



Christian Questions

TALK RADIO WITH A PURPOSE

You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13

Dear Chris,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You said that because Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, we are now cursed with that knowledge. You asked if that knowledge was something we were not originally supposed to have. You also wondered if the purpose of baptism was to wash away the original sin of Adam so that once baptized we no longer have that knowledge of good and evil. Lastly, you referred to Matthew 10:16 where Jesus told his disciples to be as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves. You wondered if this statement would imply having the knowledge of good while also possessing Satan's evil ways.

We believe that the Knowledge of Good and Evil was something that God ultimately wanted every member of the human race to have. Had Adam not disobeyed God by partaking of the forbidden fruit, God would have allowed him to have that knowledge at a later date after he had proven his obedience. However, that would mean that each of Adam's children, grandchildren, etc. would also need to be tested in a similar fashion in order to prove their obedience. Some might pass, while others would fail and be in need of a Redeemer. However, God knew that Adam would disobey and thereby plunge himself and all his progeny into sin and death. Therefore, God made provision for Adam and his entire human family by providing a Redeemer in his Son Jesus, the Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). We believe that Jesus died for all of humanity—his faithful followers first and then for the rest of the world later during the thousand-year time of judgment, yet future.

The knowledge of God's plan helps us understand the true meaning of baptism. Once we understand that there are two parts to salvation, we realize that baptism is only for those followers of Jesus who are sacrificing their wills now so that they may attain a heavenly reward. You asked if baptism washes away the original sin of Adam that each of us inherits? No, we believe that is not the purpose of baptism. Baptism is a voluntary decision made by an individual after much consideration. Baptism symbolizes the death of the old will and the begetting of a new nature. We believe that baptism is an outward manifestation of a heart attitude that has taken place within the individual. The person being immersed has already made a covenant of self-sacrifice in his heart (a consecration) in order to do the will of God in all matters of life. Baptism (total water immersion) symbolizes the figurative death of the old nature and the begetting by the holy Spirit of a new nature. Although one is encouraged to publically show that desire of his heart by baptism, the act of baptism itself is not necessary for consecration.

We believe that there is only one baptism during this Gospel Age and that is to be part of the heavenly class. When Jesus fulfilled his mission by dying on the cross, He redeemed everyone who ever





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lived in the past and everyone who was yet to live in the future. 1 Timothy 2:3-6 says, "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men – the testimony given in its proper time." And again in 1 Timothy 4:10, "... that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe." These scriptures indicate that all men will be saved, but that there is a special class (a heavenly class) who are to be favored first. These are the ones who have made a covenant to do the will of the Lord now and have symbolized that consecration in baptism. Do we still have the knowledge of good and evil after we are baptized? We most certainly do and that knowledge is essential for our growth and our testing as we are confronted with sin from without (the world) and from within ourselves. Therefore, the Apostle Paul tells us to put on the full armor of God so that we can take our stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:11) and, thereby, remain faithful to our covenant of sacrifice.

Lastly, you referred to Matthew 10:16 where Jesus told his disciples to be as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves. You wondered why Jesus would make this comparison. Jesus said, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." Jesus was telling his disciples that he was sending them out to preach the Gospel as sheep among wolves. Therefore, they needed to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. We quote from the Bible Commentary of Jamieson-Fausset-Brown. "Wonderful combination this! Alone, the wisdom of the serpent is mere cunning, and the harmlessness of the dove little better than weakness: but in combination, the wisdom of the serpent would save them from unnecessary exposure to danger; the harmlessness of the dove, from sinful expedients to escape it."

We hope we have answered your questions. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.com. The service is free and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

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