

## Should Any Baptism Be Accepted?

Fred R. Coulter—June 3, 2011

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. We are getting an awful lot of requests through Church at Home for much of our material, especially the *Baptism Series* booklet. That means there are going to be some people who are wanting to know about baptism. It also came up, because there are those who have been baptized in different churches, and they come and they say, ‘Well, I’ve been baptized.’

What is the true baptism? We’ll go to Eph. 4 a little later, but it says there’s *one baptism*. Many people can get wet or they can get dunked, but a baptism is something else. A baptism is a *covenant* baptism.

What we’re going to do is we’re going to start out with where baptism began with John the Baptist. It’s very interesting; they had washings and oblations under the Old Covenant, but baptism is entirely new when we come to the New Covenant. God did something very important with John the Baptist; not many people realize this.

John the Baptist was the son of a priest. He was to be trained in the priesthood, so at age 30 he could be a priest at the temple. Well, it says that he stayed in the wilderness until the day of his appearing. Remember the occasion of his birth. The angel Gabriel came and told Zacharias, his father, ‘Your wife is going to have a son.’ Now they were well into their seventies. And he said, ‘He shall be great before the Lord and you shall call his name John.’

Zacharias said to the angel, ‘How is this going to be, see as how my wife is old and I’m old?’ Good lesson in believing the angels of God and believing God. He said, ‘Because you didn’t believe me, you’re going to be dumb, not able to speak, until the child is born.’ And it actually went to the eighth day of the day of circumcision.

There’s another instance, too, where Moses didn’t believe God and that was where God told him to ‘speak to the rock’ and the water would come. But he got so frustrated dealing with these rebellious Israelites that he did like he did last time—strike the rock and the water would come. But this time he took his rod and he beat the rock. So God told Moses, ‘Because you didn’t believe Me, you’re not going into the *promised land*.’ God didn’t say to Moses, ‘Well, I understand. You were under stress. It was a very difficult day and really these Israelites are very stiff-necked and tough to get along with.’ We’re to believe God under all circumstances.

What happened when John the Baptist started his ministry? *He did not go to the temple*, yet they all knew that this was a special birth. Don’t you think the whole priesthood knew, all of them, for the full 30 years? *Yes, they knew!* They were wondering, ‘Where is he?’ And, of course, the angel told him that he was not to cut his hair or to cut his beard and that he was not to drink anything of the vine nor eat anything of the vine. So he was under a Nazarite vow from birth. At age thirty, I imagine he had long, flowing hair, and I imagine he had a long flowing beard, and I picture him as being redheaded. Now I never used to, until I met a Jew who was redheaded and freckled, a real Jew—a temple-attending Jew, by the way.

I picture him as looking really fierce, eyebrows real bushy, big bushy beard, hair hanging down, and then he was dressed with what? *Camel’s hair and a leather girdle around his waist!* He was fierce, and I know how that is with people when they react to fierce people. So here’s where he appeared. The farthest away from the temple he could get, the Jordan River.

Let’s read it here, Luke 3:2: “*In the time of the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he went into all the country around the Jordan... [He went up and down the Jordan. There’s a lot of water in the Jordan River, so if you look in *A Harmony of the Gospels*, you will see that even a little waterfall that I have there, a picture of the Jordan River.] ...proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*” (vs 2-3).

We’re going to see that the baptism of John, if it has been many, many years before you found out about Christ, is not valid. Yet, the baptism of John when he did it was valid and he told people to believe on the one Who would come after him.

Verse 4: “As it is written in *the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah*, saying, ‘*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight His paths.”*.... [Then it goes immediately into the second coming of Christ.] ...Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked *places* shall be made into straight *paths*, and the rough *places* into smooth ways; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (vs 4-6).

How many outside the area of Galilee and Judea and Samaria knew about Jesus Christ, other than a few of the Roman soldiers that may have been rotated back to Rome? *Nobody!* ‘All flesh shall see

the salvation of God,' is also talking about the second return of Christ.

Verse 7: "For this reason, he said to the multitudes who were coming out to be baptized by him... ['Oh, how wonderful that you're here. It's lovely, all you nice religious people. Let's come over here and let's have a nice time. I'm the son of a priest and I can do really good.' *He didn't say that!* I'm being facetious because listen to how he treated people. He was not nice; this was rude.] ...'You offspring of vipers...'"

Have you ever seen a Palestinian viper? It's got a huge head and the body is about five feet and it's big around. And it's got a real teeny tail. First time I saw it was at the snake house in San Diego Zoo. All the kids would go along and say, 'Oh, daddy, look at this.' And I'm eight feet over here walking along like this. I don't like snakes, so I get clear out of the way. 'Oh, come look at this one.'

"...'You offspring of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath?' This also tells us something else, too. When it comes time for difficulties in the end-times, not everybody's going to escape just because they want to come and be baptized. Here's the key, for any baptism we'll see that this is exactly the same that we had with—when we gets to Acts 2.

Verse 8 tells us: "Therefore, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance..." This is something that needs to be determined when someone wants to come be baptized:

- Have you repented?
- Do you know what repentance is?
- Do you understand all about it?

"...and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham *for our father*'... [They used this to make themselves important to God in their own eyes.] ...because I tell you that God has the power to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. But the axe is already being laid to the roots of the trees. Therefore, every tree *that* is not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into *the fire*'" (vs 8-9). Nice warm welcoming words—aren't those? *Yes!*

Verse 10: "And the multitudes asked him, saying, 'What then shall we do?'.... [Because there are things you needed to do. What are some of the things that show repentance?] ...And he answered *and* said to them, 'The one who has two coats, let him give to the one who has none; and the one who has food, let him do the same.' Now, the tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, 'Master, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Exact nothing beyond that which is appointed to you.' Then those who were soldiers also asked him, saying, 'And we, what shall we do?' And he

said to them, 'Do not oppress or falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.' But as the people were *filled* with expectation, and they were all reasoning in their hearts about John, whether or not he might be the Christ" (vs 10-15).

Why would they do that unless they understood when the Messiah was going to come. And remember Matt. 3, the wise men; they came to Herod first and they said, 'Where did you see the star?' He told him and then he had the priest come up and say, 'Where was He going to be born?' They knew, they said Bethlehem. So they were waiting.

Verse 16: "John answered all *of them*, saying, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but He is coming Who *is* mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to loose the thong of His sandals. He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire.'" The baptism of fire is not like the wild Pentecostals where they say you're speaking in tongues. What does baptism mean, first of all? Baptism comes from the Greek 'baptizo,' which means *to be fully submersed*. They were to be baptized completely in water. If you're baptized completely with fire, what happens? POOF! You're burned up.

And he's talking about Christ, v 17: "'Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His granary...'" (v 17). Who are the wheat? *All of those that He calls!* Where is the granary? You know what the granary is? *It's the grave until Christ returns!* Then a few will be alive when He returns who are baptized, but the granary is the grave.

"'...but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.'.... [That's the Lake of Fire.] ...And *with* many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people" (vs 17-18). Then shows that he was later cast into prison.

Verse 21: "Now, it came to pass after all the people were baptized, and Jesus was baptized and was praying, *that* the heaven was opened, And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in a bodily form like a dove; and there came a voice from heaven, saying, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased'" (vs 21-22). Then it talks about Jesus being about 30 years of age. Then Jesus after that, He immediately went into the wilderness from Jordan and was tempted of the devil.

John 3:23: "And John was also baptizing in Aenon, near Salim because there was much water there..." How do people get pouring, and you actually see Catholic pictures of John the Baptist pouring water on the head of Jesus. How do you get sprinkling and baby baptism that way in the Catholic Church? We already covered that; they're too young. They know nothing about sin and can't repent anyway.

Then the Orthodox—I didn't know how they did this until several years ago—baptize infants, too' they do the full baptism. What happens, I saw the Orthodox priest baptizing one of the babies and it was yelling and screaming and crying and kicking. What they do, they have a tank and he takes the baby and plunges it, pulls it up, the baby's gasping like that, plunges it down. He does that three times, you know, 'In the name of the Father'—plunges; 'in the name of the Son'—plunges; 'in the name of the Holy Spirit'—plunges. By the time the baby comes up, poor mom is out there frantic wondering what's happening to the baby, is he drowning, or whatever. That's not a baptism, that's a dunking. That might even cause childhood trauma, who knows.

Verse 23: "...and the *people* were coming and were being baptized, for John had not yet been cast into prison. Then there arose a question *between* the disciples of John and *some of the Jews* about purification. And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, He Who was with you beyond Jordan, to Whom you have borne witness, behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him'" (vs 23-26). We'll see how that is described (John 4).

Verse 27: "John answered and said, 'No one is able to receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear witness to me that I said, "I am not the Christ"... [read that in John 1] ...but that I am sent before Him. The one who has the bride is *the* bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands by and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the voice of the bridegroom; *in* this then, my joy has been fulfilled. It is ordained that He increase, and that I decrease. He Who comes from above is above all..." (vs 27-31).

Yet, their arguments, 'Where did Jesus come from?' John 17:5: "And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed." Where did He come from? *Heaven!* And He was there before the world existed, because He created the world.

Verse 31: "He Who comes from above is above all. The one who is of the earth is earthy, and speaks of the earth. He Who comes from heaven is above all; and what He has seen and heard, this *is what* He testifies; but no one receives His testimony.... [Here's something very interesting. Before you can even be accepted of God and be baptized, also; this has to happen]: ...The one who has received His testimony... [The testimony is the full message of Jesus Christ contained in what? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then we can add to that the witness of the apostles and the writings of the apostles, hence the whole New Testament.] ...**The one who has received His testimony has set his seal that God is true**" (vs 31-33).

What does it mean to 'set the seal'? *That means you verify it!* How did they set the seal? They would take melted wax and while it was still soft, after they sealed the letter, they would put an imprint right in the wax and it put your initial there that you sealed it. 'God is true.'

Verse 34: "'For He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God...'" There's a great lesson for us here—right? *Yes, indeed!* Not only is he talking about Christ, but any minister who comes has also had to set his seal that God is true. Anything that he preaches is going to be preaching what Jesus preached. *For whom God has sent, speaks the words of God!*

- Did God send John the Baptist? *Yes!*
- Did God send Jesus Christ? *Yes!*
- Did He send the apostles? *Yes!*

He told them to go into all the world.

Verse 34: "...speaks the words of God; and God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. The one who believes in the Son has everlasting life... [That belief must also be accompanied with baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.] ...but the one who does not obey the Son..." (vs 34-36). Isn't that interesting?

You think about that statement for a minute and understand this: *Obey!* Did He teach what God the Father wanted Him to teach? *Yes!* What did Jesus say? *'I of My own self can do nothing. As I see what the Father has done, that's what I do. As I hear what the Father told Me, that's what I speak. As the Father commanded Me, so I do.'* There is 'obey.' That's one of those words that a lot of modern-day Christians don't like. They like 'feel good.' If you feel good and you think it's good, then it is good, and if it is good, then it's of God and so therefore you're saved. That's not what the Bible teaches.

"...but the one who does not obey the Son shall not see life, for the wrath of God remains on him" (v 36). That's quite a statement—isn't it?

John 4:1: "Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John. (Although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples)... [Can you imagine what would happen if someone was baptized actually by Jesus? 'Oh, I'm so important, I got baptized by Jesus.' The only ones who were really baptized by Jesus would then be *the 12 apostles!*] ...He left Judea and departed again into Galilee" (vs 1-3).

Let's come here to Acts 1, here He talks about being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Talking about what Jesus did, Acts 1:2: "Until the day in

which He was taken up, after giving command by the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen; To whom also, by many infallible proofs, He presented Himself alive after He had suffered, being seen by them for forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God” (vs 2-3).

Remember, He opened their minds to understanding of the Scriptures. So He had 40 days of teaching them. I think it’s quite significant when you put it together. Jesus began His ministry with 40 days of being tempted by Satan the devil. He ended His ministry with 40 days of teaching the apostles and showing by many infallible proofs, that yes, He had risen from the dead.

Verse 4: “And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to ‘await the promise of the Father, which ‘ *He said*, ‘you have heard of Me.’” He did; He told them about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was *with* them and He said it would be *in* them. That’s the whole purpose of baptism and laying on of hands to have the Holy Spirit *in* you. That is called ‘*the baptism*,’ and that is, as it says in Eph. 4, there is *one baptism*.

Verse 5: “‘For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.’ So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority; but you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth’” (vs 5-8).

And it’s still going to the ends of the earth right now through the written Word, going to every nook and cranny of the world. I’m going to give a sermon on how powerful a witness that God has given by sending the Word of God in almost every language to every nook and cranny of the world. People aren’t going to say, ‘Oh, God, why didn’t you tell me?’ *I did, I sent you a Bible!* ‘Well, I never read it.’ ‘Is that My fault?’ God will say. *No!* You know what happened: The Holy Spirit came!

Let’s see the formula for and the requirements for baptism. When they understood that they had their hand in killing Jesus, we come to Acts 2:37: “Now, after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive

the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (vs 37-38). So there has to be:

1. repentance
2. baptism
3. receiving of the Holy Spirit

That is the proper sequence and that is the baptism. We already covered that children can’t be baptized because they’re not held responsible before God. They are in a category called ‘innocent,’ although they have human nature and do things which are not right.

Let’s see some other instances here in the New Testament. Let’s see a wrong baptism. Let’s come to Acts 8. Actually the baptism was right, but God did not let Philip <sup>[transcriber correction]</sup> lay hands on to receive the Holy Spirit when he went to Samaria. Because we will see there is big trouble, not in ‘River City,’ but in Samaria.

Acts 8:5: “Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them; and the multitudes listened intently with one accord to the things spoken by Philip when they heard and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many of those who had *them*; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (vs 5-8).

Didn’t realize it, but there was a ‘Darth Vader’ there, if we could use modern-day terminology—called Simon—and Philip made the mistake of baptizing him. This was not a baptism, though he was put under the water. We’ll see what the apostles did in response to that.

Verse 9: “But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one.... [That’s a great religious leader, much like a pope. This Simon is undoubtedly ‘the Peter’ that was the first starting of the Roman Catholic Church.] ...To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’ Now, they were giving heed to him because he had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries.... [under the spell] ...But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women” (vs 9-12). Simon wanted to get in on the ground floor. He saw this as a great thing to do, to add to what he was doing.

“Then Simon himself also believed; and after being baptized...” (v 13). It didn’t say that he repented. Can people believe to a certain point and not repent? *Yes!* Everywhere before baptism because we’re talking about *the* baptism. The reason I’m

going through this is, this is to show right here that there are people who have been baptized in the various churches and their baptisms were only dunkings; they were not valid. You can't come from a Sunday-keeping, Halloween, Easter, Christmas, New Years type of church and say, 'Well, I was baptized over here in this church.'

1. Did you believe?
2. Did you repent?
3. Did you obey the words of Christ?
4. Did you start keeping the commandments?

And, of course, most of them don't. First thing they hear is, 'You've been *born again*. The law's been done away.' I imagine they hear that over and over and over again. What if you were baptized into say, something like the Seventh Day Adventists? And you actually have to say, well, you believed that Ellen G. White was a prophetess of God. Well, she spoke a lot of things that were true, but she spoke a lot of things that were not true.

Here we have a *false* belief. He believed for ulterior motives. "...and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip; and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power *that were* being done, he was amazed" (v 13). He saw the healings, he saw the casting out of demons. And he thought, 'Boy, if I had this power, man, I could really bewitch more people. I could really have the power in my hands.' That was something!

Verse 14: "Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them... [Who are they? *Two leading apostles*—right? *Yes!* Why would they send them down there? Couldn't Philip lay hands on them? *Of course!*] ...Who, after coming down *to Samaria*, prayed for them that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them... [God withheld giving the Holy Spirit, because of the thing with Simon Magus.] ...but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (vs 14-16).

If you were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and didn't receive the Holy Spirit, was this a valid baptism? *No!* You must receive the Holy Spirit. What about where it says—there are some people who teach this—that you should only baptize in the name of Jesus? But Matt. 28 says, 'Baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit.' And you do all of that in the name of Jesus Christ.

What we have, we have the printed-out words of the baptism ceremony. After we ask them if they've repented and accepted Jesus Christ, and understand what baptism is all about. And we will cover that because the true 'one baptism' is this: ***It is a covenant baptism unto death for eternal life.***

There is no other baptism. Any other baptism, though it may have been done in the name of Jesus, though you may have believed to a certain point, if you don't receive the Holy Spirit, that baptism is not a real baptism. That means, maybe there are a lot of people out there who think they're baptized and everything is in good shape, but they're not.

Verse 17: "Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit. Now, when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money... [This is where 'simony' comes from.] ...saying, 'Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit'" (vs 17-19).

He believed, but he didn't repent. What was his action? *Everyone knew what it was!* He was a sorcerer, meaning he was a *male witch*, and he was casting spells, keeping people under those spells, coming to him for advice, running their lives, being heralded as a great one of God. His baptism was no more valid than taking a shower with clothes on.

Notice what Peter said to him, v 20: "But Peter said to him, 'May your money be destroyed with you... [That's not very nice, he's supposed to be kind and loving—right? Well, he's harsh and mean.] ...because you thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter... [That means you have *no part of being a Christian* and you have *no part and lot of being an apostle*, because that's what he wanted to be.] ...for your heart is not right before God'" (vs 20-21).

This is why for baptism everyone needs to be counseled. People I've had to re-baptize after years of attending church, they finally had to say, 'I really don't think I have the Holy Spirit.' Almost nine times out of ten it gets down to this: They were never counseled directly to find out:

- Did you repent?
- You know what baptism means?
- You understand what you're doing?
- You know that this is a covenant death?
- You know that Christ died for you?
- Do you understand that?

*No!* They just said, well, in some cases, some ministers have come up to people and said, 'Well, you've been attending church long enough. Don't you think it's time you get baptized?' *Well, I suppose.* POOF! Not valid, because it's not a covenant baptism.

So, Peter told him, v 22: " 'Repent... [Belief without repentance is not the belief necessary for baptism.] ...Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought

of your heart may be forgiven you; For I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness” (vs 22-23). Now, ‘gall of bitterness’ has to do with what? *Idolatry!* ‘Bond of unrighteousness’ has to do with what? *Being Satan’s servant as a sorcerer!* ‘Bond of unrighteousness.’

“But Simon answered and said, ‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf...’” (v 24). He never repented. But the historical account and there are some myth mixed in with it, too, shows that he used the name of Jesus. He preached in the name of Jesus. He had his own following. He had a woman consort with him that he called the manifestation of the Holy Spirit—Helen—and so forth. And they went around and they raised up other ministers, so that was a lot of the competition with the apostles. *No, he never repented!*

(go to the next track)

Let’s analyze the baptism of the Apostle Paul, because this helps answer the question: Who should baptize? Should it be an elder or can it be a senior man or can it be like in my case, I was baptized by two senior students down at Ambassador College, but under the authority of the ministry. It can’t be something that you’re just—someone’s going to come along and say, ‘Oh, you need to be baptized. I’ll baptize you.’ *Well, who are you?* ‘Well, I’m just a good fellow. I’ll baptize you.’ *No! It has to be delegated and designated under the authority of the elders.*

Remember where we read in John 4. Jesus was baptizing, but it wasn’t Jesus. It was the disciples; they were baptizing under His authority. We see the same thing right here, Acts 9 and 22. This is after Jesus knocked him [Paul] down on the ground there and revealed Himself. They led him away.

Acts 9:9: “*But for* three days he was not *able* to see, and he did not eat or drink. Now there was in Damascus **a certain disciple**... [Doesn’t say he was an elder. He certainly must have been a senior man, if we could look at it that way, but it doesn’t say he was an elder.] ...there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Behold, *I am here*, Lord.’ And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem” (vs 9-13). He was on his way to Damascus—wasn’t he?

Verse 14: “*And even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and *the* children of Israel; for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name.’.... [Notice what happens here]: ...Then Ananias went away and came into the house; and after laying *his* hands on him, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, *even* Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road in which you came, so that you might receive sight and be filled with *the* Holy Spirit.’ And it was as *if* scales immediately fell from his eyes, and he instantly received sight; and he arose *and* was baptized” (vs 14-18). Ananias did the baptizing.

Acts 22:12: “And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law... [did not describe him as an elder, yet he was converted] ...who had a good report by all the Jews dwelling *there*. Came to me; and he stood and said to me, ‘Brother Saul, look up.’ And I looked up at him at that time. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has personally chosen you to know His will, and to see the Just One, and to hear *the* voice of His mouth; for you shall be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (vs 12-16).

There’s the other account of it. *Baptism is to wash away sins!* Let’s answer the question concerning the baptism of John; that that was only good *if* they believed on Jesus and were probably at the temple and then I wonder how many of them were re-baptized in the name of Jesus because of this.

Acts 19:1: “Now it came to pass *that* while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the upper parts *and* came to Ephesus; and when he found certain disciples, He said to them, ‘Did you receive *the* Holy Spirit after you believed?’... [Why would he ask this question? *Maybe he discerned they didn’t have it, so he asked.*] ...And they said to him, ‘We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit.’ Then he said to them, ‘Unto what, then, were you baptized?’ And they said, ‘Unto the baptism of John” (vs 1-3).

John’s baptism had to be a very important thing—right? Would we conclude that the baptism of John is better than any Protestant baptism or Catholic baptism or Orthodox baptism? *Have to!*

Verse 4: “And Paul said, ‘John truly baptized *with* a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ.’ And after hearing this, they were baptized into the name

of the Lord Jesus. Now when Paul laid *his* hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with *other* languages and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve” (vs 4-7). That means twelve in number.

Let’s see what the formula is here and we will clarify what it means to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. We’ve already talked about it, so let’s go there at this particular point, and let’s see what Jesus told them to do, and we will see that that’s probably what Paul did, but all of it in the name of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son... [Not *the name of*, but of the Son.] ...and of the Holy Spirit’” (vs 18-19)—not *the name of*. Why this formula: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? This is not a Trinitarian formula as people would like to assume.

- Why the Father? *Because God the Father gives the Holy Spirit and it is a begetting of eternal life!*
- Why ‘of the Son,’ in this formula? *Because it’s through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that you have your sins forgiven!*

You have the One Who gives the Holy Spirit. You have the forgiveness of your sins through Jesus and His sacrifice and now

- The Holy Spirit. That is, *you receive the Holy Spirit to lead you!*

As Paul said, ‘Have you received the Holy Spirit?’ They said, ‘No!’ The Holy Spirit is to lead us. All of this is done in the name of Jesus Christ when you finish it.

I’ll just give you kind of a summary of what it is for baptism. When I baptize I get in the water with those who are being baptized. Sometimes when I couldn’t do that, I could do it at the side of the pool. But I don’t like that, I like to get into the water.

And I put my hands on their shoulders and I look them right in the eyes and I ask them: ‘Have you repented of your sins?’ Of course, I’ve already counseled them before, so I know they have. ‘Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior?’ *Yes, I have!*

Then I say, ‘Because you have repented of your sins and have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, your Lord and Master and High Priest in heaven right now, your soon coming King in the Kingdom of God, I baptize you, not into any sect or denomination of this world. But I baptize you into the name of the Father, because the begetting of

the Holy Spirit will make you a child of God; and of the Son, because it’s through the crucifixion, sacrifice, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that you have your sins forgiven; and of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is the power that God gives you to lead you in your Christian walk. And that you accept this baptism as a covenant, an irrevocable covenant with God the Father and Jesus Christ, so that you are in a covenant relationship with Them’ — because they know it’s a covenant death.

Then when I get done and I say, ‘I now baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.’ Then put them under the water. Then when they come up out of the water, I lay hands on them and pray for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. So that’s how it should be done. That’s what Paul did back here to those who had been baptized under John. ‘And they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in other languages.’

Let’s come to Romans 6 and let’s see the covenant baptism, that’s what it is. And here in Rom. 6 it talks about baptism as ‘the baptism.’ In other words, there’s none other. There’s only, as Paul wrote, ‘One baptism’ — right?

- one God the Father
- one Lord Jesus
- one baptism.

Not many baptisms.

Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**.... [Sin is the transgression of the law of God. So why even ask the question if the law has been done away?] ...**We who died to sin...**” (vs 1-2). That’s what baptism is.

- you are dying *to sin*
- you are dying *to self*
- you are dying *to enter into a covenant relationship with God*

Did Jesus die for you? *Yes, He did!* Did He also promise that He would die within an irrevocable promise, the maledictory oath (Gen. 15)? *Yes, He did!* So, He died! What happens is that being a *covenant baptism you have to pledge your life* through this symbolic death. Christ died for you! Now in baptism, *you die for Christ!* You die unto that covenant relationship. So let’s read it.

Verse 2: “...We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we... [he’s including himself] ...as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into **the** death... [the death of Jesus] ...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been

conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection” (vs 2-5). There is the symbolism. The old self dies in the watery grave. The sinful self dies. You die to sin. You have still sin to overcome. That’s to walk in newness of life and change and grow and overcome, because of this covenant relationship you now have with God.

Verse 6: “Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him*... [That’s what it means in the Greek.] ...in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin.” So we have two verses here:

1. Verse 5: “...we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death...”
2. Verse 6: “...our old man was co-crucified with *Him*...”

In other words, what God the Father does is this: When you enter into this baptism, He directly unites your baptismal death and burial with the death of Jesus Christ’ gives you the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands, so now you can walk in newness of life, because you can’t keep the commandments otherwise. All of this is an *operation of grace*.

- it is belief
- it is repentance
- it is a symbolic death

Verse 7: “Because the one who has died... [in the watery grave] ...to sin has been justified from sin. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (vs 7-8).

Let’s come to Colossians 2 and let’s see what this baptism does for us. And the receiving of the Holy Spirit is to circumcise our hearts. In other words, cut away that hardness of sin that is lodged right within. Doesn’t take it all away, circumcises it, so then you can change, you can grow, you can overcome. This is why we continue to repent all through our Christian lives.

Colossians 2:10: “And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power In Whom you have also been circumcised with the circumcision not made by hands... [The operation of God having to do with your mind and your heart.] ...in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.... [When does that circumcision of Christ take place?] ...**Having been buried with Him in baptism**...” (vs 10-12). That’s when it takes place. Then, once that has taken place, then you can receive the Holy Spirit. You see all the things that you have to have correct, according to the Scriptures, in order for it to be a *Scriptural* baptism. Are any of the Sunday-keeping churches baptizing with this understanding? *No!*

So therefore, a baptism in a Protestant church or Catholic Church or Orthodox Church, or I think even the Hindus they have certain bathings and washings they go through. That doesn’t count. You just got wet. It needs to be so that you come into a covenant relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. And the rest of your life you’re going to be growing and overcoming and perfecting. That’s why we have the Feasts of God, put sin out, put righteousness in. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit we are to be perfected by God the Father and Jesus Christ until the day of the resurrection. Then the change will really come. But that’s what baptism was all about.

Can we accept the baptism from another church? *No!* Someone will say, ‘Well, I was sincere when I was baptized.’ Yes, a lot of kids were at eight-years-old, going down the sawdust trail. You know you hear the music, ‘Just as I am,’ and come walking down the trail.

Dolores was saying that she did it when she was eight-years-old, because her friends went down, she went down. One time there was the minister standing up there saying, ‘Isn’t anybody going to walk down?’ So after awhile that gets to be old.

Did kids know anything about it? *No!* You play nice music and things like this and harp-tugging music; it’s really something. *Not valid!* That’s why children are not baptized. We’ve covered that before, too. So, this is a valid baptism for the circumcision of the heart.

Verse 12: “Having been buried with *Him* in baptism, by which you have also been raised with Him through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead.” Because the inner working of God’s Spirit in your life. When you first receive the Holy Spirit of God, that’s just the begetting, that’s just a start. You have to grow in grace and knowledge. You have to grow in the use of the Spirit of God.

- That’s why we have Sabbath services every week
- This is why we study
- This is why we pray
- This is why we repent
- This is why we strive to overcome

—because we are putting to death the old man of sin.

Notice what God has done here in forgiving all your trespasses, v 13: “For you, who were once dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses.”

*He did not nail the commandments to the cross.* And what we have here is a correct translation, v 14: “He has blotted out the note of

debt... [If you sin, you're indebted to God—is that not correct? *Yes!*] ...the note of debt against us with the decrees of our sins, which was contrary us; and He has taken it away, having nailed it to the cross.” In other words, when Christ was nailed there, all sin of all people was nailed there with Him. And all of those who repent and are baptized have it washed away. Isn't that what Ananias told Saul? 'Get up and be baptized and wash away your sins.'

Let's talk about something else here, too. There are some who say that if you believe in Jesus you don't have to be baptized because Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit without being baptized. But they miss the rest of the story which is told right there.

Acts 10:44. He was speaking to Cornelius and his house. “While Peter was still speaking these words...” This was to uncircumcised Gentiles and this was to open the door that those who believed in Jesus did not have to do as the proselytes of Judaism. The Gentiles did not have to be circumcised to become a true member of the body of Christ. Whereas, all of those who feared God, as Paul talks of them in Acts 13, those were Gentiles who had been circumcised. So, God was going to teach a lesson here to Peter. Going to teach the lesson that Gentiles do not have to be circumcised.

Verse 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message.... [The Jewish believers that came with Paul.] ...And the believers from the circumcision were astonished... [Unheard of thing, because Judaism says you can't even keep company with someone who is uncircumcised or of another nation—right? That's what Peter said.] ...were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out; for they heard them speak in other languages and magnify God....” (vs 44-46).

What was God doing? *He was letting Peter know that under the same circumstances without physical circumcision, the Gentiles would receive the Holy Spirit!*

“...Then Peter responded *by saying*, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized...’ (v 47). So they were baptized after the fact to teach Peter the lesson that this is how God was going to do it. From that time forward they had to be baptized *before* receiving the Holy Spirit. But this was to teach Peter and the whole Church.

Verse 47: “‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days”

(vs 47-48). Who did the baptizing? *The ones that went with Peter!* So there we have it.

I actually heard a minister preach this. He said that you don't need to be baptized, based upon Ephesians 1:12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (vs 12-13). There it is; you don't have to be baptized.

*Wait a minute!* What happened in Ephesus when Paul first went there? *He found those who believed unto the baptism of John*—right? Did he re-baptize them? *Yes, he did!* This does not eliminate baptism. But just because everything is not in a place you might expect it to be, doesn't mean you can draw that conclusion.

Ephesians 4:4: “*There is* one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith... [No baptism? *NO!*] ...**one baptism**; one God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all” (vs 4-6). It.

Can we conclude that in Eph. 1:13 that Paul did away with baptism? *NO!* If he had, he wouldn't have mentioned it. And besides, can you do away with something that God has commanded? *Of course not!* This shows you the utter impossibility of the beliefs of some people. The truth is this: *There is one baptism*, the proper baptism for

- the remission of sins
- the receiving of the Holy Spirit
- entering into that covenant pledge with God

That is *‘the one baptism.’* Those who have not been baptized into ‘the one baptism,’ the covenant baptism, then you got wet.

You may have been sincere. You may have even cried. The preacher may have even told you that everything is fine. But unless everything is according to the Word of God, then you may have undoubtedly received a substitute.

If you receive a substitute, is it the real thing? *NO!* In today's world they call it what? If you produce something that looks like say a brand name, they call it a ‘knock-off’—a fake, a counterfeit. If you watch any of the documentaries on those, you will see that they confiscate billions of dollars of goods entering in these containers coming in from overseas, mostly from China.

They've even taken some of them to the Chinese judge and the judge says, ‘Well, this doesn't look enough like it for me to say that it's piracy.’

Because they were told, ‘Well, you have to go back to China and get the conviction in China.’ Here they have all of these goods, all kinds of things—clothes, sporting goods, fake Nike stuff, and all of that.

Well, it can happen with baptism. You’re baptized in the Mormon Church—now, if you’re a good Mormon what you do then is you get a genealogical list of all your relatives and you’re baptized for your relatives.

There was one woman, never forget this, she went that kind of baptism in a Mormon church and there were others who were supposed to come and she was the only one. So, she was baptized two hundred times. She said she walked out and never came back, because it was a snowy day and no one else showed up. She said, ‘I walked out and never came back.’ She said, ‘I felt like I was drowned.’ I supposed you could say that’s much like water boarding.

Anyway, there can be all kinds of difficult problems. ***That is what the Bible describes as a covenant baptism and that is ‘the one baptism,’ and the only one!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 3:2-18, 21-22
- 2) John 3:23-36
- 3) John 17:5
- 4) John 4:1-3
- 5) Acts 1:2-8
- 6) Acts 2:37-38
- 7) Acts 8:5-24
- 8) Acts 9:9-18
- 9) Acts 22:12-16
- 10) Acts 19:1-7
- 11) Matthew 28:18-19
- 12) Romans 6:1-8
- 13) Colossians 2:10-14
- 14) Acts 10:44-48
- 15) Ephesians 1:12-13
- 16) Ephesians 4:4-6

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 3
- John 1
- Genesis 15
- Acts 13

Also referenced:

Booklet: *Baptism Series* by Fred R. Coulter

Book: *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter