

51-03-03.wpd — Baptism's Call to New Thinking
 baptism, Gnosticism, world, flesh, Satan, kingdom, heaven
 Col 3:1-4
 Heavenly thinking makes Kingdom living a present reality.

INTRODUCTION:

–Col.2 showed how *baptism* answered both *Jewish legalism* and *Greek Gnosticism*. It both replaced *circumcision* and gave it a new meaning of stripping off the old life, like a garment. In its original form as a *naked baptism*, it represented a believer's *birth* into the spiritual family of the New Covenant. It physically demonstrated our union with the bodily resurrected Christ, an unthinkable concept for Gnostics, who detested the material body. Col.3 explains how *baptism gives us a new way of thinking* that opposes the Jewish and Greek ideas. Union with Christ, who was *physically raised from death* and *physically raised up into heaven*, establishes our relationship with God based on faith, not works of *legalism*. It brings the future spiritual realm Gnostic were concerned about, down to this physical earth, where God intended it to be lived. This is what baptism means. It marks the point from which **HOM.idea**.

I. The Importance of Being Baptized

- A. The early church never taught baptism as a "tacked on" initiation ritual. It was a visible adoption of a new kind of thinking
1. It begins to answer the Lord's Prayer in a believer's physical life – "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
 2. It shows that the future is not distant. It is very *present* both in baptism, and in the Communion Table.
- B. The church today has forgotten much of the original symbolism in baptism, but also its original importance in the believer's life.
1. The doctrine of "justification by faith," as opposed to "*salvation by works*" was never intended by any church reformer to remove the obligation of make a believer's faith visible by baptism.
 2. Baptism was so important in the early church, that only believers who had been baptized could partake of the Lord's Table.

TRANS: It would take a big miracle for us to go back to the early form of baptizing (today there's a *Gnostic view* of the naked body that sees it

as *pornographic* rather than as a "fearfully and wonderfully made" display of God's image). **But** for some unbaptized Christians, submission to water baptism might take a *small miracle*. I wonder if any here need baptism. If so, I pray for that miracle. I pray you ask us about it, especially after learning why God gave it to us—to give us a heavenly mindset that makes living out His Kingdom a present reality on earth.

II. Uniting Our Minds with the Resurrected Christ, v.1-3

- A. (v.1, *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*) God is not in the business of promoting "pie-in-the-sky" thinking.
1. Getting our earthly thinking set on Christ in Heaven is far from Gnosticism's idea that "spirit is everything"
 2. We must remember that Jesus, the God-Man, is one of us living forever in a human body (union with Him brings His kingdom down to earth in down-to-earth ways, as Colossians shows later).
- B. (v.2, *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*) We are not just physical, earthly creatures, concerned only with Planet Earth.
1. Christians are body-spirit beings with a destiny, shown in Col.1, to be astronomically larger than this earthly life.
 2. In union with Christ, we are destined to rule over the entire universe, uniting together both the physical and spiritual realms.
- C. (v.3, *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*) **Baptism is a reminder to our faith that we have passed from death to life:**
1. In baptism we reject the voice of Satan, who wants to cut us off from God— Gen3:4-5, "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [in the early church, while in the same naked state that Adam and Eve were created in, believers were called upon to renounce Satan and his works; the ritual itself included an *exorcism*.]
 2. In baptism we reject the sin nature's independence from God:
 - a. Eve was so attracted to the fruit of independence that she gave up her relationship with God for it— Gen 3:6a. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.
 - b. Man was created as a body-spirit being, not to live in spiritual independence from God, but to live by *His will*, which resides in His Word— 1 John 2:15-17, Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For

everything in the world--**the cravings of sinful man** ["*good for food*"], the **lust of his eyes** ["*pleasing to the eye*"] and the **boasting of what he has and does** ["*desirable for gaining wisdom*"]--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

3. **In baptism**, we reject conformity to this fallen world, declaring our **allegiance to the King of all creation**-- Rom 12:1-2. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to **the pattern of this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

CONCLUSION:

--**In baptism** we reject **the trinity of sin** (the *world*, the *flesh*, the *devil*), and embrace **the Triune God** (the *Father*, the *Son*, the *Holy Spirit*). But **note the focus** of our "spiritual act of worship." It says, "offer your **bodies** as living sacrifices." **The focus is NOT on a future after-life**, but on a present loyalty by **joining our physical bodies to the will of God**. We are to fulfill the Lord's Prayer through these physical bodies of ours: *God's kingdom come; God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*. This is the **heavenly thinking that makes Kingdom living a present reality**. -- **Humans are glory-seekers, but *so backward!*** Adam and Eve were physically **fashioned from earthly dust by God's own hand to display His glory** in their bodies. But **deceived by Satan into seeking worldly glory** in the *fruit of independence from God*, they *sinned and fell short of the glory of God*. But **God, in Christ's Incarnation, made a way back**. In Christ's human body God restored His glory to humanity. By the death of His body, Jesus destroyed Satan's work. By His resurrection, He made divine glory available to us again: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." **Baptism** hides our bodies in the **watery grave of Christ's death**, and **raises us out of the water as newborn babes, ready to live a new life**. It **marks our rebirth for this present life**, it **marks our destiny with a glorious future**-- v.4. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

--Let's remember our baptism; remember how it shows our connection to the resurrected Christ, the King of glory; and let's allow Kingdom living to be our present experience here on earth.

Col 3:1-4 (NIV) Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. {2} Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. {3} For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. {4} When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.