



The New Birth Experience

Examining Tradition in the Light of Truth

By Michael G. Blankenship

No study of the Bible is more to the "bottom line" than the study of redemption and salvation! There may be many things we may not fully grasp in Scripture, but WE MUST GRASP this subject.

Let's begin with a premise... WE ARE SINNERS!

ROMANS 5:8 - "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (See Romans 5:19)

Notice Jesus' Comment:

MARK 2:17 - "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

His Message to SINNERS was...REPENTANCE

Listen to Jesus Again.

LUKE 24:45-47 - "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Two Things Would be Preached - Repentance and remission of sins:

> How? It would be preached in **HIS NAME**
> Where? It would begin in **JERUSALEM**. This was fulfilled in **Acts 2:38**

God Demanded Repentance of Mankind!

Repentance means: the "the act of turning about; an about face" (from sin to God).

MATTHEW 3:8 - "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

MATTHEW 4:17 - "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

True Repentance Is the First Step to God!

Repentance prepares our heart to obey the Scriptures further.

Many have assumed that repentance is itself the new birth experience. It is said that if we "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" we need not go any further, because the new birth is complete.

Let's Examine This Idea

First of all, it is true that believing on the Lord Jesus is the FIRST step toward salvation.

As Paul told the Phillipian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Why is This True?

HEBREWS 11:6 - "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Let's Look at This Issue Even Closer:

ACTS 2:21 - "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

MATTHEW 7:21 - "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus is very clear that church attendance and simple "easy believe-ism" is not the new birth experience! ("But he that doeth the will of my Father.")

We Are Not All Going to the Same Place, and We Do Not All Believe the Same Thing Concerning Doctrine

Some Wish to Downplay Doctrine as Unimportant. But the apostle Paul had a different view.

I TIMOTHY 4:16 - "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

(See I Timothy 4:13, II Timothy 3:10, 16; Titus 2:1; and II John 1:10.)

If There Is a God, Then There Has to Be a Truth!

Therefore, we have the responsibility to diligently seek for THAT truth. After repentance, the next step of obedience is **water baptism**.

Old Testament Typology

I PETER 3:20-21 - "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 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." (See I Corinthians 10:1-4)

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

EXODUS 30:18-21 - "Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water; that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: So they shall wash their hands and the feet, that they die not; and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations."

Water Baptism Has Two Distinct Meanings

WASHING:

MATTHEW 3:5-6 - "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

BLURIAL:

ROMANS 6:4 - "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." (See Colossians 2:12)

The Following Verses Reflect the Fulfillment of the Command in the Early Church:

ACTS 2:38 - "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 10:48 - "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

ACTS 19:5 - "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

How Was the Early Church Baptized?

The word baptism comes from the Greek word "BAPTIZO", meaning to dunk, immerse, or soak. For Example:

JOHN 3:23 - "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized."

MATTHEW 3:16 - "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."

ACTS 8:38-39 - "And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and the y went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

What About Sprinkling?

We simply do not find it in the Scripture! Sprinkling, pouring, or infant baptism cannot be found or substantiated in the Word of God. These are only human traditions. Therefore, we should reject them in the light of the scriptural truth.

What Formula was Used?

The birth of the church in the second chapter of Acts made John's baptism obsolete. It was updated when a name was added to it.

ACTS 2:38 - "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."

The greatest legacy the Lord left to his bride (the church) was His name!

ACTS 4:12 - "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we

No Other Baptismal Mode Was Practiced in Scripture!

ACTS 8:16 - "(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)"

ACTS 10:48 - "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

ACTS 19:5 - "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

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

Jesus' name must be invoked verbally to have a proper baptism!

Notice the Three Questions Paul Asked the Church at Corinth - They are relevant to our study today.

I CORINTHIANS 1:13 - "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

Jesus was crucified for us, so we should be baptized in Jesus' name! Look at Paul's own baptism:

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

Water Baptism is a Command to be Obeyed for Salvation!

ACTS 10:48 - "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

MARK 16:15-16 - "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."

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

ACTS 2:41 - "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

EPHESIANS 4:5 - "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

What About Matthew 28:19?

MATTHEW 28:19 - "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 was obeyed in Acts 2:38. Father, Son and Holy Ghost are titles, not names. Many simply repeat the Lord's command found in Matthew 28:19 instead of obeying it. Baptism using a threefold formula was not practiced by or taught by the disciples of Jesus Christ.

What is the Name of the Father?

JOHN 5:43 - "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

What is the Name of the Son?

JOHN 20:31 - "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

What is the Name of the Holy Ghost?

JOHN 14:26 - "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The Holy Ghost is not a name... It is a title for the SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE CHURCH TODAY.

This Brings us to One of the Most Beautiful Revelations of the Bible: The Message of who Jesus Really Is!

The name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is Jesus!

The disciples never had a single conflict over baptism in the New Testament.

WHY? Because they understood the singleness or oneness of God. Observe:

JOHN 14:10-11 - "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake."

JOHN 10:30 - "I and my Father are one."

JOHN 14:8-11 - "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake."

JOHN 14:15-20 - "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth;

whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

JOHN 14:25-27 - "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." THE HOLY GHOST IS JESUS IN SPIRIT FORM! These three titles refer to the different roles of the same **ONE GOD!** He is Father in creation; Son in redemption; Holy Ghost in His body, the church!

II CORINTHIANS 5:19 - "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."

ISAIAH 9:6 - "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."

ISAIAH 9:6 - "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Now You're Ready for the Wonderful Gift of the Holy Spirit!

Start with Old Testament Prophecy:

EZEKIEL 36:26-27 - "A new heart also will I give you; and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

JOEL 2:28 - "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

Then It Happened for the First Time:

ACTS 2:1-4 - "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them divided tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Jesus Prophesied This Also:

JOHN 7:38-39 - "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

YOU DO NOT RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST automatically WHEN YOU BELIEVE. It is a separate but dynamic experience that is part of the new birth!

ACTS 19:1-6 - "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized you with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 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."

Paul found believers, but they needed their EXPERIENCE with God UPDATED! Even though they had been baptized unto John's baptism, it was not enough. They were rebaptized in the name of the Lord Jesus! **YES, IT IS THAT IMPORTANT**

Is the Holy Ghost Necessary for Salvation?

EPHESIANS 1:13 - "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

THE ACTS 2 HOLY GHOST EXPERIENCE IS PART OF THE NEW BIRTH!

Some ask honestly, "But won't church attendance and being a good person save me?"

ACTS 10:1-4 - "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout

man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision a heavenly light about the ninth hour of the day, and the word of God coming into him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."

HE WAS LED TO FULL SALVATION BY THE APOSTLE PETER!

The point is, being devout does not save you! You must seek truth! Update your spirituality! *Seek and ye shall find!*

The Single Common Sign of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was "SPEAKING IN TONGUES"

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY:

ISAIAH 28:11 - "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people."

Tongues was the initial or immediate evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism. Acts 2:4, 10:45-46, 19:6 all mention tongues as the sign to your receiving the Holy Ghost.

ACTS 2:39 - "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

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