

WORD OF THE WEEK

The Subject: Baptism

Ephesians 4:5 – There is — one Lord, one faith, one baptism --
John 3:3,5,6 -- Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God -- Except a man be born of the, water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God -- that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

again - Greek: anōthen - "from above"; from ano - the top; the primary particle of the word origin is anti meaning in opposition to, or instead of; "born again" means that the "new birth" must be in the place of and again(st) the old.

kingdom - Greek: basileia - realm (where a king reigns); from basilica or base meaning the foot or walk.

II Corinthians 5:17 -- if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

Before and during the time of Christ, the Jews engaged in a gentile (heathen) naturalization process called proselyte baptism. Let us assume that a gentile from Antioch in Galatia wanted to become an Israelite. The initiate must first be circumcised submitting to the covenant of Abraham (Gen. 17:7-14). Secondly, he was baptized in water as a public testimony (witness) that he was submitting himself to all the laws and ordinances of the God of Israel, who thus became his God. Thirdly, he had to offer two turtle doves, the prescribed offering for a "new born" babe in Israel. This water baptism was called a "new birth". This gentile from Antioch was said to be "born anew" into the Kingdom of God (Israel's ancient title). He was said to be a "new man" or a "new creature" upon completion of these three rituals. Thus, he was required to disown and turn (repent) from his old life. He forsook all, denying his old self (Luke 9:23). He gave up his life, family, possessions, citizenship, language, etc. The old man was considered dead, just as when the Christian believer is "born again". In like manner, the Christian believer forsakes his old life and he is baptized (spiritually) into the Kingdom of God. The believer turns (repents) from his old ways because Christ is now reigning in the mortal body of the believer (Luke 17:21; II Cor. 4:10-16). Jesus said to Nicodemus that the man who is born (baptized) of the flesh (water) inherits a fleshly kingdom (flesh is flesh) of literal Israel. The man born (baptized) of the Spirit (Spirit is spirit) inherits a spiritual kingdom (spiritual Israel). He is baptized by the one true baptism (Matt. 3:11 --The Holy Ghost and Fire) into Christ (Gal. 3:27). Does a man have to be baptized to be saved? Yes!-- but not in water. Water is not the one true baptism. Water would only get a man into literal Israel. Holy Spirit Baptism (the new birth) gets a man into the spiritual Kingdom of God (Rom. 2:28,29), which is Christ (reigning) in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). Circumcision is spiritual (Col 2:11; Deut. 10:16), sacrifice is spiritual (Rom. 12:1) and baptism is spiritual (Acts 1 :5-8).

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