

THE WASHING OF REGENERATION

TEXT: Tit 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

WE WANT TO BREAK THIS PASSAGE DOWN, SEE WHAT THE APOSTLE PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT, AND SEE HOW WE CAN APPLY IT TO OURSELVES TODAY.

THE **NIV** PUTS IT LIKE THIS: Tit 3:3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

PAUL IS SPEAKING OF AND TO PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY SAVED.

BUT HE IS TALKING ABOUT WHAT "WE USED TO BE" WHEN WE WERE **LOST**, WHAT IT MEANS TO BE **SAVED**, AND HOW WE GOT THAT WAY.

WHAT DID WE USE TO BE? --WE USED TO BE "**foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures,**" etc. CHRISTIANS USED TO BE **LOST**. MANY PEOPLE STILL **ARE** LOST.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE LOST? IT MEANS TO BE SEPARATED AND ALIENATED FROM GOD, (Isa. 59:1,2). IT MEANS TO BE HEADED FOR THE PLACE WE CALL "HELL," Ps 9:17 "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

IT MEANS EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER, 2 Thes. 1:7--9. IT MEANS THAT WHEN WE STAND BEFORE GOD IN JUDGMENT, HE WILL ORDER US, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," (Mat. 25:41).

IT IS BAD TO BE LOST. BUT IN OUR TEXT, PAUL IS SPEAKING ABOUT HOW HE "**saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.**"

HE SAID IN VERSE 4, THAT IT WAS THE RESULT OF THE **KINDNESS** AND **MERCY** OF GOD APPEARING TO US.

THAT MEANS IT WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT WE **EARNED** OR **ACHIEVED** FOR OURSELVES. AS HE SAID IN VERSE 5: "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.**" And V.7: "**That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**"

"**MERCY**" IS ANOTHER WORD FOR **GRACE**. AS PAUL SAID IN Eph 2:8,9: "For by **grace** are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

WHEN HE SAID "NOT OF WORKS," HE MEANT NOT BY ACHIEVEMENT; IT IS NOT SOMETHING YOU WROUGHT OR ACCOMPLISHED FOR YOURSELF. Rom 4:4,5: "Now to him that **worketh** is the reward **not** reckoned **of grace**, but of **debt**. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his **faith** is counted for righteousness."

SALVATION IS NOT SOMETHING THAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH BY OUR OWN CONNIVANCE; NOT SOMETHING WE CAN "ACHIEVE" OR "EARN." THE PSALMIST SAID, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever)," (Ps 49:7,8).

1Pe 1:18,19 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot..."

SO, IF WE ARE TO BE SAVED, WE MUST GAIN SALVATION BY **CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD**. IN THIS, WE APPEAL NOT TO OUR WORTHINESS, OR OUR MERIT, BUT TO GOD'S **MERCY**. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, JOEL PROPHESED OF A TIME COMING: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered..." (Joel 2:32)

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, IT TELLS US THAT TIME HAS COME: Ac 2:16 "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel * * * Ac 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:10 says: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

PETER PREACHED "JESUS" Ac 2:37--39 "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? 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. 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." THERE IS YOUR WASHING OF REGENERATION AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

WHEN WE COME TO CHRIST, WE ARE CALLING **ON HIM** TO SAVE US: ANANIAS ASKED SAUL: Acts 22:16 "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, **calling on the name of the Lord.**" EVEN THOUGH WE MAKE THE CHOICE TO COME TO CHRIST FOR

SALVATION, THAT SALVATION IS NOT FROM US, BUT FROM FROM HIM!

AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE SAVES US: PAUL SAYS, "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

LET US LOOK AT SOME OF THESE TERMS:

1. "REGENERATION."

ANOTHER TERM USED IN THE BIBLE FOR THIS REGENERATION: **IT IS REFERRED TO AS BEING "BORN AGAIN."** John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him (Nicodemus), Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:7 "Marvel not that I said unto thee, *Ye must be born again.*"

1Pe 1:3,4 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you..."

THIS IS NOT JUST MAKING A NEW RESOLUTION. IT IS NOT JUST THE "TURNING OVER OF A NEW LEAF." IT IS SOMETHING WE MUST **SEEK** FROM GOD, BUT NOT SOMETHING WE CAN DO FOR OURSELVES!

PAUL SAID, Eph 2:1 "And you hath *he* quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins..."
CONTINUING IN Eph 2:4-6 "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, *hath quickened us together with Christ*, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus..."

WHEN YOU GET **REGENERATED**, YOU WON'T BE THE SAME. 2Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Gal 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Gal 2:20 PAUL SPOKE OF HIS REGENERATION: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

2. "WASHING."

THIS "WASHING" HAS TWO ASPECTS: A CLEANSING FROM SIN, WHICH IS A SPIRITUAL WASHING...

ALSO: A SYMBOLIC WASHING IN THE WATERS OF BAPTISM.

CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL "WASHING:"

1Co 6:9-11 (NIV) "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you **were**. But you were **washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**"

Rev 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, **and washed us from our sins in his own blood.**"

THOUGH SOME WOULD TRY TO DENY THIS, IT ALSO INVOLVES A WASHING IN THE WATERS OF BAPTISM. THIS IS MADE EVIDENT IN A NUMBER OF SCRIPTURES:

Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, **and our bodies washed with pure water.**

Eph 5:25-27: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the **washing of water by the word**, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

ONLY A PRE-CONCEIVED BIAS AGAINST BAPTISM WOULD CAUSE US TO CONCLUDE THAT THIS WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD IS ANYTHING OTHER THAN BAPTISM. THE "WORD" ORDAINS BAPTISM IN THE GREAT COMMISSION: MAT 28:19.

THE APOSTLE PETER SAID, 1Pe 3:20,21 "...The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by **water**. The like figure whereunto even **baptism** doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

WHEN JESUS TALKED WITH NICODEMUS ABOUT THE NEW BIRTH, HE SAID, Joh 3:5, "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." BOTH ARE INVOLVED!

SO, THIS "WASHING OF REGENERATION" IS A CLEANSING OF THE SOUL FROM SIN BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, THAT IS PORTRAYED AND APPLIED IN BAPTISM... THE WASHING OF THE

WATER BY THE WORD.

PAUL CONNECTS BAPTISM WITH REGENERATION IN ROMANS 6: Ro 6:3 "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 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. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

ADDING IN Ro 6:17, 18 "But God be thanked, that ye **were** the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being **then** made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

3. THEN, LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THERE IS THE "HOLY SPIRIT" ACTIVE IN THIS REGENERATION:

"...but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

SOME WOULD ARGUE THAT THE ONLY WAY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OPERATIVE IN OUR REGENERATION IS IN GIVING US THE INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHAT WE ARE TO DO... BUT TO ME, THIS CONTRADICTS THE PLAIN TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD.

REMEMBER: 1Co 6:11 "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, **and by the Spirit of our God.**"

AND LOOK AT HIS TERMINOLOGY: "**The Holy Ghost, Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.**" The "Word" is not "shed" on us. The Holy Spirit is!

JOHN SAID, 1Jo 5:7,8, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. **And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one..**"

THERE ARE SOME WHO "JUMP THROUGH HOOPS" TO GET WATER OUT OF THE NEW BIRTH, AND OTHERS WHO "JUMP THROUGH HOOPS" TO GET THE SPIRIT OUT. BUT JESUS PUT BOTH IN: "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." (Jn. 3:5)

Ro 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

WHEN WE ARE SAVED, OUR SPIRIT AND GOD'S SPIRIT ARE UNITED: 1Co 6:17 "But he that is joined unto the Lord *is one spirit.*"

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; *and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

SO... Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour... HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THAT REGENERATION? ARE YOU READY TO LET HIM MAKE YOU SPIRITUALLY ALIVE?