

Chapter Fifteen

Instructions for Holiness

Four Kinds of Washings

Without the shed blood of Jesus Christ, there would be no forgiveness of sin. Through faith in Christ's shed blood, we are forgiven of and cleansed from sin. If we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ according to the scriptures, and confess Him as our Lord, then we shall be saved (see Romans 10:9-10). Associated with our confession of faith in Christ are instructions on washings.

Water Baptism

Water baptism is directly associated with conversion, our initial confession of faith in Christ. When Peter first preached salvation in Jesus Christ, he instructed those who believed saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." Those who received his word were baptized that same day (see Acts 2:38-41).

When Phillip preached Christ to the Ethiopian in his chariot, the man believed and was immediately baptized in water (See Acts 8:27-39). This account also indicates to us that baptism was included in the message that Phillip preached.

When Paul was confronted by Jesus and blinded on the road to Damascus he went directly to the house of a man named Ananias. Ananias commanded him saying, "...now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (see Acts 22:16).

There are other examples of people being baptized immediately upon believing, but the words of Annanias to Paul provide one of the strongest associations between water baptism and cleansing from sin: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins..." However, we do not find evidence in the scripture that water baptism is absolutely required for salvation.

The book of Romans likens baptism to a burial and a resurrection.

"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 KJV).

So we see that water baptism is a funeral service for the old person that has been crucified with Christ. Coming out of the water is then seen as a resurrection from the dead to a new live in Christ. These things are not simply symbolic. They represent something very real that is taking place in the spirit realm.

For more on this subject, see Appendix C.

Holy Spirit Baptism

After Jesus rose from the dead, He was speaking with His disciples concerning the kingdom of God. He told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:3-5). The disciples were curious if this meant that the kingdom of God would immediately appear on earth. They asked Jesus, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

Jesus' answer to this question about the kingdom was (paraphrased): Don't worry about

the time, but you will receive power to be My witnesses when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will then be able to take the message of the kingdom to the surrounding area and even to the end of the earth (see Acts 1:7-8). Contextually, this tells us what Holy Spirit baptism is and why we need it. *Holy Spirit baptism is the equipping of God's people to be powerful witnesses for Christ who are preparing the way for the kingdom of God to appear on earth.*

The disciples obeyed Jesus' command to wait in Jerusalem. Then, at the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on 120 believers gathered in an upper room. They were baptized in the Holy Spirit and it was evidenced by flames that appeared above them and by a supernatural gifting whereby they spoke in other languages they had not learned. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit was like a wind that was so loud that people in the city heard it and came to see what it was.

Some modern Christians claim that water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism are one and the same or that they happen simultaneously. But examples from the scriptures show that this baptism is a separate experience from water baptism, though it can and hopefully does happen simultaneously (see Acts 8:14-16; 19:1-5)

Again, the most obvious purpose of this baptism, as seen in Acts 1:8, is to empower us to be effective witness for Jesus. Therefore, it should be sought diligently by all believers, but often is not.

For more on Holy Spirit Baptism and its evidence, see Appendix D.

Mind Washing (Renewal)

Anyone who has been a Christian for any length of time has realized that believing, being baptized in water, and even being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not the answer to all your problems. You may still find yourself struggling with old habits and evil thoughts. This is not unusual, but it should not be treated as acceptable. Jesus has provided a washing for this as well.

Every human was created with three parts: a spirit, a soul and a body which makes up the whole person (see diagram in Appendix E). It is the work of God going on in our souls (minds) that we want to focus on here. *Though our spirits may be cleansed, the mind still has need of cleansing.*

To some degree, all of us have had our minds programmed with thought patterns, habits, ideas that disagree with God. In other words, our thinking process has been formed and shaped by the world we live in. God wants to change that. The apostle Paul writes, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). We don't always know what the will of God is. But as we renew or wash our minds with the word of God, be gradually begin to think like He thinks and see things from His perspective.

In Ephesians chapter five this is called "the washing of water by the word." Christ is continuing to wash us that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless (see Eph 26-27).

More detailed information on mind washing is provided in Appendix E.

Foot Washing

In John's gospel, chapter 13, we have the record of the Passover meal that Jesus shared with His disciples before His crucifixion. After the meal, Jesus wrapped a towel around Himself and began to wash His disciples' feet. Afterward, He said, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher,

have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you (John 13:14-15 NKJV). Like me, they didn't understand fully what He was doing either. But He told them they would later.

Those who traveled the dusty roads in those days wearing sandals had regular need of foot washing. It was customary in those days for hosts to provide water for guests to wash their own feet. To actually wash the feet of another was a very lowly task, often reserved for servants or slaves.

The obvious lesson is one of humility. But there is more to learn from this than just humility. *Foot washing at the last supper was a symbolic act representing the humble relational aspect of dealing with personal sin.* Though we may be forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Jesus, baptized in water, and baptized in the Holy Spirit, we are still walking the dusty roads of this world. This means that our feet will get dirty from time to time and will need to be washed. This is often overlooked aspect of washing has to do with relational accountability and forgiving one another of sin. No one has totally overcome sin. Therefore we all need a person or persons to whom we can go for confession, prayer, cleansing and accountability.

There is a spiritual work that takes place in foot washing, just as there is in water baptism and it is almost nonexistent in the modern church. Please take the time to read Appendix F and learn more about essential doctrine on washing. Make it a practical part of your life.

Conclusions on The Doctrine of Baptisms (Instructions about Washings)

The Doctrine of Baptisms (Instructions about Washings) is the second foundation stone in God's strategy of preparation. We must make the pursuit of holiness a foundational and continual part of our lives by make all four of these washings a part of our lives.

The foundational purpose of this principle is: To be Holy as He is Holy.
In God we are destined to be holy.

Questions To Ask Yourself

1. Have I been properly baptized in water?
2. Have I been baptized in the Holy Spirit?
3. Am I diligently studying God's Word and renewing my mind?
4. Do I have someone in my life with whom I can be transparent with and confess sins?

Key Verses

Acts 2:38

Romans 12:1-2