

Christ in you the hope of glory ministry

Baptism and follow-up

Part 1

What happens at baptism?

When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was baptised too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21-22)

Many people claim that nothing actually happens at baptism, and others just don't expect anything to happen, except to be soaked in the water and possibly as an initiation into the membership of a church.

Jesus' experience

We can best learn from the Master's experience when He got baptised, after all, His baptism was to "fulfil all righteousness". Some might think it exaggerated to think that whatever experience Jesus might have had during His baptism can be expected of a Christian who decides to follow in His footsteps.

Jesus had an interesting experience during and after His baptism, which we will examine below.

In taking the step to be baptised, Jesus was demonstrating obedience to the will of the Father. I say, "**demonstrating obedience to the will of the Father**", because when it was time for His ministry on earth, though He knew no sin in His life, he decided to take this crucial step in order to be made sin for us; in order to be identified with our sin and that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2Cor 5:21)

So he went straight to the river Jordan where John was baptising, humbled Himself, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, to be baptised at the river like He was a sinner. This was what baffled John the Baptist for which he initially refused to carry out this task. After all, he described Jesus thus:

I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Luke 3:16)

And when Jesus approached John asking to be baptized by him, John was hesitant, having had a full revelation of who Jesus really is, and he tried to deter Him, saying:

*“I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”
Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.” Then John consented. (Matthew 3:14,15)*

The significant of Jesus’ obedience

However, Jesus obedient submission was to deal with some critical spiritual issues.

1. He was going to show Himself as obedient, humble and a submissive, an example for us to follow in His footsteps.
2. He was taking the steps in order to fulfil all righteousness. God is a just God and as the psalmist says: “...So that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.” (Psalm 51:4) God’s righteous needs are fully met in Christ.
3. He took up the sin of the world as the sacrificial Lamb of God by identifying with our sins. So that His death burial and resurrection will make it possible for our sins to be washed away.

Jesus’ experience during baptism

According to the word of God, Jesus did have a very significant experience following His baptism, which was prompted by His obedience to do the will of the Father.

Matthew 3:16-17

1. Heaven was open to witness this event
2. The Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove
3. The Father’s voice spoke to Him from heaven
4. A voice from heaven, the Father’s voice, spoke to confirm three things about Jesus:
 - a. That Jesus was indeed His Son
 - b. That He “loved” Jesus (Reassurance, needed in times of difficulty)
 - c. That He is pleased, well pleased with Jesus.

Jesus was also filled with the Holy Spirit and it was for a specific purpose – to prepare Him for ministry. He needed the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit for the “times ahead”. And the Holy Spirit took pleasure in pouring Himself out on Him without restraint, so that He was given the “Spirit without measure”.

Anyone who is not prepared to humble himself and serve God in obedience should not expect the Father to fill him or her with Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit knows what is in your heart, he knows whether you do have the hunger and eagerness to please the Lord and to serve him and to walk in obedience.

When He comes on you, it is not for you to sit back and remain an idle Christian. If you do, it won't be long before His influence on you drains out, sipping away like as of a licking vessel. That is why the scripture warns us to make sure we fan up the gifts we received through the laying of hands...and to be careful not to quench or grieve the Spirit. (2Tim 1:6; 1Thess 5:19)

You too can have a unique experience during baptism

Just like Jesus, you can have a unique experience during your baptism, where the Holy Spirit will delight in filling you up, and believe me, the difference is apparent. But He needs your permission to do that. Your obedience to his directions, your desire to receive him and your faith to believe him.

For you, baptism becomes:

1. A step you are taking in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus
2. An outward demonstration of what had taken place spiritually when you made the Lord Jesus your Saviour and Lord.
3. Identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ which is enacted in three different steps:
 - a. Christ died, I died in Christ
 - b. Christ was buried, I was buried in Christ
 - c. Christ rose from dead, I rose in Christ

The whole essence of baptism

The scripture reveals a deeper meaning of baptism than most people make it. it is an exiting spiritual experience which when understood, will explain why baptism is not something to be done without understanding.

Apostle Paul through his letters has given us insightful illustrations that helps to explain the spiritual truth hidden in the ordinance of baptism. It is so significantly connect to our new image in Christ that he dealt with it from various angle.

Paul's main mission is to bring to the awareness of everyone "the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col 2:2-3) His intention is that through the knowledge of the truth, people might be free from bondage and captivity due to ignorance, human traditions, false belief, deceptive philosophy, man made rules etc.

Circumcision in relation to Baptism

Col. 2:11-15

When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature.

In the OT, God demanded circumcision from His friend Abraham as:

1. As a sign of belonging to His covenant people and this was a permanent incision that could not be undone, and it equally means no turning back.
2. As a sign of obedience to Him in all matters.
3. The man will be identified as a Jew forever
4. As a shadow of what is to take place in the life of God's people following the work of the cross, whereby, it represented the "cutting off" of the old life of sin, purifying the heart and being dedicated or set apart to God.

When we first receive Christ into our heart, that put an end to the rule of satan and sin over our lives. That does not mean people are no longer capable of committing sin, rather what it means is that the person is no longer under compulsion, and sin has no power over the person. Whatever sin a person might commit after coming to Christ is as a result of choice; whether the person chooses to continue to live in sin and go on sinning or not.

How is this possible?

Before coming to Christ, we were dead because of our sins; (Ephes 2:1-3), this means we were unresponsive to God and unable to relate to God. And as a matter of fact, you were embalmed as it were in the grave of your sinful nature, with all sorts of labels hanging around you that denoted the different records that contained charges against you.

Just like a mummy, you are surrounded and tightly clothed in your sin nature all the tags. As long as your sin nature remained attached to you, you remain dead to God. The only remedy is that you be separated from your sin nature, practically cutting it away, just like you would to separate the fore skins from the rest of the body during circumcision.

To reveal the content of a mummy, you will need to cut through the outer layer of embalmment and what is exposed is certainly not a live person. In the same way, when the embalmment of sinful nature that we have around us is cut away, what is exposed is the dead you, and this is the one that Father God will make alive with Christ. (Col 2:13)

Paul explains it below:

¹²For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

¹³You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. ¹⁴He canceled

the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. ¹⁵In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ.

The implications

The implications when you are cut free from your embalment is that you are freed from the grips of the law with its demand.

Romans 7:4-6

So this is the point: The law no longer holds you in its power, because you died to its power when you died with Christ on the cross. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, you can produce good fruit, that is, good deeds for God. [5] When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced sinful deeds, resulting in death. [6] But now we have been released from the law, for we died with Christ, and we are no longer captive to its power. Now we can really serve God, not in the old way by obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way, by the Spirit.

What is this way of the Spirit?

As people begin to serve God in the Spirit, they are able to bear fruits and productive. They bear fruits that will last and they are known by their fruits.

The fruits of the Spirit:

But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law. Galatians 5:22-23

What happened after Jesus' baptism?

Luke 4:1-4

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, ²where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.' "

Immediately after Jesus' baptism He was led to be prepared for ministry.

Many have admitted that they have had an interesting and significant experience during baptism and that is right.

This should be everyone's experience who under baptism, if they really did it with total submission and repentant heart.

I have experience people after people being baptise and I have noted the difference in each of them. Some have come out of the water feeling like they are going to be soaring in the air and their lives have never been the same again. Others have come out just dripping wet. And continued the next hour in their old self attitude.

The explanation to these differences is that though they all heard the word of truth describing the meaning of baptism and the impact it is to have in our lives, they have all equally learnt about the burial of the old self and the resurrection of the new self. But for many, though they have been taught to put off the old self and put on their new self, they have still allowed the issues of the past to keep them entangled. Some were still full of envy, pride, unforgiveness, bitterness, and all these things that clog up the heart and create dark corners for the evil one to operate from. These are the very things that describe the old nature.

For unless we freely abandon ourselves, and our burdens at the feet of Jesus, we will not be able to receive the overflowing of the Holy Spirit. The Father is always faithful, and is faithful to perform what He has promised. So, as Jesus said to the disciple, do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit...and when He comes upon you, you will receive power and authority, and you will be my witness...

The evil one works the minds of the disobedient, but the Holy Spirit works in the minds and hearts of the obedient. He knows our heart, who He knows who really longs to be filled... Many long to be filled, but their hunger is not strong enough to get them to trade their past hurts and disappointments with the new outpouring. So they receive the promise, who is the Holy Spirit upon them, but what they don't get is the over flowing, the spilling over. And if they continued in their old ways, and are not renewed with repentance in the attitudes of their minds, then they fall back into being slaves to sin. And there is no more sacrifices left to be done.

Our Lord Jesus explained this in two specific parables:

Matthew 12:43-45

"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation."

Luke 5:36-39

He told them this parable: "No-one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. ³⁷And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be

ruined. ³⁸No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. ³⁹And no-one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.' "