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A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Today
we continue
our study of
Baptism.
(John 3)

- Nicodemus says something (**John 3:2**).
- Jesus' answer (**John 3:3**).
- Nicodemus misunderstands (**John 3:4**).
 - Jesus answers a second time that is more difficult to understand (**John 3:5**).

- And then there follows **a discussion.**
- John uses this method in order that we may **see men thinking things out** for themselves
- So that we may **do the same.**

When Nicodemus
came to Jesus,
he said that no one
could help being impressed
with the
signs and wonders
that he did.

- Jesus' answer was that it was **not** the signs and the wonders that were really important;
- The important thing was that there must be **a change in a man's inner life.**

- And that change could only be accomplished with a new birth.

- No wonder Nicodemus was confused.

- This idea of rebirth, runs all through the New Testament.

- 1Peter 1:3

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Because of his great mercy

he gave us new life

by raising Jesus Christ from death.

Peter talks about
being
born anew

not of perishable seed,
but of imperishable
(1Peter 1:22-23)

James 1:18

By his will he
gave birth to us
through the
message of truth,
(Lexham English Bible)

- Paul speaks of the Christian as dying with Christ and then rising to life anew (Romans 6:1-11).

- Paul speaks of those who have lately come into the Christian faith as babes in Christ (1Corinthians 3:1-2).

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Therefore if anyone
is in Christ,
they are a new creation:
old things are passed
away; behold, all things
are made new.

All over the
New Testament
this idea of
rebirth,
re-creation occurs.

- This was not entirely a new idea
 - The Jew knew all about rebirth.
 - "A proselyte who embraces Judaism," said the rabbis, **"is like a new-born child."**

In Matthew
Jesus taught
this same great truth.

Put forth simply and vividly:

**"Unless you turn
and become like children,
you will never enter
the kingdom of heaven"**
(Matthew 18:3).

- Most denominations teach that a person is born again, and thus has sin washed away by the blood of Christ, when that person “accepts Jesus Christ as his/her personal savior.”

- By this expression,
it is meant that
a person must
mentally and/or orally
decide to embrace Christ
as the Lord of his life.
- Hence, the new birth
is seen simply as
a determination of the will
resulting
in an oral confession.

- In an effort to avoid identifying “**water**”
 - (**John 3:5**) as water baptism, many in the last half century have proposed a variety of **novel interpretations.**

- For example,
some have proposed that

“water”

is a reference to
the Holy Spirit.

- A view that
Martin Luther took.

- It is heart-breaking that so many in the denominational world will go to **outlandish lengths** to defend cherished theological theories.

- Some claim that the water baptism specifically mentioned in the book of Acts was merely **a Jewish purification ritual.**
(**Acts 8:36;10:47**)
- And that this ceremonial act was terminated with the **close of the book of Acts.**
- Therefore, the only baptism in vogue today is a **Spirit baptism.**

- It is generally agreed by most that whatever the baptism is in those passages that associate the rite with salvation,
- It is the same type of baptism in **all** the verses.²⁴

- In other words,
the baptism of
Matthew 28:19

is of the same kind as:

- {**Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; and 1 Peter 3:21}.**

- The baptism mentioned in **Matthew 28:19** was administered by humans.
 - Christ commissioned the apostles to go and make disciples, **baptizing them** into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- Inasmuch as an apostle could not baptize someone in the Spirit

- Only

- Christ could do that
(**Matthew 3:11**)

- We are forced to conclude that the baptism of Matthew 28:19

is

water baptism,

not

Spirit baptism.

- **No reputable Bible scholar**
would contends otherwise.
 - It follows therefore
that baptism
is
water baptism
and not Spirit baptism.

- When Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, he declared there is **“one baptism”** (**Ephesians 4:5**).

- If this is **Spirit** baptism, water baptism has been removed.

- If it is **water** baptism, there is no Spirit baptism today.

- If both are still in effect, **the apostle’s math was wrong.**

- Some contend that **”being born of water”** is a reference to the **amniotic fluid** of the mother.
- However, since John had already been born **it was useless to remind him that he had already been born.**

- Another quibble offered in an effort to avoid the clear import of John 3:5 is that “water” is a symbol for the blood of Jesus.

- **No** rationale exists for making such a connection.
 - In **1st John 5:6** John refers explicitly to **water** and **blood**,
- And clearly distinguishes them
from each other.

- The saving power of the blood of Jesus is accessed by faith when one submits to the command to be immersed

“for the forgiveness of sins”
(Acts 2:38; cf. 22:16).

- This is not salvation by meritorious works;
- It is salvation by obedience
(Hebrews 5:9).

- **Hebrews 5:9**

And being made perfect,
he became the author of
eternal salvation
unto all them
that obey him;

- At this point
I want to
shift gears
in regards to a
related subject.

- Another topic

we want to touch on briefly
is found in

1st Cor 15:29

- What shall they do

which are baptized for the dead,

if the dead rise not at all?

why are they then

baptized for the dead?

- In January 1841,
Joseph Smith
claimed to receive a revelation
that baptisms for the dead were intended
to be performed in temples.
- The Lord continued to lead the Church
by revelation,
“**giving them
here a little
and there a little.**”
 - Brigham Young, “Speech,”
Times and Seasons, vol. 6, no. 12
(July 1, 1845), 954–55)

- This is advocated by **Mormonism**
- Stating that people who are alive on the Earth can be baptized, and the effect of that baptism then is offered to **those who already have died and are in the spirit realm.**

- **Joseph Smith, Jr.**, the founder of Mormonism, claimed to have received a “**revelation**” from God on **January 19, 1841**, which revealed that the practice of “**baptisms for your dead**” were “**instituted before the foundation of the world**” (**Smith, 124:33**).

- The Mormon view is **in direct contradiction** to what the Bible teaches from beginning to end.
 - We have only **this life in which to make our decisions,**
 - And when we leave this life, **we have no further opportunities** to repent (**Luke 16:25-31; Hebrews 9:27**).

- The Book of Mormon itself refutes its own doctrine.
- “For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God;...
- behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed”
(*Alma 34:32-33*).

But behold,
your days of probation

are past;

ye have procrastinated
the day of your salvation

until it is everlastingly too late,

and your

destruction is made sure;

(Helaman 13:38-39)

- Paul brought up the subject of baptism for the dead

for one reason:

- To **reaffirm** the reality of the resurrection.

- Christians were being drawn into the destructive heresy **that the general resurrection is fictitious.**

He wanted the
Corinthians
to face the fact that
many things Christians do
have meaning only if
the resurrection is
an anticipated and
ultimate objective.

- This is branded by many as a very difficult verse;
- But the proper regard of the third person plural pronouns in this verse makes it easy.

- The one thing that makes it impossible to suppose that Paul approved of such a thing
 - Is the use of the third person pronouns.
 - There are no examples in the New Testament of the practice of Christians being designated as what "they" do

- One must look carefully at the pronouns.
 - Paul does **NOT** say:
“What will we do who are baptized for the dead?”
 - That surely would have been the construction if he had been alluding to a dogma which he and other faithful Christians were practicing.
 - Rather, he says:
“What will they do.”
- **The pronoun is a third person form.**⁴⁷

This tactic of
referring to what
outsiders were doing
(without implying endorsement)
to make a valid spiritual point
was used by Paul
on other occasions
(Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12).

- Concerning Christian baptism, for example, it is always "we" or "you" who were baptized
- And addressed in the first or second persons,
- Never in the third person.
 - It is still "they"
 - Not "we" who baptize for the dead!

- **Jude 1:3**

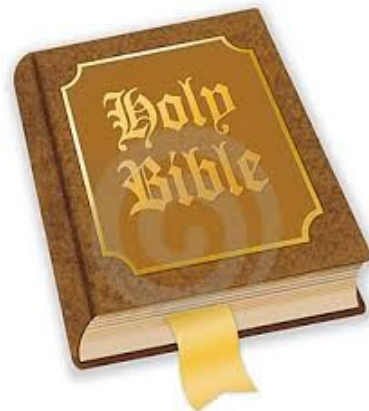
earnestly contend
for the faith
which was
once delivered
unto the saints.

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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