



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1945 ~ Jesus Baptised.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

From the earliest times known in Jewish history, there were ceremonies of symbolic washing in water for spiritual purification. As an example, when Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and into the desert near Mount Sinai, he told the people to wash their clothes in preparation of meeting with God. Later, Aaron and his sons were also washed with water prior to their ordination into the priesthood.

In the time of the first Temple being built by King Solomon, one important part of preparing for Temple services and worship was making sure the priest was ritually 'clean'. There are many references in the Old Testament book of Leviticus that warned people under certain circumstances to wash their clothes and remain unacceptable to God until evening on that day.

Special pools or bathhouses were used for these purification ceremonies. But it wasn't like taking a bath. The person had to be thoroughly clean before entering the pool and follow specific rules about what to do while in the water. Most ways of becoming impure, like touching a dead body, could be cancelled by immersion in any natural collection of water like ponds. In Leviticus Chapter 15 people cured of infectious diseases were required to wash in running water like flowing rivers.

In modern times, a pool is often built in the basement of a Jewish home in the smaller, Orthodox Jewish communities, to allow for complete immersion in water as a spiritual purification. When a person not born a Jew wanted to follow Judaism, a priest had to supervise the candidate's immersion in the pool. Jews have always believed that the pools for purification are so important, that they are, and in the past often were, built before a new, nearby synagogue was erected.

Ancient purification pools can be found throughout Israel and are dated from the end of the first century AD. In other parts of the world where there were Jewish communities in times past, purification pools have been found there too.

When John the Baptist was preaching to the people of Judea beside the Jordan River, he called them to repent and be immersed or 'baptised' as a sign that they had turned away from their old life of sinfulness towards God's required purity and holy living.

In Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 3, John the Baptist was aware that some of the people coming to ask for spiritual purification weren't ready in their hearts to do so. So he told such people to bear fruit in their lives consistent with the conduct of a changed heart.

John the Baptist was conducting a revival of the old Jewish ways of remembering God. But the priests weren't sure that they wanted an outsider taking on this responsibility of purification, and so their leaders set up a watch over John's ongoing sermons and activities.

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By the time Jesus was around 30 years old, He was ready to start His ministry as God's Messiah to the people of Israel. Just as the young priests were required to do before taking up their duties, Jesus was also fully immersed in water by John the Baptist as a dedication or ordination to His new role.

John's baptism of the people was for the forsaking of sin, but Jesus had no sin to forsake. John didn't want to baptise Jesus at all; in fact, he said it should be the other way round. But Jesus said to let it be this way so that all they did was consistent with what God required.

When Jesus came up out of the water, John saw the Holy Spirit come down from heaven like a dove and rest on Jesus. And God's voice spoke great encouragement to Him: "This is my beloved Son whom I am well pleased with."

When people become Christians, in one way or another, they need to identify with Jesus in the sight of their family, friends and acquaintances. In His baptism, the Lord Jesus identified with His heavenly Father and His Father responded by identifying Jesus as His own Son, Who well pleased Him.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 1, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples: "John truly baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." He said this just before He went back to His Father in heaven. This Baptism of the Holy Spirit took place on the Feast of Pentecost some 50 days after Passover, and the evidence of flames of fire upon the disciples' heads, speaking in other languages and worshipping God indicated the apostles' receiving the Holy Spirit.

Visitors at the Feast of Pentecost could understand what the Apostles were saying about Jesus in their own particular language. This helped spread the Gospel all over the then-known world. Both God the Father and the Lord Jesus were honoured by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and many people believed in the redeeming work of Jesus for saving their souls.

When a person invites the Lord Jesus to be their Saviour from sin and take over control of their life, the Lord Jesus comes in immediately through the Holy Spirit. There's an initial salvation work of the Holy Spirit, and then the ongoing life of disciplined living under the Holy Spirit's direction. The Christian life is more than a one-off confession of sin and asking for forgiveness. Each day the believer in Jesus needs to self-examine their conscience to see if there are sins to be repented off, confessed and forsaken. Otherwise, there will be little spiritual growth.

In The Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 1, he said: "In Christ you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance ..."

Each day in our Bible reading and prayer-time devotions, we need to seek and expect to receive by grace, God's presence in our lives for the day. We cannot be content unless we have the quiet assurance that God is with us and will protect us and bless us.

To live under the power of the Holy Spirit, we need to daily deny our self-interests, worldly ambitions and the plans that we've made for our lives. We must defer to following God's example and direction for our future.

The Spirit of God alone knows the very things of God. So it is by the Spirit that the things of God can be imparted into the believer's life. The Holy Spirit also grieves when a believer sins in some way, and a conviction of wrongdoing is brought by the Holy Spirit in the person's conscience.

Unconfessed sin will become a barrier to a good relationship between the person and the Holy Spirit. If a person doesn't want to give up favourite or besetting sins, God will seem very distant, and there'll be no power to combat Satan's temptations. This is the time when Christians work in the power of the flesh, using their own abilities and energies but with little gain. God simply doesn't bless such work.

Some people focus so much on God's Holy Spirit that they forget that the Spirit always glorifies and shines the spotlight on Jesus, the victorious Saviour of the world. We must never forget the importance of the central figure of time and eternity, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Here is a good verse to remember about pride from Proverbs, Chapter 11, Verse 2: "People who are proud will soon be disgraced. It is wiser to be modest."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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