AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

Bible

LESSON 25

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Why WATER BAPTISM?

"REPENT, and *be baptized* . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the *Holy Spirit!*" (Acts 2:38). Be *baptized!*

Does this Scripture apply today? *Is* WATER BAPTISM still ESSENTIAL FOR OUR receiving the SAVING power of the Holy Spirit? Or is baptism just a form of initiation into some church? Why do churches disagree on this vital point of basic Bible doctrine?

Millions Deceived About Salvation

Millions today are worshipping Jesus Christ in vain! Do you believe this astounding statement? What did Jesus say? "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of *men*" (Mark 7:7-9). *Not* God's commandments but men's *ideas*.

Yes, MILLIONS are being DECEIVED and misled by their ministers into thinking they are "saved" when they're not! Most "professing Christians" have been TAUGHT that "Christ completed the plan of salvation on the cross" – that all they must do is just accept and BELIEVE ON the name of JESUS CHRIST and they will AUTOMATICALLY be SAVED. What a lack of Bible understanding!

You can understand exactly how the TRUTH about water baptism affects your salvation, and what it actually symbolizes – but not from the teachings of *men*. The truth is IN *YOUR* BIBLE.

Let's UNDERSTAND how important water baptism really is to our attaining of eternal life.

A Condition of Salvation!

Notice the very beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus proclaimed, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." Here Jesus commanded two conditions to becoming a Christian—repentance and belief—faith. These two things we must meet as prior *conditions*.

Repentance *is toward God* and means that we *abhor* our old sinful way of life, want to QUIT sinning, and begin to live according to God's Commandments.

FAITH—BELIEF—IS OUR FIRM BELIEF IN THE SACRIFICE OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST TO PAY FOR OUR SINS—in the FACT of HIS DEATH, and our acceptance of Him as our personal Saviour from our sins. Jesus also commanded, ". . . and believe the GOSPEL!" But without FAITH you cannot *really believe* the Gospel – the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

But is this all we must do to receive God's Spirit, become converted, and receive eternal life? Notice carefully!

Here is what the Spirit-empowered and inspired Apostle PETER SHOUTED to the multitudes on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent, and *BE BAPTIZED* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," and then what? ". . . AND ye SHALL RECEIVE THE *GIFT* OF the HOLY SPIRIT" (Acts 2:38).

Yes! God commands that we *must* also *be baptized* to be saved from the death penalty of sin and receive His Spirit! BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES TO GOD OUR FAITH—BELIEF IN THE DEATH, buriel, and resurrection OF CHRIST FOR OUR SIN. It is ALSO SYMBOLIC OF the PUTTING TO DEATH of the OLD SINNING SELF by burying it under water.

Our repentance and belief alone are not enough. We must also show proof of our repentance by the

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outward sign of *baptism.* Since repentance and belief in Jesus Christ lead us to a new life of obedience, God therefore commands baptism not only as a symbol of this change, but also as A TEST OF our OBEDIENCE.

Once we comply with all three of these conditions — repentance, faith, and baptism — God stands eternally bound by a promise to put within us His Holy Spirit of power which is His love, faith, understanding, gentleness, goodness, His attitude of perfect obedience, His life — the very character of God. Yes, the very power that will change your mortal life into God's new spiritual creation at the resurrection!

WATER BAPTISM, then, IS A REQUIRED PART OF the WAY TO SALVATION!

In this fascinating and eye-opening lesson, we will come to fully understand exactly what God does command concerning water baptism and its real meaning to all who want to become true Christians and be transformed into the Kingdom of God.

Final Instruction

Before we begin this vitally important lesson, be sure you HAVE your BIBLE OPEN in front of you. Do you have your PAPER, pen or typewriter ready? Follow the same procedure in writing down your answers for this lesson as you did for the previous lessons.

You must READ AND RE-READ and THINK OUT EACH PASSAGE you read. MEDITATE on it in your leisure time in the following twenty-four hours, and in your time of prayer—before you forget it. MAKE IT A PART OF YOU!

Don't forget to PRAY to God for understanding before each study session so that His Word may become a part of your very being. Also, continue to PRACTICE the STUDY HINTS MENTIONED IN LESSON NUMBER 4.

LESSON 25

Noah Saved by Water

The OLD TESTAMENT contains some significant types or foreshadows of New Testament water baptism. Let's realize how important these SYMBOLIC EXAMPLES are to the understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles concerning baptism and our eternal salvation.

1. When men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, did they obey God, or did they turn to heinous wickedness and crimes? Gen. 6:5, 11-12.

2. What did God say He would do to the earth's population as a punishment for its sins? Gen. 6:7. By what means of destruction? Verse 17.

COMMENT: God says "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). The evil world NOAH lived in was to reap the just consequences of its sinful deeds and practices.

3. But who, in this world of rampant sin, found grace in God's sight? Gen. 6:8. Why did God favor Noah? — did he walk with God in OBEDIENCE to His laws? Verse 9. Also II Peter 2:5.

4. God gave Noah instructions for the building of an enormous ship in which he and his family were to *escape* the great flood — the world's punishment for disobedience, *sin* (Gen. 6:14-16). How did Noah show his belief — his faith — in God's promise of *salvation* from the penalty of the world's sins? Gen. 6:22 and Heb. 11:7.

COMMENT: Over one hundred long years were required to complete the ark. (Compare Gen. 5:32 with Gen. 7:11). Just imagine all of the ridicule Noah must have endured from the people around him. They must have thought he was crazy. But NOAH *BELIEVED* GOD, he trusted in God — he HAD *SAVING* FAITH!

5. Did Noah's escape from the old world's penalty of death by this tremendous deluge — a watery grave for the sinning world — *typify* our salvation from sin's penalty by the waters of New Testament baptism? I Peter 3:20-21. In verse 20 read only the words "ark . . . wherein eight souls were saved by water." In verse 21 read the first eleven words.

COMMENT: Here we see that in both the saving of those in the ark in the time of Noah and saving of people now in New Testament times, GOD COMMANDS MAN TO DO SOMETHING REGARDING *WATER* TO *TEST* MAN'S *FAITH* in what He says, AND to test man's *OBEDIENCE* to do

what He commands if he is to be saved. IN NOAH'S CASE God commanded Noah to build a ship to save himself from water. NOAH had the *faith* to believe God and *OBEY* Him. He built the ark, *although he saw no earthly reason for doing so*. He was SAVED PHYSICALLY.

Now for the other part of this similarity! IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES, GOD COMMANDS MAN TO BE *BAPTIZED* IN *WATER*. *IF* one will have *faith* in God and *OBEY* Him and BE *BAPTIZED*, he may be saved (Repentance and faith and baptism). How plain the similarity of types! Today we can be SAVED FOR ALL ETERNITY.

The water of baptism cannot save us from our sins. But it is the repentant, faithful and OBEDIENT ATTITUDE of heart expressed when we submit to baptism that GOD looks upon and ACCEPTS.

COMMENT: God provided Noah with a way to escape the old world of sin. Noah expressed his willingness and desire to come out of sin and escape the earth's penalty for sin – death – by believing God and building the ark. Noah demonstrated his faith by his works of obedience! This is the same kind of faith and obedience God expects from us today – if we want to be saved from the penalty of our own sins!

COMMENT: In verse 21 the words "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" tell us that the physical act of baptism does not kill our carnal pulls and save us. The remainder of the sentence shows that "a good conscience toward God" – repentance – and the same Holy Spirit within us to raise us as it did Christ, *will* save us. So, here we have in this verse "Repent, *believe*" – *as Noah did* regarding God's commands—"and be baptized" and "we shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," the same Spirit that saved Christ.

Israel Baptized in the Sea

Now let us further notice ANOTHER Old Testament ANALOGY which points TO NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM. While the children of ISRAEL were in Egypt, they were Pharaoh's slaves – helpless and powerless under his task masters – just as a *sinner* is under the power of the devil. EGYPT, PHARAOH, AND HIS ARMY REPRESENT Satan and SIN! GOD COMMANDED ISRAEL TO COME OUT OF *SIN* – EGYPT. ISRAEL OBEYED. The Israelites began their exodus out of Egypt under Moses after they applied the blood of the literal lamb to their door-posts. Likewise, we must willingly start out of sin as soon as we accept the blood of Christ who is our Passover lamb today (I Cor. 5:7). Their departure from "sin" is a TYPE OF OUR REPENTANCE from sin.

1. Were the Israelites happy and joyful upon leaving Egypt – sin – behind them? Numbers 33:3.

COMMENT: "High hand" means JOYFUL. Yes! The children of Israel left in great exaltation and elation over what they thought was to be their immediate deliverance from the bondage of "sin."

2. While the Israelites were rejoicing over their new–found freedom from "sin" (Egypt and Pharaoh), did Pharaoh and his army (sin) begin to pursue them? Exodus 14:8-9.

COMMENT: Today, millions of "professing Christians" find themselves in the same position the Israelites were in, but they do not realize it! They have just accepted Christ and His blood for the remission of their sins and think they are now free from sin forever – just as the Israelites thought they were free from slavery and bondage in Egypt.

3. Did God commission Moses to deliver the children of Israel from the physical clutches of Egyptian bondage–"*sin*"? Exodus 3:10 and Acts 7:35.

4. Is Moses therefore referred to as a type of Christ? Acts 7:37. The word "prophet" refers to Christ. Note the words, "*Like* unto *me*." Also Acts 3:20-22. Didn't God send Jesus Christ to deliver us from our *spiritual sins*? Romans 3:24-25.

COMMENT: Moses, sent by God to deliver Israel from *physical* bondage, was a type pointing to Christ – whom God sent to deliver repentant believers from *spiritual* bondage! A wonderful analogy.

5. What did the Israelites' Saviour say when they became fearful of Pharaoh's oncoming army (sin)? Exodus 14:13. Did God tell them to bog down in hopelessness of escaping the Egyptians (sin) or go forward in obedience trusting Him and His Power to deliver? Verse 15.

COMMENT: God likewise tells us, in order to receive salvation, to GO FORWARD IN OBEDIENCE to Him, TRUSTING HIM and His Power – the Holy Spirit – to deliver us! The churches of this world today believe and practice the very opposite! In practice they teach there is nothing more for us to do other than to accept Christ and BELIEVE IN HIS SHED BLOOD.

6. What external help did the Israelites receive to protect them from Pharaoh and his army? Exodus 14:19-20.

COMMENT: The angel of the Lord in the cloud had gone before the Israelites (who were representative of present day true Christians), in order *to show* them the way. Now it went behind them, between them and their enemies, to *protect* them.

We need external help today, too – and very desperately! What we need is God's *Holy Spirit* to help keep us from future sins once our past sins are forgiven by Christ's blood!

7. When Moses – by power of God – divided the Red Sea for the Children of Israel to walk across on dry ground (Exodus 14:21-22), were they fearful? Psalms 78:53. Did they lack faith in God to keep

the walls of water from crashing down upon them? Hebrews 11:29.

8. What happened to the Egyptians who pursued the Israelites through the water? Exodus 14:27-28.

COMMENT: Here we see PHARAOH AND HIS ARMY WHO REPRESENT SIN IN WHICH ISRAEL LIVED, *BURIED* IN A *WATERY GRAVE*. How wonderfully this TYPIFIES the symbolism of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. "Knowing this, that our old man [OUR OLD SINFUL CARNAL SELF] is crucified [killed – BURIED BY BAPTISM] with Him [Christ] that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

9. Therefore, isn't Israel's deliverance from Pharaoh (sin) through the waters of the Red Sea a type of Christian baptism today? I Cor. 10:1-2. Why? Verse 6.

COMMENT: God often required many of the Old Testament prophets, including Moses, to ACT OUT the things that He would bring to pass in the future (See Ezek. 4:1-17 and 5:1-4). Likewise, God requires those who now sincerely want to have their past sins covered by Christ's blood, to *act out* the procedure too – by the *physical* performance of baptism! It IMPRESSES the *MEANING* of baptism upon them.

Yes, the Israelites passing down through and up out of the Red Sea and the DESTRUCTION OF Pharaoh and his army (OUR OLD MAN OF SIN) typically point to New Testament water baptism!

John's Baptism

Down through the ages God has called on all to REPENT. IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. Why? Because we are creatures of *free choice*, unlike sticks and stones. And we have a *will*. If we do not choose to repent—surrender our carnal will to God – He can do nothing to give us a Spiritual nature. JUST BEFORE the COMING of CHRIST and the subsequent coming of the Holy Spirit by which we may receive a Spiritual nature, God inspired JOHN THE BAPTIST to ADMINISTER A SPECIAL TYPE of BAPTISM, the *BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE*. Its purpose? TO *EMPHASIZE* the NEED of *REPENTANCE* in order TO RECEIVE this new priceless GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Let us understand.

1. Was John the Baptist, a prophet of God, sent to proclaim and prepare the way for Jesus Christ? Luke 1:63, 76 and Mat. 3:1, 3.

2. Was John sent to baptize with water? John 1:33.

COMMENT: Remember baptism symbolizes *burial* of the old carnal self – this being preceded by *repentance*.

3. Who sent John and gave him authority to baptize? Luke 3:2-3 and Mat. 21:25-26.

COMMENT: The chief priests and elders knew John was a prophet sent by God, but they would not acknowledge the fact because if they did, then they would also be acknowledging that Christ's authority came from God.

4. Just exactly what was the baptism which John preached? Mark 1:4-5 and Mat. 3:11.

COMMENT: John's "baptism of repentance" was exactly what it implied. Those John baptized had truly repented of their past sins and were actually forgiven by God. But they *DID NOT* RECEIVE the HOLY SPIRIT – the power to overcome future sins and to master themselves, for it was not available until *after* Christ's resurrection. The account in Luke clearly states that John the Baptist was sent "to give *knowledge* of salvation unto His people by (in or through) the remission of their sins" (Luke 1:77). JOHN was MERELY PREPARING A *REPENTANT AND BELIEVING PEOPLE* READY TO RECEIVE AND OBEY CHRIST WHEN HE CAME!

5. Since Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, how can one receive the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:38. Did the REPENTANT BELIEVERS THEN in Ephesus have to be *RE*-BAPTIZED UNTO CHRIST'S BAPTISM? Acts 19:1-6.

COMMENT: Those who had been baptized unto John's baptism had to be *re-baptized* in Christ's name if they were to receive the Holy Spirit to obey God.

Baptism a New Testament Command!

BAPTISM IS COMMANDED FOR *OUR* DAY. Study here the *PROOF!*

1. Did JESUS SET us an EXAMPLE in all things that we should also walk as He walked? I Pet. 2:21. Was Jesus baptized by John the Baptist? Mat. 3:14-16.

COMMENT: Even though Jesus had committed no sins to repent of, HE WAS BAPTIZED, setting the *example* for us to follow. This was the only purpose of His baptism.

2. After His resurrection, JESUS gave His twelve apostles the FINAL GOSPEL COMMISSION for this age. In it, did HE COMMAND BAPTISM be done if one is to receive salvation? Mark 16:15-16. What is the ultimate fate of those who don't believe and are not baptized? Same verse.

3. What is Matthew's version of this same great commission? Matthew 28:19-20.

COMMENT: Notice that *Christ commanded* baptism!

4. What did PETER, the leader of the other apostles after Christ's death, COMMAND to be carried out? Acts 2:38.

5. And do we not find that REPENTANT BELIEVERS CONTINUED TO BE BAPTIZED? Acts 2:41; 8:5, 12.

6. Ten years after the Apostle Peter preached his first inspired sermon to the Jews in Jerusalem, God also sent him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles for the first time. God miraculously sent him to the *house of* CORNELIUS, a very devout Italian Gentile. But Cornelius did not have saving knowledge. Peter had to preach the forgiveness of sins through Christ to Cornelius and his family. (Acts 10:22, 43.)

Did the family receive God's Spirit before being baptized? Verses 44-45. Was their receiving of the Holy Spirit before baptism a special sign from God to the apostles? Acts 11:17-18.

COMMENT: God made an exception in this instance. Repentant believers would normally have to be BAPTIZED first, before they could RECEIVE the HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38). But since Cornelius and his family were the first Gentiles to be converted God reversed the procedure, bestowing the Holy Spirit upon them before baptism as a special sign to prove to Peter and the other apostles that He had also opened the way of salvation to the Gentiles.

7. Did the Apostle Peter immediately command that Cornelius and his family be baptized? Acts 10:47-48.

COMMENT: The gospel that Christ commanded His Church to proclaim is not the present-day message about the person of Christ only, but it is the message He brought and preached – the good news of the coming Kingdom – the government of God.

What is necessary to believe to be saved? The Gospel, of course. (Mark 1:14-15). And CHRIST'S GOSPEL INCLUDES believing on Him as our personal Saviour and coming King in the Kingdom of God. Also, it is "HE THAT IS *BAPTIZED*" that SHALL BE SAVED.

COMMENT: Baptism is part of the divine commission being carried out by God's true Church *TODAY*. It is A REQUIRED CONDITION FOR SALVATION!

Sprinkling, Pouring, or Immersion—Which?

Those who use sprinkling as a mode of baptism usually apply it to children. However, the word "SPRINKLE" only occurs but seven times in the New Testament, and in every instance it IS used in connection with the sprinkling of blood – NOT with BAPTISM!

"POURING" is also mentioned many times in the New Testament, but *NOT once* as a form of BAPTISM!

Even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that *immersion* – placing *completely under* the water – was the form originally employed. "The *most ancient form* usually employed was unquestionably immersion . . . in the Latin Church [the Roman Catholic Church] immersion seems to have *prevailed until* the *twelfth century*. After that time, it is found in some places as late as the 16th century. Infusion and aspersion [pouring and sprinkling] were growing common in the 14th century and gradually prevailed in the Western Church." (From article "Baptism.")

It is obvious that sprinkling and pouring WERE late INNOVATIONS OF *MEN* and were *not* commanded by God.

The first recorded case of a professing Christian being sprinkled was that of Novatian, who lived at Rome in the middle of the third century after Christ. Of him even Eusebius, a Catholic historian in the days of Emperor Constantine, wrote: ". . . And being supposed at the point of death [Novatian] was baptized by sprinkling, in the bed on which he lay; *if, indeed it be proper to say* that one like him did receive baptism."

Observe that *sprinkling was not even* then *considered* as a *valid* form of baptism! It was the rule of the Catholic Church that "It was *unlawful* that one who had been sprinkled . . . should enter into any order of the clergy . . ." (*Church History* of Eusebius, Bk. VI, Chap. 43.)

The word "BAPTIZE" is not an English WORD. It is a Greek word. The New Testament was written in the Greek language. In translating it into English, the translators left this word untranslated! Literally, in the Greek, the word is "baptizo." The DEFINITION of this word IS "IMMERSE." It means to PLUNGE INTO, TO PUT INTO. It does not mean "to sprinkle" or "to pour." The Greek word for "sprinkle" is "rantidzo" and " to pour" is "cheo" in Greek. The Holy Spirit only inspired the use of the word "baptizo" meaning *to immerse*, to *put into!*

Therefore, sprinkling or pouring is *not* baptizing! Immersion – BEING PLACED *COMPLETELY* DOWN UNDER–*is*. Baptism symbolizes the burial of the old carnal self. IF one were NOT put *completely* under, he would have ONLY *PARTLY* "BURIED THE OLD SELF."

1. Why was John baptizing in Aenon near Jerusalem? John 3:23.

COMMENT: John would have needed only a cup full of water to sprinkle, or a pitcher full to pour– but BAPTIZING REQUIRES "*MUCH* WATER."

2. How does the baptism of CHRIST indicate that He must have been *IMMERSED*? Matthew 3:16.

COMMENT: Jesus had to be put down *into* the water, for He "went straightway *out of* the water . . ." It is ridiculous to think He could have come out of a sprinkle or a pour!

3. When PHILIP baptized the eunuch, did they both go *into* the water? Acts 8:38.

COMMENT: There was no purpose whatever for Philip to actually go into the water, except for the reason there was no other way he could *plunge* the eunuch into the river. Had sprinkling or pouring been the proper method of baptism, Philip would have only needed to bend over and scoop up the water in his hands.

We have conclusively proven from the Bible, the Greek language, and by the admissions of Catholic historians, that COMPLETE IMMERSION—being placed *completely under* water — was THE *ONLY* METHOD of baptism practiced by the original inspired Church of God! *Therefore, sprinkling and pouring are only* COUNTERFEIT *baptisms!*

The Real Meaning of Baptism

Do you know in detail, through the Scriptures, the real meaning of baptism? By the following questions you are going to find the true answer in your Bible. The command to keep God's laws is not done away!

1. Are carnal flesh-minded individuals capable of pleasing God by themselves? Romans 8:5, 8. Can the carnal mind be subject to the laws of God? Verse 7. What is the PENALTY FOR BEING CARNALLY MINDED? Verse 6. Also Romans 6:23.

2. Do Spirit-led Christians desire to follow after the dictates of their FLESHLY SINFUL LUSTS?—*or* are they strengthened to walk righteously by the power of God's Holy Spirit dwelling within them? Rom. 8:1, 9.

3. Does one SHOW BY BAPTISM that he DESIRES FROM HENCEforth that his OLD SELF —his old ways of evil—BE LEFT *BURIED* IN THE WATERY GRAVE, buried with Christ? After being "dead" in baptism, does he yield himself to God's will as one who has been FIGURATIVELY BROUGHT TO LIFE FROM DEATH? Rom. 6:13. Doesn't this plainly show that a truly Spirit—begotten Christian NO LONGER REALLY DESIRES TO LIVE ACCORDING TO the LUSTS, BUT RATHER BY GOD'S LAWS THROUGH the POWER and direction OF His HOLY SPIRIT?

But exactly how does *Christ's* death, burial, and resurrection fit into *our* physical act of baptism? *Let us understand!*

4. Did God the Father send Jesus CHRIST to *condemn* sin in the mortal flesh — show that Holy Spirit begotten fleshly mortals need not sin—by His living a perfect Spirit-filled sinless life? Romans 8:3. Did He suffer DEATH to PAY the PENALTY OUR SINS have incurred? I Cor. 15:3. Was He then BURIED and resurrected from the dead? Verse 4 and Rom. 8:11.

COMMENT: The original Greek meaning of the word "quicken" is to "make alive," or to "give life."

The Scriptures plainly reveal that as CHRISTIANS, our mortal, sinful flesh MUST FIGURATIVELY BE *DEAD* TO SIN WHILE we YET *LIVE!* And only through the power of God's indwelling Holy Spirit, can we then keep our sinful, carnal natures in subjection to His laws and ultimately receive eternal life as Jesus Christ did.

5. Is BAPTISM A BURIAL OF US IN a LITERAL GRAVE? Col. 2:12.

COMMENT: When one is PLUNGED INTO the WATER, he is in a watery grave. He WOULDN'T LIVE more than a few minutes unless brought up out of the water—unless *risen* from this watery grave. THEREFORE, a person immersed under water, is in a LITERAL GRAVE.

6. Does BAPTISM ALSO symbolically PICTURE the DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF *CHRIST?* Rom. 6:3-5. Does it ALSO PICTURE the voluntary DESTRUCTION of *OUR* CARNAL FLESH AND old SINFUL WAY OF LIFE? Verse 6.

COMMENT: As all things in God's plan are DUAL in operation, baptism also pictures the crucifixion of *our* old self — of the sinning life. It is the burial of this sinning self, and the coming up out of this watery grave symbolic of a changed person resurrected to a new, righteous spiritual life in Christ Jesus!

GOING DOWN INTO the WATER PICTURES the DEATH OF CHRIST AND OF OUR OLD SELF. Likewise, *BEING BURIED* IN the WATER PICTURES the BURIAL OF CHRIST, AND OF OUR *OLD SINFUL LIFE.* And *COMING UP OUT OF THE WATER* PICTURES CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, AND THE HOLY SPIRITUALLY RESURRECTED PERSON COMING UP TO WALK HENCEFORTH "IN NEWNESS OF LIFE" — IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAWS! Then, we no longer remain "debtors" or servants to our fleshly sinful lusts (Rom. 8:12), though our mortal flesh and human nature still remain.

The Apostle Paul said: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I LIVE; YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

It is CHRIST who dwells WITHIN US *BY* the HOLY SPIRIT which we receive after baptism that enables us, from that time forward, to resist the sin in our mortal flesh and obey God's spiritual laws (Rom. 8:13).

WATER BAPTISM is SIMPLY the ORDINANCE OF CHRIST BY WHICH WE SYMBOLICALLY EXPRESS OUR *FAITH IN HIM AS PERSONAL SAVIOUR*—our *ACCEPTANCE* of His death, burial, and resurrection *for* us—and *our REPENTANCE* of our old sinful life and *BURIAL* of it, *RISING to a new and higher life of* SPIRITUAL OBEDIENCE *to God*. What beautiful symbolism!

"IN the Name of Jesus Christ"

There is an important meaning in this phrase. Let us understand it.

1. Does the Bible say Jesus baptized more disciples than John? John 3:22 and 4:1. Did Jesus actually perform the baptisms himself? John 4:2. Then *who* did the baptizing? Same verse.

COMMENT: JESUS DID NOT actually DO the PHYSICAL WORK OF BAPTIZING these people. He had His disciples do it *for* Him—*in His stead.*

2. Did the apostles baptize repentant believers *in the Lord Christ's name?* Acts 10:48.

COMMENT: The inspired Greek expression for "in the name of Jesus" means "*by the authority of*." If you do anything in the name of another, you do it with or by that person's *authority*—BY HIS EXPRESS PERMISSION.

JESUS' DISCIPLES DID THE BAPTIZING *IN HIS NAME*—that is, IN HIS STEAD. They did it for Him, by His authority—and that was considered just the *same* as if Jesus had *actually done it Himself*. GOD'S TRUE MINISTERS TODAY ARE COMMANDED to DO ALL THINGS *IN* the *NAME OF CHRIST* (Col. 3:17).

"INTO the NAME of Father...Son, and...Holy Spirit"

1. Must repentant believers also be baptized "*in*" the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit? Mat. 28:19.

COMMENT: The inspired GREEK word translated "in" is "EIS." This word actually MEANS "*INTO*." Therefore, Matthew 28:19 should be translated: "...baptizing them '*into*' *the name of the* Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." THIS DEPICTS TO MAN HIS GOAL. It does *not* mean to baptize "by the authority of" or "in the name of."

This scripture simply MEANS we are BAPTIZED or immersed INTO the DIVINE FAMILY *NAME* called God! And it is *done in the name—by the authority*—of *Jesus Christ.*

At present, the literal spiritual family of God consists only of the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the divine *nature*, the power, and the composition of the God family (John 4:24), *not* a third person as might wrongly be assumed here.

OUR RECEIVING OF the HOLY SPIRIT *FOLLOWING* BAPTISM ENABLES US to PARTAKE OF the DIVINE NATURE OF GOD. We then ultimately BECOME GOD'S born SONS and heirs of the Kingdom of God. A human being is named after a human father—the son of John is "Johnson," and the son of Jack is "Jackson." If we become begotten children of God, we become "God's—sons," sons of God, *though not yet born* of Him (Rom. 8:14 and I John 3:1).

Therefore, when we are baptized "*into*" the *name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we automatically become members of the *GOD FAMILY*, though NOT YET BORN INTO it as *Spirit* beings—as Gods!

Baptism Needed for Being Put INTO the Church

1. Did Jesus promise His disciples the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:5. When did the Holy Spirit come? Acts 2:1, 4.

COMMENT: On this day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, God began His spiritual Church on earth by putting the Holy Spirit within 120 disciples.

2. Is God's TRUE CHURCH CALLED the "BODY" OF CHRIST? I Cor. 12:12, 27 and Col. 1.18.

3. How do we become members of the true Church? Can we join it? Or must WE be *PUT INTO* IT? I Cor. 12:13.

COMMENT: In Romans 8:9, Paul tells us plainly that unless the Spirit of Christ dwells within us, we do not belong to Him. We become Christ's, then, only when the Holy Spirit comes into us!

EACH MEMBER of Christ's body—His Church—is JOINED TO THE OTHER BY the *COMMON BOND* of God's *HOLY SPIRIT* residing IN EACH of them. So when we become Christ's by receiving *His* Spirit, we are then PUT INTO *HIS* BODY—the *CHURCH OF GOD*—BY THE HOLY SPIRIT MUTUALLY DWELLING WITHIN ALL.

Just being PHYSICALLY BAPTIZED in water DOES *NOT* PUT US INTO God's true Spirit-led Church. You must be put into the Church by the Spirit of *God! GOD* DETERMINES who are the true members (those who have *truly* repented) BY HIS PLACING OF His *SPIRIT WITHIN* them. You could actually sit among its members and yet not be of it, unless you have received God's *Spirit!*

Therefore, it is the receiving of the HOLY SPIRIT which automatically PLUNGES US, immerses—BAPTIZES—OR PUTS US, INTO the TRUE CHURCH of God! This *immersion into the Church* by the Holy Spirit is termed by the *Scriptures*, "the baptism with, by," or "of the Holy Spirit."

Has God put you into His Church?

The "Laying On of Hands"

Finally, we must understand the ritual God has ordained for receiving the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Is the imposition of hands—the "LAYING ON OF HANDS"—one of the basic fundamental doctrines TAUGHT IN GOD'S WORD? Heb. 6:2.

2. When the Apostle Paul had come to Ephesus during his third evangelistic tour, he found certain people there who had only been baptized unto John's baptism of repentance (Acts 19:1, 3). After Paul baptized them in the name of Christ, did the HOLY SPIRIT immediately ENTER the disciples AS PAUL LAID his HANDS UPON them? Verse 6. Then was it not through the laying on of Paul's hands that the disciples received the Holy Spirit?

3. Why were PETER AND JOHN SENT TO the disciples in SAMARIA? Acts 8:14-16. What else did the Apostles do besides pray that they should receive the HOLY SPIRIT? Verse 17. Did SIMON (formerly the Sorcerer) REALIZE the HOLY SPIRIT was given THROUGH the LAYING ON OF the APOSTLES' HANDS? Verses 18-19.

COMMENT: GOD WORKS IN THE SAME WAY TODAY! THOSE who are SENT OUT and GIVEN AUTHORITY BY GOD'S TRUE CHURCH TO BAPTIZE people, also have the authority to ADMINISTER God's Holy SPIRIT THROUGH PRAYER AND the LAYING ON of their HANDS. Many THOUSANDS have THUS RECEIVED GOD'S SPIRIT OF POWER!

(There are some instances recorded where individuals received the Holy Spirit without the laying on of hands. However they are the special exceptions and not the rule.)

COMMENT: Yes, after baptism, a new convert should have the laying on of hands by God's *true* servants to assure his receiving the power of the Holy Spirit. After these rituals, God gives such a one the Holy Spirit of power—the power to overcome self and grow spiritually more and more like Christ every day. This further shows what great power and authority God has vested in His *true* Church!

Have *you* received the Holy Spirit yet?

***Warning!* There are *many* different *groups* bearing the name "Church of God." This shows there are *counterfeits!* — for there is only *one* true Church of God — with world headquarters here at Pasadena, California. From here the *truth* goes to the world. God uses His own ministers to do His work.**

Summary

Unshackled by the traditions and doctrines of *men*, you have now gone step by step, and point by point into God's Word and seen why God says WATER BAPTISM—immersion in water—is ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL before you can receive the power of the Holy Spirit and eternal salvation!

MERE ORAL ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST'S shed BLOOD and His death is NOT ENOUGH! If this were all that God required of us, then surely He would immediately give us our eternal inheritance and relieve us from this world's suffering, sorrow, and death.

But GOD has determined that before we can be born into His Kingdom—the God Kingdom—He MUST FIRST BUILD WITHIN US HIS very NATURE and CHARACTER. This character can only be built through the experience we gain BY obeying God's laws. But OBEDIENCE to Him is impossible of our own selves. WE NEED HELP. And that help can only come from God.

God's HOLY SPIRIT—His character, His love, His power—is the added strength we need so desperately and must receive. It is His GIFT to us IF WE SUBMIT TO His conditions—repentance, belief, and *WATER BAPTISM* (Acts 2:38). Yes, water baptism.

Water BAPTISM SHOULD NOT BE DELAYED!—it might be neglected until too late! IN *EVERY* CASE recounted IN the NEW TESTAMENT, REPENTANT believers were BAPTIZED *IMMEDIATELY*. On the day of Pentecost, 3000 were baptized *that same day*. Philip baptized the eunuch *at once*. God sent Ananias to baptize Saul, (whose name was later changed to Paul). Immediately on meeting him, Ananias said: "AND NOW *WHY TARRIEST* THOU? *ARISE* AND BE BAPTIZED, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Paul baptized the Philippian jailer at midnight. They did not wait even until daylight.

The question you face today: ARE YOU GOING TO SURRENDER your life to God AND DO AS GOD SAYS?

Write Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, and one of our baptizing teams can visit you. This service, like the sending of the true gospel, is free.

Your Next Lesson

How can you be absolutely sure your previous baptism was valid in God's sight? Have you ever wondered whether or not infants or children should be baptized? What is "the baptism with fire"? Are we to be baptized for the dead? Who is authorized to baptize and how can you be baptized by God's true servants?

All of these questions and others will be thoroughly covered and explained in the next lesson.

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