

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

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PART 2: THE WAY OF THE MASTER

BAPTISM NOT TIED TO SALVATION

Do you need to be baptized in order to be born again? Not at all! Salvation is unmerited grace; it is not based upon actions. We cannot do anything to earn our salvation.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

If water baptism was a requirement of salvation, then the thief on the cross would not have made it to heaven since he had no opportunity to be baptized in water.

“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:39-43)

Getting baptized in water does not make you any more of a believer than standing in a garage makes you a car. If baptism is essential to salvation, why did Jesus fail to state so in His conversation with Nicodemus?

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.



Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:1-8)

Jesus’ reference to water in verse five refers to the birthing process. The sac of amniotic fluid surrounding the fetus provides a protective and nurturing environment. When the sac breaks, it releases the water, signaling it is time for the baby to be born.

The God-man was not referring to water baptism in His conversation with Nicodemus. He was saying it is necessary to first be born of your mother, so you can be born a second time of God.

You must be born, so you can be born again. The logic is so simple that even a child can understand the meaning.

If you’re born once, you’ll die twice.

If you’re born twice, you’ll only die once.

WATER BAPTISM AND SIN

Can water baptism wash away sin? No, only the blood of Jesus provides atonement.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” (Ephesians 1:7)

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:” (Colossians 1:14)

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Hebrews 9:22)

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood...” (Revelation 1:5)

As these scriptures show, only the blood of Jesus – not water – can wash away sin.

PURPOSE OF WATER BAPTISM

Baptism connects us to the corporate body of Christ and joins us with other believers around the world regardless of social standing.

“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.” (1 Corinthians 12:13)

Baptism declares that you are a follower of Jesus. It is a public confession of your faith and commitment to Christ. It is the next step after salvation and an important foundation because it is a demonstration of a spiritual reality that has already taken place in your life!

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:” (Romans 6:1-5)

Wedding rings are exchanged by the groom and bride as a symbol of their commitment to each other. The circular unbroken object worn by each spouse represents a vow that will be lived out on a daily basis.

In like manner, water baptism is a symbol of new life as a Christian. The water is death and you are burying the old life when you go under (death) and rising to new life when you emerge (resurrection). You are unashamedly showing the world that you have put your hope in Jesus.

Baptism is a statement to everyone that you have trusted Christ for salvation and you're committed to living for Him. You are united with Christ in death when you go under the water and resurrected to newness of life coming out of it.

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:12)

THE WAY OF THE MASTER

Being a Christian does not give you the license to sin. You cannot live under grace and practice a sloppy form of Christianity.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Romans 6:1-2)

Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, and Lutheran churches teach that when a person is baptized in water, he is also baptized into the church. There are even some Baptist and Pentecostal churches that hold the doctrine that a person is

baptized into the local church or a denomination. The apostle Paul makes it clear that you are baptized into Christ and Him alone.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4)

We are going to be resurrected just like Jesus.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:” (Romans 6:5)

We are crucified with Christ and therefore should not continue to live in sin.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Romans 6:6)

We are freed from sin because we are dead in the flesh.

“For he that is dead is freed from sin.” (Romans 6:7)

Since we will live with Jesus, we should also be dead to sin.

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:” (Romans 6:8)

We have been set free from the law of death.

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” (Romans 6:9-10)

Who is your master? That is the answer Paul provides in the letter to the Romans. As a Christian, you should not let sin reign in your life; instead, you are to live in a holy manner that is set apart from the world.

If you yield to a sinful life, you also become a slave to sin, and the end result is always death. Obeying God’s commandments makes you the bond servant of Jesus and an heir of eternal life.

THE ACT OF BAPTISM

Some believe that sprinkling water on a person’s head constitutes water baptism, while others hold to full immersion in water. This is not difficult to prove because Jesus modeled many things for us. The Greek word used for baptism in the New Testament is baptidzo, which means “to immerse.”

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water...” (Matthew 3:16a)

“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:” (Mark 1:9-10)

Following Jesus’ example, baptism by immersion is the only acceptable method of carrying out His instructions. It is no stretch of the imagination to say that every baptism in the Bible involved dipping a person under a body of water. The Book of Acts shows us that this was the norm for every believer.

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.

And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:36-39)

INFANTS AND CHILDREN

Water baptism through immersion is an act of free will. It involves submitting to the command of Jesus. As a result, the sprinkling of infants has no validity with God because they are incapable of making such a decision. Baptism is an act of faith by one who chooses to identify his life with Christ. Do babies understand faith and repentance? No, they do not.

On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with baptizing children who are old enough to understand what it means. One indication is waiting until the child asks to be baptized. This is usually a good sign they are ready.

SUMMARY

We must be careful not to let the significance of water baptism be lost on us or simply consider it a mere tradition of Christianity. There is a deep symbolism embedded in the act and everyone who engages in it must be first made aware of its purpose and importance in scripture.

Water baptism is not a ceremony of purification. Only Jesus can provide spiritual cleansing. Instead, baptism is a way to demonstrate the spiritual reality that Jesus has already accomplished through His work at the cross.

John the Baptist instituted the baptism of repentance.

“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.” (Acts 19:3)

But there is more to the ordinance of water baptism than just repentance. It now represents Jesus' death and resurrection.

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 19:4-5)

We know that salvation is not tied to baptism; it is merely an outward representation of what takes place spiritually at the moment of salvation.

Water baptism started with John, but it culminated with Jesus. John launched the rocket, but Jesus put it into orbit.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?