal. 5:4, Heb. 6:4-6. The popular religious doctrines known as "Once Saved, Always Saved," "Impossibility of Apostasy," and "Perseverance of the Saints," are false doctrines. Baptism does not insure eternal life.

**4.) Baptism will not forgive, save, result in newness of life, or put into Christ, one who is not a penitent believer.** Baptism is for the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24) and repents of his or her sins (Acts 2:38). These are essential prerequisites for scriptural baptism. This immediately rules out such denominational practices as infant baptism and proxy baptism. We must continue "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) and teach the plan of salvation as they taught it. It consists of faith, repentance, confession and baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).