

# **HC 69-70 – Christian Baptism: United With Christ and his Church!**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Today we will now move from the general teachings of baptism to the specifics. You will hear from God's Words regarding the assurances you personally get from your baptism, and you will see an explanation of a metaphoric and often misunderstood phrase regarding baptism.

Our headings are: The **Assurances of Christian Baptism**, and a **Misunderstood Phrase regarding Christian baptism**.

Our goals are: That **you will love the God who sent his Son and Holy Spirit to give to you the benefits of eternal life and to mark those benefits by sprinkling you with water baptism.**

## **The Assurances of Christian Baptism**

69 Q. HOW DOES BAPTISM **REMINDE YOU AND ASSURE** YOU THAT CHRIST'S ONE SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS IS FOR YOU **PERSONALLY**?

A. In this way: **Christ instituted this outward washing** and with it **gave the promise** that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so **certainly his blood and his Spirit wash away my soul's impurity**, in other words, all my sins.

**1. As a believer you are commanded to be baptized.** God demands that you accept the mark he puts on you. Jesus instituted (Matthew 28) this and his disciples reiterated this command.

**Acts 2: 38** Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..."

Those who refuse to submit themselves or their children to baptism are therefore in **open rebellion against the Lord** and **show a dismissive attitude to what Christ has done on the cross.**

**2. In baptism God reminds you (a perfect sign) and assures you (a permanent seal) that he has fully paid for all your sins, and that you belong to him 100% - forever.** So baptism has 2 rich meanings for the Christian. **Baptism is not a simple ritual that the Lord wants you to go through.** It is not only a sign. Baptism assured you that your soul was marked a "property of Christ." A man proves he loves his bride by assuring her of his love, by publicly displaying his love, and by giving his wife a ring. The ring does not make the marriage. It is the regular assurances of love!

**3. Jesus Christ gives you the greatest assurances of all.** Even John the Baptist's baptism did not have the same value. John the Baptist acknowledged that he was not the Christ and his baptism only pointed to Christ. Jesus Christ was much greater than he. So Jesus Christ's baptism was greater.

**Matthew 3:11** "I indeed baptize you with water unto 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 fire.

It is true that both baptisms were similar in the sense that converts had to put their faith in Jesus Christ and were marked by God himself. **But Jesus' baptism would add a fullness that John could only imagine.** While John was baptizing, circumcision was still necessary. Jesus had to die (he was your circumcision), and circumcision of the flesh had to be totally rendered useless. After the resurrection, baptism then had its full importance. **It was the only sign and seal of being made clean.** John the Baptist's baptism was simply one step in that direction.

This means you should love your baptism; it is truly special.

**4. Baptism assures you that you are united in Jesus Christ.** (This is how the assurance comes.) You were in Christ when he died, when he was buried, and when he rose again from the dead.

**Romans 6: 3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into His death**? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised 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 **united together** in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, **6** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. **7** For he who has died has been freed from sin. **8** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, **9** knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. **11** Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Apostle Paul made the point that those who were already baptized were inexorably united in Christ. He did not intend to teach of the mode of baptism, but he wanted to remind Christians that they were united with Christ and therefore could not live however they wanted. As a result of Jesus Christ dying for you, and since you were in him,

death no long has dominion over you. And you show that you are alive by being baptized. You have been washed in the blood of the Lamb...and washed by his Spirit.

5. Those who carelessly argue that being buried with Christ was a symbol of the mode of baptism will have a hard time explaining how we “put on” Christ in baptism, or how the Holy Spirit was “poured out” in baptism. (Gal 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Acts 2: 17 ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...’) The truth is, those who were “put under” water usually symbolized destruction in the Bible. Pharaoh and his army were put under water, not Israel. The people of the flood were put under water, but not Noah. And the Bible teaches that Noah’s baptism symbolized our baptism. (1Pet 3:20) Search for the word “floods” in the Bible and you will see that being covered by water was usually negative.

**6. Your baptism assures you that you are brought into the covenant community with God’s people. You pledge to God** to support and correct each other and work together to advance Christ’s kingdom. What rich blessings are in the church of Jesus Christ! You willingly obligate yourself, because you belong to Jesus Christ, to help each other. Praise God for your baptism...praise God for his church...praise God that you are in his kingdom-for sure!

### **A Misunderstood Phrase Regarding Christian Baptism**

70 Q. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE **WASHED WITH CHRIST’S BLOOD AND SPIRIT?**

A. To be washed with Christ’s blood means that God, by grace, **has forgiven my sins** because of Christ’s blood poured out for me in his sacrifice on the cross. To be washed with Christ’s Spirit means that the **Holy Spirit has renewed** me and set me apart to be a member of Christ so that more and more I become dead to sin and increasingly live a holy and blameless life.

**1. Now we come to this strange phrase “washed in Christ’s blood and Spirit.” What does it mean?** It does not mean that you were immersed in the blood of Christ physically. That would be gross. From where does this teaching come?

**Exodus 29:21** "... take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and **sprinkle it on Aaron** and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; **and he and his garments shall be hallowed**, and his sons and his sons’ garments with him.

When the priests were sprinkled (baptized) with blood they were **declared to be washed of their sins**. Blood was figuratively poured over them and they were fit to be priests. They were viewed as holy (hallowed).

**2. So to be washed (baptized) with Christ’s blood means that God has forgiven you all your sins, and** like Aaron’s sons, you are now fit to be priests before God. Of course blood was not literally poured or sprinkled over you because you have no need to be sprinkled with blood anymore. (If you were under the cross you would have been sprinkled with the blood of the cross.) So God instituted that we use water. But the meaning is the same. Want more proof?

**3. The language of you being washed (and show you are forgiven) by the poured out blood of Jesus is found in literal and figurative** language throughout the Old and New Testament.

**Zechariah was a prophet of God** spoke of the future work of God and the sacrificing of Jesus Christ. (Zech 13:7)

**Zechariah 13: 1** "In that day **a fountain shall be opened** for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **for sin and for uncleanness**.

In this verse Zechariah pointed to the spiritual cleansing work of Jesus Christ that is symbolized in baptism.

**Ezekiel stated that Christ would sprinkle his church** and make her clean.

**Ezekiel 36:25** "Then I **will sprinkle clean water on you**, and you shall be clean; **I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols**. 26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

**The writer of Hebrews testified** that that was what Jesus did...animal blood wasn’t enough to clean you!

**Hebrews 12: 24** to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the **blood of sprinkling** that speaks better things than that of Abel.

**Hebrews 9:14** how much more shall the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, **cleanse your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?

Consciences can’t be washed by Christ’s blood literally, but consciences can be washed spiritually by Christ’s blood. As a result, you are forgiven. Your conscience is figuratively scrubbed clean.

Both of these passages were in the context of baptism.

**Apostle John wrote of this is a most direct way:**

**Revelation 1: 5** and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and **washed us from our sins in His own blood**,

And all of this was by grace.

#### **4. Is there something you can learn about the mode of baptism? Yes.**

**You are washed by the blood of Christ in baptism.** But that it is not a literal washing. It's a symbolic one. No one can literally wash the conscience. So first, immersion is not required by the text. How was this "washing" taking place? Blood was either sprinkled or poured out - on many, many occasions. Because some people hear "wash" they insist that that must mean baptism by immersion. Follow the argument now:

- a. "Sprinkling" or "pouring" are clear methods of baptisms symbolizing that you have been made clean through the work of Jesus Christ.
- b. Immersion is a possible translation of "baptism" but doesn't have to be. Because Jesus came "out of the water" is not proof that he was immersed. (The Jordan can be knee deep often.)
- c. Those who argue that baptism must be by immersion would have to prove that baptism by sprinkling and pouring, as was done before, was abolished by God. But keep in mind that the amount of water used in your baptism does not make it more or less effective. It is one who works in you and indeed washes away your sins that make the true difference.

#### **5. When you are washed in the blood of the Lamb you will be a testimony to others of the work of**

the one who baptized you and forgave you your sins. This is where doctrines get teeth. You are clean and other will see you as clean...and you will tell other why you are clean. You will remember how the Israelites had the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts and lintel of their front doors, not just as a evidence that their sins were forgiven, but also as a public testimony...and what a testimony that was to the Egyptians. No wonder many of them left with the Jews. They knew beyond doubt that the Jews were the people of God by the blood.

#### **6. You are not only washed in Christ's blood, but you are also washed by the Holy Spirit. What**

does it mean to be washed by the Holy Spirit? It means that the Holy Spirit is renewing you to be more and more like Jesus Christ by removing all your sins. He did the initial cleaning and continues to clean up your messes. Look at scriptural proofs.

**John 3:5** Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

**1Peter 1: 2** elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in **sanctification of the Spirit**, for obedience and **sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**: Grace to you and peace...

**1Corinthians 6: 11** ...But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

As the Holy Spirit sprinkles you with the knowledge of what Jesus Christ did for you, you will get better day by day. Your soul becomes cleaner every day. Such is the continued work of the Holy Spirit. He cleaned you initially and continues to work till you die. You need it.

What great love God had for his people.

#### **Conclusion:**

At your baptism God put a **sign on your head** and confirmed a **seal in your heart** that you belong to Jesus Christ. You belong to Jesus Christ because he paid for your freedom with his blood – his red blood that washed black sins and made you as white as snow.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Love what Jesus Christ did** for you. And **love baptism and the warm assurances it gives you**. **Live like your sins are forgiven**. **Let others know** what Christ did for you. This will **lift him high for the world to see**...see him on the cross, suffering for their sins.

Finally, if you are not a Christian you are still in your sins and will die in your sins. You can escape death if you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sin. You will show that you believe by being baptized and being incorporated in the body of Christ – the church – and receive all his benefits.