**What Does The 'Washing Of Regeneration' Refer To?**

Titus 3:5 reads "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the **washing of regeneration**, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" I've heard many gospel preachers say the phrase "washing of regeneration" in this verse refers to baptism but I don't think that is exactly right. Instead it refers to the forgiveness of our sins - which does happen to occur at baptism according to passages like Acts 2:38 and 22:16.

We see that when David asks God to “wash” him from his sins in Psa 51:7. That can’t refer to water baptism; water baptism didn’t even exist back then. It is most definitely referring to the forgiveness of sins which takes place in the mind of God.

Compare the phrase to a similar phrase in Rev 1:5b "Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins** in his own blood." When the Bible uses the word "wash" to refer to the shedding of Jesus' blood for our sins, it is using an analogy to compare our spiritual cleansing to something we might physically wash. Our salvation is the cleansing of our sins since our sins are what cause us to be lost, that is, in need of salvation (Rom 6:23).

And that exact point is made in Tit 3:5. This washing/forgiveness of our sins (in the mind of God) happens when we are regenerated according to the verse. That confirms what John 3:3-5 is saying. Salvation from sin occurs when we are "born again" or regenerated. Additionally, being "born again" involves being "born of water and of the Spirit." That tells us the "washing of regeneration" occurs when we are baptized in water.

Acts 22:16 ("And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord") mentions another phrase parallel to Tit 3:5's "washing of regeneration" - Saul was told to "wash away thy sins." Both phrases are referring to the forgiveness of our sins, and Acts 22:16 confirms again that that happens at our baptism.

The phrase "remission of sins" in Acts 2:38 ("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") is another parallel to Tit 3:5's "washing of regeneration." And Acts 2:38 also tells us this spiritual washing/cleansing occurs at the point of baptism.

The phrase "washing" of Tit 3:5 is not an illusion to the incidental physical washing the waters of baptism might do, but is referring to the washing away of our sins (via the blood of Christ) that occurs when we are born again. That does happen to occur when we are baptized, but we learn that from other passages (not Tit 3:5).