



May 14, 2023

## Abounding Grace: Belonging Washed Clean

Titus 3:5

### For Discussion and Reflection

1. Some people have been taught that baptism is a New Testament rite because it doesn't show up in the Old Testament. The reason is that the OT is written in Hebrew, but when the Greek Jews translated the OT into their language, they used that word for several OT washing practices. Consider these references: Exodus 12:22, "dip"; Leviticus 4:6, 14:6,16 again, "dip"; Joshua 3:15, priests dip their feet into the water; Psalm 67:24, "pour"; Daniel 4:33, Nebuchadnezzar's hair was "wet" or dewy. The point of these passages is two-fold: the word does not mean "immerse" and the practice of dipping was often associated with sprinkling.
2. Read Hebrews 9:9,10. The author refers to these OT ceremonial washings that don't actually cleanse the individual as evidenced by the regular practice. What did these washings teach them? What did Jesus provide that cleansed them? Hebrews 9:11-14. How was it applied? Hebrews 10:19-22.
3. The ceremonial washings were a type or a shadow of the reality that God promised that Eve, Abraham, and David's descendent would provide: Isaiah 52:13-53:12, John 1:29.
4. John, the one who came baptizing, is not practicing NT baptism. We know this because he is not baptizing in the name of Christ or according to Matthew 28:18-20, in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. John was offering a baptism of repentance, a baptism of cleansing from the OT practice of ceremonial washing (Matthew 3:1-12). Based on the OT practice, and John's words, what is he communicating to Israel?
5. John the baptizer, baptized Jesus. Why? Read the exchange in Matthew 3:13-17. Remember some important points: John was from the priestly line of Levi, Jacob's son and ancestor to Moses and Aaron. Simply put, he was a priest. Jesus is from the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe, but like Melchizedek (Hebrews 4:14-5:10) he is appointed a priest by God's order. How are the priests cleansed? Numbers 8:5-7. How would John have baptized Jesus? Why would Jesus need to be baptized?
6. Next week, we'll consider the connection between baptism and regeneration. Read the Apostle Paul's statement to Titus, pastor of Crete. Titus 3:4-7. How do you think baptism and regeneration are connected? Consider John 1:32-34
7. What does baptism communicate that mankind needs from God? What ceremonial rite in the Old Testament communicated that need? Consider Colossians 2:11,12. Circumcision anticipated what Christ would do while baptism communicates what Christ has done. What is that work? What is the circumcision not done with human hands on the body, but done by the Spirit upon the soul?
8. What did you learn about your need before God? What did he provide to meet that need? "Are you washed?"
9. When you witness a baptism, how will you view that rite based on today's study?