

# After Baptism—What Do I Do Now? I

Fred R. Coulter—April 21, 2012

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services! After baptism, now what do I do? That's a good question, because general Protestantism is: If you accept Jesus as Savior with their little prayer, with no repentance, with no meaning, the simplest little thing that there is, you are now saved and you will be in the rapture and you will be in heaven. You have to attend church and you do the things that the church is doing and those are the works that you are to do and you're on your way to salvation.

- Is that true?
- What does the Bible show?

First of all, most churches today don't even bother to baptize anymore. If you pray that little prayer, you're saved. That's because they don't understand anything about covenants. We have covered covenants. A *covenant pledge* is what God did with Abraham and what Christ fulfilled when He gave His life.

A covenant is not in force until there is evidence of a sacrifice that you provide first. It's not like a will and testament. You can make out a will and that does not come into force until you die. You can change it anytime you want to. Say you make out a will when you're 50. Then all your kids get wild and greedy and want everything that you have. You call up your attorney and say, 'Mr. Attorney, I want to change my will. This child I'm not giving anything, this child I'm not giving anything, this one has been good and faithful, I'm going to leave everything to this child.' Done!

But a covenant is different. A covenant is you pledge a sacrifice. In marriage you pledge your lives—the two shall become one. To receive the Holy Spirit of God for eternal life you must be in covenant with God. The way you're in covenant with God is with covenant baptism. Christ gave His life. We've covered that. You present evidence of your death to God. Christ presented His death and was resurrected from the dead. You can't enter into covenant with Him by just saying, 'Oh, Lord, bless me.' That's not acceptable to God.

If He's going to give you eternal life, you have got to have a covenant baptism because you cannot receive eternal life without a covenant relationship. It's that simple.

So this is what Romans 6 is all about. Romans 6:3: "Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus... [That's an interesting preposition in Greek. It is 'eis' (pronounced 'ice') and that is *into, to become part*

*of.*] ...were baptized **into** His death?" Your death pledge has to be the same as Christ's.

Verse 4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death..." What do we do when we baptize you? *We put you completely under the water!* If we hold you there long enough, you would drown; you would die. This is the closest you can come to death and yet, come out of the water and live, because after you make the pledge you are perfected, not before. You're not perfect when you come up out of the water. You have your sins forgiven.

"...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.... [We have to change the way that we live. We have to live God's way.] ...For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness of His* resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed..." (vs 4-6). What you have with your body, your mind, and everything, it's called *the body of this death*.

"...might be destroyed... [because it isn't removed instantly] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; because the one who has died *to sin*... [that's what you have died to] ...has been justified from sin. Now, if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (vs 6-8). That is the *covenant death*. When you are baptized, you now enter into covenant with God; now you are ready to begin.

God led you to open your mind. God inspired you to want to know His Word. God gave you the understanding of what sin is. God gave you His perspective of what your sinful life really is like so that you can repent. Now then, *we have to walk in newness of life!*

Verse 12: "Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body..."—because we are to *overcome* sin. God gives us the strength and power to *overcome* sin with the Holy Spirit, but He does not take it out of our genes. He doesn't remove it from our minds. With His Spirit we can have it removed:

- with prayer
  - with study
  - with living
- all of that is required.

Verse 12: "Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments

of unrighteousness to sin..." (vs 12-13). Now we are to live to God—*God's way!* Most people want to live to God *their way*. Never going to happen! You live to God, *God's way*.

"...rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the dead*, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you..." (vs 13-14). ***You can overcome sin!*** Before baptism and without the Holy Spirit, you could not stop sinning. Everything that you did—even though some of those things on the surface were good—were not motivated from the Spirit of God. But they were motivated from human nature, which is a combination of good and evil. And the good of human nature is not good enough for eternal life. That's why God requires your death in a covenant baptism.

Verse 14: "For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace." That is completely misunderstood by Protestantism, but I will give you a simple answer to it. Everyone in the world is under law to God. Any relationship, even remote to God, is on the basis of law. Our relationship is a higher and different relationship; it is a spiritual relationship where even the commandment keeping and the law keeping that we do is at a higher level. Being under grace, we have access to God the Father, which people in the world do not have.

- Can they pray to God? *Yes!*
- Do they have a relationship of grace with God? *No!*
- Will God hear their prayers if they're sincere? *Yes!*
- Does that mean that they have eternal life? *No!*

God has not abandoned the world totally. But God's interest is in those who have His Holy Spirit and made a covenant with Him.

Come to Psalm 50; we covered this recently, but it's something that we need to understand, that we need to realize. Once you have been baptized, you have pledged your life to death. What does that mean? *That means you have pledged your life that if you do not fulfill the terms of the New Covenant between you and God, you shall die!* That death would be the Lake of Fire. ***That's what you've pledged!***

That's kind of mean and tough. *no, it isn't!* *Eternal life is so great!* Eternal life is not to be handed out like candy. Eternal life means that you are *pledging to learn to live God's way* so when you receive eternal life, you will be sinless from that time forth. Psalm 50 is really a great Psalm; you go through the whole thing.

Psalm 50:1: "The mighty God, God the LORD, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined forth" (vs 1-2). That means directly from His throne.

Have you ever heard about politicians who donate great sums of money to their candidates so that they can have access to them to get what they want? *This access that you have to God is pledged by your life!*

- You cannot *buy* it!
- You cannot *earn* it!
- You cannot do it *your way!*
- ***You must do it God's way!***

Since baptism is a beginning, now you're going to learn the way of God.

Verse 3: "Our God shall come... [New Testament, return of Christ] ...and He shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.... [read the book of Revelation, see what's going to happen] ...He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, so that He may judge His people" (vs 3-4). And we're being judged right now. Peter wrote, 'Judgment begins with the house of God and if the righteous are scarcely saved, or saved with great difficulty, where will the sin and ungodly be?'

Verse 5: "Gather My saints unto Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." You have pledged your life; that is your sacrifice. Animal sacrifice would never do. That's why for the New Covenant it was the body of Christ, God manifested in the flesh.

Verse 16: "But to the wicked God says, 'What right have you to declare My statutes, and to take up My covenant in your mouth?'" He's talking to the religionists.

Let's just stop and think here for a minute. I've covered some of this before, but this is important to remember. What is God going to do with us with His Spirit? *He's going to perfect us*, like I covered on the First Day of Unleavened Bread—right? *Yes!* Those people who want a short cut He's saying, 'What are you doing? I don't know you.'

Verse 17: "Yea, you hate to be taught, and you cast My words behind you." What did they do with the Old Testament? Did they cast it behind them? *Yes, they did!* What did they do with, say the Epistle of 1-John where it shows we're to keep the commandments of God and love God?

The truth is, you only love God when you do what He says. So, we see the difference here. Let's see the outline of what we are to do. Being under

grace God has given you one-to-one access through prayer to God the Father and Jesus Christ. Think of that! The great Sovereign of the universe has given you one-to-one access. *That's grace!* How are you to conduct your life? Grace does not mean lawlessness. *Grace means the favor and gracious kindness and mercy and love from God to you!* That's why at baptism your sins have been forgiven. That's why every Passover you renew the New Covenant. You once again renew the pledge of your baptism.

Now then, he asks the question, Romans 6:15: "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**" That's why God said to the wicked, 'What are you doing claiming My covenant? You have nothing to do with Me.' Let's just be very blunt.

Some people don't like to hear it. But maybe if you hear it enough, maybe you'll understand it: **God is perfect!** Everything He has done is perfect. If you want to be perfected, the only way to do it is *God's way*. Therefore, you cannot come to God and say, 'We choose to worship on Sunday. And by the way, God, You better be here, because we're good and nice people.' God is under no obligation. They can make it sound wonderful. You can have gorgeous music. You can have praise worship. You can read out of the Scriptures. You can have little children's choirs. You can have children get up there and recite Scripture and all of this. That's well and good. But that is not how God operates His covenant.

He operates it because He created the Sabbath Day. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Why would He be under obligation to come to even smell in His Sunday-worship? There might be some sincere people there, seeking God. If they are, then God will give them an opportunity. How will He do that? He'll bring it to their mind concerning the Sabbath Day. He'll bring it to their mind concerning other commandments of God if they believe what God has said, written in His Word. Today we have no excuse. We have the whole Bible.

We're not like the children of Israel. When the children of Israel left Egypt, how many Bibles were they carrying? *Zero!* When they kept the Sabbath, they stayed in their tent to rest because they were out there marching all day and all week. God has sent His Word to the world today. So, if you want God, He tells you how. That's what baptism is all about and it is a start.

This shows the whole process. Then we'll fill in the blanks concerning this. He says, v 16: "Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servant to obey, you are servants of the one you obey..." Just the way it is.

Not only are people hooked on sin, let's just use the one thing of pornography: 30-million women are hooked on pornography; 60-million-plus men are hooked on pornography; 40% of all pastors are hooked on pornography. Where do you think it leads the Catholic priests with their behavior? This is not an attack upon them; this is just stating a fact. And they see nothing wrong with it. It's true, women get all upset because men watch pornography. If women wouldn't pose and be photographed, pornography wouldn't be there—right? *Yes! You're not to live in sin!* What are you hooked on? Sports? Pleasure? All of those things you can't continue in.

Verse 16: "Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death... [Sin is what? Transgression of the law. Sin is lawlessness.] ...or of **obedience** unto righteousness?"

The truth is, even though God reckons the forgiveness of your sins as righteousness, which then is the beginning of righteousness—because righteousness is not finished until you have lived an obedient life of righteousness—that is God's life—then you're faithful to the end and you are there at the return of Christ, or you die in the faith. There it is!

What do you yield yourself to? Your heart? Your mind? Your attitude? Your money? Everything about you? Let's also understand this: coming to Sabbath services is to be the best day of the week because we've been praying and studying all week leading up to the Sabbath, and we have been living God's commandments up to the Sabbath.

It's not like you've heard in the world. 'Oh, put on your Sunday best and go to church on Sunday.' It's not, 'Come to church on Sabbath and you're all set.' *No!* If you come to church on Sabbath and that's all you do, you are not all set, because this is a full-time thing.

Verse 17: "But thanks *be* to God, that you were *the* servants of sin, but you have obeyed... [How are you to obey? *Oh, God, I know the Sabbath is there, but I'd really rather be doing something, but because You said I need to be there, I'll go.*] ...but you have **obeyed from the heart**... [willingly] ...that form of doctrine which was delivered to you."

That's why the motto of Church at Home is: *Restoring Original Christianity for Today*. That's why it's the motto for the Christian Biblical Church of God.

- What did Jesus teach?
- What did the apostles teach?
- What did Paul really teach?

Verse 18: “And having been delivered from sin, you became *the servants* of righteousness.” Connect that with *doctrine*. Connect that with *obey*. Connect that with *obedience*. All of those things tied together.

He wants us to understand, because this is the beginning point. Now what do I do after I’m baptized? *You need to understand the covenant relationship that you are in!*

Paul says, v 19: “I speak from a human point of view because of the weakness of your flesh; for just as you *once* yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto sanctification.” Sanctification is *unto Holiness or perfection*. That’s why we’re called Holy brethren, because we have the Spirit of God. With the laying on of hands after baptism, you have received the greatest thing in your life: the Spirit of God.

- The Spirit of God is to *lead* you!
- The Spirit of God is to *help* you!
- The Spirit of God is power given to you so you can overcome!

Verse 20: “For when you were *the* servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. Therefore, what fruit did you have then in the *things* of which you are now ashamed?... [You repented of those—right? You saw that was wrong—yes?] ...For the end result of those things *is* death. But now *that* you have been delivered from sin and have become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end result *is* eternal life” (vs 20-22). That’s where we’re headed after baptism. We’ll see how do we get there.

Then he reminds everyone. When you take v 23 and separate it from all the rest of Rom. 6, you lose the meaning of it—don’t you? “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” If they never tell you what sin is. Sin is you don’t go to church on Sunday. Well, the Sunday-keeping is sin. You may enjoy it.

We need to understand that these things now become detached from us spiritually. Too many people are still emotionally attached to them and *you can’t be*. You have the Spirit of God. You have to be led of the Spirit of God. Let’s see how you got the Spirit of God. We know the Scriptures.

What does Acts 2:38 say? “...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.’

Acts 3:19: “Therefore, repent and be converted...’ You are to be changed from *within*.

We’re not like Hollywood and makeup artists to change. You ought to see some of the transhumanist things that they give prizes on for people making themselves evil and grotesque. I was doing channel-surfing one night and I saw, what are these people doing here making themselves out to be just some sort of demonic freaks. They were actually using makeup. The ones doing it were devoted to drawing the images of these grotesque things that they would create and put on them and put on their bodies and go stand before the judges. The one that the judges said was the best would get a prize. I was flabbergasted! I thought, man, are they ever deceived. God doesn’t want that. That’s just carnal nature and Satanism full blast.

Let’s understand what God has done for each one of us in particular. This is what you grow into in understanding with your relationship with God. You will come to appreciate it more and more, because as you go back and read these Scriptures over and over again, God’s Spirit *will lead you* to greater understanding. God’s Spirit will give you more inner power so that you love God more. You appreciate what God has done more. You see what God has done not only just in your life, but you understand with God’s Spirit in your mind and in your heart what God has done for you.

Read all the first verses of the Epistles of Paul and his message is from God the Father and Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God... [Not what *he* did; he wrote other places, not because of what *he* was.] ..to the saints... [Who are the saints? *Everyone who has the Holy Spirit of God has been sanctified with the Holy Spirit!* So, you are a saint!] ...who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus.”

Notice what comes from God. Notice what God wants to convey to you:

- He’s *called* you
- He has *led* you
- He has *brought* you to baptism

You’ve been baptized; you have received the Holy Spirit of God.

Verse 2: “**Grace and peace** *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.” I want you to understand what that means. I know that I recently included this in a sermon, but let’s go to Rev. 4 & 5. I want you to understand what it means when it says ‘*from the Father.*’ I want you to understand what it means when you get on your knees and you pray to God and say, ‘Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.’ Where are your prayers going?

If you’re yielded to God, repenting of sin, growing and overcoming, they go right to the Holy

of Holies. It's not how long you pray. How many times have you heard, 'Pray an hour a day; study an hour a day.' So, different ones have clocks. They go pray and put a clock there and pray and pray and pray. Then say, 'I'll check the time. Ten minutes! A whole hour?' You can pray a whole hour mechanically, but if your heart is not in it, you've accomplished nothing.

- You pray because you love God
- You pray because you desire God's Spirit
- You pray because you desire to overcome sin
- You pray to grow in the grace and knowledge and mind of Christ and what God is doing for you

God is doing something great and eternal and fantastic in your life. Paul wants you to know. But here it is. John—the one whom Jesus loved, and the one whom Jesus loved—was given this vision in Rev. 4. This is greater than the vision that was given to Isaiah, back in Isa. 6. When he saw the throne of God, he didn't see it like this. Who are you praying to? Where are the blessings coming from? *Right here!*

He said Revelation 4:1: "... 'Come up here and I will show you *the* things that must take place after these things.' And immediately I was in *the* Spirit, and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* was sitting on the throne.... [that's God the Father] ...And He Who was sitting *was* in appearance like a jasper stone and a sardius stone; and a rainbow *was* around the throne..." (vs 1-4). I don't know if the rainbow was this way around the throne or this way around the throne, but there it was.

"...like an emerald in its appearance. And around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments; and they had on their heads golden crowns. And proceeding from the throne were lightnings and thunders and voices; and seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God, *were* burning before the throne" (vs 4-5). You have come to the *central powerful Person in the universe*:

- God the Father!
- All power!
- Everything that upholds the universe through Christ comes from Him!

You need to understand that when you receive a blessing—as Paul writes, peace and grace—this is an official message to you from God and here's where it's coming from.

Verse 6: "And before the throne was a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne and over the throne *were* four living creatures, full of eyes

before and behind. And the first living creature *was* like a lion, and the second living creature *was* like a bull, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. And each of *the* four living creatures had six wings respectively; *and* all around and within *they were* full of eyes!...." (vs 6-8). I cannot imagine what that would look like, but that's the description.

"...and day and night they cease not saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who *is* to come.'.... [continuous praise to God] ...And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanksgiving to Him Who sits on the throne, Who lives into the ages of eternity" (vs 8-9). That's what's going to happen to us, brethren. We're going to live into the ages of eternity. We ought to be more zealous and more on fire for God than any people at anytime in the whole history of the Church of God, because we can see the heavens as never before seen. We can see what God has created. We have the whole Word of God.

Do you know how lame and dumb it is to say, 'Oh, I didn't have time to pray today. I just didn't have time to study today. I know I've got my Bible'—when God sustains your life, when God has given His Spirit to you, when God has given to us the greatest tools that we could possibly have so that we can grow in grace and knowledge and be perfected and enter into the Kingdom of God, be part of the Family of God. This is why it's important that we know what's going on.

Verse 10: "The twenty-four elders fall down before Him Who sits on the throne; and they worship Him Who lives into the ages of eternity, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are You, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power because You did create all things, and for Your will they were created and exist'" (vs 10-11).

You receiving the Holy Spirit of God is the *will of God*. We're going to see God wants to create in you the same kind of character that Christ had when He was in the flesh. Then it talks about the 'little book,' who is going to open it.

Revelation 5:5: "Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion Who is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome to open the book, and to loose its seven seals.'.... [That's symbolic of Christ as the returning warrior to take over the throne of David.] ...Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and before the elders, was standing a Lamb as having been slain... [that's Christ] ...having seven horns and seven eyes..." (vs 5-6).

What are the seven horns? Where are they attached? *They are attached to the head*—correct?

Who is the Head of the Church? *Christ is!* How many churches are listed in Rev. 2 and 3 that come right before these two chapters here? *Seven! Yes!*

“...and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God that are sent into all the earth” (v 6). Let’s understand something else. God is not way off someplace trillions and trillions of miles away. We’re seeing something that is composed of Spirit. We could look out into the heavens and never see it. We don’t know how far, we don’t know how close. But I can guarantee, it’s a whole lot closer than we’ve ever thought. God keeps track of what’s going on.

Anyone who is seeking God, these seven eyes, seven Spirits, they’ll communicate back to God: ‘Here’s someone seeking.’ God’s Spirit of the seven Spirits will be with them to guide them, to help them, and if they respond, then the Father will begin drawing them. Think of that. The reason why you’re here is because the Father drew you. Think of that! That’s amazing—isn’t it?

Verse 8: “And when He took the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.... [Our prayers come right up before God. It looks like the twenty-four elders help sort out our prayers.] ...And they sang a new song...” (vs 8-9). This is a song that we’re going to sing, but they were singing it because it’s referring to the prayers of the saints.

“...‘Worthy are You to take the book, and to open its seals because You were slain, and did redeem us to God by Your own blood...’” (v 9). The twenty-four elders didn’t need to be redeemed. The four living creatures didn’t need to be redeemed—we *do!*

“...out of every tribe and language and people and nation... [God is doing a fantastic work—isn’t He?] ...and did make us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.’.... [That won’t take place until we find in the time setting of Rev. 20.] ...And I saw and I heard *the voices* of many angels around the throne...” (vs 10-11). Your prayers are going up there. The twenty-four elders are helping administer these prayers so they get to God, so that they’re going to be answered.

“...and the voices of the living creatures and the elders, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb... [If you don’t have the *Messiah* by Handel, you get it. If you get down and discouraged, you pop it into your CD player and you listen to this song taken with these very words.] ...Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and

glory and blessing.’.... [This is going to become a point when we get back to Eph. 1.] ...And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and those that are on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying, ‘To Him Who sits on the throne... [that’s the Father] ...and to the Lamb... [at His right hand] ...*be* blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty into the ages of eternity.’ And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen.’ And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped *Him Who lives into the ages of eternity*” (vs 11-14). ***That’s what God has called you to!***

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You need to understand the process of what is happening. You need to understand what God is doing with you so you then know what you need to do.

Back to Ephesians 1:2: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.... [You got that? ***From the throne in heaven above on the Sea of Glass with Christ at His right hand!***] ...Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (vs 2-3). This is what is going to happen in your life from this time forward. It is not going to be physical riches. It is not going to be success in the world. ***It is going to be spiritual riches and spiritual success in changing and overcoming!*** We will also see that will include a good measure of trials.

A little sidebar here: Have you ever been praying, say, ‘Oh, God, I need more patience. Oh, God, I need more love’? And immediately something comes up where you’re in a hostile situation. You think: I just prayed for more love. I just prayed for more patience, and in the hostile situation you lost your temper. *The prayer was answered with a little trial!* Now then, you realize how weak you are—correct? *Yes!* So, when you ask for something, the answer is going to come and it may be different than what you expect. If you ask for more love, you expect more hugs and kisses. But *God wants you to have love from within, with control.*

“...Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ” (v 3). What can that be compared to? *Nothing!* This is great. I want you to think on this verse, because sometimes people will be sitting in church and wonder: Why am I here? Especially if you’ve been in a church where you’ve heard nonsense from the pulpit, be it a Protestant church, a Catholic church, or a Church of God.

Here’s why you are here: because *you responded to God and God responded to you*—which is, v 4: “According as **He has personally chosen us** for Himself...” I want you to think on

that! I want you to begin to grasp in your prayers how great this is.

You're going to understand this verse more as you study the Psalms, as you study the Epistles of Paul, as you study James, 1-2-Peter, 1-2-3-John, because you come to God in prayer and He's already given you what He wants you to do—*study His Word*. This is God's personal message to each one of us. We're now His children. We received the Holy Spirit. We are in a different category than other people in the world. Not to get lifted up and get a kind of prideful attitude—no, not that at all. We need to be humble and thankful and grateful.

Verse 4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Himself... [this was God's plan] ...before *the* foundation of *the* world...” God had the plan all worked out before He started creating the world. Wouldn't you think that would be a good idea?

What if you started building something, you didn't know why you were building it. When you got it done you said, ‘I wonder what I'm going to do with this?’ It doesn't mean He knew us before the foundation of the world, but He planned it and predestined His plan, and then called us to it, ***personally chosen us for Himself!***

“...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love” (v 4). That's what God has called us to. Everything that you do after baptism, you base it on

- the *love* of God
- the *faith* of God
- the *hope* of God
- the *grace* of God

Verse 5: “Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself...” *Many are called but few are chosen*. Once you are chosen and you answer the call, you are predestinated to sonship. If you don't answer the call, you are not predestinated to sonship and He did not know you before you existed.

“...sonship to Himself... [*for Himself* (v 2); *to Himself* (v 5)] ...through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will.” Why am I here? *Because God has called and I have answered and have repented and am baptized and received the Holy Spirit!* Now God is dealing with you as sons and daughters.

Verse 6: “To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved Son.”

Here's also what we have, brethren. You remember the model prayer when the disciples said, ‘Teach us to pray.’ He said, ‘Our Father Who is in heaven. Holy is Your name. Your will be done on

earth as it is in heaven.’ That means *in our lives and in God's plan*. ‘Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses and sins as we forgive others.’ We're going to talk about that in a different sense about us and others, because others are also involved. Combined together we have some great things that we need to do.

Verse 7: “In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

The Holy Spirit of God will reveal sin that's already lodged in your brain. You go back to the series we did, *Who and What Controls Your Mind?* Everything you have ever done has been recorded in your mind. Your mind is to be converted. That's the whole process of what is going to be done after you are baptized.

- You need to yield to God
- You need to love God
- You need to keep His commandments
- You need to stand in His grace
- You need to pray
- You need to study

All of these things are the tools that God has given so that we can grow and develop and prepare for eternal life. Everything has come from God. Like Paul wrote that even one of the Greek poets said that in God we live and move and have our being (Acts 17). That is true.

All ministers and elders, please—that being the case—don't get lifted up in power and authority. Edify the brethren; don't beat them up. It's hard enough in the world. When they come to church they don't like to be excoriated and you're not going to get righteousness in them by condemning them. God wants us to be inspired and *to desire to respond* to Him. That only comes with the Spirit of God and understanding what we are to do.

Verse 8: “Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; **having made known to us the mystery of His own will...**” (vs 8-9). Those who have the Spirit of God and study His Word, know the Sabbath and Holy Days have had made known to them—to us—“...the mystery—or secret—of His own will...” God has done that through His Word, through His Spirit. After you are baptized you grow in this. You grow in understanding.

“...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself;’ That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth” (vs 9-10). And you are a part of that grand plan. That's something!

In the Greek, from vs 1 to 14 is one long, run-on sentence, which if you handed it into your English teacher she would flunk you because you can't do that in English. In Greek you can do that and that way you can put thought upon thought and precept upon precept.

Verse 11: “Yes, in Him... [Who is Him? *God the Father and Jesus Christ!*] ...in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance...”

- What are we going to inherit?
- First the earth, then the universe!*
- What are you going to compare that to?
  - What is ‘Uncle Willie’ going to leave you in his will?

or

- Mom and dad in their will?
- they might leave you something, but*
- Do you have an eternal inheritance?
  - A life that you’re going to shine like the stars of heaven?

“...having been predestinated according to His purpose... [through His Spirit and plan] ...Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will.” What did we just say the prayer was to be every day? ‘*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*’ There it is right there!

Verse 12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ.” What does that mean? I believe it means this: *That at the resurrection all the angels* (that we just read of back there in Rev. 5) *praise God the Father and Christ, Who is worthy of power and glory and honor and blessing and riches.* What do you think it’s going to be when we’re all on the Sea of Glass and the angels are singing, praising God for the completion of His plan? *That’s going to be something!* Then we’re going to sing some hymns. I’m getting ahead to Pentecost, so let’s come back down to earth here a little bit.

Verse 13: “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.” That’s what happened when you received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. *You were sealed!*

Notice what this is. *This is a down payment by God or an earnest*, v 14: “Which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory”—period—all of that is one sentence, vs 1-14.

Now let’s see how Peter wrote about what we need to do. We know that when we receive the Spirit of God it is called a begettal. It is the earnest. That’s the start. Your life in going to be centered on spiritual things:

- the *Word* of God
- the *commandments* of God
- the *Spirit* of God
- the *grace* of God
- the *Truth* of God

—and everything like that.

As you grow in grace and knowledge and you study the Word of God, that’s going to go into your mind and this is going to replace what your brain has already had structured upon it. *That is conversion!* There are going to be some things that are in there that are going to be hard to get rid of, but you have your part in repenting and praying to God and they will be gotten rid of.

Right here in 1-Peter 1, Peter gives a good summary of what’s going to happen in your life. There are going to be some things that you are going to be confronted with which will be difficult. Those are called trials. Then we will see what the Apostle Paul says about the trials and what those trials are to do.

1-Peter 1:1: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect strangers scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; *who have been chosen* according to the predetermined knowledge of God *the Father*... [we just read that in Eph. 1] ...unto obedience... [we read that in Rom. 6] ...and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: **Grace and peace be multiplied to you**... [not just given—*multiplied*] ...Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy... [Just as we read there in Eph. 1] ...has begotten us again... [exactly what the Greek means—‘ana genea’—*begotten again*] ...unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible... [it isn’t going to rot away] ...and undefiled... [no one’s going to come and pollute it] ...and unfading... [it’s spiritual] ...reserved in heaven for us” (vs 1-4).

What did Jesus say? Put in your margin there John 14:1-2, where Jesus said, ‘You believe in God, believe also in Me.’ *and* ‘I’m going away and I am going to prepare a place for you.’ That’s going to be in New Jerusalem.

I was thinking about this the other day as I was coming home on the plane from the trip that I made back east. I’ll write about that in my letter. Had a great trip. But when you’re in the plane and you look down, you see the earth, when you’re up there at 35,000 feet you can’t even see the highways. Yet there are cars and trucks on the highways. You have to come down to a lower level before you look down and say, ‘Oh, yes, there is a car. Oh, look, there’s a truck, there’s a bus. Look at the houses, look at the buildings.’ You come in closer and

closer. I was thinking this: everybody, every human being has a place where he or she, or husband and wife and family, live—right?

Even the poorest ones in India, they have a place to live. It may be a lean-to, but it's a place to live. I thought of the poor, poor people in India that are the outcasts, the unclean in the caste system that they have. These pitiful people, you know what they live on? Rats and rice. They have to get down and dig and grub in the dirt to get the rats. And I thought, sometimes you have a talk with yourself, ever do that? I did and I said, 'Fred, you better never ever complain about anything ever again! Because you can go to your refrigerator, open it up and it's stuffed with food. You open up your cupboard and it's stuffed with food.' Here in America you can start out as an outcast and you can end up as a billionaire, but you have to do it God's way.

God is doing something greater. The place that we're going to live in is New Jerusalem, v 4: "Unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us, Who *are* being safeguarded by *the power of God...* [the Spirit of God] ...through faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in the last time" (vs 4-5). We're getting closer to it.

There was a last-time sequence with the apostles when the Apostolic Age was coming to an end. But that wasn't the end-time. Here he's talking about the last time, which is the end-time. When did the end-time really begin? I don't have my cowbell out [speculation], but I believe it was for the ten tribes of Israel when the Protestant Reformation took hold.

They could have gone all the way to God, but they didn't. The only one who came the closest to doing it was William Tyndale and he did it alone. Yes, he had some business helpers, but he did it alone. After that, the UK, Britain, started rising. By the time of the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I England went from the poorest nation in Europe to the richest. Spain went from the richest to a third-rate nation. The thing that really did them in was the Spanish Armada that God intervened and destroyed. Rather than turn to God and continue in great repentance, they did not do that.

Now we see today under Queen Elizabeth II everything taken away from Ephraim. *Everything!* The Church of England is no more. Belief in God is virtually non-existent. Witchcraft and Harry Potterism and evolution and the great son Charles Darwin is what they look to now. They can't see that it's all being taken away.

I'm going to send a Bible to a man who belongs to the organization, Covenant Nations, and he wrote a good article in the magazine called

Covenant Nations, about the Bible. I'm going to bring out to him that here, living in South Africa, you now know what's going to happen to the British Isles. And we now know what's going to happen to the United States. I'm going to bring out certain things and I don't know quite how I'm going to do it, but I think it will be an audio message, maybe even a video message, I don't know yet. I haven't decided.

But they still stubbornly cling to Protestantism, stubbornly cling to the throne, stubbornly cling to the fact that they are God's people and they can't see beyond their noses that they have been experiencing the punishment of God for turning their backs on God!

God gave them the Bible, but they didn't follow through it. God gave them the blessing of Abraham, but they misused it. Now God, according to the covenant, is taking it away from them. Sorry for the little sidebar there. But that's been on my mind recently.

Verse 6: "In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials." We're going to experience those, brethren. We don't know what they're going to be. Read Rev. 12, when Satan is angry, what is he going to do? *He's going to come after the others of the Church who have the testimony of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments!*

We have to have *faith* when those days come. But we know the only thing they can do to us is take our physical life. They can kill the body, but ***they cannot take the eternal life that God has begotten us with*** here in 1-Peter 1. So we're going to have a proving of our faith.

- Do you really *believe* it?
- Do you really *believe* the Sabbath?
- Do you really *believe* the Holy Days?

Verse 7: "In order that the proving of your faith, ***which is more precious than gold that perishes...***" I bet if you knew there was a pile of gold somewhere you could get your hands on and no one else knew it but you, you would be out there working furiously, sweating, working. You'd get whatever tool you needed to get it, to dig it, to haul it, whatever—right? Wouldn't you? What about eternal life?

"...more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire..." (v 7). So yes, what are you going to do after baptism? You're going to have some trials by fire. Don't think it's any strange thing. Read all of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>-Peter and you will understand.

Isn't it interesting how the Bible is laid out? We have the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and

John and Acts—which then tell us what Jesus taught. Which shows us what we need to do. Then you have James, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>-Peter, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup>-John, and Jude. These epistles tell us what we must do. So, here’s an assignment for you: Right after baptism, you start studying through James, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>-Peter, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>-John, and Jude. And by the way, we have a complete study book on *The Seven General Epistles*, and we have 79 verse-by-verse messages. They go through it.

“...may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ; Whom, not having seen, you love; in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and* rejoice with unspeakable joy, and filled with glory; and are receiving the end of your faith—even the salvation of your souls” (vs 7-9)—or your lives.

Notice what it is today, even at that time when Peter wrote it and multiply it that many times more. Here’s part of the attitude of what we do, is what is it that God is doing? Right here:

Verse 10: “Concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you have diligently searched out and intently inquired... [But they never understood. Think of that!] ...searching into what *way* and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and these glories that would follow.” (vs 10-11). What did David think when he wrote Psa. 22? What did Isaiah think after he wrote Isa. 53?

Verse 12: “To whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but to us they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by *the* Holy Spirit, sent from heaven—into which things the angels desire to look.” Think on that! God has revealed to you things He hasn’t even revealed to the angels. They don’t find out until God has revealed it to us. All of this leads to what are you to do?

Verse 13: “For this reason... [It starts out: you’ve been begotten again.] ...be prepared in your minds... [with the Spirit of God] ...be self-controlled, *and* be fully hoping in the grace that will be brought to you at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children... [That ties in with Rom. 6—right?] ...do not conform yourselves to the former lusts, *as you did in your* ignorance” (vs 13-14). ***You are to change***

- the way that you *think*
- the way that you *live*
- the way that you *act*

—because of Christ. ***Salvation is creation and the Father is creating in us! We are His workmanship!***

Verse 15: “But according as He Who has called you *is* Holy, you yourselves also be Holy in all *your* conduct.” Now your life changes! Now your life is focused on:

- How do *I live* God’s way?
- How do *I think* God’s way?
- How *am I led* by the Holy Spirit?
- How do *I pray*?
- How do *I study*?

And in every one of these things you are to grow in *grace and in knowledge*—every one of them!

Verse 17: “And if you call upon the Father... [prayer] ...Who judges according to each man’s work without respect of persons, pass the time of your *life’s* journey in *the* fear of God; knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living, inherited *by tradition* from *your* forefathers; but by *the* precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot” (vs 17-19).

How close does that parallel Eph. 1? What are these for? *These are epistles!* Let’s understand something about epistles. The epistolary form of writing means it is a personal letter. It’s not like anything in the Old Testament. These are personal letters from *God the Father and Jesus Christ as they inspired the apostles*; personal letters encouraging us to do these things.

Verse 20: “Who truly was foreknown before *the* foundation of *the* world, but was manifested in *these* last times for your sakes.” They saw Christ; they heard Christ; Peter was taught by Christ. Look at everything that he went through. Study the life of Peter in the Gospels. He had good points and he had bad points. Did he become converted? *Yes, he did!*

Look at what he’s writing here now and compare that to when Christ had to rebuke him for his attitude. Just likewise with you. You’ve been baptized, what now do you do? *You start living God’s way!* How do you do that?

- through prayer
- through study
- through daily living
- through whatever comes into your life
  - ✓ how you live
  - ✓ how you think
  - ✓ what do you do

All of that is involved.

Verse 21: “*Even for you* who through Him do believe in God, Who raised Him from *the* dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope

might be in God. Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth unto unfeigned brotherly love through *the* Spirit, love one another fervently with a pure heart” (vs 21-22).

That’s what God wants us to do. When we get together in fellowship groups or church groups, you’re gathered together with the different saints of God. We’ve all come from different backgrounds. None of us would have chosen any of us to be our friends, let alone brothers and sisters. But God has chosen them and brought us together so that we can learn to love God, to love each other, and to learn to grow and overcome together. So that we can pray for one another, help one another, serve one another. That’s why he says here, v 14: “...do not conform yourselves to the former lusts...”—your former way of living.

Verse 23: “*For* you have been begotten again... [same thing that we have in v 3] ...not from corruptible seed, but from incorruptible *seed*, by the living Word of God, *which* remains forever.” Here we come across another principle that’s important for us to understand. The Bible, though it is a book, it is not like any other book. The Bible teaches you spiritual things and it affects your mind spiritually.

I might also say this, that having the printed Word of God will do it for you greater than the electronic Word of God. It’s not wrong to have the Bible in the electronic or digital form. We produce it and we give it to you. But when the power went out down in Southern California, one of the brethren was out of electricity for 11 days. He said, ‘I was thankful to have my Bible,’ because he is an expert with his computer and the Bible on there. If you need a physical Bible, you write us, we’ll send it to you. That’s why we have them.

Just as another sidebar before we finish. We know we’re going to come across some very difficult economic times. So we’re going to be confronted with some very difficult societal things, maybe riots and looting and killing, just like Greece. We’re only five years behind. Look at that. Look what’s going on over there. What we have done these last couple of years is that we have taken the funds that you have sent in with your tithes and offerings and we have filled up our storage units full of Bibles and every book that we have. We did that for two reasons:

1. If there’s inflation, we got them at a lower price.

Do we have inflation? *Yes!* Oh, the government says, ‘no, no, you don’t have inflation.’ But you try it when you go buy something. We got them at a lower price.

2. Or if there is a depression and they crash the economy to bring in the world currency, there won’t be any money for awhile and we will already have them in storage, ready to go, paid for.

We don’t do anything on credit. We don’t run off to Satan’s banks, borrow money on interest to preach the Gospel. Think on that!

“...by *the* living Word of God, *which* remains forever. For all flesh *is* like grass, and all *the* glory of man *is* like *the* flower of the field, the grass has withered, and its flower has fallen away. But the Word of *the* Lord endures forever; and this is the message that was preached to you through the Gospel” (vs 23-25).

All of these things are important. If you’ve been in a Protestant church in the past, how many sermons have you heard about what do you do now?

Ephesians 2:1: “Therefore, having put away all wickedness, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and jealousies, and all slanders.” Isn’t that something? Because human nature is evil and wicked—isn’t it? Part of overcoming is putting those things away. Remember how you behaved before you were called and were baptized. Now you have to have your mind reprogrammed with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to get rid of these things. What if they pop back in your mind?

- you *overcome*
- you *repent*
- you *put them down*

Verse 2: “As newborn babes...” This doesn’t mean you’re born again, but this just shows you how eager you need to be to learn the way of God. Little babies when they are born, they don’t know how to talk, even though you can watch these silly ads where you have little kids doing trades on the stock market and all of this sort of thing. No, they don’t know how to talk.

You know why babies cry? *Because they can’t talk!* The only way they can communicate is cry. Mothers know when babies need to be fed—right? If you feed them anything than mother’s milk, you are destroying the future health of your child. That’s said, ***that would be akin to drinking the wrong Bible, misusing the Word of God!*** Mother’s milk has every anti-body that your baby needs. You don’t need the shots by the doctors.

Likewise, it says here: “...yearn after the pure spiritual milk...” (v 2). A lot of things that we teach, our in-depth teaching, if you’ve just been baptized recently, you have to yearn for the pure spiritual milk. We have it for you. Part of it are these General Epistles. We have six care-packs that we have, each going through the basic things.

We also have in one of the appendices in the Bible: *Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church* [Appendix M], exactly as they were taught by the apostles. Who is God, the nature of God, who is Christ, the nature of Christ, what is the Holy Spirit. All the way through, all of the basic doctrines that you are to learn. All of those are the pure *spiritual milk* that you can study. The Bible that we have produced for you is to tell you about the Bible, how we got it, how God has devised it, the way it needs to be. Then in the appendices we have how to study the Bible. First appendix is Appendix A, *Fourteen Rules for Bible Study*. Then you go on, what are the beliefs. What are you to believe? All right there. “...**pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow**” (v 2).

2-Peter 3:14: “For this reason, beloved, since you are anticipating these things, be diligent, so that you may be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.... [through daily prayer, daily study, righteous conduct and living] ...And bear in mind that the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation, exactly as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has also written to you; as *he* has also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand...” (vs 14-16).

Lesson #1: if you need the spiritual meat to begin growing spiritually, do not jump into the middle Galatians or Romans or Hebrews. Study the General Epistles first and get grounded.

When you have done that, we have Appendix Z—*Understanding Paul’s Difficult Scriptures Concerning the Law and the Commandments of God*—in the Bible explaining all of Paul’s difficult to understand Scriptures. And they are difficult to understand, which Peter acknowledges here.

“...in which are some things that are difficult to understand, which the ignorant and unstable are twisting *and* distorting, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness” (vs 16-17).

Don’t get caught up in doctrinal wars that you don’t understand now. Grow in grace and knowledge so you will understand.

That’s what he says here v 18: “**Rather, be growing in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and into the day of eternity.**”

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 6:3-8, 12-14
- 2) Psalm 50:1-5, 16-17
- 3) Romans 6:15-23
- 4) Acts 2:38
- 5) Acts 3:19
- 6) Ephesians 1:1-2
- 7) Revelation 4:2-11
- 8) Revelation 5:5-6, 8-14
- 9) Ephesians 1:2-14
- 10) 1-Peter 1:1-22, 14, 23-25
- 11) 1-Peter 2:1-2
- 12) 2-Peter 3:14-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 6
- Revelation 2; 3; 20
- Acts 17
- John 14:1-2
- Revelation 12
- Psalm 22
- Isaiah 53

Also referenced:

Book and sermon messages: *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter

Sermon Series: *Who and What Controls Your Mind?*

Appendices from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, a Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

- Appendix M: *Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church*
- Appendix A: *Fourteen Rules for Bible Study*.
- Appendix Z: *Understanding Paul’s Difficult Scriptures Concerning the Law and the Commandments of God*

FRC:lp  
Transcribed: 4-26-12  
Formatted: bo: 4/27/12

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