

Water

God's Great Plan

God's Great Plan included water for many purposes in both physical life and eternal life. God created water which refreshes all living plants and animals. He delivered it to the earth in both mist and rain (Genesis 2:5-6). But the very thing which can revive a weary body, God used to destroy a sinful population *"I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made"* (Genesis 7:4). God also used specific properties of water to save the faithful from the devastating flood. God used an ark to save a faithful servant and his family, *"Eight persons were brought safely through the water"* (1 Peter 3:20).

The use of water in God's Great Plan made washing a requirement in all portions of the law of Moses. The priests bathed before entering the Tabernacle or Temple to serve in the tasks given to them *"You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it. Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD"* (Exodus 30:18-20).

Under the Law of Moses, Israel washed themselves and their clothes to remove the stain of impurity from their bodies. Note the cleansing required of the one touching a dead body. *"He shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening. But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean. So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening. Furthermore, anything that the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening"* (Numbers 19:19-22). The sacrifice of animals and birds atoned for sins and trespasses, but the obedience to the commands for washings provided a type of removal of sin. That washing would have a new form as predicted by the prophets.

David prayed, *"Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"* (Psalms 51:7). Isaiah wrote, *"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool"* (Isaiah 1:16-18). The repeated "shall be" and "will be" indicate that the promised blessing to all nations was still in Isaiah's future. Later, referring to the coming of Messiah, Zechariah said, *"In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity"* (Zechariah 13:1). Messiah would provide the fountain to cleanse people of their sins

Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the change which would replace the washing of the physical body when He said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3:4-6). An explanation of this is found in (Ephesians 5:26), *"the washing of water with the word."* Jesus commanded, *"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:16). Paul said of those in Corinth, *"Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God"* (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Paul explained the freedom from guilt by burial in and raising from the waters of baptism. *"All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,*

so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin" (Romans 6:3-7). Are you free from the guilt of your sins by the baptism of water and the Spirit?