

The Three Baptisms (the second great work)

Prayer

What kind of image does the phrase “Herding Cats” conjure up in your mind?

I am reminded of the young Sunday school student named Steve who in his studies came across several scriptures on baptism. One such scripture was Matthew 28:19,20 Which says:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

So Steve was a bit nervous so he decided to practice this ordinance. To this end he decided to baptize his family pet. So off he went to get his pet. A pet I might add that did not understand why baptism was important.

So we see the young wannabee “priest” filling up the bathtub with water... A few moments later he is coming into the bathroom with his Cat Mr. Church. Well Mr. Church was resting in his arms he moved towards the water and said: “I baptize you in the name of... Yeowwww!” Mr. Church decided he was afraid of the water and didn’t understand what was going on, so he decided to claw up Steve. Steve was not yet deterred so he and he really wanted to have his cat baptized, you know to make a profession of faith, but Mr. Church didn’t want anything to do with it and so scratched up Steve a bit more.

Steve was frustrated and so drained the tub got a bowl of water and put Mr. Church in the bottom of the tub. He reached into the bowl and threw some water on the cat yelling fine be Methodist then...

Today I want to talk about the three types of baptism in the bible. Mr. Church obviously didn’t understand the significance and so trying to get him baptized was extremely difficult and quite painful. Have you ever heard the phrase: herding cats? Is it difficult to get people to understand the need and significance of baptism without understanding? That is what today’s sermon is all about.

We are going to cover each of the three aspects of baptism in the Christian Pentecostal faith. Now how we divide them up and categorize them is different depending on perspective, but this illustration will relate the concepts clearly and succinctly. To be clear this does not have to be three separate events. There are really only two works. One is physical the other Spiritual. Some call it a second great work. But to avoid confusion we will look at it for today in three aspects.

Each form of baptism is important in its own way and each one is a step that is necessary in obedience to God and to fulfill all that he has in store for you. I pray the words today will minister to you and bring you peace and understanding of this important topic.

Today we will look at all three. We will discuss:

- Baptism into Jesus Christ (Getting Saved)
- Baptism of John (Getting Dunked)
- Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Getting Commissioned)

Now before we delve in and so those of you thinking of Ephesians 4:4-6 start worrying, let me deal with this up front. There are two works one spiritual and the other physical. When we read Ephesians 4:4-6 which says:

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

In the natural and literal sense baptism refers to immersion in water. Although we categorize these aspects as baptism only immersion in water falls within the definition. We use the three aspects here to clearly illustrate what works are being done and why even though there is no physical water involved the other two aspects are categorized in this way.

Baptism into Jesus

Turn with me to Acts 16:25-34. Here we will read about Paul and Silas and the salvation of the Jailer.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, while the other prisoners listened. Suddenly a strong earthquake shook the jail to its foundations. The doors opened, and the chains fell from all the prisoners.

When the jailer woke up and saw that the doors were open, he thought that the prisoners had escaped. He pulled out his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! No one has escaped."

The jailer asked for a torch and went into the jail. He was shaking all over as he knelt down in front of Paul and Silas. After he had led them out of the jail, he asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

*They replied, "**Have faith in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved! This is also true for everyone who lives in your home.**"*

Then Paul and Silas told him and everyone else in his house about the Lord. While it was still night, the jailer took them to a place where he could wash their cuts and bruises. Then he and everyone in his home were baptized. They were very glad that

they had put their faith in God. After this, the jailer took Paul and Silas to his home and gave them something to eat.

Their witness brought the jailer to faith in Jesus Christ and we see that he was filled with joy and happiness because he had found God. You see when you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you trust him as your savior something new and wonderful happens.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 5:17:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Now turn with me to Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

This is what Paul said in Romans 6:3-11

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Finally, turn with me to Colossians 2:10-12

... and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

When you accepted Christ you became a new creation in him, your belief in him saves you. The next step is a step of obedience. Remember in Matthew where we received direction to go therefore and make disciples baptizing them...

The Baptism of John

What is this all about? Let's dig in and find out...

Turn with me to Mark 1:2-4

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "Behold, I send My messenger [a]ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way; The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight.'"

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness [b]preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

There's no mention of baptism in the Old Testament, but by the time of Jesus baptism, this ordinance had become a regular practice.

There was also a Jewish theology and practice that we need to talk to in order to understand this better...

The Jews held and still hold the belief today that they are God's chosen people... and they are. SO... if they are God's chosen people that are already saved because they were the Son's and Daughters of Abraham. Because of this truth they believed they were already saved and so had no need whatsoever to be baptized. Anyone non-Jewish was called Gentile. That's you and me folks. I am a Gentile man. Now in that day if I were to convert to the Jewish faith I would have to go through a baptism in water ritual so that the filth of the world would be washed away. They took this very seriously. Total immersion in water was performed in front of witnesses. The person to be baptized would ritualistically prepare for this. They would cut their nails, disrobe and become completely naked and make a new profession of faith before what they called the "Fathers of Baptism" During this process and after their profession of faith the person would stand straight up with legs spread shoulder width apart and their hands held out in front of them. The person would then totally immerse themselves be squatting in the water. One of the Fathers of Baptism would officiate.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus came up straight away out of the water. Turn with me to Mathew 3:16:

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

Remember that Christianity started with Jesus. Up to this point, Jesus went to temple as a Jew. What is interesting here is that this was the form of baptism that John performed. It is significant though that there were differences. In the case of John it was more than a ritual.

So what was different?

In John's baptism it was not simply ritual, it required a change of heart for the forgiveness of sin. In short, John's baptism called for repentance and obedience for the forgiveness of sin.

In addition, a very significant difference was that John was calling ALL men even the Jewish to confess their sin and be baptized for forgiveness.

This is a point of confusion for some as they came to believe that it was the ordinance/ritual or maybe the water that washes away the sin. But we know John 3:16 which tells us:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

So we as Pentecostal Christians know that it is not the ritual or ordinance that saves us but rather our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

So why did we take this trip through history?

It is because even the Fathers of Baptism and those of the Jewish faith came to realize that water may only purify the body. It is the obedience to God's instruction, true repentance and righteousness that saves.

If you read Jewish literature contemporary of the time you will see water baptism referred to as the "Womb of the Word" This is why a convert who came up out of the water was considered born again. Their existence was considered severed from the pagan world.

Now let's go to John 3:1-5

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Now when a person came up from the waters of the Jewish baptism they were called: "A child just born" or "a child of one day" It is significant that we see the terms: "Born Again and New Creation" John's baptism is a baptism of obedience to God. It was repentance and then baptism in water.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Turn with me to Acts 19:1-7

It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in 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 Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. There were in all about twelve men.

Now let me clarify...

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one who would come after him. He was referring to Jesus. On hearing this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

No one baptized others before John. The Fathers of Baptism just witnessed the baptism.

Remember what John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:11?

"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

So... let's summarize here

Baptism into Jesus – A change in position (redeemed, propitiated, justified, reconciled) We are joint heirs with Christ

John's baptism – A call to repentance and dying to self requiring a change of heart

Baptism in the Holy Spirit – This is a commissioning and a change in power

Turn with me now to Acts 2:38-39

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

So we have learned that John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, we have learned that the purpose of immersion water baptism is a public confession of what Jesus has done within you. But what does the receive power thing mean regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

The power he is talking about is the power to do that which God has commanded us to do. Empowerment to be an EFFECTIVE witness for Christ. Power through encouragement and revelation as the Holy Spirit illuminates the word of God. It will also manifest as a burden for the lost and hurting and a hunger for the word of God.

- Jesus – Acceptance of Jesus as saviour and repentance
- John – Public declaration of repentance showing a change of heart
- Holy Spirit – Empowerment for witness

Let me close with this scripture...

Acts 2:39

"Repent," Peter said to them, "and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer