

Water Has Always Played A Significant Role

Peter writes, "There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). Peter uses the reality of what saved Noah and the seven souls aboard the Ark - water. Peter explains by stating, "When once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water" (1 Peter 3:20). Peter is using facts from the record of the flood, which destroyed the earth (Genesis 6-8) to show that Noah and his family were saved by the very water that destroyed the wicked. Noah listened and obeyed God and the ark allowed salvation through water.

The inspired writer of Second Kings also presents an example of God using water to help us understand its importance in salvation. The Syrian Commander Naaman suffered from the disease of leprosy. Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease of the skin which, if left untreated, can cause progressive and permanent disabilities (Britanica.com). Naaman sought out help from God through the Prophet Elisha. The prophet gave instruction as God had commanded. Naaman balked. Nevertheless, it was not until Naaman followed the command given by God to dip seven times in the Jordan River that his disease was healed (2 Kings 5:1-14).

Some today feel that obedience to God supersedes anything that might be perceived as a command from God. In other words, faith by itself is enough to save. However, with both Noah and Naaman only through obeying God did the result yield God's blessing. Had Noah not built the ark he would have drown. Had Naaman not dipped in the river 7 times, his leprosy would not have been healed.

The case of Namaan offers some easily recognizable parallels when it comes to the obedient act of baptism. Clearly obeying God by dipping in the river 7 times immediately cured Namaan's physical ailment (2 Kings 5:14). Certainly, we can see the significance God has placed upon baptism for the removal of our spiritual ailment - sin. Consider these passages:

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

2) "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41).

"But when they believed Phillip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

3) "And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38).

Belief in God and in His Son Jesus is absolutely necessary. But if that faith is not combined with submissive action - obedience - just as seen in the case of Namaan and Noah, that faith by itself will not save (James 2:20).