



It is hard to find a church that does not tell me that I have to believe I am predestined, or we are waiting for the millennium (or 'a long time'), or your baptism is not valid here. And I suppose it is becoming common to find all the above as 'addons'.

And of course do not mention the big 'take away', a six day creation (universe), and the foundation that keeps everything else in perspective: Rev 22:18, 19: Blessing or curses, from beginning to end. We blew it on the first 5 verses of the Bible?

My experience of not being able to find a church may not be that uncommon. If you're current church 'goes south', or your elders visit the 'user conference book table'

(or for us older folks, 'goes hip' – no faith in 'Faith of our Fathers' – sure glad the last generation did not pick up on 'I Did It My Way' – but then again?)

(Been going to a hip type Church for a few months now and I was pleasantly surprised. New music is different but/and they are incorporating old favorites for us older types. I appreciate the guys actually reading whole chapters in service and speaking to what it says. Occasionally I do hear an interpretation or quote from some prelogical types which does concern me. Good to research, but the Word should be searched for context also. I have noticed some old traits from many established churches: read a chapter of Bible and do not consider 'context of thought'. Like the old church, the new will have to live with this carelessness.

(or the old pastor leaves or dies and is replaced by a 'historically challenged' and 'prelogically trained' replacement. Goodbye 'family pews.')

and you look for another, you may find you are not welcome unless you accept the 'addon'. And to add to this, those seeking God in a church may be turned off or confused by the 'addon'.

I am convinced that 'addons' are nothing more than 'control devices' rather than a 'nurturing Biblical history' itself.

Sheep need to be fed and encouraged for service in the world, not chased away or manipulated. Democracy (say over Communism) has proven that sheep are much more productive and happy when they are not enslaved by some doctrine or one of many divisive -isms-.

I have noticed that some churches are 'living' with divided
ism's among the leadership. And maybe don't show up when
the opposition is speaking. Unity is one thing, but what
about us poor sheep, waiting to be fed and get unhealthy
food. Jesus said 'the sheep hear My voice', but where do we
go to listen without confusion?

John 21:15-17 ... Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Matthew 3

13. Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15. But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

16. Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

17. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Does water baptism save us? Most people would say no and most people would also say it is required. Is it just a Church Rite, and should we be aware of the event? Was the ‘believing thief’ on the cross baptized? Will there be many people in heaven who never have been baptized in water?

My personal experience is that I was baptized, or sprinkled as an infant. My parents were 'obedient' to what they knew about Christianity.

And I believe it was literally ‘the beginning of my journey of faith, and not the end of it’.

I was raised in that same church, was even an altar boy (‘oh for a thousand tongues to sing’), learned a ‘fear of God’, and even received a conscience about right and wrong.

For many years I knew what was wrong, but never really understand why. Our culture could use some conscience in its young people. And of course the reason why sooner than I did.

When I was about thirty, like Jesus’ age when baptized, I was encouraged to read the Bible. The first Bibles I read had many, many study notes, etc. Even the Catholic Bible had pictures of leadership.

I finally came across a plain black and white Revised Standard Bible with just the Bible.

Almost immediately from Genesis 1, I could hear God speaking, 'let there be, and it was so'. After having seen the 10 Commandments movie the first couple books were a cinch.

I read here and there and got to Matthew. After having seen the 'Greatest Story Ever Told' movie, Matthew was a cinch. Well at least I had points of reference. And the history of the Bible was just so obvious. It really enveloped me.

Anyway, as I was reading the Book of Romans looking for Julius Caesar (and not John Calvin by the way), I started to understand who the real JC was, Jesus the Christ that is.

After some thought, and something someone said about 'just say yes to Jesus, I believe you died for me'.

I did just that. That simple.

What preceded and what followed was not so simple.

(Working out our salvation with fear and trembling, or 'morning by morning, new mercies I see'. Victories and defeats are a part of the life God gives us. We are part of the process. That is security.)

Almost immediately I seemed to understand that this was real and why I felt guilty for a long time. Today I realize I was then 'baptized by the Holy Spirit', just like Jesus was after His Baptism.

(I do not pretend to know 'the works of the Spirit'. All I can propose is that after Jesus' Baptism the works of the Spirit became 'visible'? Chronologically this event begins Jesus' visible ministry. Maybe I can say the Spirit was always in my life, I just did not know it. Later I began to recognize it. Of course Jesus was a 'whole lot smarter' than me, and He recognized a 'whole lot sooner'. Maybe even surmised it from the Scriptures (my guess is that Jesus attended Rabbi School – See Jesus Wrote, Knew, Did Tab). Is Baptismal Water hot?)

(You know, sometimes you have to go out on a limb, 'while still holding on to the tree', else you are stuck in a trunk with 'myths and urban legends' as a basis for our doctrine. Visible and useful new life is on the limbs.)

Mine just took a little longer, and I believe God had his purposes for that.

Like I started my ministry of discovering what the rest of the Bible said, and what God said, and not what man said:

I am a 'will of the creature guy', I believe Jesus died for me, I believe in His second coming to rescue His own, I believe in a 6000 or so year old universe, I believe Rev. 20 is about the first 1000 years of the 'Resurrected Church' (and second 1000 really ...), I believe the Reformation was about the Church having too many isms (time for another Reform), I believe if we looked at the Bible in its historical context, we would not have so many divisive -isms-, I believe Daniel's 70 Weeks has been historically fulfilled (Agrippa I, 3 ½, 3 ½ desolation of Jerusalem to 70 AD), I believe the Kingdom is now, I believe it was 430 years from the Promise (to Abraham) until the giving of the Law (Gal 3:17), I believe Jesus lived 36 years (3 year verse: Luke 4:14-15 – 4 BC?), I believe the early Church was successfully politically and socially involved as was some later Churches, I believe the Old Testaments Saints who arose with Jesus were the 'cloud' that Jesus ascended into, and the 'cloud' that returns with Jesus 2nd coming (Matthew 27:51-53 - 12000 each tribe that witnessed),

and I believe that the Magi were there on the 1st Christmas Eve (yipes).

Other than these, I get along with just about everybody. And if there are differences among you, then I might be right?

'The Bible tells me so'. historyreally.org Rated PG-13

(Speaking of the Magi, I like the Christmas Eve concept because it does have significance. Not only were non-Jews looking for the Messiah, and had a pretty good idea about where and when, but it shows how many in Israel had given up on the idea after many disappointments, and how many misunderstood it. I suspect the same thing may happen about Jesus 2nd coming. See Christmas Mystery Tab. The Magi were neither late nor lucky, they were Historists!)

But 'these' are important issues that help us rediscover Truth that was lost in the Garden.

There is an old Presbyterian term called 'sober judgement'.

Or to quote a Yogi'ism (not Berra, nor Llama, but Bear), "I (we) have a lot to be humble about".

We do need depth in our understanding and our message, and at the same time keep our focus on Jesus.

The world, unbelieving or not, needs an in depth understanding of God's Judgement and Mercy. As God cares for the sparrow, He cares for all of His Creation.

Today, myths or old wives tales prevail. To all our detriment.

What is your story? It may be similar or it may be totally different. Why the add-ons? Are we not commanded to be 'one in the Spirit'?

1 Corinthians 12:13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Ps. About Catholicism: There is an urban legend that the Catholic Church is responsible for all the bad things that have happened. If we look at history, the Church of the first thousand years became the corrupted Catholic Church of the Reformation Period.

Could be the Reformation affected them also, ie, someone to keep them/us honest. You can also see some embarrassing things about the Protestant Church that developed out of the Reformation. Even Protestants have Popes.