

NEW COVENANT INITIATION

Reading: Acts 2:32-41; 8:36-39

1. THE BIBLE GIVES US SEVERAL REASONS FOR THE COMMAND REQUIRING OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL IN TERMS OF WATER BAPTISM.

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. (John 3:3-5).

A. Water baptism is an expression of repentance.

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

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Matthew 28:19).

B. Water baptism is an expression of faith.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15-16).

2. WAS THE USUAL MODE OF WATER BAPTISM IMMERSION?

Yes. In the early church no other means of administering water was spoken of as baptism. The Greek word for baptism means "immersion."

3. DID THE DISCIPLES TAKE JESUS SERIOUSLY REGARDING BAPTISM?

Yes. A careful study of the book of Acts will reveal there was never a Christian initiation absent of water baptism: Repentance, faith, water baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38).

A. When the apostles recognized something deficient in Christian experience, they examined this foundation stone of water baptism.

Paul taught a dozen disciples of John. He noticed something missing about them. He asked whether they had received the Holy Spirit baptism. They hadn't which caused Paul to suspect that something was inadequate about their water baptism. After further questioning he discovered they had only received John's baptism; they knew nothing of baptism into Christ. Paul required them to be baptized into water unto Christ and immediately they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit as well.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. (Acts 19:5-6).

4. DOES WATER BAPTISM DO A WORK WITHIN US?

Yes. Repentance is the change of mind toward God about sin and ourselves. Faith is the transfer of reliance from dead works to the living God. Water baptism is the inner cutting away and burial of the old life of sin. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the impartation of God's own abiding presence, the basis of all our living in Christ.

A. Baptism is a burial.

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).

B. Baptism is a resurrection.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 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.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. (Romans 6:5-9).

C. Baptism is a stripping away of the carnal nature.

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: 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 2:11-12).

Study Application:

What is baptism an expression of?

What is baptism in experiential (a work within us) terms?