



Wednesday, June 1, 2022



JUSTIFICATION by FAITH - PART 2

God's Only Plan of Salvation

Main Text: Rom. 1:17-- For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Introduction: In lesson one, we discussed God's promise to send a Redeemer (Jesus Christ) to die for the sins of humanity (Gen. 3:15, Isa. 53:4-5, Isa. 9:6). Over two thousand years later, God promised to do a "new thing." The Holy Spirit would dwell in hearts of believers (Isa. 28:10-12, 43:18-19, Ezek. 36:26, Joel 2:28-29, Zech. 10:10). To prepare men's hearts for Christ, God sent John the Baptist, preaching the kingdom of God, and calling the people to repent of their sins and be baptized in water (Isa. 40:3-5, Matt. 3:1-11). To identify with John's ministry and receive a "handoff" of the ministry from him, John baptized Jesus Himself (Matt. 3:13-15). After John's imprisonment, Jesus began His ministry, preaching that the "the kingdom of God" was at hand, and that people must repent and believe the gospel, or the good news, that He (Jesus) the Christ and Messiah had come. From both John's and Jesus' preaching of this "new" message, we received three sacraments; believing, repentance, and baptism. However, John's and Jesus' message was primarily for the Jews, not the gentiles. But that was about to change. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus promised the disciples He would build His church and that the church would consist of Jews and Gentiles alike; "there shall be one-fold, *and* one shepherd" (John 10:16). If there was to be only one church, then there would only be one plan of salvation for members of that church.

Jesus Introduces the Plan of the New Birth: Matt. 1:21, John 3:1-5

Matt. 1:21— And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

John 3:1-5—(1) There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou does, except God be with him. ³ 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. ⁴ 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? ⁵ 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 3:14-17—(14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Note: With John the Baptist dead, the people's focus shifted to Jesus. The angel said Jesus would "save" His people from their sins. The Greek name "Jesus" is derived from the same Hebrew word that means "Joshua," which translates into "Yahweh saves" or Jehovah is salvation. Biblically, the word "save" has different meanings depending on the context in which it is used, but in general "save" means "to deliver" from something. Jesus came to save people "from sins" or the effects of sin. What effect is that? Spiritual death, which is the "wages" or reward of sin (Rom. 6:23). Jesus did not come to "save" the Jews from Roman oppression, but from their sins. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He knew that Jesus "was come from God." Therefore, he wanted to know how Jesus would "save" him from his sins. Jesus told Nicodemus he had to be born again. The same applied to all the Jews because Jesus came to save them all! Jesus did not use the words repent, believe, or baptism. However both He and John taught that both were required to prepare the heart to receive or enter the kingdom of God. In addition to a birth of water, Jesus's plan to save His people included the "new thing" spoken of in the Old Testament—the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or a birth of the Spirit. Because Nicodemus was confused, Jesus recounted the story of Moses lifting the bronze serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21). Moses lifted the thing the people had to look on to be saved from death, which symbolized Jesus at His crucifixion. With that illustration, Jesus taught that salvation "the act of deliverance or redemption," would come to those who looked to and believed in Him alone.

Believing Leads to Receiving: John 7:38-39

John 7:38-39—(38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (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.)

Note: In John 3, Jesus said, "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." In other words, those who continued to believe in Jesus would be "saved" and not die, which is to be separated from God eternally (Eph. 2:1). But in John 7, Jesus takes believing in Him a step further. Those who continued to believe in Him would receive the Holy Spirit. The phrase, "as the scripture hath said" is significant. It means as the scripture teaches. When one believes according to the scriptures, the Holy Spirit, which is part of Jesus's new birth plan that included water baptism, would be given. Biblical belief leads to the infilling of the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Ghost would not be given until after Jesus was glorified, meaning raised from the dead.

Jesus Instructs His Apostles on What to Teach: Matthew 28:19-20

Matt. 28:19-20—(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: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Luke 24:45-47—(45) Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, (46) And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: (47) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

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

Note: Just prior to His crucifixion Jesus instructed the twelve apostles to go teach "all nations." The command included Gentiles, which would fulfill Jesus's promise that His church would consist of "...one-fold, *and* one shepherd" (John 10:16). Again, baptism is included in the instructions, as both Jesus and John had previously taught. However, this time, Jesus was specific about how the baptism

was to be accomplished. The apostles were to apply or invoke a name; a name that represented the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost during baptism. Before His ascension into heaven Jesus opened the apostles understanding about what and how they should teach in His absence. Both repentance and remission of sin were to be preached in His (Jesus's) name, "among all nations," beginning in Jerusalem. Furthermore, the apostles were to instruct followers to "observe," meaning "to guard or keep from escaping" all things which Jesus commanded His apostles. Mark 16 is another example of Jesus's command to teach and baptize everyone (Jew and Gentile) in the known world. Those who believed and were baptized would be "saved," or delivered from the effects of sin, which is eternal death or damnation. That is why Jesus went on to say, "he that believeth not, shall be damned." Unbelievers would reject the baptism Jesus commanded His apostles to administer, thereby retaining their sins and bringing damnation upon themselves. The passage in Mark clearly shows as far as "the scriptures saith," believing includes baptism, which leads to receiving the "living water" (the Holy Ghost).

The Apostles Obeyed Jesus's Command: Acts 2:12-1336

Acts 2:12-16—(12) And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? (13) Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. (14) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: (15) For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day. (16) But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

Acts 2:36-42—(36) Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. (37) Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men, *and* brethren, what shall we do? (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. (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.

Note: On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost was poured out onto believers for the first time in the history of the world. When evidence of the promised Spirit came through tongues, observers thought the apostles and others were drunk. But Peter and other apostles stood up, while Peter explained that what was occurring was that which was promised from the Old Testament. As proof, he quoted Joel chapter two, where the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is recorded. Peter's message so pricked the hearts of the people that they asked what they could do. Peter responded that they should repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins, and the result would be the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Summary: Both John the Baptist and Jesus taught believing, repentance, and baptism as necessary elements for salvation. Jesus combined those elements into a plan called the new birth, which He shared with Nicodemus. The plan consists of a birth of water and a birth of the Spirit. However, continuous belief in Jesus alone, not simply believing, is central to the new birth experience (John 3:14-17), as it leads one to both baptism (Mark 16:15-16) and the infilling of the Holy Ghost (John 7:38-39). This new message, with believing at its core, became the effective plan of salvation for Jesus's New Testament church. However, there were two significant changes: One, the plan was not to be limited to the Jews, but preached in "all the world," which included Gentile nations. Two, instead of John's general baptism, the apostles were to baptize in a specific name; a name that represented the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus opened His apostle's understanding, so that they knew to baptize in His name (Luke 24:47). On the Day of Pentecost, the apostles preached the message of the new birth which Jesus explained to Nicodemus, and baptized the first three thousand

converts in the name of Jesus. Doing so, reinforced the angel's promise that Jesus would save His people from their sins, and that salvation would come from belief in Him alone. Later, the apostles preached the same message to the Gentiles, who received the Holy Spirit just as the Jews did at Pentecost; thereby ensuring the New Testament church consisted of one-fold, with one shepherd, and one plan of salvation.