Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at cdanielwilson@gmail.com. **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the Service: Psalm #2

Bro & Sis: ***Our only Hope is found in the Lord our God, the Creator & Sustainer of all Things & Savior of those who trust in Him!***Grace be yours in abundance, with Mercy, Peace & Love from God our Father & the Lord Jesus Christ. ***Amen.***

Let us sing God’s Praise: Psalm **#19 “The Spacious Heavens Declare” *vs.1, 4-8***

***We will profess our faith using Apostles Creed*** *pg. 7 of Hymnal Please be seated*

***NOW FLIP OVER TO PAGE 35 of CREEDS Confessions and Liturgical Forms as we Read LD 27***

**Cont. to worship our God as *we remain seated* #461 “My Hope is built on nothing less** *than Jesus’ blood & righteousness***”**

***NOW WE COME TO OUR CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER … Prayer***

Turn to our scripture reading: **Numbers 19**

**God has given us such a great salvation - so** let us respond to His grace, by generously giving to support God’s kingdom work through His tithes and our additional Free-will offerings! ***( Deacons)***

*Let’s cont. to worship as we sing* **Our Song of Prep: #445 “***Rock of Ages Cleft for Me***”**

***Sermon Text:* Ezekiel 36:25-28 *Sermon Title: LD 27 – Sacraments #4: A Spiritual Sign***

***Let us now sing a* song of Response Dwelling on God’s saving power *–*#384 “O God Great Father”**

***May God the Father*** *bless you & keep you,* ***May God the Son*** *turn His face toward you & be gracious to you,* ***May the Holy Spirit*** *lift up his countenance upon you & give you peace!* ***Amen***

***Doxology*: #531**

# Evening Sermon: “A Spiritual Sign” Heidelberg #30 – Sacraments #4

Text: Ezekiel 36:25-28 (read 22-36) Reading: Numbers 19

***Introduction:*** Children, have you ever seen Sunday school songs with hand motions? Like the Butterfly song, or build your house on the rock? You do the motions as you sing the song: Like this with the Butterfly song: If I were a butterfly… you do this hand motion right? And If I were a robin in a tree… you make a robin with your hand and fingers… you make a sign/hand motion that pictures/shows what you are saying/singing.

The song wouldn’t make sense if I used the wrong hand motions, would it? For example, If I were a butterfly… (build your house on rock motions). That doesn’t make sense… THE SIGN MUST MATCH THE WORDS/MEANING of the Song.

*The same is true with Baptism. What we do in baptism: how much water, how it is applied, when and to whom it is applied all have to match the meaning of the sacrament. The Spiritual meaning and purpose of Baptism must be shown or pictured by what we do in the action. Just as the hand motions/actions have to match the words of a song!* ***Tonight, we will unpack how our practice of Baptism best reflects the meaning and purpose of the sacrament.***

***Review***: *We have covered a lot of information over that past few sermons, so let’s take a moment for a brief review…*

**In Genesis 17,** we saw that circumcision was the sign of the everlasting covenant between God and Abraham and between God and Abraham’s children, even those children who were not going to be saved (for instance: Ishmael received the sign of the covenant even though He was rejected from the covenant).

**In Romans 4,** we saw that Abraham’s children are only those who have his faith (NOT just those who are his ethnic descendants), which means that if you are a Christian, you are a spiritual child of Abraham. *Furthermore, we saw that circumcision was always intended to be a sign of the righteousness Abraham had by faith.*

**So, the OT spiritual sign of Faith (circumcision)** was to be given to all children (even known reprobates) out of obedience to God’s covenant promises, ***and* Abraham’s true spiritual children** would confirm/complete their circumcision through true faith when they reached maturity.

**Now, Please forgive me… I should have explained the significance of that last time…**  **What does it mean that this sign of righteousness by faith was given to children?** It means that God Saves! It means that God is the one who makes our children righteous by faith, or not! This symbol is meant to point and direct Covenant children to WANT the reality to which the sign of circumcision (and now Baptism) pointed – a saving faith relationship with God! And giving the sign of righteousness by faith to our children is a sign that we, as Parents, desire God’s promise to come true: That He will be OUR God, and the God of our children after us!

**All these facts are the clear teaching of scripture…** Though, our reformed Baptist and dispensational brothers in the faith would stop us at this point **and say that such things don’t apply to the New Testament Era because the covenant is** **different** – They claim that beginning in Acts 2, only those who believe are brought into relationship with God through Baptism, and there is no specific mention of baptizing children; to some extent they are right.

**However, as we saw last time,** Peter restated the covenant promises of Abraham – namely that the promises of God belong to the children of believers, *specifically the promise of the Holy Spirit.* And if the promise of the Holy Spirit belongs to our children, then the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit also belongs to them.

This evening I want to develop this connection between the Holy Spirit and Baptism. We saw it last time, in that Peter told the crowd at Pentecost, ***repent and be baptized and you will receive the Holy Spirit!! Baptism*** **was related to** **the Spirit’s coming**. Be baptized first, and then the Spirit will come. There is some connection between water Baptism and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now just as the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was prophesied in Joel chapter 2, so the connection between water baptism and the Holy Spirit baptism was prophesied about in our text: in Ezekiel 36:25-28.

There in Ezekiel 36, we learn that: For His own name’s sake, God promised to save His OT people Israel, from exile, as a picture of His final and complete salvation of ALL His elect people from Sin. We know that this text is not confined to the ethnic Jewish people FOR 2 reasons:

1. because there are specific verses/phrases that were never fulfilled, prior to Pentecost, (portions of 25-28) and
2. because those previously unfulfilled phrases were fulfilled in the New Covenant people of God after Pentecost – and that is demonstrated by parallel language in the New Testament.

I have chosen this text in particular, because it connects Old Testament Levitical Ceremonies with their New Testament Fulfilment. Ezekiel was one of those glorious prophets who stood at the threshold/the doorstep of the New Covenant Era, and He prophesied of that coming age using the language and customs that the Old Testament Israelites could understand*. IT is as if Ezekiel was explaining airplanes and rockets using the language of chariots and horses!*

To help us understand how this text prophesies about the New Covenant, I believe it best that we take the verses in reverse order, ***under 3 brief points:***

1. **The Future People of God**
2. **The Promised Spirit Baptism**
3. **The Prophesied Water Baptism**

*In verse 28 we see our first point:*

# The Future People of God (REPEAT)

In this verse God reiterates the promise that the people would return to the Land as a distinct people of God, and that they would once again exist as Israel had existed prior to exile. He says, “You will live in the land I gave your forefathers…” We know from Nehemiah and Ezra (as well as the apocryphal books) that God fulfilled this promise to the Israelites. That they did return from the exile as a distinct people (something that had never happened to any other people – no other nation had ever recovered from the level of destruction that was brought on Israel – such nations had always been fully assimilated into the cultures that conquered them!). So, God promised to bring them back, and kept this remarkable promise to show His power and glory to the nations.

**God next includes a covenantal phrase which inextricably links this passage back to the Abrahamic covenant and forward to the New Covenant! *He says:*** *“you will be my people, and I will be your God.”*

 We first read of this promise in Genesis 17, and this idea was repeated in various forms over a dozen times in the Old Testament. **But God** doesn’t only say this to the ethnic Jewish descendants of Abraham… NO, in fact, He repeats much the same phrase at least **3 Times** in the New Testament:

1. The Apostle Paul applies these words to the New Covenant believer in 2 Corinthians 6:16, saying: “*I will be their God, and they will be my people*”
2. The Apostle John in Revelation conveys God’s Words from the throne describing the Bride of Christ, the Perfected people of God – In chapter 21:3 we read God saying: “*Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God!* ”
3. The third and most important passage for our study tonight is from Hebrews 8:10: There the writer to the Hebrews is explaining the details of the New Covenant from the prophecy of Jeremiah, and He quotes these words as a specific reference to Christian believers: “*This is the Covenant I will make with the House of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people.*” Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the writer to the Hebrews specifically points out that *these phrases* were intended to prophesy of us, the New Covenant Church! And we find these very phrases in our text for this evening!

*In Fact, in verses 27 and 26 we see more of those same ideas, and there we see our Second point:*

# The Promised Spirit Baptism (REPEAT)

* 1. **In Verse 27, Ezekiel describes the work of the Promised Holy Spirit**

*This is a description of the Holy Spirit’s work in the normal life of the New Covenant Believer.* We saw last time that Peter explained the miraculous signs of the outpouring of the Spirit, with a prophecy describing those miracles from the prophet Joel. Ezekiel is describing the nature of the Holy Spirit’s work AFTER that first miraculous generation. **After the gifts of tongues and prophecy ceased (as was predicted they would in I Corinthians 13), after they ceased, the Spirit continued to work in believers (and does so even today!).** But the Holy Spirit’s Work TODAY: is to work in and move the heart of the Believer to follow the decrees and laws of Christ. Ezekiel says, “*And I will* ***put my Spirit within you,*** *and* ***cause you*** *to walk in My statutes and you will be careful to observe My Ordinances.*” We see the same ideas at the end of I Corinthians 2 and end of Galatians 5… There Paul describes How the Spirit teaches us, moves in us to make us obey God’s commands. When we compare the fruit of the Spirit to the works of the sinful nature we see that the Holy Spirit’s work of sanctification (making us holy) is the ultimate fulfilment of this text! ***ALSO promised by Jesus in John 14 & 16***

* 1. ***As we turn our attention to verse 26,* we see Ezekiel explaining *How* we receive the Holy Spirit**

This verse is a wonderful parallel to Ephesians chapter 2. Because Ezekiel is describing regeneration – ***God’s work of making a dead sinner, into a living Christian.*** Paul tells us that God made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions! Ezekiel says that God would be taking a heart of stone (which is dead, can’t beat etc) and replace it with a heart of flesh – a living, pumping, vibrant, SPIRIT LED Heart!

 If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, *This verse is true of you!* You believe, because God gave you a new heart, and He is working in you through the Holy Spirit to love God, believe in Christ, and obey His commandments… As Jesus Himself said, if you love me, you will keep my commandments!

 **Your obedience to Christ illustrates/shows what is going on in your heart? Are you led by the Spirit? *Or do you have a dead, stoney heart?*** Your actions/words reveal your heart!

 *Let’s continue on now to verse 25, where we see our Final point:*

# The Prophesied Water Baptism (REPEAT) *Let’s read verse 25 again…*

* 1. **In these two sentences we have a prophecy regarding New Testament Baptism in OT terms**

When Ezekiel speaks of sprinkling clean water on the people and they will be “clean” – what is he saying? Was this something new that the Israelites wouldn’t understand? No… the word used for clean was the same word used for ceremonial cleanness or uncleanness in Leviticus and Numbers. The Israelites were all too familiar with these words, if any Israelite touched a dead body, or an unclean person, or an unclean tent, animal, stranger… anything unclean… they would become ceremonially unclean. That meant that they needed to be sprinkled with special water (with heifer ashes in it) according to the ritual described in Numbers 19.

*However, in this passage, God is telling His people,* ***that one day****, He would give them a sprinkling of clean water which would cleanse them from all impurities – not just ceremonial uncleanness, but it would cleanse them from everything – even Idolatry!!* ***The greatest sin a man could commit!***

**A sprinkling of repentance, representing forgiveness of ALL sins.** GET THAT…**Sprinkling clean water meaning repentance and forgiveness.** We have no historical record of any such sprinkling until John the Baptist arrived on the scene. HE came to prepare the way for the Messiah – and what did John say? I baptize you with water, but the one who comes after me will baptize with the HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH FIRE!!! We saw in Acts 2, that the Holy Spirit came on the first believers in what appeared to be tongues of fire on their heads…!

 And following John’s baptism of repentance, His sprinkling of God’s people with clean water… following that… ***The Holy Spirit was given to those who believed in Christ! Next time we will deal specifically with the New Testament confirmation/proof that Sprinkling is not only the prophesied mode of Baptism, but the actual practice demonstrated in the New Testament accounts.***

* 1. **But we already begin to see that thru our text’s connection to New Cov. Christian Baptism.**

Because when Peter said, **repent and be baptized, Every one of you, IN the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS!!! *he then added***, **and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! And the promise is for you and for your children and for those who are afar off!**

 Peter was clearly calling those first believers to repent from sin, be sprinkled with clean water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, **and then they would receive the spiritual reality that Baptism represented – the Holy Spirit!!** And what is more, the Holy Spirit who was promised in numerous OT passages (such as Jeremiah 31, Joel 2, our text) **that promised Spirit** *was promised to those new believers and their children and those who were afar off!!! WHICH MEANS* that the sign of Spirit Baptism, which is water baptism, must be given to all to whom the promise belongs – Believers and their children.

That Spirit is the giver of life, so the fact that our children are heirs to the promise – Is the God-given assurance that all the elect of our children will be saved through the Spirit’s regenerating work, **of which baptism is the sign!** So, we baptize our children out of obedience and faith to the covenant promises, **believing** NOT PRESUMING, ***believing*** that God will save our children according to HIS PLAN and Grace. *And we teach them by Faith in His Promise!* **Is God *YOUR GOD?*! Then He is the God of your children as well! AMEN.**