

Revelation's Last Appeal

In Revelation chapter 18, God gives us the final call, the last appeal.

Revelation 18:4

*"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."*

In this appeal, God is calling for us to come out of spiritual confusion! We have learned that a woman in prophecy represents a church. Therefore, when He is calling His people to come out of "her," He is calling for men and women to leave the churches that are not teaching "ALL" the truth and join His church, that upholds, not only the Ten Commandments, but all the truths from the Bible. Truths about Hell, Death, Health, Standards, and the Second Coming, just to name a few.

God declares that He would raise a final movement, a church that would share the final message of mercy to a lost and dying world. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been given the opportunity to give this loud cry! A call for all who will heed the warnings of the Bible before it is too late! A call to come out of the churches teaching false doctrines and join God's remnant church—the Seventh-day Adventist. Now, please understand, this doesn't make Seventh-day Adventist any better than anyone else, but it does make them more accountable, since they have been given the gospel commission to take God's Last Appeal to the world!

Since, baptism is the entrance to the church, in this study we would like to look at what the Bible says about baptism.

A few years ago a young man was awaiting a new heart. As he lay upon his hospital bed, he looked perfectly healthy, but a virus infection had severely damaged his heart muscle; and he knew he had but a short time to live, unless his surgeon could obtain a heart, from an organ donor, and he could have a heart transplant operation.

Similarly, all of mankind is afflicted with a fatal heart disease! It is caused by the deadly virus of sin; and it is destroying all spiritual life. But, listen, I have good news for you! Jesus, the Great Physician, is a specialist in performing heart transplants; and His operations are **one hundred percent successful!**

This operation of God is performed through the sacred rite of Baptism. I believe that true Biblical Baptism has a much deeper meaning than most of us have yet discovered. Let us pray, earnestly, that the Holy Spirit may enlighten our understanding; and give us keep spiritual discernment of sacred truth as we study this important subject.

Ephesians 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 Bible tells us that not everything that passes for religion, and not every mode practiced as baptism, meets with God's approval. We must follow His diving command and example. When Jesus returned from heaven, having had His supreme sacrifice accepted by the Father, He gave the Gospel Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.

Matt 28:18-20

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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.**"*

Jesus would soon be returning to heaven; and take up His work as our Great High Priest; therefore, He instructed His disciples to go into all the world and teach the truths of Scripture to all people of every nation. As the people responded to the message of salvation, the disciples were to baptize them in the name of the three Persons of the Godhead; baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Jesus promised to be with them, through the Holy Spirit's presence, to bring conviction to the hearts of their listeners; and to give them power in their witness for Him.

It is wonderful to know that, when God leads us to share our faith with individuals, His Spirit has prepared the heart for the reception of truth. One of the most striking examples of this is found in the 8th chapter of Acts. An Ethiopian Eunuch is returning from worshipping in Jerusalem. He is reading in the book of Isaiah, about the prophecies of the Messiah being led as a sheep to the slaughter; and he is deeply concerned about its meaning. An angel could have come to him with the enlightenment; but God chose a human instrument. Let's read the inspired record of this in Acts. 8:26-39

Acts 8:26-39

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”

What I love about his story, is the fact that Philip was eager to respond, the Ethiopian Eunuch had a humble, teachable spirit, Philip shared the Gospel with him, letting the Scriptures speak for themselves; and as Philip spoke, with great earnestness, the Eunuch responded to the Holy Spirit's conviction that Jesus was indeed, the promised Messiah. As an evidence that he had accepted Jesus, as his personal Saviour, and Lord of his life, he requested to be baptized. At that time, in Apostolic purity, the Evangelist did not have to confront all the false teachings that we face with Christendom; and the basic question that had to be addressed was only if the Eunuch believed that Jesus was really the Messiah, according to the Scriptures. He responded, from the depths of a sincere hearth, **“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;”** and Philip, the Evangelist, baptized him. It was a wonderful experience for both of them; and they went their separate ways rejoicing in God's providential leadings.

Peter was preaching, with the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit, as thousands gathered together on the Day of Pentecost. No longer was he a coward; and with great boldness he declared a heart convicting message.

Acts 2:36-38

“36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and

said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Many of those, now listening to Peter, had been witnesses to the loving ministry of the Saviour; and to His shameful trial and crucifixion; and now they realized that He was, indeed, the Son of God! The Spirit brought deep conviction; and they cried out “**Men and brethren, what shall we do?**” Peter replied that they must experience repentance, a deep heart-sorrow for sin, and a turning away from it; and then as they were baptized, they would receive the gift, or the anointing of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God sent the arrows of conviction to their hearts; and three thousand souls responded to the call and were baptized that very day!

In our study thus far, we have covered three important pre-requisites for Biblical Baptism. The individual desiring baptism must:

1. Be taught all the teachings of Christ.
2. Believe with all of his heart, accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord of his life.
3. Earnestly repent, by having a deep sorrow for the pain that his sins have bought to the heart of Jesus.

Many Christian denominations today practice the rite of infant baptism; they either sprinkle, or pour water over their heads. This is not baptism; for you and I both know that a six month old infant can neither be taught the teachings of God’s Word; neither can he believe with the sincerity of his heart; neither can he know anything about the repentance required. Both Philip and the Eunuch went down into the water and he baptized him. The word, “**Baptize**” comes from the Greek word “**Baptizo**” meaning to submerge or immerse. So just by **understanding the word you can know that sprinkling or pouring is not Biblical baptism!** This is just another one of Satan’s counterfeits; a means by which one has the assurance of salvation, without receiving a Spiritual Heart Transplant. What a fatal deception!

There is something else that I want to point out in Acts 2:38, Peter said that, at the time of baptism, they would receive the gift or anointing of the Holy Ghost. Let us explore this thought further as we read about the baptism of our Lord. We read about this inspired account in Matthew 3:13-17.

Matt 3:13-17

*“13 Then cometh **Jesus** from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway **out** of the **water**: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Can’t you see our Saviour, having just been baptized, kneeling on the sandy river bank; and praying that God would give Him the power to reach the hearts of sin-hardened men and women? The Father responded to the earnest appeal of His Son; and the heavens opened; and the Spirit of God, in the form of a gentle dove, landed on Him; and the Father spoke; “**This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**”

Our precious Saviour gives the divine example of receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit at the time of His baptism. What is the purpose of this anointing, or of receiving “**The gift of the Holy Ghost?**” Let us allow Jesus to answer this question Himself. We’ll find the answer to this all-important question in Luke 4:16-21, where Jesus already baptized and tried in the wilderness of temptation, gained the victory through claiming the promises of God’s Word; and now, He goes home.

Luke 4:16-21

“16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

You see, my friends, all of Christ miracles, for the sick and suffering, were performed after He was anointed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus clothed His divinity in humanity, choosing not to avail Himself of any power that is not freely available to each one of us; if we will be as fully dependent upon Him, as He was upon His Father.

Do you desire power, in your life, to live like a child of God? Here is the vital key, as recorded in John 1:12-13.

John 1:12-13

“12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

This is the experience that every one of God’s children must have to prepare themselves for heaven; and to see Jesus face to face.

Nicodemus was a strict Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, but he did not understand this divine principle. Desiring to know more about Jesus, but not wanting to identify himself with this humble Man, he visited Jesus in the night hours. You may read the entire story in John 3:1-21/ and I really hope you will take the time to read its entirety; for Jesus gives the clearest description, in all the Scriptures, of how one receives the Spiritual Heart Transplant. Jesus looked right into the heart of this proud Pharisee; and he saw that it had been severely damaged by the virus of sin; and that Nicodemus must receive a Heart Transplant in order to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus came right to the point, in His Spiritual diagnosis.

John 3:3-6

*“3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”*

The word “**Again**” in the Greek means “**From Above.**” Therefore, Jesus is telling Nicodemus that his sinful carnal nature must change to the nature from above, a spiritual nature like Christ. Notice that Jesus also tells him that he must be born of “Water and the Spirit.” Water represents dying to the old self as symbolize by baptism, while being born of the Spirit is to allow the Holy Spirit to live in us and anoint us with power to live a victorious Christian life and to share the good news with others.

This spiritual leader of the Jewish Nation asked Jesus, “**How can these things be?**” (Jn. 3:9) In the next few verses Jesus explained the plan of salvation in the clearest, most dynamic way possible. He said, “*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 order for us to recognize our fatal heart condition, we must take a good look at the cross of Calvary. As we behold the Infinite Son of God, One equal with the Father, bearing the burden of our sins; as we see Him dying the death that should have been ours, our hard hearts are broken!

Kneeling in faith at the foot of the cross, the Holy Spirit brings us to deep repentance for the sins that caused our Saviour to die. **We are now experiencing the New Birth!**

This has always been God's plan of operation. Let us turn to the Old Testament for an example, which we find in Ezekiel 36:26-27.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Here is the promise of the Heart Transplant which every child of God must have. This new heart, in which Christ is enthroned, now finds great joy in obedience. Paul states this fact in this way in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The born again believer will find that the things of the world, which he once loved, have now become very distasteful to him; and the things of God, which he once despised, have now become the most important things in his life.

When a young man notices a young woman, he may be attracted by her smile, her general attitude, or her talents; but, in order to really get to know her, in a personal manner, he must enter into a courtship with her. As the couple get better acquainted, and begin to admire the inner qualities of each other, they find that their friendship has deepened into a love relationship; and they desire to unite their lives in the sacred rite of Marriage. It is the same way in a relationship with Jesus. At first, He is just an acquaintance; by, as we study His Word, and contemplate His wonderful life, we begin to realize that his sacrifice was made to save us, personally, from our sins; then He becomes our dearest Friend; and we desire to give our entire life to Him, in the sacred rite of Biblical Baptism. In Galatians 3:26-29, Paul speaks of the Spiritual Marriage to Christ in this manner.

Gal 3:26-29

*"26 For ye are **all** the children of God by **faith** in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been **baptized** into Christ have **put on** Christ. 28 There is **neither** Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are **all one** in Christ Jesus. 29 And **if** ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

Just as my wife is no longer Nancy Hinkle, but is now Nancy Nelson, and we share all the rights and responsibilities of marriage; so when we are baptized, we take upon us the privileges and responsibilities of baptized Christians. We are to avail ourselves of the power of the Holy Spirit to live like Jesus, as we await the return of the Bridegroom.

How is it that we receive the power to live a life in harmony with the principles of heaven? Remember, in Acts 2:38, where it is promised that when we are baptized, we are to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? Here is the secret to living the victorious life in Christ. How long do you think our marriage would be a wondrous, meaningful, experience, if Nancy and I did not continue to express our love to each other after the wedding? Every day we find our joy in expressing our love and gratitude to each other. We keep our marriage commitment alive, and vibrant! God never intends that His children lose their first love experience for Him either. **It is to be a continuous, growing, love relationship.**

Peter tells us how to preserve this sacred union in 1 Peter 1:23.

1 Peter 1:23

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Friends, if you will take time, after you are baptized, to prayerfully study God’s Word every day, your love for Him will deepen; and you will find joy in obeying Him; and strength to live for Him.

How important is it for one to be baptized? Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He said, as it is recorded in Mark 16:16, **“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”**

We understand that the thief on the cross that accepted Jesus as Lord was never baptized; for there was no opportunity available; yet, Jesus promised him a place in His kingdom. I am sure if he could have been, he would have gladly followed his Lord’s example of Biblical Baptism. When an individual is born again, he desires to seal that commitment, with his Lord, in baptism. He wants the entire world, and the vast universe of God, to know that he belongs to Jesus. He longs to be filled with the Holy Spirit; thereby empowered for service to Christ, in ministry to others.

Let us now examine the Biblical method of baptism. In the book of Romans, Paul gives a beautiful description of the meaning of true Biblical Baptism. As we mentioned before, the Greek word for **“Baptism”** is **“Baptizo”** which means **“To immerse or submerge.”** True Biblical Baptism is representative of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. We are testifying that our old man of sin has died, with Jesus on the cross, that the sins of the past are buried with Him; and as new creatures in Christ, we are resurrected to live a new life, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We are to consider ourselves entirely dead to the appeal of the sins of the flesh, and alive to the promptings of God. Let’s follow closely as the Word magnifies the baptismal experience.

Rom 6:3-11

“3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: 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. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

If Christ is reigning on the throne of our hearts, sin shall not have control over our lives any longer; and we shall experience the enabling, transforming power of His grace.

This is the experience of **“Being born of the water and of the Spirit,”** it is the Spiritual Heart Transplant. Just as the man in the hospital was waiting for an operation in order to receive a new heart, so the Apostle Paul tells us that we must also receive an operation.

Col 2:12

“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.”

Do you see why Satan has counterfeited this sacred rite of baptism? He does not want people to realize that they must receive a new heart in order to be saved. Sprinkling and pouring are just convenient methods by which one

is given the false assurance of salvation; without their ever experiencing the new birth, through spiritual regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

How soon should one be baptized after he has been taught all the teachings of Christ, believes with all his heart, and repents of his sins? From every Biblical example that we have, one should be baptized at his first opportunity. The Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized that very day, as we discovered in Acts 8:35-39. When Saul was converted on the road Damascus, he was baptized three days later. You can read about his experience in Acts 9:1-18. When Paul and Silas were in the Philippian jail, there was a great earthquake; the jailer was about to take his life, thinking that all the prisoners had escaped, when Paul cried out, ***“Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.”*** The jailer was so impressed by these men who could sing praises to God, through their suffering, that he said, ***“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*** That night he and his household were baptized.

You can read the entire story in Acts 16:16-33.

Acts 22:16

*“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be **baptized**, and wash away thy sins, **calling** on the name of the **Lord.**”*

It is such a privilege to seal the commitment to Jesus; and to receive the power of His Holy Spirit to live the life of a victorious Christian. I can't understand how anyone would want to delay this union; anymore than I can understand how two people that are really in love, and properly prepared for the experience would want to postpone their wedding. Be strong in the Lord and march forward for Him. Once you have surrendered, and have victory, you shouldn't wait--be Baptized! Remember, on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand souls responded to the work of the Holy Spirit and were baptized (Acts 2:41). Just like Marriage, baptism entails privileges and responsibilities; for it is an entrance into the Church. Those baptized were ***“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*** (vs. 44) As God's witnesses, anointed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit, the members of God's Church are to go forth sharing what they know of Christ's love and power.

Now, there are some who have already been Biblically baptized, but now say, “I have learned new truth, or I have lost my first love for Jesus and feel called to be re-baptized. Is there ever a need for re-baptism. Acts 19:1-6 gives us a Biblical example.

Acts 19:1-6

*“1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain **disciples**, 2 He said unto them, Have ye **received the Holy Ghost** since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye **baptized**? And they said, Unto **John's baptism**. 4 Then said Paul, **John** verily **baptized** with the baptism of **repentance**, saying unto the people, that they should **believe** on him which should come after him, that is, on **Christ Jesus**. 5 When they heard this, they were **baptized** in the name of the **Lord Jesus**. 6 And when Paul had **laid his hands** upon them, the **Holy Ghost** came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”*

The first thing I want you to see is that Paul found disciples. These men were believers already, and when Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit, they responded with, ***“We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”*** Paul explains to them they were living up to the truth that they knew, but now tells them of the gift of the Holy Spirit, by being baptized into Christ Jesus. Then these disciples, that had already been baptized, were re-baptized! Then Paul lays his hands on them and prays, and they receive the Holy Spirit! Once again, we see the importance of receiving the laying on of hands, at our baptism, to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This should be done and received with gladness. Now, some folks want to just be baptized, without joining any church or organization, but remember Christ is the head of the church. How can you join Christ without being part of His Church? The call for anyone to be re-baptized must come from the Holy Spirit; it is

not the work of men to tell you whether you should be or should not be re-baptized. In having said that, let me hasten to add this thought: If you have not been faithful and loyal to your baptismal vows, and have allowed the temptations of Satan to destroy your first love experience with Christ; if you have allowed the things of this world to water down your convictions of truth and righteousness; and you find yourself being conformed to the world, rather than being transformed by the Holy Spirit, then you should earnestly repent; and consider re-baptism.

Another reason the Holy Spirit might call a person to be re-baptized is because He has brought them to understand the truth of God's Word more clearly and has called you out of Babylon or spiritual confusion, to walk in the light of God's Truth and to have a fresh anointing of power from the Holy Spirit to be the light to the world that Jesus is calling us to be.

Jesus is coming soon! He is giving His Last Appeal! He is now reviewing the Book of Life, endeavoring to save every person who has ever professed to serve Him. Please co-operate with the Holy Spirit, everyday, as He endeavors to convict you of sin; or to lead you into greater light. May you always surrender your heart to the loving control of your Saviour; that you may discover your relationship with Him is growing deeper, and more meaningful with every passing day.