

BAPTISM & FORGIVENESS of SINS

We'll begin our study with John the Baptist since that's where the scripture begins speaking the word 'baptism.' Water baptism was Israel's 'door' into their kingdom.

We'll read through a passage in Matthew chapter 3, so keep your place there while we run some other references:

Matt 3:5 Then went out to him (that's John the Baptist) Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, (these were people of Israel --- not Gentiles)

Notice what the people did when they were water baptized:

Matt 3:6-7 And **were baptized** of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. (that's **NOT** what people do today when they get water baptized!)

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

That 'wrath to come' is in the 'Ages to Come' It is during the Day of the Lord, the Day of His Wrath, during the Great Tribulation:

Zeph 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

Rev 6:15-17 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Go back to Matthew 3, and look at how John warned the religious leaders:

Matt 3:8-10 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: (they **had to do works**)
9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: (Again, these people are Abraham's family --- not Gentiles) for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

When the Lord returns, He's bringing judgment fire with Him.

Psa 50:3-4 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

Just being 'naturally born' into the nation of Israel was not enough to get into the kingdom. They had to be born again like Jesus told Nicodemus:

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water (that's when they are physically 'born' into God's elect family ... because they are born a Jew) and of the Spirit (that's a spiritual baptism), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

We can actually count 3 'different' baptisms in this next verse. Go back to Matt 3:

Matt 3:11-12 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance (there's one): but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost (there's number 2 - we just saw that in the verse we just read in John 3:5), and with fire (that's a 3rd baptism):

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Being baptized with fire is a fearful thing. The Lord will search out all the rebels:

Psa 21:8-9 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.

The Day of Wrath will be horrible:

Isa 66:15-16 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

The only way for them to escape the fire was to get in the water!

Common folk didn't have a problem with it they believed and were baptized.

It was the religious leaders who were the difficult ones that spurned God's message (and His messenger John) by refusing John's water baptism:

Luke 7:29-30 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, (HOW did they do that?) being not baptized of him. (by refusing water baptism!)

Next, let's see exactly WHY John was water baptizing. He was showing Israel who Jesus Christ was their Messiah. Initially, water baptism was just for Israel:

John 1:31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

What was the purpose of the water baptism? Was it a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as many claim today? No, it wasn't NOT according to what scripture says:

Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance FOR the remission of sins.

That's what water baptism was always 'FOR' - in the Bible - remission of sins! Jesus commanded & expanded His disciples to preach water baptism to ALL nations:

Matt 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Yes, water baptism was supposed to spread to all the world. But it is very important that you notice where the message had to START. Israel had to 'get it' FIRST:

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, **beginning at Jerusalem.**

First, we'll read where Jesus told His disciples to STAY in Jerusalem until they got baptized with the Spirit. Then we'll read about the water baptism there also:

Acts 1:4-5 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. Hold your place here in Acts 1, and let's go read that promise in John 16, then we'll come right back:

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

(Now back to Acts 1:5) 5 For **John truly baptized with water**; but **ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence**. (and they were at Pentecost.)

Now, here's the water baptism, there in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, when Peter preached about BOTH the same water baptism AND the baptism with the Spirit:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you (it was never OPTIONAL EVERY person was instructed to do it) in the name of Jesus Christ **FOR the remission of sins** (still for the same reason), and **ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost**. (there's the baptism with the Spirit)

We read the 'so-called' Great Commission in the book of Matthew. Now, let's see it in the gospel of Mark. They had to be water baptized. It was not elective it was required. It was necessary 'for the remission of sins' (as Mark 1:4 said).

Mark 16:14-18 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Sure enough, it began at Jerusalem, just like it was prophesied:

Acts 2:1-4 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And **they were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The Feast of Pentecost was a feast for the nation Israel. That's WHO was there:

Acts 2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem **Jews**, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

The scripture specifically says that the nation Israel is WHO Peter directed his preaching to during Pentecost. They were his audience:

Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Acts 3:12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

Acts 5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

The issues of the baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins, which are the subject of this message, were the subject then as well:

Acts 5:30-31 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, **for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

Water baptism was HOW Israel got their sins pardoned. Their sins went into 'remission' sorta like cancer does. Doctors will say a person is 'in remission' or 'cancer-free' but they will NOT guarantee a person to be entirely RID of it. Water baptism 'washed' them clean. Paul, recounting his testimony, said Ananias told him:

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and **be baptized, and wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord.

Israel will enjoy complete freedom from their sins when they get their New Covenant in their Kingdom. Notice the TIME --- WHEN Israel will get that blessing:

Acts 3:19-20 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, **that your sins may be blotted out, WHEN the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ**, which before was preached unto you:

The apostle Paul explained that happening for Israel in his epistle to the Romans:

Rom 11:26-27 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
27 For this is my covenant unto them, **when I shall take away their sins.**

The letter to the Jews (Hebrews) explains it as well:

Heb 10:16-18 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

It will be 'WHEN' Christ their King returns, that they will be rid of sin and be born again:

1 John 3:5-9 And ye know that **he was manifested to take away our sins**; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Jesus had already taught His disciples about 'abiding' in Him. If they were not attached to the vine ... they would be baptized in the FIRE:

John 15:4-6 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and **cast them into the fire**, and they are burned.

Yes, Israel was familiar with different types of baptisms. In these next 2 verses, the same Greek word 'baptismos' is translated both 'baptisms' and 'washings.' Notice that both words are used in the plural (more than one):

Heb 6:2 **Of the doctrine of baptisms**, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Heb 9:10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and **divers washings**, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The word 'baptism' simply means 'putting into' or 'putting upon.'

Israel had to do both things to their sacrifices. They had to be both washed with water and burned with fire:

Lev 1:9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Next, let's look at yet another baptism. In this next verse, we see Christ prophesying His death, as He spoke of the cup He would drink and His baptism:

Matt 20:22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and **to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?** They say unto him, We are able.

Peter wrote about baptism and being saved by water:

1 Peter 3:18-21 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Now, we're going to move into another phase, where we will notice a change in God's program for US today, living in the dispensation of grace under the ministry of the apostle Paul, to whom God gave further revelation about baptism and the forgiveness of sins.

When Paul was witnessing to King Agrippa, he said:

Acts 26:15-18 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they (the Gentiles -- that's US) may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

We can learn from reading the book of Acts, that Israel did not receive their Messiah (after they had demanded His death, and God gave them further opportunity to repent) but, instead, they stoned Stephen (in Acts 7) when he offered them forgiveness since they had killed Christ.

Now, rather than Gentile salvation flowing through Israel to the rest of the world (as the prophecy foretold), God did something surprising! He revealed a mystery to Paul, by bringing salvation directly to the Gentiles --- in spite of Israel's rejection.

Paul had a DIFFERENT commission committed to him by the Lord, than what Jesus had given to the 12 apostles when He was on the earth.

2 Cor 5:18-21 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The 12 didn't preach about the cross for the entire time of Christ's earthly ministry. They didn't even know about it. It was only after His resurrection that they understood the prophecies concerning His death (we already read that in Luke 24:45).

The cross of Christ was the focus of Paul's message.

1 Cor 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Gal 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

For example:

The 12 operated under Moses' law to circumcise baby boys on the 8th day.
Paul did NOT preach circumcision.

Compare:

John 7:22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

With:

Gal 5:11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

On our subject of BAPTISM:

The 12 were specifically commanded TO water baptize (we already read). Although Paul himself had been water baptized (we already read it in Acts 22:16) AND Paul baptized a few people BEFORE he received revelation not to:

1 Cor 1:14-16 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

Paul was specifically sent --- by the Lord --- NOT to water baptize:

1 Cor 1:17 For Christ sent me NOT to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Not only that, but the Lord also gave Paul some other information about baptism.

Whereas, there used to be more than one baptism (we already read about several)

now, there is ONLY ONE baptism that is operating:

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Since Paul is the person that got that revelation, let's let Paul answer the question, "Which ONE baptism is it?"

It is the one that is performed by the Spirit of God whereby He spiritually places us into the body of Christ:

1 Cor 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.

This is the one baptism whereby we are spiritually placed into Christ.
.... we are spiritually placed into the death of Christ:

Rom 6:3-4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 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. (The great exchange! He took our sins, and we get His righteousness!)

Because of our baptism into His death, we can say:

Gal 2:20 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.

This is the one baptism whereby we are spiritually placed into Christ:

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Israel had both physical and spiritual - circumcisions and baptisms - with promises different than ours. We're going to read through a passage in Col. chapter 2, to see what we are promised in the body of Christ - where there's neither Jew nor Gentile:

We have a spiritual circumcision:

Col 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Here again is that ONE spiritual baptism --- performed by GOD (not a preacher):

Col 2:12 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.

Now look at the COMPLETE forgiveness of sins we enjoy:

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you (it's ALREADY done) ALL trespasses;

We don't have to ASK God for something (such as, forgiveness of sins) that we already have!

Paul told the Colossians in the very 1st chapter, of their UNCONDITIONAL forgiveness:

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Here's that assurance again, in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians:

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Let's contrast that with the so-called Lord's Prayer, when Jesus taught His 12 disciples to pray:

Matt 6:9-13 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 **Thy kingdom come.** (That is what Israel is looking for when New Jerusalem comes DOWN from out of Heaven to the earth. It is described in Rev. 21:2-3. We, by contrast, will be going UP TO Heaven, where we will be forever with the Lord.) Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread. (God gave them manna every day in Exo. 16. It was called angels' food in Psa. 78:25, and it was called the bread of heaven in Psa. 105:40. God will yet again provide hidden manna for His Little Flock (the believing remnant of Israel). You can read about it in Rev. 2:17; Rev. 12:3-6; and Matt. 24.

We, by contrast, have to work for our food in 2 Thess. 3:10, or else we shouldn't eat!)
12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (However they forgave others would be how God would forgive them.)

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

God's program for Israel operated on the 'If....Then' Law Principle:

Exo 19:5-6 Now therefore, **IF** ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, **THEN** ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

"IF they forgive others, THEN God would forgive them."

Their forgiveness was CONDITIONAL based on whether or not they held a grudge:

Matt 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

They have to wait until their Kingdom comes to earth for the joy of their sins being completely taken away. We are already reconciled, and our sins are gone NOW:

Rom 5:10-11 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **by whom we have now received the atonement.** This is David Dowell, saying 'Think about it!'