

Msg #149 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“Why Immersion Is The Only Way To Be Truly Baptized”

With Randy Smith
(269) 763-2114

Preparation Ministries, Inc

PO BOX 475 OLIVET, MI 49076

preparationministries@gmail.com

(Please feel free to call, or send messages)

Web Site: <http://www.preparationministries.net>

Broadcast Schedule

WOLY AM 1500 - Battle Creek, Sat. 10am - Sun. 9:30am

WLQV AM 1500 - Detroit, Sun. 10am

Also, Internet Stream - www.am1500wlqv.com

WFPM

99.5 FM in Battle Creek - Fri. 3:30pm

99.9 FM in Albion - Fri. 3:30pm

103.7 FM in Jackson - Fri. 3:30pm

Also, Internet Stream - www.wfpmradio.org

Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about the baptism. John the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus Christ, telling the whole country of Israel that they needed to get prepared for the soon coming of the long awaited Messiah. John's message of repenting from sin and being baptized in water caused a nationwide stir among the people. Old and young, rich and poor, the upper class citizens, the middle class citizens, and the lower class citizens all flocked to the Jordan River to hear John's message and to be baptized. It was a time of preparation for the people. And, the people needed it. They had forgotten what it meant to serve the Lord with all their heart, all their soul, and all their strength. But even though the people had strayed from the true word of God, the Message of John the Baptist stirred the hearts of the people, and because of both the fear of God and the love of God, they accepted John's exhortation. The nation was waking up. They had looked forward to the day of their Messiah, and according to the message of John, the Messiah was soon to come. They were going to get ready. However, many of those who were baptized did not have a true heart for God. They accepted the baptism of John as a way to escape the coming damnation, but they didn't really have a heart for it.

You see, the baptism of John was more than an act of getting wet. It was more than just the washing with water. In conjunction with the water baptism, the people had to repent of their sins. It actually was no different than what we see in our present world today. Many people can respond to the outward act of preparing to meet Jesus Christ, but not everyone who gets baptized is truly repentant of heart. I know you've all heard of people reciting the sinner's prayer in order

to be saved, but I'm also sure that all of you realize that just reciting the sinner's prayer does not promise anyone eternal life. At least, I hope all of you realize this.

However, what I'd like to do today is to take a closer look at baptism from the standpoint of a Christian. No, not the baptism of John, but the baptism of Jesus Christ. The baptism of John was only the forerunner of Christ, and it looked forward to the covenant of grace that we have today, but the actual baptism in Jesus Christ is more than getting wet with water. It is a life conversion.

If you are a Baptist, then I'm sure you believe in water baptism, and also, that you believe in baptism by full immersion. If you are from another denomination, you may believe that baptism isn't even necessary anymore, or if you do believe that baptism is necessary in this day and age, you may think that baptism can be accomplished just by sprinkling with water. In some denominations, even infant baptism is practiced as a means of salvation.

However, I would like to establish something right up front. I, personally, believe in baptism by full immersion. No, I'm not a Baptist, but neither am I Methodist, Presbyterian, or Assembly of God. My convictions don't come from a denominational viewpoint. I am an independent. I am a Christian, and my convictions come from what the Bible shows me. Of course, you're the same way, at least I hope you're the same way. Your convictions come from the Bible also. But to me, baptism is not really baptism unless it takes place by immersion. And, just for the record, I'm not just talking about baptism in water, but also baptism in the Holy Spirit. And, what I would like you to see today is that any kind of baptism must be by immersion, no matter what element is being used for the baptism. I believe that when you are baptized in water, if you are not overwhelmed with water, then you weren't really baptized. Also, if you are being baptized in the Holy Spirit, then I believe that if you are not overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit, then you weren't really baptized in the Spirit.

Now, hold on a minute. I'm sure there are some of you out there that either believe that sprinkling is proper baptism or you believe that baptism was a New Testament church thing and that we don't need to be baptized anymore. That's fine. Believe what you want to. I'm just trying to explain why I believe in full immersion.

And here it is. This is why I believe in full immersion. First, the word baptism, as used in the Bible, only implies being overwhelmed. I'm sure you've been overwhelmed with things before. Mostly you've been overwhelmed by problems for which you couldn't find an easy solution. We all get overwhelmed at times. However, the actual word, baptism, means, "to whelm." The word, whelm, isn't used in the English language anymore except in conjunction with the word over. When you put the two words together, over, and, whelm, you get overwhelm, and this is the meaning of the word baptism. To whelm something is like having a plate full of leftovers from Thanksgiving dinner, and you need to keep them fresh, so you take a large bowl, turn it upside down and place it over the plate of leftovers. If you do this, you have just overwhelmed the leftovers in order to keep them fresh. So, the word baptism, in itself, means to whelm, which

means to cover over, or be covered over. Therefore, if you use the word baptism, as it was used in the Bible, you are talking about being covered over. To me, it makes perfect sense that if the word baptism means to cover something, then the word sprinkle doesn't fit at all. And, remember, I'm not just talking about being baptized in water, I'm also talking about being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Think about it. Can you imagine just being sprinkled with the Holy Spirit? I can't. To me, if you're not immersed in the Holy Spirit of God, then you're not really baptized in the Spirit. You can claim to be baptized, but a little sprinkling of God's Spirit will not give much testimony to your Christianity.

But then, if you listen very much to this program, you know by now that I don't believe in serving God half way. A lot of Christianity today is half way, but I can't handle that. To me, if you're going to do something, then you might as well do it to the best of your ability. That's also the way I try to be a husband to my wife. I try to be the best husband I can be. No, I didn't say the perfect husband, just the best husband I can be. It's the same for Christianity. I'm a long way, a looooooonnnnnnnnnnngggggg, way from being a perfect Christian. But I'm still going to make every effort I can to be what God wants me to be. I don't have any other life. I'm not interested in anything else. Sure, I'm tempted to reach out to the delicacies of this world just like anyone else. But then, if I start trying to get my satisfaction from earthly things, then what's the sense in telling God that I love him with all my heart? What's the sense in telling Jesus that he is worth more to me than anything in the world?

Have you ever heard people make the statement that they would give anything in the world if they could just do this or do that? Sure you have. But how many people want to give the whole world just to be the bride of Christ? But you see, that's what baptism is all about. When I was first baptized, I didn't look at it this way. But since then, things have changed a lot. When I was first baptized I didn't really understand it all quite as well as I do now. Back then I just knew that God had convicted me that I needed to be baptized. In fact, I was baptized twice. Once when I was 13 years old, and once when I was 30. The first time I was baptized, at 13 years of age, I did it because I was in a church school where all the other kids were getting baptized because they were 13 years old. I didn't really want to be baptized, but I knew that if I refused to be baptized, the people were going to ask me why. I wasn't ready to stand up against the accusations which would naturally follow. It was easier to go through the process of being baptized than it was to refuse. But then, when I was 30 years old, I decided that I really did want to be baptized. I wanted it for myself, not just to please somebody else. I had finally had a true experience with Jesus Christ, and I didn't want anything to stand in the way of my relationship with him.

Do you remember your first love with Jesus? Do you remember how happy you were? I hope you do. If you didn't go through a honeymoon experience with Jesus, then I would suggest that maybe it didn't happen after all, and that maybe you should take a good close look at your marriage alliance with him just so you can be certain of who you really are betrothed to. It would be a very sad day if you found out on the day of judgment that you had actually given yourself in marriage to the Devil. Do you get what I mean?

You see, if you didn't get completely overwhelmed with Jesus Christ, then it's a very good possibility that your baptism never really took place. You see, when you're baptized, you get overwhelmed with it. You get covered over. And the reason for this is because you have decided that your past life isn't the one you want to be stuck with for the rest of eternity. You decided that you were going to put your old fleshly man to death, and begin a new life as a born again spirit being. Life in this earth starts out in physical form. But if you end up as just a physical flesh and blood person on the day of judgment, then you will not live with Jesus for ever and ever and ever.

In baptism, it is the death of the old physical man that has to take place. And, what do you do with a dead body? You bury it! That's what takes place when a person becomes a Christian. At least, that's what should take place. A person who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord of their life has made the choice to reject this physical world in order to live forever with Jesus. You see, 1 Corinthians 15:50 tells us that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God. It also says that corruption cannot inherit incorruption. This means that the human body, our physical existence in a flesh and blood form, our first stage of the game, is perishable. It can become corrupted, it can become diseased, and die. But the eternal things of heaven are not corruptible. Heavenly things are spiritual, not physical. Remember, John 4:24 tells us plainly that God is a Spirit. God is not flesh and blood. However, God became flesh and blood once in the person of Jesus Christ, but only for the purpose of conquering the flesh. That's what we also want to do. We also want to become born again. We were first born as humans, but when we believe in Jesus Christ, then we become born again, and this time we are born as spirit beings so that we can be spirit as God is Spirit.

But then, what do you do with the body that is left over? It certainly isn't a good idea to leave it laying around on top of the ground. That would be kind of gross. What we do with a body that is no longer useful is to bury it.

Now, this is where the concept of baptism comes in. When we first believe in Jesus Christ, we realize that in order to escape from eternal destruction and enter into an eternal life with God, we will have to get rid of the old man of the flesh. So, the first thing the Bible tells us to do is to be baptized. The baptism is, first of all, our symbolic demonstration of what we intend to do. When we decide that we are going to be born again in spirit, and therefore that we are going to begin living our life from the spiritual perspective of heavenly things, we enter into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ.

Ahhhhhh. Covenant. There's that word again. We hear it all the time. Covenant. It means, an agreement between two or more people. It is a contract. And, the agreement we make is an agreement with God that we will be his children if he will be our God. Of course, that's the same thing that the Children of Israel did with their covenant. It was God who told them that they would be his children and that he would be their God.

You know, if you decide to give God the right to be your God, then you're going to let him do with you what ever he wants to do. You see, when you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are entering into a covenant relationship with God. You are accepting God's part of the bargain of giving you a Savior from your sin in order that you will gain eternal life with him. Then, because you agreed to receive his promise of eternal life with him, then you give God your promise that you will no longer live life on earth from a flesh and blood perspective. You will no longer act like a person who is a physical being, but will begin to act like a spirit being. You agree with God that he will be the authority over you, and you will be his child. You will be betrothed to Jesus Christ as part of the bride of Christ, and you will put your old man to death.

But then, you see, baptism is that first step. However, baptism is not the act of putting the old man to death. Baptism is just demonstrating your intention to put the old man to death. When you are baptized, you are, in essence, telling God that this is what you intend to do in order to carry out your part of the covenant relationship with him. You are going to give up life as you know it as a physical flesh and blood person, and are going to begin living your life on earth according to what you intend to be in the eternal future. Baptism is just the outward demonstration of what you intend to do for God each and every day of your remaining days on earth as his child.

We're told in 1 Peter 3:21 that it is not the washing of water that saves us, but what really saves us is having a clean conscience before God. Baptism doesn't wash the body clean, but it actually cleans the conscience. You see, when we are baptized we make a promise to God that we are no longer going to live our lives like we were living in our old man. What you are telling God is that your old man is going to be dead and buried so that your new man, your born again man, your spirit man, can start living. The baptism just symbolizes your intent to bury the old man so that your new man can live for Christ instead of your old man living for the flesh.

The actual change in your life takes place gradually. Lots of changes take place right at first, but many things take a long time to change. That's because we are still locked in these physical bodies. But God can take care of those things for us as we walk with him each day. But the first thing we have to do is to go through the outward demonstration of what we intend to do. It is the outward demonstration of our promise to God that if he will be our God, then we will do whatever we can to put away the filthy things of this world and begin to live in Christ and to actually put on Christ, in order that we might one day be brought fully into his presence.

Baptism in water is the symbolic expression of our promise to God. It is our down payment to him, assuring him, that we have every intention of fulfilling our covenant relationship with him by living as born again spirit beings instead of flesh and blood beings. In return, God gives us a down payment, which assures us that his promise will one day be completely fulfilled in us. His down payment is the Holy Spirit which comes to abide in us. It is his promise that one day we truly will become spirit beings completely, just as God is a real spirit being.

But then, you probably realize, all to well, that being a child of God is a little bit harder than you first thought it would be. However, accomplishing your goal of being a born again spirit being is not what baptism is all about. Baptism by water is not the act of being good, it is only your outward demonstration that you intend to be good. You see, fulfilling your intent to be a born again spirit being as God intended you to be is not really just your responsibility. Actually, it is God's responsibility to make you into a good born again spirit being. The only one who is good, is God. Jesus said that himself. God is good, and man cannot be good by his own strength. The only way you can become good is if God makes you good. You only become good by the power of God. And that power of God comes through the working of God's Holy Spirit. This is why God's down payment to you is our assurance of eternal righteousness. As the Holy Spirit resides in you, it moves you every day to act and speak in righteousness. Of course, because you are still locked within this flesh and blood body, you won't be able to actually become completely good in your flesh. However, the Holy Spirit, which resides in you, will war against your flesh nature and will begin to make changes right from the beginning. But your promise begins with your outward demonstration of your intent to become a true child of God. It is baptism which symbolizes your intent to do away with the old man, and allow your spirit man to live in Christ.

So, because you are outwardly demonstrating your intention to put the old man to death, then baptism must be an act whereby you demonstrate the burial of the old way, and resurrection into the new way. Without full immersion, how can you effectively demonstrate the death and burial of the old man? I don't think you can.