

# TLCBiblical.com Video Lessons

## 204 - The Figure Of Water

### 1. Introduction

From the earliest verses of Genesis to the final chapters of Revelation water is a figure that can be followed throughout the narrative. From its physical manifestation to its figurative application this element is not only common but becomes a powerful symbol. In this lesson we'll explore **The Figure Of Water** and examine its significance and utilization.

### 2. Exploring the figure of water

In the murky darkness of the beginning the deep covers a formless world at a time before light is created but it doesn't appear alone. God's spirit hovers over the waters signaling the beginning of creation (**Gen 1.2**). In a single and very powerful image one of the most significant symbolic elements is presented. Apparently passive in the opening verses of the account of creation its easy to overlook several connections, all of which we'll examine in this lesson. Note that water appears in the presence of God, is present at the beginning of creation and is paired with the Spirit of God who hovers over the newly formed world. Water has a presence that remains constant throughout the scriptures and quietly reminds us of God's power. In order to understand the significance of this element and its connection to the word as a symbolic figure we need to take a look at its uses and connections. We'll examine

- a. The presence of water
- b. Water and cleansing
- c. Water and sanctification
- d. Water as an agent of healing and
- e. Water and Salvation

The last point will allow us to make the necessary connections between God, water and redemption. As we go through the lesson I'll be presenting several lists of scriptures. Some passages will be repeated in order to illustrate each aspect of the figure. With that in mind let's look at our first point.

### 3. The presence of water

A subtle aspect of water in the scriptures is observable but not one that we generally think about. That aspect is its presence. Water is the most abundant element in the physical realm, covering approximately seventy percent of the Earth's surface. Its essential for life and without it, existence comes to an end. Our bodies are largely made up of water and it permeates every tissue. Blood is mostly water and everyone understands the significance of maintaining fluid intake to sustain proper circulation and hydration. In the Bible water has a presence

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throughout the scriptures though not always brought to the forefront and singled out as significant. The presence of water, and its figurative representations, allows us to trace it's path through the Bible in a fashion similar to that of blood. As we develop the lesson we'll see that blood and water intersect in many areas and have a complimentary relationship. Let's start with the beginning and the presence of water in the account of creation.

On the first day of creation the world was "*without form, and void*". The globe was immersed in water described as the "*deep*" (**Gen 1.2**). We're told that the spirit of God "*moved upon the face of the waters*" and the world was enveloped in darkness. On the first day God created light and divided it from the darkness naming the light day and the darkness night. As the first day comes to a close the world remains submerged in the waters of the deep.

On the second day of creation God created a "*firmament*" or space and divided water into two bodies, one above the space and the other below still covering the world. God called the firmament between the waters "*heaven*" (**Gen 1.6-8**).

On the third day of creation God caused the dry land to appear which He called Earth and the waters He named seas. Once that was done God created plant life on the land including grass, trees and vegetation (**Gen 1.9-12**).

As we study the pattern the Lord followed in creating these things we see that he ordered the structural arrangement of the world by setting limits and boundaries for the elements. Seas were gathered together allowing dry land to appear. This prepared the world for the addition of plant life and finally mankind. As these things are created the presence of water begins to recede in the narrative as creation becomes more diverse and complex. As we read the account we find that there's an interesting note about the sustenance of plant life on the land. In addition to the seas separated from the land, "*there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.*" (**Gen 2.6**)

Water plays a prominent role in God's order of the world and the preservation of life. This order continued until some time later when God changed the physical aspects of the world in the days of Noah. A change, brought about by water, in answer to sin and evil that corrupted the Earth. This brings us to the first physical and figurative utilization of water - cleansing.

#### 4. Water and cleansing

As the population of mankind grew there were problems. There were violations of God's law of marriage and violence increased to the point the Lord determined to destroy the world. The exception to this was Noah who found grace in the sight of the Lord (**Gen 6.8**). God told Noah what was going to happen and gave him instructions for the construction of an ark that

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would save him and his family (**Gen 6.14-16**). Most are familiar with the story of how the animals came to Noah and were placed aboard the ark to be preserved. We usually think of the ark as the medium God used to save the family from the destruction brought on the world but as we look closer we find that the emphasis is placed elsewhere.

Although Noah and His family were preserved by means of the ark, the scriptures reveal that the flood was the element which saved the family (**1 Peter 3.20-21**). The flood created a boundary between the faithful and the evil of the world. Within the ark was salvation. Outside was the destruction of the ungodly who were condemned by God. It was by Noah's faithful actions that the world was condemned (**Hebrews 11.7**). The rest of the world didn't care to listen to God any longer and for that they suffered the consequences. God's judgment, rendered by His right as creator, demonstrated His power over the world and once put in motion couldn't be undone by any earthly power.

The judgment rendered by God demonstrates the Lord's patience. Peter states that the "*longsuffering of God waited*" in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared (**1 Peter 3.20**). Two things are evident in this statement. First, God gave Noah sufficient time to build the ark. Secondly, while the construction of the ark progressed, the people of the world had time to repent of their evil and turn to God. Such repentance didn't occur and so the flood was brought upon the world. Following the flood, the waters abated to reveal a world purged of evil.

The global nature of the flood demonstrates the extent to which the world was cleansed. The tallest peaks of the mountains were covered completely washing away all living things (**Genesis 7.22**). As the waters were dried they flowed along the course determined by God, and a new world emerged, clean and undefiled. God totally washed the earth clean of the evil that had been done. No trace of it was left to mar the surface. The finality of the destruction was such that nothing was left of what had been. In addition to this, the order of the world was changed as well. Rain became a reality (**Genesis 9.13-16**) instead of the mist that watered the ground. God created the rainbow and set it in the clouds, as a sign of the covenant made between Himself and the Earth that destruction by water wouldn't happen again (**Genesis 9.11-17**).

Human and animal life outside the ark ceased to exist, and yet, new life in the form of trees and other vegetation returned. This regeneration of the world by God was such a contrast to the "*old world*" that was destroyed (**2 Peter 3.5-7**). All things had indeed been made new. The family of Noah stepped out into a world they didn't know to begin a new life and a renewed relationship with God (**Genesis 8.15-22**).

God didn't destroy the world simply because he was angry. Mankind became corrupt in such a way that nothing would reverse the trend. Transgression, a synonym for sin, means to go beyond. Humans cast aside all of God's limitations and no longer respected the boundaries the

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Lord put in place by doing anything that pleased them. Today we would call this chaos, or anarchy, and could easily see that nothing wholesome can come from such an environment. The order and balance of the world decreed by God had been thrown off. The flood restored order and water was the agent by which this was reestablished cleansing the Earth of evil and preparing it for a new era.

Aspects of cleansing are also apparent in the Law of Moses and were part of the tasks involved in offering sacrifices. Preparation of a burnt offering of the herd included washing. ***“If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.... But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.”*** (Lev 1.3, 9). Similar instructions are given for burnt offerings of the flock. ***“And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish....But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.”*** (Lev 1.10, 13). The spiritual significance of the offering is clear and the fact that the animal was to be washed as part of the offering once more places water in the presence of God as a critical part of the sacrifices.

In addition to the sacrifices the priests were also commanded to wash before entering the tabernacle. A large basin called the laver was constructed for this purpose. God stated, ***“Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.”*** (Ex 30.18-21). Note the significance of this action. If they neglected to wash as instructed they would die. The presence of water and the act of washing before entering the tabernacle takes on a great deal of spiritual significance since the Tabernacle represented the presence of God with the Hebrews and washing cleansed the priests and made them acceptable to the Lord. In addition to the priests, the Levites, who ministered in the Tabernacle, were to wash in a similar manner (Num 8.7).

God’s use of water as a representation of purification to prepare the priests and Levites for service may seem trivial, or even foolish by human wisdom. If we focus on the presence of water in these instructions we realize that the significance lies in the fact that these actions were directed to be carried out by God Himself and no alteration would be tolerated. The command of God constituted a spiritual boundary for acceptability for the priests and Levites in His service. In these procedures the spiritual and physical were being joined through the common medium of

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water. If we focus on the use of water and the washing of the sacrifices we see that a transitional image emerges.

In the last lesson I discussed the role of blood in relation to the forgiveness of sins and demonstrated that it was the medium by which salvation was accomplished. Washing the sacrifices in water as part of the process of rendering offerings to God brings water and blood into close proximity with each other. Blood is the primary focus of attention in the sacrifices but water is nearby and comes into contact with the sacrifices. This is an image that is somewhat vague and lacks explanation at this point in the development of the biblical narrative but will become more obvious as the plan of God unfolds.

The idea of blood sacrifices to atone for sin begins early in the scriptures (**Gen 4.1-13, Heb 11.4**) and is evident in the lives of the patriarchs such as Abraham who sacrificed to God making blood offerings as well (**Gen 8.20, Gen 22.1-14, Gen 31.54, Gen 46.1**). In these early accounts there's no mention of water. Noah offered sacrifices to God after the flood and water was present, in the form of the flood that cleansed the world, but isn't directly connected to the sacrifice itself. Water is brought closer to the sacrifices when God provides instruction to Moses. While blood is specifically named as the agent of atonement (**Lev 16.14-16**) an idea emerges as water is paired with the sacrifices and the washing of the priests. As I've already noted, a failure to wash the sacrifices in the prescribed manner, or for the priests to neglect their washing would mean death. Water is a critical element in determining the acceptability of both the offerings and those making the offerings.

The pairing of water and blood foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. We'll discuss this in more detail later but a foreshadow appears in how this was carried out. The animal being offered is divided, each part washed in water, and the blood, depending on the nature of the sacrifice, is either poured out around the altar, sprinkled on people or objects or directly applied to the body as can be seen in the consecration of the priests (**Lev 16**). This is an important point and will provide a bridge for understanding the transition from the Law of Moses to the new law that takes place.

There are other examples of water employed as an agent of cleansing as seen in Numbers chapter nineteen where instructions are given for making the "*water of separation*" (**Num 19.1-10**). One use of this was for the cleansing of one who had touched a dead body (**Num 19.11-22**). In these instructions we also find the specification of running water to be used along with the water of separation. The importance of this is made clear when God states, "*But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.*" (**Num 19.20**).

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**5. Water & Sanctification**

Water is of particular significance in the procedures for consecrating people and objects for service in the Tabernacle. God gave Moses specific directions for consecrating priests to fulfill their holy office. Moses was instructed to wash Aaron and his sons prior to wearing their priestly garments (**Ex 29.4-5**) and these instructions were carried out by Moses exactly as God commanded (**Ex 40.7,12,30, Lev 8.6, 16.4**). As we take a closer look at this process we can draw comparisons between the Levitical priests, Christ and Christians.

The presence of water provides a link to the New Testament and foreshadows a transition in the priesthood. Under the Law, Aaron and his sons were appointed to serve as priests (**Exodus 28.1**). The entire tribe of Levi was separated by God to serve Him by ministering in the Tabernacle (**Numbers 18.6-7**). Water is specifically involved in the sanctification of the priests as we find in the procedures for their consecration. God told Moses, “*And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.*” (**Exodus 29.4**). This was the first step taken in the process of consecrating them. Following this they were clothed in the priestly garments God directed them to make. Offerings were made and the blood of the sacrifices were used for the consecration. Part of the blood was poured at the bottom of the altar (**Exodus 29.12**), sprinkled around the altar (**Exodus 29.16**) and placed on the bodies of Aaron and his sons (**Exodus 29.20**). We can compare this with Christ who became the high priest of the new law.

Priests	Christ
Washed in water	Baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness
Blood of sacrifices applied to their bodies to consecrate them	Body given as the ultimate sacrifice - shed his blood
Clothed in new garments denoting purification	Christ was sinless and kept the law perfectly

**Figure 1** Comparison of the consecration of priests & Christ

1. The priests were washed in water as part of their consecration
2. Christ was baptized by John to complete all righteousness
3. Blood of the sacrifices was applied to their bodies which figuratively connected them with Christ
4. Christ’s body was given as a sacrifice and in that offering he shed his blood
5. The priests were clothed in new garments as directed by God
6. Christ was sinless and therefore spotless since he kept the law perfectly and had no sin

A similar comparison can be made between the priests, Levites and Christians

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Priests / Levites	Christians
Washed in water for sanctification	Buried in baptism in water
Blood of sacrifices applied to their bodies for sanctification	Blood of Christ applied to souls by God
Clothed in new garments	Clothed by God and made righteous

**Figure 2** Comparison of the consecration of priests & Levites and Christians

1. The priests and Levites were washed in water
2. Believers are washed in water through baptism as they complete their obedience
3. The blood of the sacrifices was applied to the bodies of the priests
4. The blood of Christ is applied to the soul of those who obey the Gospel
5. The priests were clothed in new garments of a specific design given by God
6. Christians are clothed by God as they put on Christ through obedience

These comparisons show the similarities between the priests under the Law and believers today. I'll discuss Christ in more detail in relationship to the priests in another lesson but for now we want to make a note of the underlying spiritual elements. We understand that the two laws are physically different on the surface but it's the figurative elements and spiritual meaning that link and equalize them. There are passages in the New Testament that bring this out. Peter describes Christians as a peculiar people and a holy priesthood (**1 Pet 2.5**). Paul refers to the washing of water by the word in his letter to the Ephesians (**Ephesians 5.25-26**). Paul states that those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ using the analogy of a garment (**Gal 3.27**). We'll talk more about this in the section on water and salvation but the figurative elements are there and help us appreciate the depth of the scriptures as we review things such as this.

**6. Water as an agent of healing**

A familiar Bible story involving the power of God and water as the agent of healing is the story of Naaman the Syrian captain.

Naaman was a great man and the Bible describes him as honorable. God permitted the Syrians under Naaman's leadership, to prevail over Israel and take captives. Naaman, however, developed leprosy, an affliction for which there was no cure. One of the prisoners, a little maid (**2 Kings 5.2**), served Naaman's wife and told her mistress about Elisha, a man of God, who would be able to heal her master's disease. Naaman relayed this information to the king of Syria who desired to help and wrote a letter to the king of Israel. Naaman left for Israel with the letter and "*six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment*" to be presented as a gift with the request to "*recover him of his leprosy*" (**2 Kings 5.6**). The king of Israel was very upset and tore his clothes stating, "*Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to*

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*recover a man of his leprosy?" (2 Kings 5.7). The king interpreted this as an attempt to start a "quarrel" with Israel because he knew he lacked the ability to meet the request. When Elisha heard what the king had done he sent a message to him stating, "let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." (2 Kings 5.8).*

*"So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. ... And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." (2 Kings 5.9-10). Hearing this Naaman became angry as his expectations of what would occur didn't happen. Naaman stated, "Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and cure the leper..." (2 Kings 5.11). Naaman's reaction is typical of many people when they hear God's instructions. We may find ourselves disappointed by the simplicity of what we're told and reject information intended for our own good. The Syrian captain wasn't any different. He argued that the rivers of Damascus were far better than the Jordan in his eyes and he turned away in a rage (2 Kings 5.12). Naaman's servants however showed more sense and asked, "...had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?" (2 Kings 5.13 NASB). In Naaman's way of thinking, the rivers of his homeland were better and just as suitable for the purpose of cleansing him. What Naaman didn't understand is that this command was from the Lord through the prophet and represented God's conditions for his restoration.*

Elisha was a man of God, and as such, God worked through the prophet as He saw fit. God's mercy was extended to Naaman, a foreigner, by offering to cleanse him of his leprosy. Not until Naaman was willing to meet these conditions was he healed. God, through Elisha, would heal the man, but only when he had dipped in the Jordan seven times. Naaman made the mistake of making his own determination of what had to be done. Only when he obeyed the instructions given did he receive the benefit of the command.

This event shows that God chose the medium of water to effect Naaman's recovery. The condition was to dip seven times and the limitation was that it had to be done in the Jordan river. There were no special properties in the Jordan that were absent in the rivers of Damascus. God's command, specifying the exact conditions, made the difference. A boundary was set in place that only the Jordan river met the requirements for receiving the blessing of healing. Naaman eventually paid attention to the wisdom of his advisors, forsook his own ideas of how this would be done, and was healed of his disease (2 Kings 5.14). Had Naaman dipped himself in the Jordan any less, or more, than seven times, God's command would have been altered and he wouldn't have been healed. This is important and underlines the significance of God's commands. In this example it demonstrates God's use of water as an agent of healing. A second point to emphasize is that this blessing was extended to a man who wasn't in a covenant relationship with God as Israel was, but received the benefit of God's power when he obeyed the Lord's instructions



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precisely as given.

An interesting result of this event is that Naaman recognized the one true God. Upon returning to Elisha, he states, *“Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. But he said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused. And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules’ burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord. In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace.”* (2 Kng 5.15-19). The healing of a man that was outside of a covenant relationship with the Lord and his resultant belief in God leads us to the next point - water and its role in salvation.

#### 7. Water and Salvation

In order to understand the role of water in God’s plan to save mankind we need to review what we’ve covered about the way in which water has been utilized, presented and paired. Water as a figure isn’t one that stands alone. The significance of the representative element lies in what its associated with. These associations are realized with careful examination of the context. Some aspects of what we’ll cover are controversial due to ideas that have been introduced over the centuries that aren’t in harmony with what the Bible states. When we’re through I believe you’ll have a new outlook on this powerful figure and its role.

A point we need to keep in mind is that God has used physical elements to not only represent spiritual truths in a symbolic or abstract manner but the structure of creation in many ways mirrors these connections in the physical realm. In the last lesson we saw how blood represented life and was sanctified by God. In a similar manner we see water used to embody spiritual representations and the physical presence of water mirrors its significance. Let’s review the appearances of water as a figure.

- a. Water covered the Earth in the beginning and is the first element named
- b. The Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters creating an intimate association between the two
- c. Water was the agent of cleansing used by God to destroy the evil of the world and is named as the agent that saved Noah and his family in **1 Peter 3.20-21**.
- d. The water of the Red Sea saved the Hebrews by destroying the Egyptian army as they pursued the children of Israel
- e. Priests under the Law were washed in water as they were consecrated to take their office

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- f. A basin known as the Laver was constructed and the priests and Levites were to wash before entering the Tabernacle. Failure to do this would result in death.
- g. Sacrifices were washed in water as they were prepared for offering to the Lord
- h. A “*water of separation*” was made and used to purify certain diseases and other conditions under the Law
- i. Water in the Jordan river was used by God to heal Naaman the Syrian captain from leprosy resulting in his belief in God
- h. John baptized Christ at Jesus direction to fulfill all righteousness at the outset of his ministry

As we shift our attention to the New Testament we can see a specific function performed by water. As we examine this we'll see elements that connect with the Spirit of God, destruction of evil, consecration and sanctification. Water is the figurative link that connects us with the blood of Christ. During the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations the faithful were connected to the death of Christ by the sacrifices and their blood. We don't offer sacrifices under the new law so how are we linked to the blood of Christ today?

When the Roman soldiers returned to Jesus and the thieves that had been crucified, they were surprised that Christ was already dead. These soldiers would have been well acquainted with crucifixion and the length of time it took for prisoners to die. Historical accounts suggest that some could linger for days or longer. The soldiers performed a test to confirm that Jesus was dead. “*But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.*” (John 19.34).

Medical practitioners have written about this event and what it meant for Jesus heart. Having been beaten, sleep deprived, scourged and nailed to a cross, some propose that he suffered a cardiac rupture. While that explanation may be correct the focus needs to be on the spiritual and figurative aspects of what was taking place. It was the blood that represented the loss of life, a life that had been willingly sacrificed to redeem man. The shedding of Christ's blood was the offering of God's sacrifice for the sins of the world. Paired with the blood is the presence of water forming a powerful symbolic presence. The water and blood both appear united in the death of Christ. This detail is important and one we need to understand. As we'll see these elements are complementary in nature and can't be separated.

#### 8. The complementary roles of blood & water

In order to see this clearly we need to make sure we have the correct perspective in respect to the biblical narrative. Let's start by placing the sacrifice of Christ in the center. The redemption of mankind from sin is the theme of the Bible and Christ is the sacrifice of God that made this possible so we need to see everything as it relates to this. As I've noted the sacrifices from the time of the patriarchs and the Mosaic dispensation were figures that linked the faithful

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to the sacrifice of Christ. When Christ died those sins were finally forgiven but until that time God counted the faithful as righteous through their sacrifices. The blood of the sacrifices therefore was a physical link that embodied the spiritual reality of the future offering of Christ.

The law of God changed when Christ died (**Jer 31.31-34**) and was made known beginning on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**). While believers under the previous dispensations were connected to Christ by means of the physical presence of blood, water on this side of the cross creates this link for believers today. Let's take a look at the scriptures and examine the physical and figurative pairing of Christ's blood with water. If we create a diagram with a red bar representing blood and a blue bar representing water we can draw a chart that illustrates these relationships.

- a. The faithful were counted as righteous by God through the blood of their sacrifices that represented the blood of Christ
- b. Sacrifices under the Law of Moses were washed in water
- c. Priests were consecrated with both blood and water
- d. Blood was presented before the Ark of the Covenant once a year on the day of atonement for the sins of the congregation
- e. Christ was baptized in water by John to fulfill all righteousness
- f. When Christ's side was pierced blood and water mingled together flowed from the wound.

Now let's review the significance of Christ's blood for us today.

- g. **Eph 2.13** - Ephesians (Gentiles) were reminded they were brought near to God by the blood of Christ
- h. **1 Pet 1.2** - Peter draws on the image of the Law when he states that we are elect by the *“foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”*. This demonstrates that Christians are redeemed by the blood of Christ offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.
- I. **1 Pet 1.19** - Peter adds to this and clearly notes that we are redeemed *“with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot...”*

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j. **1 John 1.7** - John notes that if we walk in the light then “*the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” This once more emphasizes that redemption and forgiveness of sin is linked to the sacrifice of Christ and particularly the blood that was shed.

k. **1 John 5.6** - In his first epistle John brings the elements of water and blood together. John focuses on the spiritual nature of Christ and uses the image of water and the Holy Spirit with the blood that saves. John writes, “*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*” This last verse is important and will help us make the connection between blood and water that we need to understand.

From these verses there are two things we can conclude. The first is that the blood of Christ shed on the cross is that which saves us. The final passage from John indicates that water is involved. If we take a look at the commands of Christ we find that the connection with water is made clear and is an integral part of salvation. Note the following passages.

l. **Matt 28.19-20** - Christ gave specific instructions to his disciples as he prepared to leave them. He stated, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” Here we have the elements of the word (that which was being taught), the water (in the form of baptism) and the Holy Spirit that would guide them into all truth.

m. **Mark 16.15-16** - In this passage we have another record of the instructions recorded by Matthew but there’s an added detail. Christ states, “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” Note the progression. The disciples were to teach the word. Those who believed were to be baptized in water. Christ stated that those who did this would be saved. Christ then adds that those didn’t believe, and obviously weren’t baptized, would be damned.

n. **Acts 2.38** - On the day of Pentecost, ten days after Christ’s ascension, the apostles were given the power of the Holy Spirit who would guide them as Jesus promised. As Peter spoke to the people they were convicted of their sin and asked what they should do. Peter replied, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*”. This is exactly what Christ commanded them to teach and as we continue through the book of Acts we see that every example of conversion in the book ends with baptism without exception.

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There are many who refuse to make this connection and point to **John 3.16** to demonstrate that all that's needed is belief. The belief that is taught includes the idea of repentance or desiring to change one's life but the means by which this is done violates what the scriptures teach. In my lesson on **The Gospel Plan Of Salvation** I discuss this in detail and I would suggest that you refer to that lesson as well. Let's take a look at the entire conversation recorded in John chapter three so we understand exactly what Christ is teaching there. The chapter begins with the statement that Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night seeking answers to his questions. Here's how the conversation went ....

1. **John 3.2** - Nicodemus acknowledges that Christ is from God because of the miracles he performs
2. **John 3.3** - Christ responds stating "*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*"
3. **John 3.4** - Nicodemus is confused and asks "*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?*"
4. **John 3.5** - Christ clarifies what he means stating, "*Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*"
6. **John 3.9** - Christ goes on to explain the working of the spirit of God. Nicodemus remains confused and in his desire to understand he asks "*How can these things be?*"
7. **John 3.10** - Christ states that a man such as Nicodemus who was a "*master of Israel*" should know what Jesus is talking about since the Old Testament scriptures spoke of him and his coming sacrifice.
8. **John 3.14-15** - Christ then points Nicodemus in the right direction by referring to an event that happened when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. He states, "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*" In the next statement Christ makes he answers Nicodemus question about how these things can be.
9. **John 3.16** - "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" This isn't the plan of salvation. It's the definition of God's grace. Remember, this was the plan of God before the world began that he would save mankind through his son. The Lord

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issued the first prophesy when he told the serpent that the seed of the woman would bruise his head. That's the grace of God - that he would provide the means for saving the lost because he loves us.

10. We have to keep this in context and remember that Christ already told Nicodemus that in order to enter the kingdom of God one must be born again and this process involved the Spirit and water! So if we want to define salvation we need to concentrate on verse **5**, not verse **16**. We can demonstrate the accuracy of this conclusion by means of Christ's instructions to the apostles and passages written after the establishment of the church that confirms this point.

We can construct a chain of proofs that water in the form of baptism is involved in the process of being saved. Keep in mind that we need to connect that to the blood of Christ as well. The passages that follow will provide that evidence and help make the connections.

o. **Rom 6.3** - Paul focuses on the process of being saved and compares that to a death and burial. The death and burial of Christ. "***Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?***" Note that the blood of Christ, or the process of shedding his blood was the offering of himself for the sins of mankind. Paul clearly states that when one is baptized, the same baptism Christ commanded earlier, we're joined with him in his death. It is in his death that his blood was shed. In baptism, a figure of Christ's death, we are brought in contact with the blood of Christ. Paul describes what happens when a believer rises from the water of baptism. Paul states, "***that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life***" (**Rom 6.4**).

p. **Gal 3.27** - Paul wrote to the Galatians to correct errors that led them to embrace certain practices of the Law of Moses. In his letter he affirms that the Gospel is that which has replaced the Law (**Gal 3.24**) and then goes on to talk about their conversion. He writes, "***For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***" This is consistent with what Christ told his disciples. Those who believed and were baptized would be saved but those who didn't would be damned (**Mark 16.15-16**). Here Paul simply lets us know that if we haven't been baptized into Christ then we're not in Christ and are therefore lost.

q. **Col 2.11-12** - Paul addresses the effects of obedience in his letter to the Colossians. He states, "***In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.***" Note the detail. Their sins were taken away

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by an operation performed by God. That operation involved what Paul referred to as a circumcision made without hands. Then he details how that was done - by being buried with Christ in baptism. The same baptism that Christ commanded, and that we see happening in the examples of conversion in the book of Acts.

At this point we know that Christ died for everyone. It was his blood that saves but how do we really confirm that connection so we know we're on the right track? Let's take a look at a couple more passages and we'll see the connection made even clearer.

r. **Col 1.20** - Paul specifically notes that the peace between man and God was made by the sacrifice of Christ. He writes, "*For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*". It was the will of God that all of mankind would be united and reconciled with Him and that this should be accomplished through the sacrifice of his son. Here Paul specifically notes that it was the blood of Jesus cross that made that peace. We can take a look at one more passage that will help bring this together.

s. **1 Pet 3.20-21** - Peter speaks of the evil that was cleansed from the world in the days of Noah. Peter notes that it was the water that saved Noah and his family. He then connects that to the act of baptism. Comparing the flood to salvation Peter states that this is the "*like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" Notice what he says. Water is the agent of salvation and this is an act of faith on the part of a good conscience toward God.

And finally we have a statement made by Paul concerning this in the book of Ephesians.

t. **Eph 4.4-5** - "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism...*" The only baptism that was commanded by Christ, taught to early Christians and confirmed in the scriptures is baptism in water. I'll talk about this in more detail when we cover the doctrine of the New Testament.

We can now summarize what we've learned to make the final conclusion about the connection of blood and water.

### 9. Bringing it all together

The figure of water in the scriptures has a powerful presence and connection with God's

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plan to save mankind. In this lesson we've seen that

- a. Water was present at the beginning and is paired with the presence of the Holy Spirit - **Gen 1.2**
- b. Water cleansed the world of evil and was used as a type of salvation to come - **Gen 6-9**
- c. Water was used to wash the sacrifices presented to God under the Law - **Lev 1.9-11**
- d. Priests were consecrated by being washed with water and sprinkled with blood - **Ex 29.4-5,19-21**
- e. Christ was baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness - **Matt 3.13-15**
- f. Christ is the lamb of God and the high priest of the new law - **John 1.29, Heb 8.1-2**
- g. Christ stated that one desiring to enter the kingdom must be born of water and of the spirit - **John 3.5**
- h. Christ commanded his disciples to baptize those who believed the word they preached **Matt 28.19, Mark 16.15-16**
- i. When Christ died blood and water mingled together were seen in his death - **John 19.34**
- j. The book of Acts reveals that baptism was preached on the day of Pentecost - **Acts 2**
- k. Examples of conversion in the book of Acts all end with believers being baptized in water.
- k. We're cleansed by the blood of Christ which was offered for the sin of the world - **1 John 1.7**
- l. We're saved by baptism when we obey out of a good conscience - **1 Pet 3.21**
- m. When one is baptized one puts on Christ - **Gal 3.27**
- n. We're baptized into the death of Christ to walk in newness of life - **Rom 6.4**
- o. When we are baptized God performs a "*circumcision made without hands*" taking away our sins. - **Col 2.11-12**

Water today connects us with the blood of Christ just as the blood of the sacrifices connected the patriarchs and those under the Law of Moses to the future sacrifice of Jesus. There are many who argue against this point but when we take a look at all the statements made in the New Testament the conclusion is inescapable. In order to be saved, we must be baptized, or buried in water, in belief and faith in God and Christ. When that happens we're placed in contact with the blood of Christ through faith and saved by the operation of God who takes our sins away.

#### 10. Next

In the next lesson we'll take a look at the way in which we're to remember the death of Christ and the price he paid for our salvation. We'll discuss the Lord's Supper or Communion and the figurative elements that we're instructed to use representing his body and blood. Join me



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in the next lesson **In Remembrance Of Me.**