

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in James

Salvation Baptism? James 2

November 6, 2016 A.D.

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(All Scripture is from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.)

Baptism of John (water) – Baptism of Jesus (Holy Spirit)

John 1:19-34 [words between brackets are notes]

¹⁹ And this is the **testimony of John**, [The Baptist]

when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him,
"Who are you?"

²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed,
"I am not the Christ."

²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"
He said, **"I am not."**

"Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, **"No."**

²² So they said to him, **"Who are you?"**
We need to give an answer to those who sent us.
What do you say about yourself?"

²³ He said, **"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'**
as the prophet **Isaiah** said." [Isaiah 40:3]

²⁴ (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)

²⁵ They asked him,

"Then **why** are you baptizing,
if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶ John answered them,
"I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know,

²⁷ even he who comes after me,
the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸ These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan,
where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,
"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁰ This is he [Jesus] of whom I said,
'After me comes a man who ranks before me,
because he was before me.'

³¹ I myself did not know him,
but for this purpose I came baptizing with water,
that he might be revealed to Israel."

³² And John bore witness:
"I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove,
and it remained on him.

³³ I myself did not know him,
but he [God] who sent me to baptize with water said to me,
'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain,
this is he **who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'**

[John could not give the Holy Spirit to someone. No one can give the Holy Spirit to another person. God, that is Jesus, who is God in the flesh, can give His Holy Spirit to a person.]

³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Therefore, the testimony of John served the main mission of identifying Jesus as the Messiah to Israel. This was accomplished when John saw the Holy Spirit (depicted as a dove) descend and remain upon Jesus. (Also compare Matthew 3:5-11.)

In addition, we read the testimony of John the Baptist and all four related passages in the Gospels; we see that they say the same thing concerning the differences in John's baptism and Jesus's. There is no variance in the text. There is a distinct difference between the Baptism of John and the Baptism of Jesus. The Baptism of **Jesus was for the Holy Spirit** (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 26-34), and the baptism of John was for **repentance** (Mark 1:4) **and with water**. In addition, and specifically, John's baptism of Jesus was **to identify to Israel that Jesus was the Lamb of God** (Messiah) who came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29, 31). John states that he does not know Jesus, but the one (God) who sent him told him to baptize the one the Spirit descends upon and remains (John 1:33). John then calls Jesus the "Son of God."

The baptism of Jesus was with the Holy Spirit to indwell/inhabit a spiritual rebirth, just as Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3). Looking back at the language Ezekiel uses to witness how God is going to change His people, we see the same indwelling.

Ezekiel 36:26 **"Moreover, I will give you a new heart
and put a new spirit within you;**

No doubt, that incorporated into this spiritual rebirth; there was a turning from sin (repentance) as seen in Acts 2:38. Therefore, the disciples carried out water-baptism after the saving experience as a sign of Spiritual baptism by the Holy Spirit which had already taken place. We see an example of this in Caesarea with Cornelius in Acts 10. The Gospel writers did not write that the important act was to be baptized by water. They distinctly wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit (Which is God/Jesus/H.S.) that Jesus taught **He** would be baptizing with and by the Holy Spirit, because He was the Holy Spirit (Trinity). In fact, Paul writes for God in Romans 5:5 **"and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts (circumcised Deut. 30:6) through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."** Therefore, we see that without the Holy Spirit we cannot receive God's love, for by it, we receive God's love which is

saving. Always remember that God started this love initiative. 1 John 4:19 "We love because he first loved us."

Matthew 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Mark 1:8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Luke 3:16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

John 1:26-34 ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷ even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. ²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

In the book of Acts (written by Gospel writer Luke), we see the first baptisms by the apostles. The resurrected Lord tells the apostles in Acts 1:4-5 the same baptismal charge declared by the Gospels writers.

Acts 1:4-5 ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said,

"you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized **with** the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Note: See John 20:19-22 - ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

^{ESV} **John 14:16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever (John 14:16).

In Acts 2:37, the people listening to Peter (who was speaking filled with the Holy Spirit from John 20:22 and from Acts 2:4) responded from their heart.

Acts 2:37 ³⁷ **Now when they heard this they were cut (pricked, pierced Strong's 2660) to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"**

Strong's 2660 katanu,ssw katanusso {kat-an-oos'-so} Meaning: 1) to prick, pierce 2) metaph. to pain the mind sharply, agitate it vehemently 2a) esp. of the emotion of sorrow

God is after the condition of the heart. God said that His desire was for a person's heart to be transformed, to be circumcised (Duet. 30:6) so that they could love Him and their neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:5 [Love God] and Leviticus 19:18 [Love neighbor], Luke 10:27-28; 1 John 4:20-21). In Acts 2:37, through Peter, the Holy Spirit had convicted (John 16:8) those present to the point that they knew their guilt and had the blood of Jesus on their hands. They were guilty and could not cure themselves, nor remove the guilt on their own power or work through the Law to remove their guilt. They did not possess the ability or knowledge of how to remove the price of their guilt. They pleaded to Peter from a heart-position of total unconditional surrender and capitulation. They knew that through no work or merit of their own could they be redeemed/made right/saved. They were convicted and dead on their feet. Therefore, God came to them through His messenger Peter, just as He did through His messenger Moses and called them to surrender (John 3:14,15; Numbers 21:6-9). The rebellious people in the wilderness after the Exodus cried out "We have sinned against the Lord." Many of them had died, and the rest were facing death and begged intercession through Moses to God. This is why in John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that spiritual rebirth is necessary to gain

entrance in the kingdom of God. He did not say "water-baptism." Jesus could have very easily have said "water baptism," especially when Nicodemus compared Jesus' rebirth to entering a second time into the womb and a reference to the breaking of birth water. Jesus could have said, "No, I mean like John's water-baptism in the wilderness." Nicodemus, as the teacher of Israel, surely knew of John the Baptist (John 1:19) as a member of the leadership group.

The next sentence (Acts 2:38) is very important to understand what took place. Remember, the whole creation is fallen (Romans 8:22) and mankind is totally depraved. Without God lovingly reaching out to people, they would never turn to Him on their own. The Holy Spirit knocks on everyone's heart-door. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). This means that Jesus is communing with a person. Peter said to them in Acts 2:38 "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." Repentance is a work and gift of God. The spiritual ability to repent is given to a person by God who has surrendered to God's Holy Spirit conviction. This person opens the door to Jesus. This is the only ability of "free-will choice" a person has. Once God's Holy Spirit indwells a person then they have the ability to repent. Man cannot repent until he has surrendered. This avails the heart to receive God's power to operate in them. Ephesians 2:8 tells us "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Like Luke in the above Acts passage, Paul states clearly in Romans that salvation is a result of God's gift of grace and faith. Paul did not write that salvation is a result of water-baptism.

Romans 1:16-17, ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Paul did not write that the righteousness of God is revealed from ðbaptism to baptism.ö Baptism is a product of faith. Baptism does not produce salvation for salvation is of faith itself. Baptism is an act of man in the sanctification process of being obedient to God at work in the life of a believer. In the book of James, works are a product of faith, and James states clearly in James 2:18 **“But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”** This is clear that faith produces acts of merit and functions within the life of the believer as in the act and witness of physical water-baptism. To further God’s direction in Paul’s teaching that the Gospel saves (1 Cor. 15), and not the act of physical water baptism, we read in 1 Corinthians 1:17 **“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”** If physical water-baptism saved, why did Paul not emphasize that it did? In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul witnesses that the Gospel is the work of Jesus Christ as He died on the Cross for our sins and rose from the tomb. Obviously, this is all the work of Jesus. Paul never discussed baptism in this passage to describe the Gospel that saves, which is a work of God.

Paul even stated that he only baptized a few, and he appears to have second thoughts about people making an issue of water-baptism over the Gospel of acceptance of God’s grace and faith in the previous verses leading up to verse 1:17. Paul even states that he does not remember all that he baptized. If water-baptism was the gate to heaven, it stands to reason that Paul would have remembered this eternal moment for all he water-baptized. It is not that water-baptism is not important as a witness of salvation, but here Paul makes the point that it is already being used by men to associate the legitimacy of their salvation. They had begun to associate their water-baptism to someone other than God/Jesus Christ. This is the problem throughout history and today. People saying or being directed to be sure they are water-baptized in the right church; how ridiculous. This is why God did not make the physical act of water-baptism the act of salvation. As we can see, left to be in the hands of men, they then quarrel over its power and saving effect. Some claim that it is the water-baptism administer only by them that can save. Their claim is scripturally baseless. For one, man is not in charge of salvation. Two, water-baptism is a physical act, and once again we point to Ephesians 2:8 and Romans 4 to start.

1 Corinthians 1:11-16

¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is **quarreling** among you, my brothers.

¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

¹³ **Is Christ divided?** Was Paul crucified for you?

Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

¹⁵ so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.

¹⁶ (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

{End of Sermon on Nov 6}