

Born of Water: From Belief to Faith

We have all sinned. **For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:23.** If we are not penitent, we remain unrighteous. **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Luke 5:32; See also, Matthew 9:13 and Mark 2:17.** The unrighteous do not inherit the kingdom of God as part of eternal life! **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.**

As the Word, Jesus said to repent or perish. ...**Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13:2-5 (Emphasis added).** By definition, “repentance” means *confession followed by action* as an amendment of lifestyle. Repentance therefore *IS* an act of faith!

Jesus said to repent unto an amendment of our sinful lifestyles, or perish.

Although there is a basic difference between “confession” and “repentance”, sometimes the Bible uses the single word “confession” to cover both confession *and* repentance. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.** The biblical combination of confession and repentance into a single term “confession” (or “repentance”) makes perfect sense. Why would anyone confess their sin to God if there is no sincere regret of heart to stop the sinful conduct that produced it? **Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7.**

God is after our heart and He knows the sincerity or insincerity of it. **And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Luke 16:15.** God is not moved by lip service of indignant churchy people that confess with their mouth, while lacking a penitent heart of love for the Word—His Son! Jesus said: **This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. Matthew 15:5.** Therefore, let us not make ourselves a liar when we say to God we are sorrowful for our sins and transgressions and are not sorry at heart sufficient for repentance. **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.... Romans 6:1-2.**

True “Godly” sorrow is from the sincerity of heart which overcomes the flesh and lead us to repentance. “Godly” sorrow brings about confession followed by an amendment of lifestyle as a form of *penitent revenge* against sinfulness and transgressions.

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. *2 Corinthians 7:9-11 (Emphasis added)*. This “revenge” is a by-product of our “first works” of repentance out of love for Him (*Galatians 5:6*), in faith for eternal life through His will. **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.** *Revelation 2:4-5 (Emphasis added)*.

Accordingly, the most basic prerequisite for salvation has not been met when there is no “pure heart” of belief in His words requiring the “first works” of repentance. For example, the devil and his followers believe Jesus is the Word, the Christ, and the Holy One of God in the flesh (*See, Matthew 4:3-10, Mark 1:23-24, See also, Luke 4:33-34*). However, the devil (the god of this world) and his followers will not be saved, because they refuse to repent. A refusal to repent is precisely why the children of the devil today are called the “children of disobedience”.

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: *Ephesians 2:2*. **Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.** *Ephesians 5:6*. (The term “disobedience” in each of the immediately preceding verses (*Ephesians 2:2 and 5:6*) is *properly and correctly* rendered “unbelief” in the King James Bible.)

Do not be duped by man’s doctrines, religion, or “cheap grace” theology into thinking there is “no cost” (i.e., “no works”) at all for salvation. **...And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.** *Matthew 24:4-5; see also Mark 13:5-6 and John 5:43-47*.

Baptism with Water

Because repentance is the required bridge to eternal life, God made a really big deal about getting His will known in this regard. He started with the Old Covenant Jews as discussed above. Even before the atonement sacrifice could take place, all of the priests had to be cleansed with pure water. The significance of their cleansing helps establish the basis for being “born of water”, and the “baptism of water” for repentance, *prior to* receiving the Holy Ghost for sanctification under the New Covenant.

What about the baptism ministry of the one called “John the Baptist” or “John the Baptizer” the Bible speaks of? **John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:4.** “Remission of sins” means the sins are forgiven and forgotten as if they never existed.

John’s testimony was a testimony of the coming “light” being the Spirit of life for all mankind. **There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. John 1:6-8.** John’s message was a bridge of transition *and* connectivity between the Old Covenant deeds of the flesh and the New Covenant of faith by love and life in the Spirit. John’s baptism related to the Old Testament cleansing practices of the Jews.

As part of the transition from the old to the new, Jesus asked John to baptize Him in the Jordan River. While John was understandably reluctant at first, he acquiesced to Jesus’ request and baptized Him in the Jordan river. **Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. Matthew 3:13-15 (Emphasis added).**

Why was Jesus baptized in water for repentance and remission of sins when He had no sin from which to repent? Much like His death on the cross later, the baptism of Jesus in water was in signification for and the benefit of all people everywhere. (Because of His baptism, people today may repent anywhere at any time and be “cleansed” *without* the need or use of water (H₂O) to effectuate the cleansing.)

Immediately after Jesus was baptized for repentance and remission of sins He did not commit, He received the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the spirit of the Father and quickens the mortal body to do the Father’s will as a son. That same Spirit was the one that raised Jesus from the dead (*Romans 8:11*). **Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. Luke 3:21-22.**

Being “born of water” unto repentance for remission of sins is a prerequisite to receiving the Spirit (including the Holy Ghost) which raises people from the dead. **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 6:4.** Under the New Covenant in place today, now that Jesus has left the earth as explained below, repentance prepares us for the Holy Ghost. The question then becomes, what is the kingdom of God and eternal life worth to you and me? **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.**

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. *Matthew 13:44-46.*

If we truly love Him, we want to do whatever it takes from the heart to alter our fleshly behavior by amendment of life, lifestyle and/or body to pursue the truth in the Word and glorify Him before men. **And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. *Matthew 5:29-30.***

Still, when Jesus said to cut something off to avoid sin, many people are tempted to say: “Jesus really didn’t mean that”, “He wasn’t speaking literally”, or “We don’t have to do that because of grace”, to name a few. The intended meaning of what Jesus said is easily understood. He spoke literally of the flesh, *not* of the Spirit as in a parable. As a further example, **For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Matthew 19:12. (Emphasis added).***

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