

The Washing of Regeneration

(The truth about baptism with water)

All Christians practice baptism with water. But not all of them do it with sound knowledge of what it is or why it is done and value it as it deserves to be. I am writing so that you value the grace that has been bestowed on you through this sacrament.

Baptism with water is a means of regeneration or new birth. If it is a means, then, of course, it also serves as a sign, but it is not merely a sign. The Bible explicitly states that regeneration of a believer is effected strictly both through baptism with water and the Holy Spirit.

Here are some verses:

"... Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)

"... Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. ..." (Acts 2:38)

"... All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Gal. 3:27)

Do these scriptures and other scriptures I am going to quote in this article say that baptism is a means of regeneration or imply that it is just a sign? I urge readers to discern and judge for themselves.

People may say, "How can washing by water cause regeneration? It must be only a sign." That argument is not biblical but intellectual. It is born of human logic, not founded on the word of God.

The workings of God are not to be grasped intellectually. Human wisdom cannot handle God's wisdom. You must be a "fool" to understand the affairs of God.

"... If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. ..." (1 Cor. 3:18-19)

Understanding the workings of God belongs to the domain of spiritual logic - comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13).

God establishes and conducts His affairs through human "physical" activities.

God (YHWH) is invisible. Yet He works through physical means. He defines and establishes a set of human actions as a means of interaction with Him. When a person does the actions God has prescribed, predetermined results come into effect. This is how God has been operating since Genesis.

For instance, in the garden of Eden, God caused the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to grow, and commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from it (Gen. 2:8-17). In so doing, God presented them choices, literally a button, to stay innocent or attain consciousness of good and evil. Our parents hit the button and blew out their innocence.

Notice how a simple physical act, eating a fruit, determined the course of life and death. When they ate that fruit, they actuated consciousness of good and evil in their minds and God's dealing with humans changed instantly.

In the garden, God established "eating a specific fruit" for man as a means of dealing with Him apparently because "eating" was the only activity known to man by that time suited for this purpose.

Later, when man began growing crops and rearing animals, God established animal sacrifice and various rituals as a means of dealing with Him. And these were more detailed and formalized through the Law of Moses which prescribed the rituals priests performed in the temple of YHWH.

A man and a woman become one flesh by the law of God through the physical act of sexual union (Gen. 2:24). As a result, people who engage in sex outside marriage end up yoking themselves in bondages unconsciously. And this bond can only be broken upon death.

The list goes on. The bottom line is: God operates through physical means. If eating a fruit determined the course of life and death, if God bonds together a man and a woman merely through a physical act of sexual union, if God operated through the rituals priests performed in His temple, surely He does regenerate us through baptism with water provided that He prescribed it for this purpose.

Here is Ezekiel's vision of the new covenant of God YHWH with the house of Israel. God prescribes baptism with water for cleansing from sins. By this word:

"... I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Ezek. 36:25-27)

Here, God promises to cleanse His people from their sins by "sprinkling with water" and put "a new spirit" within them.

This is exactly what God has done to us in Christ Jesus. He saved us by "washing of regeneration" and "renewing by the Holy Spirit." Paul says:

"... When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:4-5)

Using the exact same words of Ezekiel's prophecy, "sprinkling with water," the Epistle to the Hebrews also prescribes baptism with water for cleansing from evil conscience.

"Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:22)

Ezekiel prophesied about the cleansing of the house of Israel only. This is because the saving of the Gentiles along with the Jews was hidden by that time.

"... In other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (Eph. 3:5-6)

John the Baptist appeared ahead of Jesus the Messiah preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:1-8).

The baptism in the name of Jesus Christ superseded John's baptism and works "new birth" or "regeneration" of the believer through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The people of Israel were baptized into Moses as they passed between waters, while crossing the Red Sea, God rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians.

"... Our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. 10:1-2)

Likewise, through baptism with water, one joins himself to Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-7), thereby being regenerated (Titus 3:5), receives forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38), gets cleansed from evil conscience (Heb. 10:22), and initiated into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

So, contrary to what some sincere Christians have concluded prematurely, an in-depth study of the Bible reveals that baptism with water carries great value. Even rejection of John's baptism constituted rejection of the counsel of God because God established the baptism, not a man.

"When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John." (Luke 7:29-30)

If so, do we not offend God more than the Pharisees did if we devalue the baptism of regeneration? I urge all teachers and preachers to adhere to the word of God on this subject.

Channel: <https://t.me/WordOfTruth0>

Copyright © 2023 Gideon Kahn. All rights reserved.