

1. Christ's Purpose for the Church

Let's begin by reading Ephesians 5:25-27 (NKJV):

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,
27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”*

This passage shows Christ's sacrificial love and His ultimate goal for the Church: to sanctify and cleanse her. This cleansing is done through water and the Word meaning both the external act of baptism and the internal work of the Word of God in the believer's life.

2. The Symbolism of Water and Blood

This concept is rooted in Christ's crucifixion. In John 19:34 (NKJV), the Apostle John writes:

"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."

This is not just a physical occurrence it holds deep spiritual symbolism. The blood signifies the atonement for sin (*Hebrews 9:22*), while the water represents spiritual cleansing and renewal. These two are inseparable in the salvation process.

3. The Role of Baptism in Cleansing

In Acts 2:37-38 (NKJV), after Peter preached the gospel at Pentecost, the listeners were convicted and asked:

"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
Then Peter said to them,

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Here we see a clear sequence of salvation:

1. Repentance
2. Water Baptism in Jesus' Name
3. Forgiveness of sins
4. Receiving the Holy Spirit

The apostolic teaching connected baptism with remission of sins not as a mere ritual, but as an act of obedience and a means of sanctification (*Mark 16:16, Romans 6:3-4*).

4. The Unity of the Spirit, Water, and Blood

According to 1 John 5:8 (NKJV):

“And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit,

the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.”

This verse affirms the theological unity of:

- The Blood — Christ’s atonement (Hebrews 9:14)
- The Water — Baptism and cleansing (Titus 3:5)
- The Spirit — Regeneration and empowerment (Romans 8:9)

No part can be ignored. True spiritual transformation involves all three.

5. The Necessity of Being Born Again

In John 3:3-5 (NKJV), Jesus tells Nicodemus:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

...

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Being born again is not just an emotional experience it is a spiritual rebirth through:

- Water (signifying baptism)
- The Spirit (signifying transformation and regeneration)

This new birth introduces believers into the Kingdom of God (2 *Corinthians 5:17*).

6. The Proper Mode and Name in Baptism

Biblically, baptism was always conducted by full immersion and in the name of Jesus Christ. Consider:

- John 3:23 (NKJV) — John baptized “where there was much water,” indicating immersion.
- Acts 2:38, Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, Acts 19:5 — All mention baptism in Jesus’ name.

This method reflects early Church practice and theological accuracy.

Conclusion

Cleansing through water and the Word is not symbolic only it is essential for Christian sanctification. Baptism is not optional or replaceable by inner conviction alone. It is part of the process Christ established to purify His Church, preparing her to be holy and blameless before

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