

CHRISTOLOGY (50)

5. That the word “baptize” must only mean to dip when in so many other places it cannot literally mean this.
6. That Mark is giving us a better and fuller representation than the other writers of what actually happened.

It is probable, in view of the presence of the Holy Spirit after Christ was baptized by John (Mt. 3:16), that the meaning of Christian baptism must be discovered in regard to the Holy Spirit, not in regard to the baptism of Jesus Christ.

We know from a study of Scripture that at the moment one believes, one is baptized by the Spirit into Christ, thus completely identifying that believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:1ff). Therefore, our baptism is not following Christ; it is illustrating what the Holy Spirit has done in putting us into Christ. Christ’s water baptism is not Christian baptism and never should be viewed as such. (For an excellent and thorough discussion of this issue, see Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 5, pp. 56-73.)

QUESTION #19 – What will Jesus Christ do in the future?

Although a deep analysis and study of this falls under the doctrine of Eschatology, the doctrine of future events, it is legitimate to at least outline the future ministry of Christ when studying the doctrine of Christology. In capsule form, to understand what Christ will do in the future, we must isolate three separate groups to see what Christ will do for each one:

(Group #1) - What Christ will do in the future in regard to the Church.

(Group #2) - What Christ will do in the future in regard to Israel.

(Group #3) - What Christ will do in the future in regard to unbelievers.

Group #1 - What Christ will do in the future in regard to the Church.

When the N.T. believer thinks in terms of the future concerning himself, he will have a good perspective of what Jesus Christ will do in regard to Him by remembering the four words, which begin with the letter “R”: 1) Rapture ; 2) Resurrection ; 3) Reward ; 4) Reign .

(Event #1) - The Rapture of the Church.

The Rapture of the Church may be understood as that moment in time when Christ will appear in the sky and in a moment and in the twinkling of an eye He will catch up His Church in the air, taking it to be with Him forever. There are many texts of Scripture which speak or refer to this event:

1. John 14:3- given by Christ in the Upper Room Discourse which discusses the Grace Age that will feature the Holy Spirit.
2. I Cor. 15:51-52- In this context, “the last trumpet” refers to the last moment of the Church Age, which probably will feature the word “come up here” (Rev. 4:1).
3. I Thess. 4:13-17- the most famous rapture passage. The word “rapture” is derived from a Latin word for “caught up” in verse 17.

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4. II Tim. 4:1- both “His appearing” and “His kingdom” contain an article in Greek, indicating these are two separate events which are to be distinguished in the future program of God.
5. I John 2:28- the future event for the church is described as Christ’s “appearing,” which supports the Rapture.
6. Rev. 3:10- the Church is promised to be kept “out of” a time of trouble that will come against the “whole world,” which clearly supports a “Pre-tribulation Rapture” position.

This is the next event that will happen in the prophetic program of God. Presently, the stage is being set and nothing further needs to happen prior to the Rapture. The Rapture of the Church will do three things: 1) End the Church Age; 2) Signal to the world that something is now happening in the program of God; 3) Begin the Great Tribulation.

(Event #2) - The Resurrection of the Church.

The resurrection of the Church may be understood as that moment of time when believers in this N.T. age, who have died before the Rapture occurs, will be raised up with their new glorified bodies. Presently, a believer who dies is instantly with the Lord (II Cor. 5:8). This believer, however, does not get his new, final glorified body until the resurrection of the Church, which will occur in the moment and twinkling of an eye (I Cor. 15:52). In the specific chronology of events, the resurrection of those dead in Christ occurs just prior to the rapture of those who are alive. I Thess. 4:16-17 gives a numerical chronology to this event which is clearly supported by I Cor. 15:51-52.

(Event #3) - The Rewards of the Church.

It is clear that every believer will stand before Jesus Christ to be judged by Him. This judgment will not determine heaven or hell; it will determine rewards or loss of rewards:

1. Rom. 14:10 – here the judgment of believers is called the “judgment seat of God.”
2. I Cor. 3:10-15 – a believer gains or loses rewards, but is still saved even if losing rewards.
3. I Cor. 4:1-5 – a believer’s judgment will be at a specific moment of time in the future.
4. I Cor. 9:24-27 – the possibility of winning rewards kept Paul focused to the end of his life.
5. II Cor. 5:10 – here the judgment of believers is called “the judgment seat of Christ.” When compared to Rom. 14:10—the name of the seat proves Jesus is God!
6. II Tim. 4:8 – a reward given to the faithful believer who loves the appearing of Christ. A reward system is operative and believers who will love His appearing are those living for Him.
7. I John 2:28 – Two kinds of believers will be raptured—those confident; those ashamed.

It is not specifically stated when this judgment occurs. Most Bible students believe it will occur immediately after the Rapture. I John 2:28 connects the event of Christ’s appearing with having shame or confidence as does I Corinthians 4:5. However, II Corinthians 5:10 speaks of the Judgment Seat of Christ in the context of the death of a believer. When we look at Hebrews 13:17, it is legitimate to think that this judgment will occur when all believers are with Christ, which does not happen until the Rapture.

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The judgment itself will be very intimidating and very legal. We get a glimpse of an earthly judgment seat judgment in Acts 18:12-17. The judgment seat (Greek word is “Bay-ma” βῆμα), from which we get our word “Bee-ma,” was a raised throne-like platform on which rulers or judges would sit in order to hear cases, determine facts and pronounce judgments. This was a very intimidating place to be, for serious judgments were made either against or for an individual. For the believer, this judgment will be very personal, accurate and eternal. Only those who were believers will be at this judgment (I Cor. 3:9-11) and their works as a believer will be analyzed by Jesus Christ to determine the issuance of rewards or the loss of rewards.

The potential loss of rewards and the potential of receiving full rewards was something that motivated Paul (I Cor. 9:24-27); Peter (II Pet. 1:11); and John (II John 8). The having or not having rewards will apparently work itself out in eternal honor and responsibility.

Dr. Charles Ryrie cites Dr. Hoyt in giving an excellent illustration: “The Judgment Seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve” (*Basic Theology*, p. 513).

According to I John 2:28, there will be for some a real sense of shame, and a real sense of confidence. Those who faithfully served God with their lives will be highly honored and rewarded. Valedictorians or Salutatorians do not typically have any academic regrets at graduation. Even though all leave with a diploma, these dedicated students leave with many awards and scholarships for their faithful work. So it will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

(Event #4) - The Reign of the Church.

From John 14:3 we learn that once Christ raptures us, we will forever be with Him. This point is also stressed in I Thess. 4:17. We learn from Rev. 19:7-8, 14 that when Jesus Christ comes in all of His glory we will come with Him. We also observe from Revelation 20:4 that when Christ judges and reigns, we will judge and reign with Him. The words “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them” refer to the Church (I Cor. 6:2; II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-27).

Apparently, part of the determining factor of how much authority or reign we have with Christ in His Kingdom is determined by our use of what God gave us physically, spiritually, emotionally and financially (Luke 19:11-19).

Jesus Christ’s future program with the Church includes, rapture, resurrection, reward and reign. There is nothing that needs to happen before the Rapture; therefore, wise are those believers who are living life with an expectant longing for this blessed day.

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(Group #2) - What Christ will do in the future in regard to Israel.

We may also understand God's future program with Israel by remembering four words, which all begin with the letter "R": 1) Regather ; 2) Resurrection ; 3) Reward ; 4) Reign .

(Event #1) - The Regathering of Israel.

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He promised Israel that He would return when the nation as a whole would be united and looking and longing for His return (Matt. 23:39). God will use the Great Tribulation as a means of bringing Israel to this point. After the Rapture of the Church, Israel will once again become the focal point of the program of God. About half-way through the Tribulation, God will seal and send out 144,000 Israelite evangelists who will spend the next 3.5 years announcing to the Jews and the rest of the world that Jesus Christ will return (Rev. 7:4-7). The Jews will be persecuted by world powers for 3.5 years, led by the Antichrist. The positive that will come out of this is that Israel will become united and will be looking and longing for Jesus Christ, which is exactly what He predicted.

(Event #2) - The Resurrection of Israel.

At the end of the Tribulation, a resurrection will occur for O.T. believing Israel (Dan. 12:2). Luke calls this the "resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:14). This is what is called the "first resurrection" in Revelation 20:5-6. All believing Israel is raised at this resurrection.

(Event #3) - The Reward of Israel.

Prior to establishing His 1000-year reign, Jews will be judged by Jesus Christ (Ezek. 20:33-44).

(Event #4) - The Reign of Israel.

During the reign of Jesus Christ, Israel will finally be esteemed as the nation of God. She will have her land, her King and her Kingdom. She will also have her honor.

Group #3 - What Christ will do in the future in regard to the unbeliever .

Any unbeliever who dies or who has died is presently in a hellish-type of place called "Hades," which features terrible pain, torment and agony (Lk. 16:22-24). These unbelieving dead will stay in this place until the end of the 1000-year millennial reign of Jesus Christ. At the end of the 1000-year reign, Christ will call all unbelievers to face Him at the White Throne Judgment, at which time every unbeliever will be forever cast into the eternal "Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:11-15).

The works books used at the Great White Throne Judgment will prove that every unbeliever deserves the Lake of Fire by his works. Paul says wrath is being stored up (Rom. 2:5-6), which means every violation of God's Law is recorded and accurate records are kept. Only a fool would rely on himself rather than Jesus Christ.

There will be some unbelievers who will survive the Tribulation—both Jewish and Gentile. Both will be judged by Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation and cast into "eternal fire."

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Jewish unbelievers who survive the Tribulation are purged and cast into outer darkness (Ezek. 20:37-38; Mt. 25:30). Gentile unbelievers who survive the Tribulation will apparently be judged on the east side of Jerusalem and cast into fire (Joel 3:2; Matt. 25:31-46).

The destiny for any unbeliever, regardless of the dispensation, is ferocious. Eternal fire is real and those who are sentenced to it will experience real pain forever.