

*A Study
on the
Epistle to
Titus*

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Bible Study Guides for the New Testament

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is

presented herein is an analysis of important details in God's creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our

intuition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start

writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study

questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with [Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

JESSE JONES

A Study on the Epistle to Titus

From the John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible

In point of time, this epistle is prior to the Second Epistle to Timothy, which is the last of Paul's extant writings. Titus was a Gentile and Paul's disciple, but we have very little certain knowledge about him. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he is mentioned nine times, and is, no doubt, the Titus of whom Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Galatians. It was Titus that brought to Paul the manner in which the Corinthians received the First Epistle, and it was Titus who carried back to that church the Second Epistle.

It seems evident from Titus 1:5 that Paul visited the church on the island of Crete, which lies in the Greek Archipelago, and left Titus in charge of the work. That was when Paul returned to Asia from his first imprisonment in Rome. There were many Jews on the island, some of whom were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11), and it is thought by some that these converts to Christianity returned to Crete and founded a Christian community. This epistle was written from Nicopolis, probably shortly before Paul was taken as a prisoner to Rome (67 or 68 A.D.) for the second time. From 2

Timothy 4:10 we learn that Titus had been with Paul during this imprisonment.

Good Ministers, Bad Teachers

From Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to God's chosen people to promote trust and knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, based on the certain hope of eternal life promised before the world began. God has manifested His word in due time through a proclamation entrusted to me according to the commandment of God our savior. To Titus, a true son in the faith that we share: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

For this cause I left you in Crete, that you could set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city, according to my instructions. If anyone is blameless, husband of one wife with faithful children, is not wild or rebellious, self-pleasing or prone to anger, and not given to wine, not a quarreler or greedy for ill-gotten gain, but hospitable and a lover of good, discreet, just, holy, temperate, and one who clings to the Word according to the teaching, that he may be able to encourage by sound doctrine and convict the ones contradicting. For there are many insubordinate men, empty talkers and mind-deluders, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths you must silence, who overturn many by teaching things that they should not for the

sake of ill-gotten gain. One of them, a prophet of their own, has said Cretans are always liars, evil beasts and idle gluttons. For this reason you must be severe when you rebuke those that have followed this false teaching so they will come to be sound in their trust, and no longer pay attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of people who reject the truth.

To all who are themselves pure, everything is pure. But to those who are defiled and without trust, nothing is pure—even their minds and consciences have been defiled. They claim to know God, but with their actions they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work, reprobate.

Guidance for Doctrine and Life

Paul tells Titus to speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine, such as: older men are to be temperate, sensible, discreet, and sound in faith, love, and patience. Likewise, older women should be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to drinking, and teachers of that which is good so they can train young women to love their husbands and children. They should be discreet, chaste, workers in their homes, and subject to their husbands. In this way God's guidance will not be disgraced. Similarly, urge the young men to be self-controlled, and in everything set an example yourself by doing what is good. When you are teaching show integrity and be serious; sound speech cannot be condemned and the person opposing you will be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about you.

The saving grace of God which brings deliverance has appeared to all sorts of men. It teaches us to renounce godlessness and worldly pleasures, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives; while continuing to expect the blessed fulfillment of our certain hope: the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself up on our behalf to redeem us from all

iniquity, and to prepare a special people for His own possession who are zealous of good works.

Guidance For Titus Continued

Remind people to be subject to rulers and authorities, principalities and powers. Do not speak evil of any one and avoid quarreling. Be friendly and behave gently toward everyone. For we ourselves were at one time foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit: He cleansed our bodies from all filthiness, and renewed our spiritual life. Ezekiel 36:25-27 describes this as follows: *“Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”* You can see from this that the word “*regeneration*” involves a lot of changes in the life of one that receives salvation from Jesus Christ.

These changes are described as follows:

1. The Ministering of Angels

God sends out ministering angels to “*do service*” for those that will be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14, Matthew 18:10). This possibly refers to God’s protection of those He has chosen to insure they will not be overwhelmed by evil before they become mature believers. The Greek New Testament (GNT) says that these angels are sent out “*because of the ones being about to inherit salvation*”.

2. The Father Draws Those He Gives To Christ

At the appropriate time God initiates the drawing process in the (future) believer’s life (John 6:44). This happens in many different ways but is always what God sees as being necessary to get the person to “come to himself” (Luke 15:17).

3. The Washing Process Begins

Once God has gotten the (future) believer's attention He starts the "washing" process. This is the first step in the five steps listed in Ezekiel 36:25-29 describing what happens in the life of person as he becomes a believer into Jesus Christ. This "washing" was referred to by Jesus at the Last Supper as He prepared to wash the disciples feet prior to leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane. John 13:10 describes what Jesus told them: "*ye are clean, but not all.*" (referring to Judas). He further clarified this in John 15:3, by adding that they were "*clean through the word which I have spoken unto you*". This "washing" process is also referred to as "*the washing of regeneration*" in Titus 3:5. The Greek word interpreted "clean" in these passages is defined as "sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, and void of evil" ("Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised", by Moulton). This is the condition that Jesus gets us to in readiness to receive Him as Savior.

4. Hearts Are Changed and Sins Are Forgiven

As we begin to get our lives cleansed by the Word of God we also begin to loosen our hold on some of the hard places in our hearts (actually the mind). This is recorded in Ezekiel 36:26, where God says He will give us a new heart,

and will take the stony heart out of our flesh. The stony places in our hearts are the worldly beliefs we have stored in our brains, the things that keep us from receiving the Word, and mixing it with the saving faith necessary to believe into Christ (Hebrews 4:2). God does some reprogramming within our hearts at this time, for He is preparing us to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit. We are washed by the pure water of the Word to make us “clean”, but it is the blood of Jesus Christ that justifies us in the Father’s eyes, purges our conscience from dead works (Hebrews 9:14), and remits our past sins (Romans 3:25). The only sacrifice acceptable to God the Father for the sins of man is the sinless life of the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. His blood was poured out for our sins.

It is at this point that many come to believe in Christ, repent of their sins, accept the fact that God has forgiven them, and feel that they are Christians in every sense of the word. Romans 10:17 talks about the faith required for salvation, which comes by hearing the spoken Word of God and Hebrews 4:2 adds that this faith is the power unto belief. The emphasis here is on “belief,” as contrasted to “faith”. It is clear from these verses that the Bible is referring to belief unto salvation, that comes from hearing the spoken Word of God and mixing it with “saving faith”. This faith is a gift of God (Romans 12:3), and not

all men have it (2 Thessalonians 3:2). Thus, we note that when the unbeliever hears the Word of God, and mixes it with the faith God provides to engender belief, he/she takes the first major step in becoming a believer into Jesus Christ.

At this point we avail ourselves of the blood of Jesus, shed for us on the cross. The blood of Jesus accomplished two things for us: it provided forgiveness for our past sins, and it cleansed our conscience of the guilt associated with these sins (Romans 3:25, Hebrews 10:22).

5. The Human Spirit is “Quickened”

Ezekiel 36:26 also says that we receive a “*new spirit*”. This is referred to in the new testament (NT) as a “quickened spirit”. The human spirit in unregenerate man is dead to God as a result of Adam’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:17, Romans 5:12), but God quickens our spirit at the appropriate time (Ephesians 2:1). It is through our human spirit that we communicate with God (Job 32:6, Romans 8:16), so God does the things within us that are necessary for us to receive His nurturing and guidance through the Holy Spirit that will ultimately be given to us. Our human spirit receives information from the Holy Spirit whereby we renew our minds (Romans 12:2).

I believe the disciples' spirits were quickened when Jesus appeared to them after His resurrection, when they were gathered together in hiding for fear of the Jewish hierarchy. John 20:22 says that Jesus "*breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost...*". I see a similarity between this and God breathing into Adam when he became a "*living soul*" (Genesis 2:7). It was necessary that the disciples' human spirits be "quickened" before they received baptism in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, seven weeks later. When Jesus breathed on them He gave them the assurance (earnest, or pledge) that they would receive the Holy Spirit.

Before God, in the form of the third person of the Trinity, enters our bodies, the old (sin) nature that held us in its grip must flee, for no evil nor sin can exist in God's presence (Romans 6:4-6). Romans 6:6-7 says "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [done away], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead [hath died] is freed [justified] from sin.*" 1 Corinthians 1:30 says, "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" When we are born again (spiritually), we become part of Christ's body, we are "*in Christ*" (Ephesians 1:1-20): we have joined Christ in the death of our sinful (fleshly) nature on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:14). This is also described in

Hebrews 10:9-10, 17-22, where Jesus says that He came to take away the first (old) covenant, that He might establish the second (new): He takes away our old sinful life and establishes us in a new spirit-led life: He takes our sin nature, thus, we are no longer a slave to sin: we are born again, a new creature. This is described in Romans 8:15 as an act of adoption: “...ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father”. We are no longer citizens of this world, subject to Satan’s influence and direction, but are now citizens of the Kingdom of God, and sons of God the Father, with all the authority, rights and privileges vested in sonship. When we identify ourselves as Christians we fully accept the fact that Jesus took the old “us” to death on the cross, and created us anew as spiritual beings: adoptees of His Father in heaven.

Ezekiel 36:27 records the fact that God will give believers His Spirit (the Holy Spirit): the Comforter Jesus promised to send after He went to the Father (John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7; Luke 11:13; Romans 8:15, 26; Acts 1:3). Receiving the Holy Spirit (or baptism in the Holy Spirit), does not always occur at the same time our human spirit is quickened, nor even when we accept the fact that Jesus bled and died on the cross for our sins. In fact, the Book of Acts records instances when people who had been baptized in the name of the Lord did not receive the Holy Spirit until sometime later when Peter and John laid their

hands on them (Acts 8:14-17). In talking to many people about the salvation experience in their lives nearly all attest to a period of some time between recognizing Jesus as Savior, and receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Bible makes it clear that we do not receive the Holy Spirit in part: when you receive the Holy Spirit you receive the third person of the trinity in His entirety, not piecemeal. He comes with all His attributes intact: all the fruits (Galatians 5:22-23), and gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28) are in Him. However, this does not mean that all these fruits and gifts will be manifested immediately in the life of the one to whom He comes. The fruit you bear is a direct function of how thoroughly you are “purged” (1 Corinthians 5:7, Proverbs 16:6), and how firmly you are attached to the vine (Jesus Christ), from whom we receive our nourishment (John 15:4-5). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to edify the body of Christ, and God selects the gift that will be manifested based on the readiness of the vessel (body member), and the need of the church body (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-12).

In regard to evidence that we have received the Holy Spirit, I know of at least three things that changed dramatically when I received the Holy Spirit: I realized for the first time in my life I was a son of God (Romans 8:16); I was now able to talk to God and know that He was there listening and waiting to

give me answers and guidance; and my life began to change, for I immediately saw a change in my priorities and goals. When I encountered the Lord personally, I was one of many that began to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At that time (1963), the generally accepted evidence of one having received baptism in the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues, and I and many others gathered around teachers who reportedly could assist in receiving and manifesting this gift. I was not successful in that endeavor, but later, God, with wisdom that only He possesses, opened my mouth in this way while I was in personal prayer. As the years have passed I have come to realize that this is only one the many attributes of the Holy Spirit that He brings with Him wherever He goes. Anyone that has received the Holy Spirit has the capability within (from the Holy spirit), to pray in this way in their prayer time, and when we do not know how to pray about a certain situation, I think it is extremely helpful. After all, the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:12), and this is what we are trying to determine: what is God's will in a particular situation, and how (or will) He use me as a vessel to bring closure. Praying in tongues in this manner is not the gift of tongues mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10, which refers to prophecy in tongues that requires an interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:5).

Note: Appendix A entitled “The Water and the Blood” is a copy of Chapter 3 from the book, “The Path To Holiness,” by Jesse C. Jones, that deals with this subject in considerable detail.

The Water and the Blood

1 John 5:6 - *“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood”.*

Surely, the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5), or washing by the pure water of the Word is one of the most neglected Bible teachings associated with salvation. I have never heard a message on this subject, nor have I found it discussed by expositors of the Word of God in Christian writings and books. This may possibly be explained by the fact that the word “regeneration” is used only two times in the Bible: in Matthew 19:28 Jesus is talking to the disciples about their judging the twelve tribes of Israel in the regeneration when He is sitting on the throne of glory; and in Titus 3:5 Paul refers to the method by which all believers are saved: the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. From this we know that the word “regeneration” can refer to either a state, or to an act. The Greek word “*paliggenesia*”, interpreted by the English word “regeneration”, is defined as “a new birth; regeneration, or renovation” (“The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised” by Harold Moulton).

There are many other words, and word phrases, used in the Bible to convey the basic meaning of regeneration: new birth, born anew, new creation, as well as others. I believe one reason we find little exposition, and teaching, on the subject of regeneration is the fact that its true meaning is somewhat occluded by the use of other words that convey only partial information. The other important word in Titus 3:5 is “*washing*”, or “*loutron*” in the Greek. The definition of this word is “a bath, water for bathing; a bathing, washing, ablution” (“The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised”, by Moulton). Two other related Greek words will prove important to our discussion here: “*louo*”, interpreted in English as “washed”, meaning to bathe the whole person, and “*nipto*”, interpreted as “wash”, which means to wash only a portion of the body, such as the hands or feet to ceremonially perform ablution.

The goal of this writing is to discuss the meaning of the phrase, “washing of regeneration”, and, in particular, to sort out the purpose and effect of “*washing with pure water*”, and “*sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*”, as they relate to the salvation of sinners.

I. Background

The washing of the body for purification has been ordained by Jewish law for centuries. The old testament (OT) book of Leviticus describes the laws

relating to uncleanness, and specifies the various methods by which the penitent is restored to ceremonial, and, in some cases moral purity, by washing of the body. Even in ancient Jewish marriages, after the marriage contract had been accepted by the bride, it was common for her to undergo a ritual, or cleansing bath, for purification prior to consummation of the marriage. The Jewish marriage process is highly symbolic of the steps involved in a sinner becoming the bride of Christ. The purification bath is particularly analogous to the process of sanctification described in the NT, whereby the newly born-again Christian is sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water by the Word so that he/she can be presented without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:26-27) prior to consummation of “marriage” to Christ at the time of rapture/resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Another OT practice foreshadowing NT spiritual cleansing was the washing of the priest’s hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle. God directed Moses to make a laver of brass for this purpose, to be placed in the outer court at entrance to the Tabernacle. The Laver was made of copper from looking-glasses donated by Israelite women for this purpose. The size of the Laver is not known, but it was apparently a pan-shaped vessel large enough for the priest to wash his hands and feet before entering the Holy Place, or offering

sacrifices at the Brazen Altar. The Lavers in Solomon's Temple were quite large, since all the sacrifices were washed there before being offered on the Altar. The Lavers constructed by Solomon for the temple were 16 feet in diameter. Priests were required to wash their hands and feet in the Laver before entering the Holy Place, and on the day of Atonement the high priest was required to wash his entire body before entering the Holy of Holies. Since sin cannot enter into the presence of God some temporal spiritual cleansing procedure had to be devised to allow the priest to serve within the Tabernacle. The Brass Laver served this purpose in providing a place wherein the priest could wash with water prior to entering the Tabernacle, thus cleansing himself of sin, albeit only temporarily.

From the above we begin to see how Baptism, introduced in the NT by John the Baptist, is an adaptation of the OT cleansing bath. Baptism is a ceremony symbolizing what has happened within the born-again believer: the old sin nature has died at the cross, and a new Christlike nature has been received. This purification or cleansing is a necessary step for union with Christ, our bridegroom, for we know the promised Holy Spirit can only reside in a purified temple (body). Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church (the bride) by the “*washing of water by the word*”, and verse

27 adds that He continues this up to the time we are presented at the wedding ceremony. From this we know that we must continue to be “*washed by water by the word*” after we receive Christ.

II. Washing Of Water By The Word

I have never heard a sermon, or teaching, on “*washing of water by the Word*” (Eph. 5:26), nor on “*the washing of regeneration*”, as it is given in Titus 3:5. I think it is fair to ask, “What happened to this teaching from God?” Granted, it is not discussed at great length, nor is it mentioned a great number of times in the Bible, but the few times it is referred to have such great significance that is difficult to see why, or how, it could have been overlooked. Even great biblical expositors of the past have seemingly ignored, or overlooked this teaching, although some have written on regeneration apart from the “*washing of water by the Word*”. God’s most valuable gems are at times buried in the Bible in such a way that it takes considerable digging to ferret them out: to bring them to the surface for edification and enlightenment. The “*washing of regeneration*” may be one of these great truths. I hope that what I have gleaned

from God's Word on this subject will bring some increased appreciation of this wonderful teaching.

Various scriptures pertinent to this subject are quoted below, followed by analysis of each passage. All scripture references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.

I. Ezekiel 36:25-27 - *"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."* The English word "*clean*" in this passage interprets the Hebrew word "*taber*". "*Taber*" relates to moral purity, and is defined by Strong's Concordance as being physically sound, clear, unadulterated, uncontaminated; morally innocent, or holy. The "Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament" (TWOT) by Harris, et al, gives examples of the use of this word in Psalm 51 when David cries out to God after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband: "*Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity*", "*Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean*". We infer that what David is asking for here is ceremonial cleanliness, and moral purity. In Psalm 51:2 David asks to be washed thoroughly from his iniquity and cleansed from his sin, which only the blood of Christ can do. The Hebrew word "*tum'a*" is interpreted by the English word "*filthiness*" ("impurities" in the Ezekiel 36:25 NIV). As used in this scripture it refers to ethical and ceremonial

uncleanliness; unrelated to spiritual cleanliness or purity. The Hebrew word “*gillul*” is interpreted by the English word “*idols*” in this verse. The Brown, Driver, Briggs (BDB) Hebrew and English Lexicon indicates that this word specifically means logs, blocks, or shapeless things. TWOT gives some synonyms that help in understanding the meaning of this word: “image, thing of shame, thing of horror, empty or meaningless thing, sinful thing, and thing of mystery”.

Ezekiel 36:25 indicates that the first thing that happens to an unbeliever on the path to becoming a believer is that he/she is washed with the water of purification. What we tentatively conclude from the above is that this cleansing seems to be related to impurities, unethical and immoral beliefs, shameful strongholds, empty and meaningless thought processes, bad habits, etc. We know that the washing of verse 25 has nothing to do with our human spirit, nor with our heart because they are dealt with in a different way (see Eze. 36:26-27). When we bathe water cleanses our bodies, not our spirit or soul. God surely chose this way of describing the first step on the road to salvation to distinguish it from the changes that follow having to do with the inner (spiritual) man. The goal of this first step is the purification of our

bodies, which will later become a temple of the Holy Spirit as part of the born-again experience (1 Corinthians 6:19).

2. John 13:8-10 - *“Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.”* This event occurred after the last supper, when Jesus took a towel and a basin of water and began to wash the disciples’ feet. In this passage of scripture Peter objects to the Master humbling Himself in this way. But after Jesus explains that if He does not wash him (Peter), he will have no part with Him, Peter quickly changes his mind. It was important for Peter to submit to the Master humbling Himself by washing his feet, and to realize that Jesus came to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (see Mark 10:45).

The word we are interested in here is the Greek word *“katharos”*, which is interpreted as the English word *“clean”*. “The Analytical Greek Lexicon” by Harold Moulton gives the definition of this word as “sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, void of evil”, which seems to agree with the OT use of the word *“clean”* in Ezekiel 36:25.

We see that this passage of scripture describes the bodily condition of eleven of the twelve disciples at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. Judas, although he had been privy to the ministry of Jesus throughout the three plus previous years, was not "clean". He had apparently held on to his own version of Jesus' mission on earth. He had "hardened" his heart in acting on his own inclinations and lusts, even to the extent of being accused of being a thief (John 12:6). The other eleven disciples were identified as being "clean" by Jesus, so they were essentially ready to receive the Holy Spirit: only one more thing needed to be accomplished in the disciples' bodies before that momentous event could occur. It is noteworthy that all this transpired before Jesus went to the cross, so we know that the "washing" process is normally initiated before we join Him on the cross in death and resurrection. We recognize from the above that Jesus' preparation of the disciples in this manner was directly in accord with the steps listed in Ezekiel 36:25-27.

There is another wonderful teaching in the action of Jesus' washing of the disciples feet that is mostly overlooked in today's world. Jesus emphasized the importance of the disciples need to remain humble, and to take on the mantle of a servant. This is also encouraged in 1 Peter 5:5, where Peter reminds the brethren that they should be subject one to another. Another teaching here is

related to the need for continuing this practice. Washing of the feet in this passage is highly symbolic of the need for Christians to seek continued cleansing as we continue on our “walk” through this world. We pick up a lot of “worldly” dirt in our daily lives that can draw us away from abiding in Christ and becoming conformed to His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). Jesus is encouraging members of His body to be diligent in keeping this dirt washed off our bodies so we remain “clean” and useful in His service. It is significant that members of His body are to support and edify the other members in this way, always maintaining a humble attitude of service.

3. John 15:3 - *“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you”.*

This verse answers the question, “How did Jesus prepare the disciples for receiving the Holy Spirit?” He fed them on the Word, but He had to administer the Word with power: faith (power) that results in belief. Hebrews 4:2 says, *“For unto us was the gospel preached as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”* These two verses give us vital information about how Jesus goes about preparing those He has chosen for salvation. He starts by ministering the Word so that the penitent becomes clean (sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, void of evil). He then “quickens” their human spirit so they can receive guidance from God through

the Holy Spirit. Finally, He empowers the ministered Word through saving faith, by which the penitent believes unto salvation (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2). The Word can be ministered in many different ways as we will see later on in our discussion.

It was necessary for the disciples to receive a “quickened” (live) human spirit (Ephesians 2:5) because the human spirit received at birth was dead to communication with God as a result of Adam’s sin (Genesis 2:17). Ezekiel 36:26 refers to this as receiving a new spirit which was necessary for the Holy Spirit to minister to the believer’s body.

4. John 20:22 - *“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost.”* There is disagreement among Christians about this verse and the purpose of Jesus’ breathing on the disciples. Regarding this verse, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s “Commentary on the Whole Bible” states that this act of Jesus amounted to a symbolic conveyance of the earnest of the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Vines Expository Dictionary of Bible Words says, “. . . Jesus invokes the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on His disciples in John 20:22 with the words ‘receive the Spirit’, in anticipation of the baptism of the Spirit in Acts 2.” Although it is not stated here, I believe this is when Jesus “quickened” the

human spirit within the disciples, for we know the human spirit must be alive to enable the Holy Spirit's ministry to the body (Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:11). In Genesis 2:7, when God breathed into the lifeless body of dust it received a soul, and a human spirit, and became a living creature, whom God named Adam. It was through Adam's spirit that he had communion with God, but he forfeited this when he disobeyed God's command and ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When Adam was told in Genesis 2:17, he would die if he ate of the fruit of this tree, God was referring to spiritual death. When this spiritual death took place the physical body was cut off from its source of life and it began the slow progression toward death as well. God forms man's spirit which He gives to us while we are still in the womb and it returns to God at physical death (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1). Jesus exercised this same creative power when He breathed on the disciples and "quickened" their dead human spirits in anticipation of receiving the Holy Spirit ten days later at Pentecost.

5. John 3:5 GNT - *"Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, if not one is generated of water and of Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God."* Here we deviate from our chronological scripture presentation concerning the disciple's lives to discuss the encounter Jesus had with Nicodemus early in His ministry.

I cite this scripture from the GNT because it uses the word “*generated*” rather than “*born*”, to interpret the Greek word “*gennaō*”. This is another one of those scriptures that is interpreted in many different ways. If you consult the GNT it seems pretty obvious that Jesus is referring prophetically to the Word recorded later in Titus 3:5: Christ saves sinners by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit. Vincent’s “Word Studies in the New Testament” says that the “*washing of regeneration*” in this scripture refers to cleansing as performed by the OT priests in the brass laver, which is referred to as the “laver of regeneration”. “The new life is inaugurated both *symbolically* in the baptism with water, and *actually* in the renewing of the Holy Ghost”. For baptism to have meaning it must be preceded by the “washing of regeneration” by the pure water of the Word.

III. Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ

Above we have restricted our discussion to cleansing, which normally precedes the born-again experience. We have not addressed the need for all who become believers to be forgiven of sin. We can never be reconciled to God until our sins are forgiven, and the Adamic nature within (the sin factory) is replaced by the righteous nature of Christ, imputed to us through Jesus' death and resurrection. This was the thing Nicodemus did not understand when he asked Jesus "*How can these things be?*" (John 3:9): he was not prepared to comprehend spiritual rebirth. I would hasten to add that until a person has an encounter with Jesus Christ that leads to a personal relationship, they, like Nicodemus, cannot truly understand the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14).

In our consideration of "washing of regeneration", and "washing by the pure water of the Word", we noted that Jesus had "cleansed" the disciples, thus preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We now want to take up the spiritual significance of Jesus' death on the cross and His ascension to the Father three days later. First, we need to explain the use of the word "sprinkling" rather than "washed" in discussing the efficacy of Jesus' blood. While searching the Word I was very surprised to find little scriptural

basis for believing that sinners are washed (bathed) in the blood of Jesus. Only two scriptures use the word “washed” in this context: Revelation 1:5 says, “*Unto him that loved us, and washed [loosed] us from our sins in his own blood*”. Many of the oldest Bible manuscripts render Revelation 1:5 as, “*loosed us in [virtue of] His blood*”. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown’s (JFB) “Commentary on the Whole Bible” compares this verse to Matthew 20:28, which refers to Jesus giving His life a ransom for many. The NIV gives this scripture as, “*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood . . .*”. Old Christian hymns such as “There is a Fountain Filled With Blood”, which includes the phrase, “sinners plunged beneath that flood”, imply that the entire body is immersed and washed in this fountain. Zechariah 13:1 also says that in the “*day of the Lord*” there will be a fountain opened to the Israelites for sin and uncleanness, which seems to imply bodily washing. The Hebrew word “*maqor*” is interpreted “fountain” in Zechariah 13:1. This Hebrew word consistently refers to flowing **water**, but derivatives of this word can also refer to menstruous blood, or to the flow of blood in child-birth. I see no justification here for assuming this scripture implies that believer’s bodies are washed in the blood of Jesus.

Revelation 7:14 GNT says, “*These are the (ones) coming out of the great tribulation; and they washed their robes and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb*”.

It is clear from this that believers' robes are "*washed*" in Jesus blood. This is the robe of righteousness, referred to in Isaiah 61:10. Revelation 7:14 implies that believers' robes are "*whitened*" through their own actions. However, since the "whitening" is corollary to the righteousness of a particular life, this must actually refer to holiness manifested by that life during sanctification (the process of making them holy). These works unto holiness are actually works done through the believer's body as the believer subjects his/her will to the will of the Holy Spirit within. In this way believers are "conformed to the image of Christ" through renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2). The more we become like Christ, the whiter our robe of righteousness will be when we receive it from Him after the rapture. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 record that every person's works will be made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ. If any works survive the refiner's fire, that person will receive a reward.

Scriptures in the KJV (other than those discussed above) invariably describe the application of Jesus' blood (or the blood of animals in the OT), using the word "sprinkled", or some variant of this word. Deuteronomy 12:23 and Leviticus 17:11 indicate that life is in the blood, and therefore, the Israelites were cautioned against eating (drinking) it. The implication here is that eating or drinking blood can cause the life in the blood to be manifested in some way

by the one eating or drinking it. Jesus initiated the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:26-28, and clarified its significance in John 6:53-54:

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”

Taking the cup, representing Christ's blood, is one way in which the believer's life becomes more like Jesus' life, but this desirable effect only occurs if this ordinance is celebrated in accordance with God's direction in 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

Blood placed on the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites abodes in the OT protected them from the death angel sent to take the life of the firstborn of all Egyptian households. From this we note that blood can be used by God as a sign to protect His chosen ones from evil, even evil that He Himself has ordained, as in this case (Exodus 11:4-6). We also see the symbolic nature of Jesus' blood in the celebration of the Lord's supper. In a sense the blood of the cup is like the blood painted on the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites houses in Exodus 12:7: when Satan, or any of his minions, see the (spiritual) blood painted on the doorposts and lintel of the heart they know they have no access to that life.

It is clear from many scriptures in the Bible that God separates us from our sins by Jesus blood shed for us through His death on the cross; and He washes us clean with His written and spoken word, the Logos and Rhema.

1. John 3:5 - *“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”* I do not believe that the mention of water here refers to our physical birth: it would seem to be unnecessary to state that a person must be born physically in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Nor do I believe that this refers primarily to water baptism, which is the outward symbol of a change that has occurred on the inside of a person. John the Baptist’s baptism was unto repentance, which is a necessary step for a person to enter the kingdom of God; but baptism unto repentance must be followed by baptism in the Holy Spirit so that the believer can become holy and useful in God’s purpose on earth (Hebrews 12:14).

2. Titus 3:5 - *“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.”* Among other things, rising out of the water in baptism is symbolic of being washed clean or purified. Jesus, when speaking to His followers in John 15:3,

indicates that they were clean through the Word spoken unto them; and in talking to Peter at the last supper (John 13:10), Jesus stated that they were clean, but not all (speaking of Judas). They were clean from the Word ministered by Jesus, and this cleansing was required before the Holy Spirit could come to reside within them. This cleansing is like pruning a vine, it removes the pollution (dead growth) from sins previously committed through our flesh, but does not remove the guilt of sin within our conscience, which can only be removed by the blood of Jesus Christ. In the NT the flesh of mankind is characterized as vitiated human nature: works of the flesh include sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, magic, and hatred (Galatians 5:17-19). Galatians 5:17 says, *“For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”* Believers are to live by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

Unlike cleansing by the blood, cleansing by the water of the Word needs to be continued for the rest of our lives: Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church by the washing of water by the Word. Notice that He does this to make (and keep) us holy so that we can be presented to the Father without spot or wrinkle: holy and without blemish. This is Christ's primary task as Mediator of the new covenant.

Both blood and water flowed from Jesus' side when the soldier pierced it with a spear after His death on the cross (John 19:34). This is symbolic of what happens to the believer when they join Jesus on the cross, and are resurrected in Him: the blood is shed for our forgiveness, and we are cleansed by the washing of regeneration.

3. 1 John 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.”* Speaking of believers, Romans 8:16 says that the Holy Spirit within witnesses with (or through) our human spirit that we are children of God; and thus, we know that we have been adopted by God the Father, and are a member of the family of God. The continued washing by the pure water of the Word (washing of regeneration) sanctifies us and makes us holy, or more like Christ (Ephesians 5:26). The works the Holy Spirit can do through our bodies bear witness not only to ourselves, but to the world we live in. The blood of Christ shed on the cross removes the stain of sin from our lives, and the sprinkling of His blood within our hearts purges our conscience, and cleans us inwardly so that we can approach the throne of God with boldness (Hebrews 10:22). If we did not have

the witness within that our hearts were pure we could not approach God the Father in His throne and could not communicate with Him.

We referred earlier to the purification bath in the Jewish marriage. This was to (symbolically) cleanse the bride, much like Christ does with the church, as described in Ephesians 5:26-27. In the same way, we are to prepare for the return of Christ by continually being washed by the Word and renewed by the Holy Spirit. This cleansing process continues throughout our regeneration and subsequent sanctification (Romans 12:2), until we at rapture/resurrection meet Christ, our bridegroom, and our marriage to Him is consummated. If we are not cleansed along the way our interest and love for Christ tend to wane, and we gradually fall away from our first love, Jesus, our Lord and Master (Revelation 2:4-5). When we join Christ on the cross our hearts are sprinkled with His shed blood and the guilt of past sins in our conscience is washed away completely, forever. This is what happens when we believe into Jesus Christ, but it also foreshadows our continued need for cleansing and forgiveness for the rest of our earthly lives. Jesus taught the disciples this important principle in John 13:14-15, and we should do as Jesus did: not necessarily through the physical act of washing others' feet, but by continuing to love, edify, teach, and

provide spiritual guidance and assistance as God equips us (see 1 Corinthians 12; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 5:5-7; 1 John 1:7-9).

As indicated above, the act of destroying our sins on the cross is portrayed in the OT by the priest sacrificing for the sins of the Israelites. In this ceremony Aaron would lay his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confess the sins of the Israelites, thus (spiritually) placing their sins on the scapegoat's head. The scapegoat was then led away into the wilderness where he was abandoned and left to die. This is symbolic of Jesus bearing the sins of many on the cross (Hebrews 9:28). The sins we have committed in the past are placed on Jesus' head when we come to Him in repentance and, through faith, believe into Him (Romans 3:25). His blood sacrifice was offered once for all time, after which He took His place at the right hand of God the Father to become our Mediator: to insure that none of those God had given Him were lost (Hebrews 8:6; 13:12). We understand from this that sins committed after believing into Jesus Christ are covered by His sacrifice on the cross. I believe the Bible teaches that believers should deal with sins committed after we have believed as follows: we should confess such sins, repent (turn back in the opposite direction), and regard the sin as God does, with hatred. God is

faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Jesus took our past sins **and** our sin nature in His death on the cross, and He gave us a new (His) nature at resurrection. If our sin nature were not done away with we would continue to sin *willfully*, eventually without remorse, after Christ paid for our sins by His death on the cross. The book of Hebrews describes this perfect work of Christ and states that He obtained “***eternal redemption for us***” by “*entering **once** into the Holy Place*” (emphasis mine). This scripture points out the difference between the work of the OT priests in casting the sins of the Israelites on the head of the scapegoat, and that of Jesus on our behalf at the cross.

IV. Closure

Washing of water by the Word begins with God the Father drawing us, and ends at our physical death, but the method God uses to bring this about changes as we mature in our walk. When we join Christ in His death and resurrection we are regenerated (born again) and after we are regenerated the sanctification process must begin (Hebrews 12:14). God, through the Holy Spirit, begins to purify us (make us holy) by the washing of the water of the Word, and renewing our minds (Romans 12:2). We become more like Christ

by allowing Him to take over more and more of our lives. We do this by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our thoughts and actions, and by spending time in God's presence, talking to Him and listening (praying). If we are to continue to be washed by the pure water of the Word we must spend time studying the Bible, His written Word: allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us more about God, and His wonderful plan for us in His Kingdom. In this process of sanctification, I decrease and He increases.

Questions from Titus

Chapter 1

1. Identify the scriptures of the promise.
2. What does the phrase “not given to wine” mean.

Chapter 2

1. Explain the meaning of the statement that Christ purifies a peculiar people for His own possession.
2. Explain the statement that the grace of God brings salvation hath appeared to all men.

Chapter 3

1. Explain the terms “washing of regeneration” and “renewing of the Holy Spirit”.

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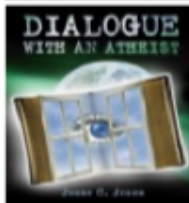


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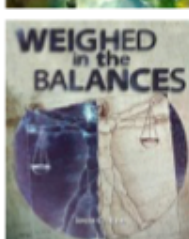
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