

Why Tarriest Thou? Arise and be Baptized

- I. This is an admonition for those who have come to the knowledge of the truth of Jesus Christ, but have not yet been baptized and added to a true and faithful church.
- II. Do you believe the gospel?
 1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (**Act 8:36-37**)?
 2. Do you believe the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (**1Co 15:1-4**)?
 3. Are you willing to repent and forsake your sins (you haven't done so yet if you haven't been baptized) (**Mar 1:4-5**)?
 4. If you believe the gospel, God's command to you is to repent and be baptized and be added to the church (**Act 2:37-42,47**).
- III. What if you don't yet fully understand or believe the truth?
 1. Ask God for wisdom, in faith, nothing wavering, and it *shall* be given (**Jam 1:5-7**).
 2. Cry to God for knowledge and you will understand the knowledge of God (**Pro 2:1-6**).
 3. Search the scriptures to see if these things are so (**Act 17:11**).
 4. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good (**1Th 5:21**).
 5. Ask the pastor about that which you don't understand (**Act 8:29-35**).
 6. You don't have to understand *everything* to commit to Christ in baptism.
 - A. If you do God's will you will understand the doctrine (**Joh 7:17**).
 - B. Life is a process of learning and conversion and you will understand more as you walk with Christ (**Pro 4:18**).
- IV. Count the cost -- but don't count forever.
 1. When deciding to follow Christ, one should count the cost (**Luk 14:25-33**).
 2. Once you put your hand to the plough, there's no looking back (**Luk 9:62**).
 3. Do you have what it takes to keep your commitment to Christ?
 - A. You do if you believe the Bible because it says that you can do all things through Christ which strengthens you (**Phi 4:13**).
 - B. God has promised not to give you more than you can handle (**1Co 10:13**).
 - C. Do you believe that?
 4. God's children should make haste to keep God's commandments (**Psa 119:60**).
 - A. On the day of Pentecost, how long did the Jews wait to be baptized after they were pricked in their hearts? years? months? weeks? days? -- more like minutes (**Act 2:37-41**).
 - B. How long did the Ethiopian eunuch wait to get baptized? Not long. (**Act 8:36-38**)
 - C. Saul (later called the apostle Paul) was asked: "why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized..." (**Act 22:16**). In other words: "What are you waiting for? Get baptized!"
 - D. If you believe in Christ, then you must get off the fence and either commit to Him by being baptized or quit pretending to follow Him. How long halt ye between two opinions? (**1Ki 18:21**)
 5. The cost may be high, but it's worth it (**Mat 13:44-46; Pro 23:23**).
- V. Be a doer of the word, and not just a hearer of it (**Jam 1:21-25**).
 1. Jesus said that if you love Him, keep His commandments (**Joh 14:15**).
 2. Why do you call Jesus Lord and do not the things He says? (**Luk 6:46**)
 3. Don't be one that is ever learning, but never comes to the knowledge of the truth (**2Ti 3:7**).
- VI. Don't give yourself a false feeling of security thinking that you're a Christian because you believe the truth.
 1. If you have not been baptized, you're not a Christian.
 2. A Christian is not a person who *merely* believes the truth.

3. A Christian is a disciple of Christ who assembles himself with the church (**Act 11:26**).
 4. A person can be a *believer* in Christ and in the scriptures and yet NOT be a *Christian* (**Act 26:27-28 c/w Act 26:22-23**).
 - A. King Agrippa believed the prophets (**Act 26:27**).
 - B. Paul taught exactly what the prophets taught: the death and resurrection of Christ, the gospel going to the Jews and Gentiles, and the resurrection of the dead (of which Christ was the first) (**Act 26:22-23**).
 - C. Therefore, King Agrippa believed in the death and resurrection of Christ and in the resurrection of the dead, which is the core of the gospel (**1Co 15:1-8**).
 - D. Yet, King Agrippa was not a Christian because he had not made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and been baptized and added to the church (**Act 26:28**).
 5. A Christian is one who suffers for what he believes (**1Pe 4:16**).
 - A. Suffering persecution happens when you enter the kingdom of God (the local church) (**Act 14:22**).
 - B. In order to suffer for what one believes, one must be acting on what they believe so that others will know it.
 - C. How much suffering does one do who never identifies with a church and sits home every Sunday and listens to sermons?
- VII. Are you trying to convert others to a faith that you haven't committed to yourself?
1. That's called hypocrisy (**Mat 23:3-4 c/w Luk 12:1**).
 2. This is what I did when I was first learning the truth; I was trying to convert others to it, but had not yet submitted to the gospel in baptism myself.
 3. I'm thankful that a brother asked me what I was hoping to convert people to, seeing that I was not a member of a church which believed what I was teaching.
 4. I realized then that I was a hypocrite.
- VIII. Excuses/reasons for not submitting to Christ by being baptized into his church.
1. Pride
 - A. The proud will not seek after God (**Psa 10:4**).
 - B. Do you have too high of an opinion of yourself to publicly admit that you are a sinner in need of a Saviour?
 - C. Do you have too much pride to admit that you were wrong about what you have believed in the past?
 2. Apathy
 - A. Do you just not care about the truth?
 - B. Quit sitting on the fence; Jesus has no time for people who are lukewarm (**Rev 3:15-16**).
 3. Accountability
 - A. Do you not want to be held accountable to God's law by a church and pastor?
 - B. Church members are supposed to submit themselves one to another (**Eph 5:21; 1Pe 5:5**).
 - C. Church members are also supposed to submit to the pastor who teaches them the word of God and watches for their souls (**Heb 13:7,17**).
 - D. Accountability in a church is part of being a Christian.
 4. Love of sin, self, and pleasure
 - A. Do you love yourself, your sin, and your pleasures, pursuits, and desires more than God and therefore will not give it up to follow Him?
 - B. A disciple of Jesus Christ must deny himself (**Luk 9:23**).
 - C. You can't love yourself and pleasure more than God and be a Christian (**2Ti 3:1-5**).
 5. Love of family

- A. Do you love your spouse, parents, or children more than God and can't bear the thought of hurting or angering them by submitting to Christ?
 - B. The first and greatest commandment is to *love God* with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength (**Mat 22:36-38**).
 - C. Jesus said that he that loves his father or mother, or son or daughter more than Him is not worthy of Him (**Mat 10:37**).
 - D. There is a great reward for people who forsake family, houses, and lands for Jesus, the kingdom of God, and the gospel (**Mat 19:27,29; Luk 18:28-30; Mar 10:28-30**).
6. Fear of ostracization
- A. Do you have a fear being ostracized by family, friends, acquaintances, or coworkers for your faith or church?
 - B. Because of the fear of ostracization or persecution, some people will not confess and commit to following Christ (**Joh 12:42-43**).
 - C. There is no shame in suffering as a Christian (**1Pe 4:16**) - it's rather a blessing (**Mat 5:10-12**).
7. Fear of rejection by God
- A. Do you fear that God will not accept you because of your past or present sins?
 - B. This is not true.
 - C. Far from rejecting them, Jesus tells his children to come unto Him (**Mat 11:28-30**).
 - D. Jesus will not cast out them that come to Him (**Joh 6:37**).
 - E. God loves and draws near to them who are of a broken and contrite heart (**Psa 34:18**).
8. Fear of unworthiness
- A. Do you fear that you are not "good enough" to be a Christian and that you could never measure up?
 - B. Jesus considers people who feel they are unworthy to be of great faith because they trust Christ and don't rely on their merits (**Luk 7:6-9**).
 - C. None of us are good enough, which is why God saved us by His grace (**2Ti 1:9**) and made us acceptable to Him (**Eph 1:6**).
9. Fear of failure
- A. Do you fear that if you commit to Christ you will not be able to stick with the commitment?
 - B. God's grace is sufficient for you (**2Co 12:9**).
 - C. God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations (**2Pe 2:9**).
 - D. God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able and will make a way to escape it (**1Co 10:13**).
10. Distance
- A. Do you think that because you don't live within a short driving distance of a true church that you can't or shouldn't be a member of one?
 - B. You could move to be a resident member of the church.
 - i. I did. Twice.
 - ii. If you do so, you will be blessed abundantly (**Luk 18:29-30**).
 - iii. What is really more important to you? Where you currently live, or the church of Jesus Christ?
 - C. If you *can't* move, you could be a non-resident member.
 - i. There were non-resident members in the NT churches (**Col 4:9,12; Act 8:27-39**).
 - ii. This is not ideal nor recommended, but it is acceptable.