

NEWSLETTER

RESURRECTION HOPE CHURCH OF GOD

(Abrahamic Faith)

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THE ONE BAPTISM

The Bible says that there is only “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:6), but which baptism is that – christening, when a baby is sprinkled with water; or immersion, when a believing adult makes a public confession of faith and a mature identification with the life of the Lord Jesus?

Acts of the Apostles

Consider Acts 2:37, Peter the Apostle is found preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem at Pentecost and is charging them with the death of the Messiah. Notice what happened:

Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’... Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (2:28, 41).

Notice that they were baptized **after** they had gladly received his word, which is always the pattern. Belief first, then baptism. It was the pattern for all in the first century; it is the basis of the apostolic faith. It must be the same now – the One Baptism of believers.

Time and Again

Wherever you read in the Acts of the Apostles, you can see these principles being followed faithfully in the New Testament church. For example, Acts 8 contains the record of the Ethiopian Ambassador, who was a regular worshipper at the Temple in Jerusalem.

He was both a eunuch and a Bible reader. Philip the Apostle was directed by God to draw near to this Ethiopian man as he left the temple to go homewards, and was told to preach to him the gospel of Jesus Christ. This Philip did, as the record tells.

What we have to do is to notice the sequel carefully in verse 36.

Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:36-39).

Mark carefully Philip’s words – “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” Baptism without belief would be useless.

Belief and Baptism

If you look at Acts 10 there is the case of a Roman soldier named Cornelius. He was a Gentile, a believer in God and a man who did many good deeds, who was renowned for his kindness and generosity. The Apostle Peter was sent by God to preach the truth to him through the gospel. Again we ought to mark the sequel. After Peter had preached and these Romans had believed, Peter said:

“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:47).

Notice the same procedure. Peter preached; they believed; the Holy Spirit came upon them as a sign of approval and then they were baptized. Faith first, then baptism.

Saul of Tarsus

In Acts 22 there is the account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus road, spoke to him and Saul submitted to the vision and believed. He was led blind into Damascus to a disciple named Ananias. Ananias said to Paul

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Confronted by the risen Christ, Paul had first believed, then he had submitted himself in faithful obedience to his new Lord, and so he was baptized.

Partial Understanding

Acts 19 is a very interesting case. This involved some people who had already been baptized as a result of the preaching of John the Baptist. What they had believed then was true but limited, that is it was not the full gospel. Notice what Paul said to them –

“John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:4, 5).

This is very interesting because these people were partially informed about the gospel – but they needed to know more, namely, the full gospel. And having understood and believed the whole truth they were re-baptized. Their lack of knowledge and restricted faith made their first baptism inadequate – so after they had received the full truth they were baptized again.

New Testament Examples

All this shows how important true faith is as a pre-requisite of baptism. Once again – first faith then baptism. This emphasizes that baptism without knowledge and faith is useless. It is the first act of

obedience of a believing person. It is a sign of conversion. God has commanded it as a sign of incorporation into the fellowship of the saved and the redeemed and into the fellowship of the church – those who are called, blood-sprinkled and chosen.

One Baptism

It is a definition of the One Baptism because it is the baptism which was followed by those who were an essential part of the New Testament church, as taught and enacted by the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Let us give them credit for knowing about the One Baptism – they were Spirit-filled men, guided by God. What they say and do is the best testimony of all.

And their actions must be our best guide. The same question has to be asked today which was first asked of the apostles by the inhabitants of Jerusalem: *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).*

Those enquirers had one thing, and one thing alone, in their minds. They wanted salvation, and the apostle Peter’s reply is as true today as when it was first uttered:

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

PRAYER REQUESTS

Amy/Kirk Viola, Kevin Keller family, Tyler Richardson, Rose Austin, Ned/Frances Hedrick, David Brewer (OH), Sandy Thomas, Susan Bradley (OH), Amber Pennell, Sheila West, Jimmy Keller, Vicki Wilson, Judy Ritch, Wanda Thomas, Fay Gentry, Gerald Harvey, Dave Church, Terry Wright, Ruth Haynes family, Terrie Walker, Coral Reeder, Hansel McNeil, Vernon/Evelyn Clark, Mamie Hall, Jack Anderson, Clarence/Florence Walker, Mary Monroe, Juanita English, Dolly Yount, Sheri Deck, Christy Miller, Ruth Robinson, Shirley Helton, Cliff Ellis, Paul Ray Keller, Lt. Justin Smith, John Beavers, Sgt. Shawn Tilger, Chris/Melody/Bryce Corpening, Shane McCracken, Amelia/Daniel Corley, PFC Jeremy/Ashley Philyaw, upcoming Youth Retreat, the Lord’s SOON return.

Note: Please turn in to Becky Ritch the addresses of people that you add to our prayer list!

MEN’S FELLOWSHIP

SEPTEMBER 6, 6:00 PM

All men are invited to the fellowship for a light supper, program and season of prayer.

OFFICIAL BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 6, 7:00 PM

All board members are encouraged to be in attendance to take care of the business matters of the church.

GRACE HOLDEN CIRCLE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 6, 7:00 PM

Program Leader: Mozelle Minton

Prayer Leader: Wanda Keller

All ladies are invited to attend. Final plans will be made toward the Spaghetti Supper. Please turn in your tickets and money on Saturday so we can get an idea of how much to fix and bring your food items for the spaghetti so the sauce can be made.

SHELTER HOME

The month of September please bring paper goods by September 28^h to take to the Shelter Home.

FOOD PANTRY

Several families have been helped from the Food Pantry the past couple of months so please remember to bring your item(s) each month to keep it stocked.

A GRANDFATHER’S WISDOM

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, “My son, the battle is between two “wolves” inside us all.

One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, pride, superiority, and ego.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?” The old Cherokee simply replied, “**The one you feed.**”