

1.5.B.(4): **Faith** and **Baptism**(*Rebirth*) by the **Holy Spirit**.

Mark 1:7-8; John 1:12-13.

⁷ And he, saying, “After me comes he who is **mightier** than I, the strap of whose sandals I am **not worthy** to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will **baptize** you with **the Holy Spirit.**” (Mark 1:7-8)

and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and **become like children**, you will never **enter the kingdom** of heaven.

Matthew 18:3

¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people **did not receive** him. ¹² But to all

who **did receive** him, who **believed in his name**, he gave the **right** to become **children of God**,¹³ who were **born**, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but **of God**. John 1:12-13

Background:

- **Necessity of Receptive Faith:** (Matthew 18:3)

Unlike every other earthly religion, including Judaism, **new life** in Jesus Mashiach does not derive at all from *fleshly human design* or *human effort*, because the *reality* of the Kingdom is in a realm far removed from our grasp of this material world. It requires us to *walk by faith* and be changed in ways that see only glimpses of as *foretastes of spiritual fruit*. In this world, we truly are like helpless, unformed infants who must be

given all aspects of life due to our limited capacities.

For this reason, Jesus Mashiach warns his audience that only those who take the attitude of very little children and the *wondrous faith* that they have, be unexpectedly surprised at even the littlest things they have been given, can *enter* the Kingdom of Heaven.

The wise, the rich, and the powerful meet with frustration when they attempt to rely on these *fleshly advantages* in a spiritual realm which operates by a different logic entirely—according to the very mind and life of God. In Acts 8:9-24, we meet a “magician” accustomed to power and the influence bought by money. But, when he attempted to *pay* for the power of the Holy Spirit, assuming that worked so wonderfully in the world must *grease the wheels of heaven too*, he was denounced by the apostle Peter as being in the

“gall of bitterness” and in the “bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:24).

So, the “receptive faith of children” is an uncritical, unreserved faith. When feeding, an infant will trust his mother completely and without reservation to take all the life given to him. In this way, hungrily take every Word that God gives you without reservation. For example, when God reveals himself in Genesis 1:1 as *Elohim* rather than *Elohe*, the person of uncritical and unreserved faith will accept what God has revealed and expect to see other indications that God acts as a plural unity, such as in Genesis 1:6-7 or 1:26 when God says, “Let us make man in our image.” But, Jews and Muslims do not accept this simple revelation of God as *Elohim*, a plurality who exists as *Echad*, a unity. Instead, they seek to recast God in their own isolating, monadic image, insisting that God should be called *elohe*, a *singular entity, who exists as yachid, an indivisible*

singularity. Likewise, Muslims imagine God as *Allah*, a singularity like any other idol like Baal or Molech, only more powerful.

- **Needy Surrender of Faith:** (Genesis 15:8). From these examples, we see that a “receptive faith” requires that we come to God not as equals, as Job had once imagined himself a “prince” who would march up to God and make demands (Job 31:37). Rather, to accept what God says to us by faith, we must *surrender helplessly* to God, relying on him to act to accomplish what he said.

So, consider Abraham, the *father of faith*. In exemplifying a faith that God “counted to him as righteousness,” Abraham surrendered to believe:

⁵ And he brought him outside and said,
 “Look toward heaven, and number the
stars, if you are able to number them.”

Then he said to him, “So shall your **offspring** be.” ⁶ And he **believed** the **Lord**, and he **counted** it to him as **righteousness**. Genesis 15:5-6

When the Lord God promised Abraham that his *Seed-Zera* would be multiplied as the “stars” of the heavens (Gen. 15:5), Abraham likely realized the *impossibility* of this promise and his complete inability to plan or produce what God talked about. In fact, he was far beyond the age of child-raising and had no bodily offspring. In order to *believe* in these impossible words, Abraham would have to *surrender to God* all that he had to make himself available to God. Surrendering meant that he would give up *his improbably plans* of choosing Eliezer as his heir or planning another way to make this promise come true. Instead, Abraham surrendered his understanding of how this would

happen and put himself into the Lord's hands, relying on the Lord to make his revealed truth come to pass.

- **New Birth is Received by Faith:** (John 1:12-13)

Thus, when John the Baptist redirects you to look at Jesus alone as the one who is “Mighty” and “Worthy” to give you new life, sacrifice and lay down your own understanding. Yes, new life is an impossibility for *fleshly people* who are accustomed to having their own way, of understanding and controlling the world around them. But, faith requires you surrender and give what life you have to this Jesus Mashiach, who has the power and the right to give you New Birth.

To receive Jesus for who he claims to be, the Mashiach, the Son of God *raised up* by God to be the Seed of David, this One is worthy of your faith. Yes, you are merely a creature of dust, but He has the power of the Holy Spirit to give you new life

(John 1:12-13). You are an outcast, having no rights before the Lord God. But, Jesus is of the family of God, being God's *Heir and Firstborn son*. So, he has the right *raise up Sons as their kinsman-redeemer* that they might be *reborn of God*, just as he was.

Focus:

- Faith (1:7): to perceive: Jesus Mashiach as Mightier and Self as Unworthy.
- Baptism-Rebirth: (1:8)
- By the Holy Spirit (1:8).

Consider:

When John the Baptist talks about Jesus Mashiach, the Son of God, he models for us how we should look upon this *Son of God* by faith, as our only life-giver. Recalling that disciples only enter the Kingdom of Heaven and God's family by a spiritual rebirth, we recognize John's faith as the same way a *newborn* must look so intently on the face of his

life-giving parent. In fact, the newborn's entire physiology, the focal range of his newly opened eyes, his innate disposition to fixate and bond to this parental face—his being is designed to unwaveringly focus upon the face of his parent. For the newborn, this parental face is his entire world and so is endlessly interesting and engaging. Innately, he must preverbally realize that his entire being hinges on this person before him, so he locks eyes with a look of fascination, of wonder, of delight, of contentment. This newborn's gaze should be our very definition of faith.

For, John the Baptists looks upon the Mashiach with this same sense of *delighted wonder*, for he beholds the "Son of God" himself, the one who alone brings an eternal birth by the Holy Spirit (1:8). So, let's focus first on what John the Baptist teaches us of faith. Being warned that no *infant* ever abandoned such faith for independence, rejecting its mother's milk for food of its own

design, being convinced that it was well able to sustain itself by its own genius and ability.

However, many disciples of Jesus have abandoned such a humble, childlike faith because they were confident in their own ability to manage and design their own spiritual lives, choosing this fleshly path of fruitlessness and ruin.

When John the Baptist looks upon Jesus Mashiah with a *delighted wonder*, he is quick to admit that Jesus is “mightier” than himself (1:7), for the Son of God’s ability to “baptize”—to give *rebirth* infinitely exceeds his earthly ability to baptize in water. If the power and capacity of parents to give life to their babies far exceeds what the babies can do for themselves, then the Son of God’s *life-giving power* exceeds the distance between earth and heaven. Clearly, the Son of God is unmatched in his power to bring this infinite life of God to you and me as his disciples. And, the *apostle John* adds one more privilege of

this Son of God. He can bestow on his *newly born* disciples the “right” to take their place as the children of God, because he himself is “the Son of God”—the *family of God’s* Firstborn Heir, its Redeemer who has been tasked with *rebuilding a Household* for God and David of *spiritually reborn children* (2 Samuel 7:11, 13), fulfilling for even Abraham the promise that his *Seed-Zera*, would multiply children of his household like the “stars of heaven” and the “sands” of the sea (Genesis 22:17). So, in John the Baptist’s eyes, Jesus Mashiach was both *powerful* as the life-giving Son of God, and *worthy* and furnished with the Right as God’s Firstborn Son to bring other sons legitimately into the family by a new spiritual birth.

So, as a disciple of Jesus Mashiach, adopt John’s view of Jesus as the focus of your faith, looking to the Son of God as being *infinitely endowed* to give you a new spiritual birth into God’s family as a

“son.” Like *newborn* gazing at his all-providing *parent*, look upon Jesus Mashiach by faith, and know that He is both all-powerful and worthy as God’s rightful Son.

Yes, your faith must be **anchored** in the Power and Person of Jesus Mashiach as the Son of God. But, faith also requires you have the infant’s ***surrendered receptivity*** as well—to take with complete trust all the life-giving goodness given to him by his parent. For, Jesus assures you that if you come to the Kingdom with any Self-reliance or Self-righteousness, you will not enter it. Faith does not dictate to God the terms of this *new life*. Rather, the simple faith of a child *meekly yet hungrily* receives this new life, knowing that his spiritual parent is “might” and “worthy” to give him this new life.

Reborn into the Kingdom of God by Faith in Jesus Mashiach:

¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did **receive him**, who **believed** in his **name**, he gave the **right** to become **children of God**, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, **but of God**.

Jesus Mashiach comes to you as the Son of God, alive with the Father's heavenly life and endowed with all *rights* of God's family as its Firstborn Heir and Son.

Will you view him by faith, receiving all that he claims to be? When Jesus comes to you as Mashiach, the Son of God, will you surrender to him in honor and *helpless trust*? Will you hungrily ask him for this *spiritual new life* that only he can give you by the Holy Spirit?

If the answer is yes, then like Abraham, surrender and give yourself to him, that His Word of promise make become a reality in your life!

Question:

- Led by the Holy Spirit:
- Taught by the Holy Spirit:
- Healed by the Holy Spirit:
- Gifted by the Holy Spirit:

Further Discovery:

John 1:4-13.

