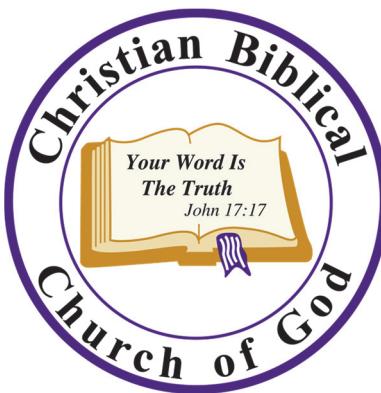




The Christian Covenant of Water Baptism

By Fred R. Coulter

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Introduction

Today, very few “Christian” churches baptize by full immersion in water any longer. However, the New Testament teaches that baptism is the believer’s fundamental covenant pledge necessary for the forgiveness of sins and the granting of the Holy Spirit of God—which enables you to walk in newness of life, keeping the laws and commandments of God through the grace of God, and to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ in preparation for eternal life.

The New Testament, or New Covenant, Baptism has great personal meaning—to God the Father, Jesus Christ and the individual being baptized. While it has the symbolism of being a public demonstration of one’s faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, as you will see, true water baptism has a greater and more profound meaning. **Baptism is a personal, spiritual covenant ceremony between the repentant believer, Jesus Christ and God the Father.**

Baptism is an end of one’s ungodly, sinful way of living and the beginning of a new spiritual way of living. You must understand what sin is—the transgression of God’s commandments and laws. You must realize that the sacrifice and the blood of Jesus Christ is the only payment for your sins and you must understand that sin is the transgression of God’s commandments and laws. Then upon genuine, godly repentance your sins and acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Savior for the forgiveness of your sins, as a new believer you must be baptized by complete immersion in water for the remission of your sins.

Water baptism symbolizes the death and burial of each repentant believer—you then are spiritually conjoined into the covenant death of Jesus Christ. Through this baptismal death, you become a covenant taker of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. Then by the grace of God the Father, Jesus’ shed blood is freely accepted as full payment for your sins.

Rising up out of the water is symbolic of being conjoined into the resurrection of Jesus Christ at His return. When the believer comes up out of the watery grave of baptism, he or she rises to newness of life. In order to become a new person in Christ, each baptized believer must be begotten with the Holy Spirit from God the Father through the laying on of hands. The believer is then to be led by the Holy Spirit to walk in loving obedience to God the Father and faith in Jesus Christ; to develop the mind of Jesus Christ; to keep the commandments and laws of God through the power of the Holy Spirit of God; to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and to be faithful unto death.

Baptism is an irrevocable covenant pledge between you, God the Father and Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus Christ died for you, to forgive

you of your sins, you likewise symbolically die in the watery grave of baptism, pledging your life unto death that you will be faithful to the end. If you are faithful unto the end, you will receive eternal life, with eternal glory and splendor, at the first resurrection when Jesus returns.

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul clearly defines full meaning of water baptism by full immersion in water—the true covenant meaning of the Christian baptismal ceremony and your new way of life in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:1-18

1. What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?
2. MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?
3. Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?
4. Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death; 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.
5. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be in the likeness of His resurrection.
6. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin;
7. Because the one who has died to sin has been justified from sin.
8. Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
9. Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him.
10. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God.
11. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord.
12. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof.
13. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
14. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law [for justification of sins], but under grace [for justification of sins].
15. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? MAY IT NEVER BE!

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, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17. But thanks be to God, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you;

18. And having been delivered from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.

Please carefully and prayerfully read the sermon transcripts and listen to these three messages about The True Meaning of Christian Water Baptism.

If you are moved to truly desire water baptism, please contact us by phone, email or letter at:

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Chapter One

The True Meaning of Baptism #1

What is the true meaning of baptism? Most of us have been baptized for many, many years. As a matter of fact, this October 19th, 2000, it'll be 40 years for me. But, let's go back for all of us, old and new, and let's look at the true meaning of baptism. Because not only is there a true meaning to baptism, there are also many counterfeit baptisms—which many people consider to be baptisms. Let's first of all start out and answer the question what it is not:

1. It is not an initiation
2. It is not to join an organization
3. It is not to be baptized into the name of any man or woman—such as the Seventh Day Adventists, they ask you, “Do you believe that Ellen G. White is a prophetess of God?” That is then not a valid baptism.
4. It is not an outward sign of inner-faith—though some people may considerate it to be so.
5. It is not a sprinkling—and we'll explain why it is not a sprinkling.
6. It is not for infants and children—because it has to be a conscience decision by the one being baptized.
7. It is not a ritual—it is a ceremony, but it is not a ritual.

And then we'll ask the question: If you were baptized in another church, or even in a Church of God, should you be baptized again?

Now first of all, let's look at the Old Testament for just a minute and let's understand something concerning the Old Testament. Let's go to Genesis 17. Even with the covenant with Abraham, which he received when he was in uncircumcision, yet, as a prelude and a token of the covenant that was made, there was physical circumcision. So let's come to Genesis 17:9: “And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant... [Now we're going to understand something concerning baptism and covenants—very important. Covenants are to be kept unto death. That's why it's not a ritual. That's why it is none of the other things that I have mentioned.] ...This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the

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flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant” (vs 9–13). Now that means *an age-lasting covenant*. So that was from the time the physical circumcision—from the time of Abraham and Isaac; and in this case, even Ishmael—that came down to the time of Christ. But what we are going to see is this: the physical circumcision was only a type of the spiritual circumcision, which requires a greater change. And the spiritual circumcision is what is at the heart and core of baptism in the New Testament, as we will see later.

Now at 8 days old, the men children had no say-so, they were just circumcised. Let’s come to Deuteronomy, the tenth chapter, and let’s see what God was really looking for with it—which He had with Abraham in the uncircumcision of his heart before he was circumcised in the flesh. And I think it’s very interesting to understand that only the males were required to be circumcised. However, at marriage, the females participated in that in the marriage estate through the conjugal relations of husband and wife. Now here, Deuteronomy 10—here’s the whole purpose behind it and here is a prophecy concerning circumcision of the heart, which we’ll talk about a little bit later. Verse 12: “And now, Israel... [and you can put your own name there, because this is what God requires of all of us] ...what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul... [and as He shows through the whole experience of the Old Testament, without the Holy Spirit and the circumcision of the heart, they never were able to do it. Which ought to be a whole lesson to everyone that you cannot, without the Spirit of God, love God and keep His commandments in the way that you ought to—as we will see a little later.] ...To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?” (vs 12–13).

Now, if you would like an interesting little Bible study, get out your concordance and look up all the places where God said, “For your good.” This runs contrary and counter to what a lot of religious people who worship on Sunday believe. They believe that the commandments of God were given for our hurt. They believe that the commandments of God were given to curse us. Such is not the case. Read Deuteronomy 28 and you will see that blessings come from obedience and cursings come from disobedience—and neither one of those necessarily have to do with conversion. Even the blessings in the physical realm have nothing to do with conversion.

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Now let's continue on here, v 14: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *is* the LORD'S thy God, the earth *also*, with all that therein *is*. Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them... [that is Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] ...and he chose their seed after them, *even* you above all people, as *it is* this day.... [That's why it's very important in the Passover book that you read and you study the three chapters concerning the covenant of Abraham—showing the physical seed and the spiritual seed.] (Now v 16—here we get into the spiritual operation of this): ...Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked... [So the physical circumcision was only a type of the spiritual circumcision of the heart. And we are going to see that the spiritual circumcision of the heart is greater than the circumcision in the flesh.] ...For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords... [And of course, all the other gods of this world are not gods are they? So what is this? This is a prophecy of those who will be born into the Kingdom of God as a spiritual seed at the time of the resurrection.] ...a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He *is* thy praise, and he *is* thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.... [Then he just reiterates] ...Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude" (vs 14–22). Not only for those, it wasn't really the stars of heaven for multitude because they could number them. Did they not number them? That's what the book of Numbers is all about. So this is really a prophecy concerning the ultimate—that is the spiritual seed.

Now let's go to Deuteronomy 30:6—now let's see who does the circumcising. It says "circumcise the foreskin of your heart" there in Deut. 10; now it says that God will circumcise your heart. How do you put the two together. Now, we will see that they go together this way: Your part of it is repentance. God's part of it is giving the Holy Spirit. Verse 6: "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Now again, there we have even a prophecy concerning those who will be born into the Kingdom of God through the power of the resurrection.

Now let's come to the New Testament, and let's see the basis for baptism, what God has done. Let's come to Romans, the third chapter, and let's begin here. Now, in spite of all the things that God did for Israel and the Jews, nevertheless, it did not solve the problem

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concerning sin. They were justified to the temple but they were not justified to God the Father in heaven above. So please read that in *The Christian Passover* book. Romans 3:9: “What then? Are we of ourselves better?.... [that is the Jews vs the Gentiles] ...**Not at all!**... [we need to understand that] ...For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—**ALL**—with being under sin... [When you are under sin that means you have the penalty of sin hanging over you. What is the penalty of sin? The ‘wages of sin is death.’ Now ‘as in Adam we all die,’ but the death that it’s talking about—the wages of sin is death—is the spiritual death of the second death, which we will see is part of baptism.] ...Exactly as it is written: ‘For there is not a righteous one—not even one!... [because our righteousness has to come from Christ. Our righteousness has to come from God’s way.] ...There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one!’ ” (vs 9-12).

Now, what if a person is good in this society? Now there are a lot of good people in this society, right? Here He’s talking about ***spiritually good!*** Let’s use the example of Job again. Was not Job good? In relationship to what he did in the society, even in keeping the laws of God? Yes, *but he was not converted, meaning that he did not have the Holy Spirit of God.* When you come to the conclusion of the matter, and Job repented, then he received the Spirit of God. That’s why, without the Spirit of God, there is none good though they can do good. But please understand, not all good is from God. There is the knowledge of the tree of what? *Of good and evil.* And as long as you have your carnal human nature, which we do until death, there is none good. That’s why you have to have the righteousness of Christ given to you. That’s why God has to call.

“ ‘...Their throats *are* like an open grave; with their tongues they have used deceit; *the* venom of asps *is* under their lips, Whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; And *the* way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.’ Now then, we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law... [Who are under the law? *All sinners!*] ...so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (vs 13–19). So there you have it. ***All have “sinned and come short of the glory of God.”***

Now how is God going to solve this problem? God has to do something in it, which then begins to lead us to baptism. Let’s go back and see the beginnings of baptism. We’ll come back here to the book of Romans because we’ll be there later. Let’s come back to Matthew, the

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third chapter—and this shows us the beginning of baptism. Now the only other rituals that they had before was when they were unclean because of a sickness or an illness or unclean because of some sin. Not all sins required it, but some sins. That they would bathe when they were done, like they would be unclean seven days and then on the eighth day then they would bathe and be clean.

Now then, the only other ones to bathe in that manner were the priests. And they had to bathe before the priest went in to offer the incense and go into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Now we have something brand new beginning with John the Baptist. This is why it said in the New Testament: “The law and the prophets were until John. That means that the law and the prophets were used as the basis for preaching. It does not eliminate the law and the prophets because Jesus said, “Don’t think that I’ve come to destroy the law or the prophets. I’ve not come to destroy but to fulfill.” But what it means is that now beginning with John, the authority for preaching has a higher standard. That is the standard of the Kingdom of God, or as it says here in Matthew, he uses mostly the Kingdom of heaven. So let’s begin in Matthew 3:1: “Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, ‘Repent... [Now then, baptism requires entirely different. You are to REPENT!] ...for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’.... [And that’s what he was preaching.] ...For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.”*’” Now John himself wore a garment of camel’s hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him *those from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan*” (vs 1-5). Now contrary to opinion, the Jordan River is plenty deep enough to have water to be baptized in.

Now let’s understand something concerning the word “baptize.” To baptize is the Greek word: ‘*baptizo*’—which means *to submerge*, even used in cases of a sunken ship. Now a sunken ship is below the water, isn’t it? And we will see there is a reason for being put below the water and rather than sprinkling. Verse 6: “...And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them... [‘Why, it’s so nice to see you wonderful, sweet loving religious people here. It’s marvelous that you have come down. I have been waiting for you.’ NO! he said]: ‘...*You* brood of vipers...’ [Now, a Palestinian viper is some viper! And when he says, ‘generation of vipers’ (KJV) that’s directly relating to the fact that they are the children of the Devil.] ‘...who has forewarned you to flee from the

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coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance...’ [or answerable for an amendment to life. So ‘repentance’ means *that you come to the knowledge and understanding*—which we’ll see in just a minute—*that God leads you to that you are a sinner!* Not only that you have sinned, but you *are* a sinner. Like the Apostle Paul said in 1-Tim. 1, he said that ‘it is a truth that Christ came to save sinners of whom I am the chief!’ Answerable to amendments of life.] ...And do not think to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham *for our father*’... [and we are circumcised.] ...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham’ ” (vs 6-9). So it’s not all who come, as we read earlier, about bringing unchurched people in. If they don’t repent how can they be part of the spiritual body of Christ? If they don’t receive the Holy Spirit of God what do you have? *You have a carnal church of do-gooders.*

Now notice how kindly he spoke to them: “But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit... [that is of repentance and love to God and obedience.] ...is cut down and thrown into *the fire*.... [Now this is talking about the second death and the lake of fire, which we will see is related to baptism, a little later.] ...I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the one Who *is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire” (vs 10-11).

Now let me just make a mention here that baptism by fire is not the result of a Pentecostal meeting where everyone is rolling in the aisles, jumping up and down, stomping on the floor, running around and saying “Halleluiah, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.” That is demonic, spiritual confusion. And God is not the author of confusion. Baptism by fire—since “baptizo” means *to be immersed in fire*—just look at it this way: consider those who commit the unpardonable sin will be cast into a lake of fire which then is what? *Molten lava.* And you are submerged in molten lava. Which means you are burned up. So anyone who says they had a spiritual experience in a Pentecostal church and they had the baptism by fire, you better repent of that or you will have the baptism by fire—God’s fire! What you had is a Satanic, demonic experience.

Now notice: “Whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather His wheat into the granary; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire” (v 12). Because no one is going to put it out. Now that’s how baptism started.

Now we know that it talks about, in John 4 (we won’t turn there, we’ll by-pass it) let’s come to Acts, the second chapter and let’s get to the heart and core of the real meaning of baptism. But it says in John 4 that Jesus baptized yet He didn’t, it was His disciples who baptized. Acts 2:36—after Peter preached, now this becomes important:

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“ ‘Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart...” (vs 36-37). Now this is important to understand. This is the first part of repentance. God has to do something in your life and in your heart and in your mind to lead you to this beginning point of baptism, which is called ‘*pricked in your hearts.*’]

Hold your place here and let’s come to Romans, the second chapter, because we’ll come back to Acts, the second chapter. God is the one Who does this. Now this is a sorrow, a deep sorrow, for amendment of a way of life and you resolve in your mind to turn and go the other way. And we’re going to see that it is actually God Who is doing this. Now, I remember when I was baptized—it’ll be 40 years ago on Oct. 19th; this year—and I remember I was leading my life and I knew nothing of God; knew nothing of sin; knew nothing of right; knew nothing of wrong; and I was doing great in the world. Whiz bang! Going to college in San Mateo, getting my education, all of this and I’m going to do great stuff when I get done with this. And all of sudden God knocked me off my horse by giving me a challenge—and that was in my paleontology class at the College of San Mateo. And I did not grow up in a religious family. And I had not been reared in a church. My folks did try and have me confirmed in the Lutheran Church when I was 12, but I always escaped out of the lessons and was never confirmed. And as soon as they brought me to church I always left—I was really a renegade that way. A matter of fact, my mom would drive me up to the pastor’s house where I had to go take the confirmation lessons, and I’d stand up on the porch and wave goodbye and pretend that I rang the doorbell, and as soon as she was gone I jumped over the side of the porch and went on down and went fishing. This was in the small town of Poulsbo, Washington. So I had no “religious” background at all. And the way the challenge came about was this: The very first day—and this is a class you had to take, you could not graduate unless you had this class; required. So here are 400 of us sitting in the theater and the professor was down there and he stepped out there and after a while the bell rang and then he stood there and just waited and waited and waited. And finally, not saying anything, it finally got quiet. And he said, the very first words out of his mouth: “If there’s anyone who believes in God and in the Bible there is the door. It will not be discussed in this class!” Well, that just got my hackles up. And that’s what God used to begin to call me.

Well, subsequently, a few weeks after that, because I had certain difficulties in my life, because God was working with my mind, bringing me to understand how miserable and rotten that I was as a person, I was in my little old Nash Rambler where I had not changed

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the radio station in three years because I listened to the classical music station and that's the only thing I listened to. And most nights I was working when the World Tomorrow program was on KGO at 9:30. So I never heard it. Except this one night, I just happened to be in my car at that time and on the classical music station they were playing the Dirge of Bach—you know, Bach's Brandenburg concertos which it just drove me up a wall—so I changed the station and I heard the World Tomorrow program. And as I heard it I knew that that was an answer to the prayer that I asked God to help me with. That was my first prayer, "Oh God, help me." And God answered. So I wrote in for the *Plain Truth* and so forth and so on. Then in August—that must have been in about April that year, I went down to visit the campus. And I wasn't ready for baptism so I came back and I announced to my boss—I was working in a restaurant at that time—and I would work almost any shift but I couldn't work from Friday night sundown to Saturday night sundown. And he looked at me and said, "Well, why?" Because I'd work seven days a week, any shift, anywhere, anytime and they had three restaurants which I could work in—sometimes I would work 16 hours a day.

He looked at me, "Why?"

"Because of my religion."

He looked at me, "well, when did you become religious?"

So I said, "If you can't do it, let me know, you got my two weeks notice."

"Now wait a minute, wait a minute." So he didn't want to loose me, "I'll go back and look at the schedule." So he went back and looked at the schedule and said, "Nope, I can't do it."

So I said, "Do you mind if I do it?"

So to make a long story short, I went back and I worked it out where I could work Fridays from eight to four and that would get me off before sundown for Friday, then I would come in Saturday night at 12:30 after midnight and work the graveyard shift and then have Tuesday off.

But here in Romans 2, the reason why I'm saying this is because *it is God that leads you to repentance*. It is *God* that opens your mind. Now, I don't know what the circumstances were that God used to call you. Maybe it was a radio program, or a television program, or a booklet, or maybe it was one of your relatives, or maybe it was husband or wife, whatever the case may be. But *it is God Who does it*. The vehicle which He uses will be different because every person needs to be approached in a different way. So God will deal with each one of us at our own level. So whatever your circumstances were, God has

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dealt with you. Now let's pick it up here Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the [goodness] graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" And 'goodness' here is the same base word as 'grace.' Or could be called "the graciousness of God leads you to repentance." Why? Because "***by grace are you saved and that not of yourselves.***" God is the one Who does the calling.

Now, hold your place—continue there in Acts 2—and let's come back to John 6 and let's see something else that is important. In this age, God is the one Who has to do the calling. As a matter of fact it says, "many are called but few are chosen." And if many are called and few are chosen, how is it that there are millions and millions and millions of professing Christians. Well, we'll see a little later on that that's based upon whether they keep the commandments of God or not. John 6:44: "No one [man or woman] can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him..." That's the whole process that God uses—He draws you with His Spirit. Now that's important to understand. Because if you have been a Protestant, and you went through the routine of going to like a Billy Graham evangelistic campaign where there it is they say, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," "the wages of sin is death," "you need to give your heart to the Lord." And everyone says, "Yes, yes, yes, I need to give my heart to the Lord." All you do is say this prayer: "Lord Jesus, enter my heart." You are saved. WRONG! WRONG! WRONG! A false Christ, a misuse of Scripture and you are no more saved than the thought. You may become a better person because you desire to do good, but even people in the world can improve themselves, can they not? Can not drug addicts overcome drugs? Cannot people change their behavior through things that they learn through how to improve your life? Yes! But that doesn't mean that they're converted. That's why people who attend the churches of this world are maybe better citizens than those who don't attend church or are atheists or completely lawless. But that doesn't necessarily mean that they are saved because "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God'.... [That's why God has to do the calling. That's why God sends the Holy Spirit to stir up your heart and mind for desire for truth, desire to understand why you are the way that you are. Desire to understand why your life is such a wreck and a shambles; and that you can repent to God because it's sin that's doing it. And God is the one Who leads you to it.] ...Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me" (vs 44-45).

Now, let's come here to v.65: "And He said, 'For this reason, I have said to you, no one can come to Me unless it has been given to

him from My Father.”’ So the whole process of even being called to repentance is a gift of God—the *gift of repentance*. That’s why they were pricked in their hearts. *It is the gift of repentance, which is graciousness from God.* Now, there is a sorrow of this world. So it has to be a greater sorrow than of the world.

Now, let’s go back here to Acts, the second chapter, and let’s ask the question: Why were they pricked in their hearts? Now many of them lived right in the area of Judea, didn’t they? Many of them lived right there in Jerusalem where the temple was, weren’t they? Had they not heard of Christ? Had many of them not even seen Christ? I wonder how many of the 3,000 that were baptized on that day were part of the 4,000 or 5,000 that were fed by Jesus, or were part of the multiple numbers of those who were healed. I wonder if the young man who was the only son of the widow who had died and God raised back to life was one of those who was baptized? Makes you wonder. They had heard and they understood what it was that Christ had gone through in the crucifixion. They lived in the time when they would walk by and see people having been crucified, hanging on crosses, and know and understand the agony. And that they understood then, through what Peter was preaching, and pricked them in the heart that *their sins did kill Christ*—because Christ died for the sins of the whole world. And that expressed the love of God. So that’s why they were pricked in their hearts. And they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do.” Because there comes a time when you have to have action.

That’s what happened to me. I got back and once I started keeping the Sabbath I began to understand things, which I didn’t understand before. And then I knew I had to be baptized. And so in October—I went down on October 18th, because I was baptized the next day. I went down in my little old Nash Rambler, and I was going down toward Pasadena. It was Highway 99—remember Highway 99? —and you had to go over the “grapevine.” And I remember that stretch right out of Bakersfield—maybe you’ll remember it. There’s this straight stretch where there’s these big eucalyptus trees, and I was listening to a World Tomorrow program and it happened to be on repentance. And I was listening very intently and it really convicted me in heart. And so, here I’m driving along repenting and tears streaming down and, you know, it is a deep and emotional and spiritual experience that you will go through. And so, I got down there and I stayed in a motel, then the next day I went ahead and got a whole stack of booklets and spent a whole day reading booklets in the motel. And then the second day on the 19th then I was counseled for baptism by Richard Plechette and Clarence Hughes and was baptized.

Now the whole purpose of being baptized, as we will see, is to

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bury the old sinful self. But the result of it is, is to receive the Holy Spirit, because we'll see a little later on, unless you receive the Holy Spirit then a baptism is only a dunking! Or as one man put it, "A short bath with clothes on." So let's read here: "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent... [which they did] ...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 2:38). That is what you want to receive—the gift of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God because they have now repented of their sins. Now let's add one thing right here concerning being baptized in the name of Jesus.

Let's go to Matthew, the 28th chapter, because there is more to it than just the name of Jesus, we'll see that. Now some people are kind of afraid that this is a trinitarian formula, which it is not! Matthew 28:19: "'Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.' Amen" (vs 19-20). Why are you baptized into the name of the Father? *Because you're going to be the child of God.* And the children bear the name of the Father, do they not? Yes! Who sends the Holy Spirit of begettal? *God the Father.* That's why it's in the name of the Father. And "of the Son."—notice it doesn't say "name of"—but "of the Son." Why? *Because it's through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ that all of this is made possible for you.* And "of the Spirit" *because you are to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

So the way that I baptize is this—just a short summary here: "I baptize you not into any sect or denomination of this world...[and this is a covenant death (which we'll talk about a little bit later] ...but into the name of the Father because He will beget you with His Spirit... And of the Son because of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit because you receive the gift of God and all of this is done in the name of Jesus Christ. So you are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Now, let's continue on here. Let's see what kind of repentance that we need. Let's come to Psalm 86. Now we know that the New Testament says that the angels in heaven rejoice over every sinner that repents. Why? *Because repentance is such a difficult thing.* There is the sorrow of the world which is you've been caught and you're upset about being caught. Or maybe you did something and there is some remorse. But you are not sorrowed unto death. That is sorrowed unto the point that you understand that the wages of your life—being sin—leads to death; and that your life and your sins have killed Christ. That's why there's sorrow. Now, let's see God's graciousness as extended here. "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy.

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Preserve my soul; for I *am* holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. **For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive...** [Now this is in mind for all of us; whenever you do sin, God is ready to forgive. Whenever you truly repent.] ...and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee” (Psa. 86:1-5).

Here now let's go to Psalm 103:1: “O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless his holy name.* Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities... [And please understand that, brethren. If you truly repent He doesn't give you a 98% score. He gives you 100%. He forgives all your sins. Now what about sins you can't even remember. That's why there's the operation of baptism. Because how could you possibly remember every sin that you ever did? *You can't!* That's why there's the burial in the watery grave as we will see.] ...Who forgiveth all thine iniquities who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (vs 1-4). And that's what God does. Is not being called and given the Holy Spirit of God being crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies? *Without a doubt!*

Now let's go to Psalm 51—let's see the repentance of David, which is the kind of Godly repentance that will lead us unto understanding about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and that then God will apply the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to you. Now what is the verse in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him... [and we'll get to that in just a little bit. **You must believe!**] ...may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

Now here's how it is done when we repent. Psalm 51:1: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... [not only just in the physical thing of being baptized in water, but also spiritually in your mind—which we will see is the circumcision of the heart.] ...For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.... [And that's what happens when God leads you to repentance. Your sins are just standing right up.] ...Against thee, thee only, have I sinned... [because you understand you can sin against people, but God is the one Who gave the law, which says: ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ God is the one Who gave the law: ‘honor your father and mother.’ Who gave the law: ‘you shall not commit murder.’ ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ‘You shall not steal.’ ‘You shall not bear false witness.’ ‘You shall not covet.’ And that's why the law is given. Then with the power of the Holy Spirit, to convict you of sin, so

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that you will be like David was here. Only against God have you sinned—and have this in mind. Even if you were the only person on earth, your sins would have killed Christ because He created you!] ... and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts..." (vs 1-6).

Now then, after you confess your sins and after you are baptized then here is the growing part, which is to grow in grace and knowledge. Desire truth 'in the inward parts.' And that's all of the process of growing and overcoming.] ...and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with hyssop... [scrub me clean—if you can liken it unto—I'm an old fashioned guy—remember SOS, you know, steel wool. That's what hyssop is.] ...and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me" (vs 6-11). And that's what baptism is all about. So that will take place.

Now, let's come to Romans, the sixth chapter, because this tells us more about baptism than anything else. Let's understand something concerning the New Covenant. The New Covenant is based upon the crucifixion and death, the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, and His resurrection. Now when we enter into baptism it is a spiritual death. That is why it is not a ritual but it is a ceremony. That's why it cannot be an initiation into an organization because it is into Christ, as we will see. Now, let's begin here in Romans. 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?.... [Now how do you die to sin? *Through baptism!* And that as we know, every year we renew our baptism through the footwashing. You can read that in the Passover book.] ...live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?" (vs 1-3). So there is great meaning with baptism. That's why you are submersed under water. And it is the closest thing that you can come to, to die because you are buried. You are buried with Christ in baptism. Then you are raised out of that watery grave. Now, if we kept you under the water long enough, you would truly die. But I haven't been known to do that yet, so don't worry.

Verse 4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death..." Now since it is a covenant relationship that you are entering into between God the Father, Jesus Christ and you

personally, you are being co-joined into that death. Christ's sacrifice did what? *Paid for your sins*. That's why you are baptized into that death. Another reason you are baptized into that death is this: Is that it is a *covenant pledge*. And a covenant pledge cannot be broken. If you do break it... Let me re-phrase it: **A covenant pledge is NOT TO BE broken.** Once you make that covenant pledge, you're buried with Christ in the watery grave. Now then, you have pledged that as you come out of the watery grave you're going to walk in newness of life. And that if you go back on that covenant pledge and, that's not to say that you won't sin because we'll cover that (I don't know if we'll have time on this tape or not, but we'll cover it later) if you go back on that covenant pledge and reject God and reject Christ and reject His commandments—which there are some who have done it knowingly—you then have pledged your death in the lake of fire! So that's something you need to understand. That's why you're baptized into His death. Now please understand: God wants you to live, but He wants you to understand you're going to live by His way—and it is a way of life. It is not just a religion or something that you do. It's not just churching the unchurched.

“...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.... [In the Spirit of God. In the commandments of God.] ...For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be in the likeness of His resurrection... [Meaning that, God is going to grant you eternal life in power, in splendor, and in glory! So that's something to understand.] ...Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him*.... [That's why you're buried in the watery grave.] ...in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin” (vs 4-6). Meaning that we're to no longer live in sin, walk in sin—but because of our human nature we will see we do sin. But we have, upon repentance, forgiveness available. And only those who are truly in Christ have that forgiveness available. So that's the encouragement in it. Now are you not willing to give up your whole self in the death of baptism to receive that? To receive the Holy Spirit. The promise of eternal life. That's what it's all about.

Now, here's the kind of commitment that we need to have—let's come to Luke 14, first. Here's the kind of commitment that we need to have, and which means that we need to commit ourselves unto this.

- That's why we have the Passover every year.
- That's why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- That's why it pictures putting out sin from us spiritually.
- Living in the commandments of God.
- Growing and overcoming.

Now let's pick it up here in Luke 14:25: “And great multitudes

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were going with Him... [and He said, ‘Ya’ll come into the synagogue now, all you unchurched just come in, we need numbers here. These rabbis are needing more money. They’re needing more people. We need more pledges. You know, we need more good folk.’ NO, NO, NO!] ... and He turned *and* said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father... [now I want you to understand: this is the **covenant pledge**, which we will see means *to love God more than*. This is pretty strong stuff.] ...and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.... [And the Greek there is ‘ou dunamai’—*the strongest negation of having no power* to become a disciple of Christ. That’s how important baptism is.] (Notice): ...And whoever does not carry his cross... [Didn’t we read that the old man may be crucified? Yes.] ...and come after Me cannot... [‘ou dunamai’—*the impossibility of it.*] ...be My disciple. For which one of you, desiring to build a tower... [so He gives a parable about building a new life.] ...does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for its completion; Lest perhaps... [or that is *unfortunately*] ... after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, Saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish’? Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war, does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand? But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off, he sends ambassadors and desires the *terms* for peace. In the same way also, each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple’ ” (vs 25-33). Now how do you forsake all that you have? Does that mean you put it up for sale and go live in a monastery under a pledge of poverty? *No.* It means that you love God more and all the physical things that are around you are counted as nothing. You don’t set your heart on it. In your own mind you have sold it. Now remember the parable of the rich man? He was told to go and sell, literally. And he didn’t do it, because he had great wealth (Matt. 19). Because he put the physical things first. So we have to put the spiritual things first.

Now, after we’re baptized and come out of the watery grave, let’s come to Matthew, the tenth chapter, and let’s get a parallel account to this so you know that you’re not to live by hatred. Of course you’re to love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being. Love your neighbor as yourself. But in relationship to God, ***you are to love no one greater than God!*** That’s what it means. Will it improve a marriage? *Yes!* *Because then Christ will be in you.* Will it improve your relations with one another? *Yes, because you love your neighbor as yourself.* And you love the brethren as Christ loved us. But here, Matthew 10:37: “The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy

of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross... [to crucify himself with Christ, through the watery grave of baptism] ...and follow [after] Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life... [that is in this world] ...shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life... [that is in this world through baptism] ... for My sake shall find it” (vs 37-39). And so, God has everything to give for you. What God wants you to do is to totally surrender yourself to Him. And then make that covenant with Him—that covenant of the watery grave—and then to receive the Holy Spirit.

Now, let’s come to John 14, and it shows what we are to do. Now this was given on the Passover night, just before they left to go out when Jesus was arrested. Let’s come here to v 6—let’s understand why today’s world wants to get rid of Christ. They cannot stand this: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’” It’s not going to come any other way, even though it may sound very religious and very sanctimonious and even use some Scriptures. Christ is the way! And the world today, we’re living in the world of deceptive compromise. That you all get along, you all go along. And one religion is just as good as the other.

I just recently—I haven’t finished it—but I’m reading the book by Deepak Chopra, *To Know God*. Reduces Christianity to the level of Hinduism. He doesn’t know God, nor does he know how to know God. And we’ll see why, right over here in v 15—here’s how you begin to know God: “**If** you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.” And Deepak Chopra does not know God or how to find Him. Maybe the “god of this world”—Satan, who appears as an angel of light. But he is NOT in any way associated with the true God. And I’ve read his book—it’s like Patton, you’ve seen the movie, *Patton*? When he caught Rommel in the ambush? And after he shot up the tanks he said, “Rommel, *blankity blank*, I read your book.” So that’s what I’ve done with Deepak Chopra—I read your book! And also the Dalai Lamas’ and also the Pope’s and also Alan Dershowitz, who thinks God is imperfect and incompetent. ***Everything is today to destroy the knowledge of God.*** And the simple solution to begin to find God is repentance, baptism and keeping His commandments out of a pure love from your heart. So “if love Me, keep My commandments.” The opposite then is, if you don’t love Christ you are not keeping His commandments. Or we could rephrase it another way: if you’re not keeping His commandments you don’t love Him.

Now let’s come down here to v 21: “The one who has My commandments and is keeping them... [So, you have to have them and keep them. Remember, we’re no longer to live in sin. And sin is what? *The transgression of the law.*] ...that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and

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will manifest Myself to him.” How does He do that? *By calling you! By opening up your mind to His Word and His truth—that’s how He does it.*

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘**If** anyone loves Me... [Now, you might want to circle that ‘if’—circle the ‘if’ up in v 15, too. IF—the condition is not on God but on you.] ...he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.... [notice v 24, very clearly]: ... **The one who does not love Me does not keep My words...** [not just commandments now, whatever Jesus said.] ...and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.” So if you reject anything in the Bible, you are rejecting the Father! Because He is the one Who sent Christ. He is the one Who then established what the New Covenant is. And didn’t Jesus say, “I speak what My Father told Me”? Yes. So that’s Whom you are rejecting.

Now, let’s come to Colossians, the third chapter. Let’s see what we are to do after we are baptized. Colossians 3. We’re to live our life differently. And you know, brethren, I was just thinking the other day—a matter of fact, not the other day, just when I was awake early in the morning, about 2:30; I think I was awake about 2:30 to 4:30; then when 6:30 came it was a little difficult getting up, but you know how it is. Anyway, I was thinking: Why do we need the Sabbath every week? *Because we live in such a deceived world, and if we didn’t have the Sabbath, to hear the Words of God, to read the Words of God, to study the Words of God, to rest and have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, we would be just like the world in full deception.*

Now here, Colossians 3:1—let’s read it: “Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ... [that is out of the watery grave as we read there in Rom. 6] ...seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died... [through the operation of baptism in the watery grave] ...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God” (vs 1-3). Then it gives the whole—the rest of the whole chapter, I’ll let you read that. That shows you how you are to overcome.

Now let’s come to Romans, the seventh chapter, and let’s see that after we’re baptized one of the things that you need to understand is this: you don’t overcome human nature all at once. And one of the things that plagues people who have been recently baptized is “Whoop! I’ve sinned! Have I committed the unpardonable sin?” Because he or she figured in their own minds that “once I’m baptized I ought to be perfect.” You are baptized because you are imperfect. You are baptized because you are a sinner. And now you have to start learning God’s way and learn to be led by the Holy Spirit of God. Now the Apostle Paul makes this very clear. Now, we’ll just paraphrase some of it—you

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can read the whole seventh chapter beginning at verse seven, which is this: Once you are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God then sin becomes exceedingly sinful, because now you are convicted of it in your mind. Whereas before God called you, you weren't convicted of sin at all. You were just trying to do your own way, which you thought was right. And if something came along where you were not right, well maybe you could change or modify that; but it didn't lead to repentance and it didn't lead to obedience. And it didn't lead to a conviction of sin.

So here Paul, he says, Romans 7:9: "For I was once alive without law; but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.... [Now, how did Paul die? *By baptism, that's how he died.*] ... And the commandment, which *was meant to result in life...* [which we read back there in Deuteronomy—'for your good always.'] ...*was found to be unto death for me* Because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me...* [Because 'the wages of sin is death.'] ...Therefore, the law *is indeed holy*, and the commandment *holy and righteous and good*. Now then, did that which *is good* become death to me? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin... [That's why you have a conviction of sin. By the Spirit of God which is leading you to understand that.] ...working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (vs 9-14). Even after his baptism he said this, because understood that his own nature was evil inherently and only God can change it and only God can help you overcome it. And only with the Spirit of God can that be done. That's why you die in the watery grave of baptism. Then he shows the struggle that he would go through. There were times when he would sin and he didn't want to sin. He wanted to do good but couldn't. And then he said, "There is this conflict in me that I can only be saved of by Christ Jesus." Now you can also read of that in the Passover book, *The Nature of Man*.

Now what happens after baptism when you find yourself in that situation: lo and behold you've sinned. Now let's go to 1-John, the first chapter, because once you have been baptized, now you are under the grace of God. Covers you like an umbrella.

- You live in grace.
- You walk in grace.
- You have faith through the grace of God.
- You have the Holy Spirit through the grace of God.
- You have the leading you to repentance, which is the gift of God or grace of God.
- All of those combined together.

This grace then gives you access to God the Father so *when*

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you sin, if it not a “sin unto death”—that is the unpardonable sin and rejecting Christ. And just like Paul, he hadn’t rejected Christ, he just sinned, like any of us do. Then what do you do? *You go to Christ and repent!* Let’s see that here: 1-John 1:6: “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth... [and that actually means *practice the truth*, which is the Word of God.] ...However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another... [and notice, this is talking about those who have been baptized.] ...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, **cleanses us from all sin**... [or every sin] ...If we say that we do not have sin... [that is we don’t have a sinful nature] ...we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us... If we confess our own sins... [Now, Who do we confess our sins to? No priest. You confess them to God. You get on your knees in the private, quiet place and repent to God:

- Ask Him for strength.
- Ask Him for His Spirit.
- Ask Him to help you overcome.
- Ask Him to help you bring ‘every thought into captivity unto Christ.’

And that is a lifelong thing. And I’m still doing that after 40 years of baptism. And we all will. But we live under God’s grace. We don’t live in sin. I don’t live in sin. But I do sin. But when I do, I confess to God. Now if you hurt or harm somebody else you may have to confess to them and repent to them.] ...If we confess our own sins He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (vs 6-9). And that not only is the instance of sin when you sin, but that is also a process of growing and overcoming.

Remember when Nathan came to David and brought out about the sin of Bathsheba? David said, “Oh, I’ve sinned!” And Nathan said, “Your sin is forgiven. But you’re going to have a little discipline from now on. Your whole household is going to be against you so that you will learn never to sin that way.” And he did! So sometimes we’ll have a little discipline that comes from God. Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.” And this is basically what the Gnostics were teaching, as we found, that you have a spark of divine life in you from God so therefore all you have to do is discover the spark of life and you automatically save yourself—you’re not a sinful person. So we deceive ourselves.

Now, 1 John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And yet, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the Righteous*... [Christ is advocating for you. And remember, leading you to repentance over sin does not stop at baptism, it continues all the way through your Christian

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life.] (now notice v 2): ...And He is *the propitiation* for our sins... [now ‘propitiation’ means *constant atoning sacrifice*. His sacrifice is constant. Once for all—and you can put ‘all time’—so you come to Him and repent and confess your sins, ‘He is faithful and just to forgive your sins. Now notice, lest we get conceited]: ...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.... [Which, when you come to understand the Holy Days will show you how God’s plan is going to work that out. When it’s going to be done. Now is not the day of salvation for the whole the world. Now is the salvation for those that God calls, as we saw.] ...And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments... [that’s after you’ve repented, been baptized, received the Holy Spirit of God, you walk in grace, you live in grace, you continue to confess your sins to Him, continue to keep His commandments. We know that we are in Him]: ...if we keep His commandments.... [that ties right in with John 14:15). ...The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.... [And that doesn’t matter who the person is.] (Here’s the whole key): ...On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected... [That is a lifelong process] ...By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked” (vs 1-6).

Now let’s go to 1-John 4:9: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the propitiation for our sins*” (vs 9-10). And He sits at the right hand of God right now to do that.

Now let’s look quickly at two other things. The circumcision without hands. Come to Colossians 2:11: “In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the circumcision* not made by hands... [This is the spiritual circumcision of the heart that we began with at the beginning of the sermon.] ...in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... [and this is done how?] ...Having been buried with Him in baptism... [as we saw; joined into His death] ...by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead.... [Because He says] ...For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him... [that is made alive through the operation of coming out of the watery grave] ...having forgiven all your trespasses” (vs 11-13). Now, you can write in for our series in Colossians or the one I just did recently on Colossians 2, and that covers a little bit more in detail.

Now let’s go to Romans, the second chapter, please. Now Paul

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makes this circumcision of the heart and the Spirit very clear. Romans 2:28: “For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the flesh*; Rather, he *is* a Jew... [that is a spiritual Jew of Jesus] ...who *is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is* of *the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter*; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 28-29). And that is a greater circumcision than the circumcision of the flesh.

Now, let's answer the question: Should you be baptized again if you were baptized once? Because some people have been baptized into different churches. Let me just tell you this: If you're baptized into a church which keeps Sunday, then your baptism was invalid, it doesn't matter even if you were immersed in water the way baptism should be. Baptism by Baptists is not a valid baptism. Mormonism is not a valid baptism.

Now let's come to Acts 19 and see what Paul said to those who were baptized unto the baptism of John. 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?’... [Because the whole point of the matter is to receive the Holy Spirit. And if you haven't received the Holy Spirit, any number of times you have been baptized are all false and fake baptisms.] ...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.’ 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...” (vs 1-6).

So that finishes the whole operation of baptism. When you are done you have hands laid on you for the receipt of the Holy Spirit and to receive the Holy Spirit is the whole purpose of baptism. Now you may have even had a false baptism within the Church of God. Because:

1. You didn't understand about baptism, or
2. You didn't repent truly from the heart. Maybe as it is in the Old Testament, maybe you rend your garments, but not your heart. And perhaps maybe the minister who did the baptism didn't have the faith in it; didn't believe in it; or perhaps had no consciousness of the true deep conversion that really needs to be.

So there are some cases when people need to be re-baptized—and I've re-baptized them. Sometimes they are baptized when they are too young and they come to a greater consciousness because God still is

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working with them. And then they are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. And sometimes people just don't understand the basis of baptism when they're baptized and so they don't receive the Holy Spirit when they are baptized. Now, one other thing that's important: You not only must you repent, but you must also believe.

Now let's come to Acts 8:37 and here's where Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. "And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart ... [and that's what the whole thing is, your whole being] ... it is permitted'... [it is lawful for you to be baptized (as it should read)]. ... Then he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" Now you have to believe that to the very depth of your being and you grow in that, and you grow in the conviction, and you grow in the love of God, and you grow in the truth of God after baptism.

And so this is what baptism is all about: You bury the old self with the death of Christ, crucify the old self. You come out of the watery grave and you walk in newness of life. And you overcome the pulls of the flesh, growing in grace and knowledge through the power of the Holy Spirit and looking to Jesus Christ as your Head and your Lord and your Master to Whom you live and breath and have your being and confess your sins and worship and love. That is the meaning of baptism.

Scripture References

- | | |
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| 4) Romans 3:9-19 | 24) Colossians 2:11-13 |
| 5) Matthew 3:1-12 | 25) Romans 2:28-29 |
| 6) Acts 2:36-37 | 26) Acts 19:1-6 |
| 7) Romans 2:4 | 27) Acts 8:37 |
| 8) John 6:44-45, 65 | |
| 9) Acts 2:38 | |
| 10) Matthew 28:19-20 | |
| 11) Psalm 86:1-5 | |
| 12) Psalm 103:1-4 | |
| 13) John 3:16 | |
| 14) Psalm 51:1-11 | |
| 15) Romans 6:1-6 | |
| 16) Luke 14:25-33 | |
| 17) Matthew 10:37-39 | |
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Chapter Two

The True Meaning of Baptism #2

- Now, what about baptism?
- What does it mean?
- Why do we do it?
- And what is the significance of it for each individual?

First of all, let's see Acts 2:38—and that's a basic one. This tells us some of the purpose we saw earlier, and we'll cover that again. When God gave the Holy Spirit to the apostles, to preach in power on that day of Pentecost, when the Church began, Peter gave a very powerful sermon showing the meaning and the purpose of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And that was meant—and God inspired it to be—to bring them to repentance. Now, we find this right here beginning in v 37. Repentance begins with each individual internally, in their own hearts and minds. “Now after hearing *this*... [that their sins crucified Christ. And if Christ died for the sins of the whole world, that means that every individual has his or her part in the crucifixion of Christ.] ...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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, **as many as the Lord our God may call**’” (vs 37-39). Very important, mark that.

It's not just an initiation, as we will see. It is not just a prerequisite to belong to a church organization. It is a result of God “calling” an individual. Now God ***calls*** in different ways. He calls through preaching. He calls through experience—that a person goes through a terrible experience and they start seeking God. He calls through exposure to other Christians, which show them the way of God, explain the Word of God. That's all part of it. Many different ways, but God is the One Who ***calls!***

Let's come back to John 6, and in this “calling” it really is a very profound calling. Now let me ask you a question as we're turning there: Is not human life itself a very profound thing? And yet so common, isn't it? Billions! And everybody values human life, don't you? And you're sad when someone dies, and we're all sad when we see what happened with this mother [who] drowned five of her own children, or someone is murdered, or a plane blows up, or whatever, a

ship sinks. And so we value human life.

Now let's talk about eternal life. God is calling you to eternal life—***to share in the existence of God.*** Now that's why human beings are made in the image of God—male and female. And that's why Jesus came, born of the virgin Mary, being completely human, so that we can become as He is. Now since at this time God is not offering it to the whole world, God has to call—as we saw there back in Acts, the second chapter. Now how does He call? What is it that God used in your life? I can look back and see what God used in my life—and there will be something or someone or some thing that God used to begin to call you. And He began to intervene in your life.

Now here in John 6:44, it says: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him....” Which means that—let's ask the question: Who is God the Father? *He is the Sovereign of the universe*, is He not? Yes, *He is*. Now, think about it: “for everyone that the Lord God shall call,” God the Father, the Sovereign of the universe, has reached down and through His Spirit and through some thing in your life,

- has given you a desire to seek Him;
- has given you something that you desire to understand His Word;
- has drawn you so you want to know what is the purpose of life.
 - Why am I here?
 - Why am I born?
 - Why am I so rotten and miserable?
 - And why are human beings so evil, including me?

The Sovereign of the universe, God the Father, is the One Who draws! Isn't that something? Now that's very humbling in itself, and it takes a lot of thinking and living and learning and of God's Spirit to fully appreciate that. You can appreciate it to start with, but you grow in this.

“...and I will raise him up at the last day.... [Be raised from the dead!] Now that's profound, isn't it? We've all attended funerals, haven't we? Yes, we have. Now here's something else that happens] ...It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God’.... [Now God is teaching you, one way or the other: through experience, through leading you with His Spirit; through studying His Word; through praying to Him.] ...Therefore, everyone who has heard... [that is responds to this drawing and calling] ...from the Father, and has learned... [has been taught of the Father—these things that is to lead him to repentance] ...comes to Me” (vs 44-45). So it's really quite a thing that happens, isn't it? God is the One Who does that. Because God is not way off somewhere in the universe, sitting up there with His arms folded, just waiting for the end to come. He is actively involved in our lives. And Christ is involved in our lives. But because it's such a profound thing and it's not just an ordinary occurrence and God is not calling everyone at this time, therefore, you are required to enter into a covenant with Him.

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Whenever God deals with His people He enters into a covenant. And baptism is a covenant. Jesus said it is the New Covenant. Now Jesus being our Savior then, the One Who died for our sins and being the Author of the New Covenant, He was telling this to His disciples. Let's come here to v 51: [He said,] "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven... [and He contrasts that just to the bread that people eat to sustain their physical lives. Now this bread is unusual because it says:] ... if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Now the Catholics believe that the little wafer that the priest commands God to come into actually turns into the flesh and blood of Christ. That is not true. It is symbolic. But the meaning behind it is profound.

He says, "...which I will give for the life of the world.' Because of this, the Jews were arguing with one another, saying, 'How is He able to give us *His* flesh to eat?' Therefore, Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves.'" (vs 51-53). Now then, you either have life or you don't have life. You'll either have the Holy Spirit or you won't have the Holy Spirit. So it's impossible unless you enter into that New Covenant with Christ, and He tells us what that New Covenant is, as symbolized by the Passover and the partaking of the bread and the wine.

Now v 54: "The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day; For My flesh is truly food, and My blood is truly drink. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood is dwelling in Me, and I in him.... [and that's the end result of it. Now, here's the key:] ...As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so also the one who eats Me shall live by Me" (vs 54-57). So the covenant is that ***you agree to live by Jesus Christ—with His Spirit in you.*** And He makes it all possible. God the Father gives His Spirit.

Now, let's come to John 14 and see how He does this as He begins to call people. Because something happens; something different happens to you, which then we can say is the working of God the Father through the Holy Spirit. Now here, John 14:15—now this covenant that we enter into—we're going to have two baptisms this afternoon, so if you want to stick around for that, by all means do—this covenant is based upon this right here: "**If you love Me, keep the commandments**—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter... [now, I'm going to read it the way that it should be translated.] ...that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be **within** you" (vs 15-17).

So the way that God the Father draws someone is that He uses the power of His Holy Spirit to begin to work in that person's life; begin to work in that person's mind; to begin to work with that person, to begin to see the futility of human life. Now it may be one day, as some people have—maybe you've been a Catholic—and maybe one day you walk in to this cathedral and you think God is not here. Now if you begin to respond to God, and say, "God, where are You?" When you—God will lead you, maybe to read the Scriptures, maybe lead you to someone who can explain some Scriptures to you, whatever. But God begins to deal with you. And the Holy Spirit is with you. Now, after baptism and the laying on of hands, then the Holy Spirit is *within* you, in your mind. And this constitutes the begetting of the Holy Spirit. This also is the circumcision of the heart. Because now you're on the road to conversion. And just like a begetting of newly begotten child, it's just a little bit. But you're to grow in grace and knowledge, grow in the mind of Christ, and that is a process of conversion and overcoming.

So, if you're brand new and you hear all of these things and you're kind of overwhelmed, don't worry, it'll come later. So what you do is stay with the basic, beginning things. Now then, this process develops in such a way—Jesus explains it here. Now, He continues on, v 18: "I will not leave you orphans... [Because the Holy Spirit is to comfort us, to help us, to encourage us.] ...I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also. In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you. **The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me;** and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" (vs 18-22). The answer is: *by God's Spirit and by His love*. Now the world, when we walk out of this building today, they can't tell us from any other person in the world, can they? But God can tell, can't He? *Yes!* God knows whoever belongs to Him because they have the Spirit of God within them. God knows who He is calling because He sent the Spirit to draw them.

Now, so He answers the question, v 23, how He is going to do it so that only those who are being called will be able to respond: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and **We will come to him and make Our abode with him.**" Now notice the two parts of the Holy Spirit are from the Father, which is the begetting; and the Spirit of Christ, which is Christ in us. And it says, "We will make Our abode with him." Which then is *in*. So that's why we have baptism, because not only do you enter into a covenant, but you become a different person. You no longer belong to the

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world, you belong to Christ. And God the Father and Christ are in you.

Now here's the dividing line, v 24: "The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me." So if you hear about the Sabbath and you think, 'Oh, that's just for the Jews.' Then you go your own way. Then God's Spirit will withdraw from you and you go right back on into the world without ever being led to the knowledge of baptism and repentance. Or you could do like this one woman when she first heard about the Sabbath, she said: 'Well, isn't that what the Bible says?' Yes! And then she begins to respond.

Now, let's carry this a little bit further so we can understand what we need to do. Let's come to Matthew 28—and as we were discussing between services, there is a little de-feudality as to whether this should be in the Scriptures or not. But it's here and it should be and yes, it's in the Byzantine text. Now here's the command that Jesus gave to apostles, v 19: "Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations... [Now we're going to teach them] ...baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Now, why do we have these three things here when in Acts, the second chapter, we read that they were baptized in the name of Jesus. One does not contradict the other. They both go together and it goes like this: "...baptizing them **into** the name of the Father... [Why?. Because you receive the begettal of the Holy Spirit from the Father] ...and **of** the Son... [Here the word "name" is not there, but it's 'of the Son' because of the crucifixion and death of Christ to pay for our sins, and His blood which is for the remission of sins. And] ...**of** the Holy Spirit" because the Holy Spirit is to lead us and guide us as we draw close to God. All of this is done in the name of Jesus Christ so they all fit together.

Now, let's go a little bit further—v 20: "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age." So this is a process which is going to continue right on down from the time of Christ, right on down to His return.

Now let's come to Romans, the sixth chapter, and let's see the meaning of baptism defined even a little bit more. Now when we are baptized, it is ***a formal act of making a covenant with God***. And when you make a covenant, you pledge your own death to fulfill it. That's what Christ did when He prepared for the New Covenant, didn't He? He pledged His own death. "This is My flesh and this is My blood." Both of the New Covenant. Now, when you enter into baptism, it's defined here in Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin... ['sin is the transgression of the law']—no you can't] ...so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin..." (vs 1-2). So baptism is a burial—that's why you go all the way under the water and

you have to be called and you have to be knowledgeable of what you're doing, and you have to have repented of your sins. So therefore, infant baptism is a false baptism. An infant doesn't know anything. All it knows is that it's getting sprinkled—you couldn't even define that. So then they generally cry and weep and wail at the infant baptisms. Now, I saw one baby by the Russian Orthodox, and I didn't realize it, their infant baptism, they go right in the water three times. And boy, those kids are really howling and screaming after the third time.

We died of sin, therefore we don't "live any longer therein?... [It doesn't mean that we don't sin. We do because we still have a sinful nature and we're overcoming. But God forgives us again upon repentance, because then we're under His grace.] ...Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death... [So this becomes part of the covenant death that you enter into.] ...Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death... [the definite articles are in the Greek. **The** death of Christ and **the** death of the covenant:] ...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" (vs 2-4). Our lives are to change.

- We no longer live to the self, *we live to God*.
- We no longer live to please ourselves, *we live to help and to serve*.
- We no longer live our lives in a way, the way that we want to, because now *we've got to go a new way*.

In the counterfeit of Protestantism is that "you're born again." Well, that's a misnomer. You're not born until the resurrection, then you're changed from flesh to spirit. But we're to "walk in newness of life." Here, hold your place here and let's go to Ephesians, the second chapter. And we see the operation of this explained by the Apostle Paul. Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins, In which you walked in times past..." (vs 1-2).

Now, let's understand something—because God is calling you out of the world, He is calling you from a world that is filled with sin—cut off from God, having no true understanding of God. They may have some understanding of God. They may understand some parts of the Bible, but having no true, spiritual understanding of God. So He makes you alive—"...you were dead in trespasses and sins, In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [which is Satan the devil], the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [Now you see the difference here. Jesus said, 'If you love Me, you'll keep My commandments. If you don't love Me, you won't keep My commandments.' So when you're out in the world that 'spirit that works in the children of disobedience'—that's everybody.] (Notice v 3): ...Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our

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flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath*, even as the rest of *the world*. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us... [so it's a powerful thing that God the Father does to call you, to love you, to reveal Himself to you, to reveal Christ to you.] ...Even when we were dead in *our trespasses*, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For you have been saved by grace.*)” (vs 3-5).

Now, let me just mention here: get the tape, *Salvation is Creation*—because there's three steps to being saved:

1. You *have been saved* from your sins by baptism.
2. You *are being saved* if you continue in the Gospel.
3. You *shall be saved* at the resurrection when you are changed from flesh to spirit.

Now, let's come down here to v 8: “For by grace you have been saved... [that is from your sins and Satan the devil] ...through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves... [You didn't find God, God found you. Not of something you bought or have purchased or a work that you did] ...*it is* the gift of God, Not of works, so that no one may boast.... [Now then, something different takes place.] ...For **we are His workmanship**... [Now then, we become the workmanship of God the Father, and He is creating us in Jesus Christ—notice:] ...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works... [keeping the commandments of God, loving God, loving the brethren.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.” (vs 8-10). And Jesus said that we're to live by every Word of God, and that's how we're to walk in them.

Now let's come back to Romans, the sixth chapter. That is the “newness of life” in which we are to walk. Now here's a guarantee: “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*... [so just as Christ entered into the covenant death by crucifixion, symbolically—through the burial of baptism—you are crucified with Him.] (Notice): ...**that the body of sin might be destroyed**... [showing when you have your sins initially forgiven, when you are baptized, then it is a process that that which is within you of your own nature might be destroyed. That's the process of growing and overcoming.] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin.... [there is the key. You don't serve it. It doesn't rule over you.] ...Because the one who has died *to sin*... [that is by baptism] ...has been justified from sin” (vs 5-7).

You're not free of sin. Because when you start reading Romans, the seventh chapter, about how we do the things that we don't want to do and so forth, it's showing how human nature is there. And why does God leave the human nature in there? *For us to overcome. That's so we will*

appreciate and love and understand that God's way is so much greater. We come to abhor sin! And then we come to the point—let's understand something, too: When you are first brought to repentance, that is an initial thing that God leads you to. But as you grow in your Christian life, as you walk in the way that God wants you to go in, you actually come to deeper repentance as you continue to walk in the way of God. And you come to a deeper repentance because you begin to love God more, you understand what God is doing, you see that you understand what Christ did for you and all the brethren. And so your repentance becomes deeper, like I covered this morning. You come to a point that you understand that ***there is nothing that you didn't receive.*** So baptism is a start. And it's marvelous that God has done it this way.

Now then, v 8: “Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, Knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God.... [Then here is the whole layout of our Christian life from then:] ...In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof” (vs 8-12). And that's what baptism really is. The old self dies.

Now, this is a conscience decision that we come to. Not only is it spiritual, which it is because God calls us. Not only is it emotional, because you see yourself in your sins. And it would be very traumatic in some cases. Now I remember when I knew I was ready for baptism, and I was driving down to Ambassador College, because I was baptized down there. And I was driving down—some of you have been down to Bakersfield, and I was driving down, going out of Bakersfield—there are these big eucalyptus trees on the side—and I was driving my little old 1957 Nash Rambler—little ole two-door car puttin' along—I was listening to the World Tomorrow program, it was talking about baptism and repentance. You know, tears were coming down my eyes and man, it was really an experience for me, and driving on down and I'd be baptized the next morning. Boy, I could hardly wait to get down there. And when I was baptized, I knew I received God's Spirit right then—I knew that, no doubt in my mind whatsoever.

Now then, but here's something that you have to do. Let's ask a question. Let's go to Luke 14. God does not expect anyone to be perfect in knowledge before you're baptized, because we're to grow in grace and knowledge after we're baptized. But He wants us to enter into the covenant with both eyes and heart and mind wide open. Which is this—Jesus made it very clear—v 26: “If anyone comes to Me... [this is called *counting the cost* by the way—count the cost.] ...and does not

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hate his father... [Now this means to love God more in comparison to:] ...and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.... [And that means in the Greek, *the strongest impossibility of it becoming so.*] ...And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple; For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for *its completion?*..." (vs 26-28). So all of us, before we're baptized, we sit down and we count the cost. In each particular life it's a little bit different of the things that you count the cost for. But you're entering into a covenant death with Christ.

- He died for you, *you die for Him.*
- He took the literal death, *you take the spiritual death.*
- You're co-joined in that death—the covenant death.

And you signify to God, by this, that you will finish the course. That you will remain true and faithful to God the Father and Jesus Christ in all circumstances, everything in your life, because you have died in Christ. So that's why we have *counting the cost.*

Now, He says in another place that you "take up your cross daily." Meaning that you may be confronted with problems even on a daily basis. But ***always know that God is there with you.*** Never forget that! There's something to understand for all of us. Let's come back here to Hebrews 13. Christ expects you to be faithful in everything you do. Never turn back on Him. Why? Come here to Hebrews 13—very important. Because in being co-joined into His death, He has committed the same thing to you. Notice what He says, v 5: "*Do not allow the love of money to influence your behavior, but be satisfied with what you have;* for He has said, '**In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way.**'" And that means regardless of the circumstances in your life.

What happens when you get old and weak? Is God going to leave you? *No! No, He's not going to leave you.* David said, "When I'm old and gray, forsake me not." God doesn't leave you. What happens if you're in a terrible trial, will God leave you? *No! He won't. He's promised He WILL NOT!* That's a guarantee. ***That's from God,*** brethren. Do you see that? ***That's from Christ!*** God has committed Himself to you. And you have committed yourself to God in a covenant relationship for eternal life. And He wants you to love Him. And He wants you to seek Him.

Now, let's go back to the Twenty-third Psalm. Now I know this is talking about perhaps a prophecy of Jesus, but let's understand something here. Let's understand something concerning the physical circumstances we may find ourselves....

So whatever the circumstances are that we have been

confronted with. And I'll tell you one thing for sure: Has your Christian walk been that which you thought it was going to be? *No!* God knows that. And I remember this from William Tyndale's writing—and it's very moving what he wrote. And it says, "**If God bid you go over the sea, He will send a tempest to see if you believe Him or no.**"

So there will be trials that will come. Now God doesn't throw them upon you right away—Psalm 23. We can have this absolute confidence of God. And this is one, when I first heard it as a kid, I wondered, "why on earth did they ever say it." I could never get past the first verse. Because I never attended church, and I wasn't in a religious family. But I had an aunt—Aunt Grace—and that's the only thing I knew about grace was my aunt. And whenever I heard this expressed: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.... [I thought now why, why would anyone say, 'The Lord is my Shepherd' and not want Him? And I couldn't figure that out. It means *I shall lack nothing.*] ...He maketh me to lie down in green pastures... [that so you're going to be fed spiritually, from His Word.] ...he leadeth me beside the still waters... [because He will bring peace to you]. ...He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness... [those are the good works that we are to walk in.] ...for his name's sake.... [In spite of everything:] ...Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me... [because Jesus said, 'I will never, no not ever, leave you or forsake you.'] ...thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies..." (vs 1-5). Now maybe in your own way you'll experience that sometime. I've experienced that! In the presence of my enemies, God allowed me to do the *Harmony of the Gospels*. And though every evangelist within the Church was against me. When it was all said and done, Herbert Armstrong thanked me for it and said, "I wish more ministers would write books." And you can only say, "That's a table prepared in the presence of my enemies." It does not matter the circumstances that will come upon us, because this covenant of baptism that we go through and that we enter into, God is going to guarantee it. He has sealed it with His blood, with His death—and God cannot lie. And He has promised it, so therefore it shall be.

"...thou anointest my head with oil [which is symbolic of the Holy Spirit]; my cup runneth over... [because there is nothing in the world which can fill you with desire and satisfaction and love more than the Spirit of God.] ...Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (vs 5-6). And that's what He's called you to. Isn't that a marvelous thing. I tell you what brethren, ***when God reveals His family to this world, they are going to be absolutely dumbfounded!*** Because all the rich of the world, they're not going to be there.

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Here let's come back to 1-Corinthians the first chapter. God does things differently than people do. God takes that which is nothing and rejected, and He takes that which is despised, He takes that which is least, and through the power of conversion and the resurrection create them into being the sons and daughters of God. Now that's an awesome thing to be. You get the sermon from *A Speck of Dust to the Son of God*—that's what God is doing. To the world today, we're nothing. We're down here in a room. No one knows us. They're out there doing whatever they're doing. Yet, God is here with us.

Now then, 1-Corinthians 1:23: "But we proclaim Christ crucified. To *the Jews it is* a cause of offense... [and they haven't gotten over it to this day] ...and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; But to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom.... [Do you understand that? When you receive the Spirit of God, you're receiving part of the power of God. Not to enhance your person, as a great important thing. But to give you the strength to overcome human nature, to fight this world and to fight Satan the devil. It's the power of God. No, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'] ...Because the foolishness of God ...[If there be any foolishness of God. Now, with God, I think He's created a few animals that show a little bit of His humor. Try the duckbilled platypus.] ...is **wiser than men;** and the weakness of God... [now God doesn't have any weakness, so this is, you know, a play on words.] ...is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh... [we're not] ...not many who are powerful... [We're not strong personalities. We're not rich, we're not powerful. One of the kings that Paul preached to—I think it was Festus—and Paul was preaching, and he said, 'Paul, you persuade me **almost** to become a Christian.' *It's hard!*] ...not many who are high-born *among you*.... [or that is of royalty]Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are..." (vs 23-28).

Now remember what we read earlier, and we did last night, that God is going to make the synagogue of Satan come and worship before our feet. Now, you know who the synagogue of Satan are? Those are the rich, establishment people of the world, that control the governments, that control the money, that control the corporations, that control the universities and education. Those big high mucky-mucks of the world, they're going to come and worship before the saints of God! To know that Christ has loved us. And that's how He's going to bring

them to nothing.] ...**So that no flesh might glory in His presence....** [We are to glory in God] ...But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; So that, as it is written, ‘The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*’ ” (vs 29-31).

Now then, as we grow in our Christian understanding, and as we grow in studying the Word of God, and as we use the Spirit of God in our lives, then something else begins to happen. It doesn’t happen all at once. So that’s why it is really quite a miracle for new people to come in amongst our midst, because what we generally receive and I generally teach is to those who have been in the Church for years and years and so it’s at a higher level. I understand that there are some things that are difficult to understand when you first come in contact with us. But stick with it, you’ll make it—because God is able to do it.

Now, let’s come to 1-Corinthians 2:9. Here is what God is going to do: “But according as it is written, ‘*The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the* things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’” Christ is preparing a special reward and blessing for everyone He calls. Now, you think on that. It’s going to be as individual and unique as each one of us here in the flesh are individual and unique. And only God can do that, because He’s God! So you can read books, go to libraries and never understand the plan of God.

Now, you probably heard me mention this on a tape, but I remember when I went to Washington, D.C., and I was taken into the Library of Congress—and that’s quite an experience, that’s a big building. You walk in there and it’s all marble and boy, you walk in and here’s this great round room and around it are desks all lined up in different rows—many rows going around. And over the top of it is this huge dome, much like the dome of congress. And you look up there and here are all these lights. And you look out there and here are all these desks. And you are told that in the Library of Congress that they have almost every book in the world that has been published, and that you can get it from them. And you can step over here on the side and they’ve got a little computer screen and they have a keyboard. You want a book, you put it in there, you can get it. They have millions and millions of volumes. And what struck me was, ***God has one book! One book!*** Which Satan hates and wants to destroy. It has the Word of God. You don’t need the Library of Congress, you need the Bible. And with that, coupled with His Spirit, then a unique thing happens because you love God.

Verse 10: “**But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit:** for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God.... [And that’s why you’re to hunger and thirst for the Word of God, ‘for you

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shall be *filled.*’] ...For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God.... [Whatever you understand about the Bible, thank God for it, because He’s opened your mind to understand it. Isn’t that an amazing thing? God reveals it.] ...Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God...” (vs 10-12). When you receive the knowledge, do you get a bill in the mail next month? Credit Corporation of Heaven is sending you a bill for \$500—you better pay or you’ll be cut off with credit. No, it’s freely given to you.

That’s why God hates merchandizing of the brethren. And merchandizing with religions, like they are in the world. God freely gives it. He gives His Spirit freely. All He requires is *all of you!* That means your whole being given to God. That’s what He requires.

Now, let’s come to Mark 12. Then here’s the thing that we actively and consistently do. Now think of this. Think of this. Look at it this way: Now I talked to Jan, and he told me an experience that he had. He went into the hospital and had a little operation to take out some gall stones, and they just put about three or four holes in there and they go zip-zap, bam-boom and the gall stones are gone. You’re generally in there overnight and you get up the next day and you go home. So it came time for him to go home and he got all dressed, his son came there to get him, and his wife was there, and he was all dressed to go, and all of a sudden he fainted and fell back on the bed and he had a pulmonary blockage in both lungs. It took them five minutes to revive him. So you literally came back from the dead, didn’t you? *Yes you did.*

Now I want you to understand something, when you have an experience like that—and I know you probably are going through it—you love and appreciate things so much better, don’t you? Because now you have a chance to tell those that maybe if you died you wouldn’t have an opportunity to say, “I love you” and “Thank you” and all of these things. So God, likewise, is doing the same thing with every one of us. When we die the baptismal death and are buried in that grave, we rise out of that grave so that we can walk “in newness of life” and love God. That’s why Christ said here, when He was asked, “What was the first and great commandment?”—Mark 12:29: “*The* first of all the commandments *is*, ‘Hear... [listen—one of the things you’re going to learn is that God expects you to obey His voice. And His voice is recorded right here in the Bible.] ...Hear, O Israel... [now, you just put your name there] ...Our one God is *the* Lord, *the* Lord. And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart... [because you’ve been raised from the dead, literally, through the operation of baptism] ...and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’

This *is the* first commandment” (vs 29-30). It’s the primary thing in your life. That’s what ‘first’ in the Greek means—it’s ‘protos’—*primary, the first*. Now we read last night about a church that lost it’s first love and they had to repent, because they started doing works of social things instead of loving God.

“And *the second is like this*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (v 31). Now, Christ added a new commandment, didn’t He. What was that new commandment? He said, “Let there be strife among you, and arguments among you.” NO! Brethren, may we learn the lesson from that little bit of cynicism. He said, **“Love one another as I have loved you. And by this shall all know that you are My disciples.”** That’s what God wants.

And so we don’t want church experience to be that there is strife! We don’t want it rigidly run like the military. Or like a woman told me recently: “I got tired of going to church to get spanked.” And I told her this. I said, “Now how do you want it with your own children? Do you want your own children to only remember that you have spanked them continuously? Or do you not have a much better relationship with them when you love them? Isn’t that what God wants? That’s what God wants, brethren! ***That you love Him and He loves you, and He has the greatest, greatest thing to give you, which is eternal life.*** And it all begins with baptism. That’s why it is a covenant unto death.

So we’ll have a baptism here a little later. But I think it’s very important that we all understand it, even those of us who have been baptized for a long time. We need to review it, too. But also understand this—and this is very important: Then every year when you partake of the Passover, we have the footwashing ceremony. And the footwashing becomes very important because this signifies that you have a part in Christ. Now understand this: those who do the footwashing are brethren of Christ and they have the Holy Spirit in them. So view it this way: that Christ in them—or in the one who’s washing your feet—is the same as Christ washing your feet. And with that then, you renew the baptism every year and saying to God, “Yes, you will live by every Word of God and you will walk in the ways of righteousness.”

And then you partake of the bread, which is symbolic of His broken body. Knowing that you have the forgiveness of sin and healing through the promises of Christ. Then you partake of the wine, which is symbolic of the blood of Jesus Christ—the blood of the covenant. And for the remission of your sins, personally, and the remission of sins for all that God forgives.

So it’s really a great and wonderful thing, brethren. And so, that’s the meaning of baptism.

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Scripture References

Acts 2:37-39
John 6:44-45, 51-57
John 14:15-24
Matthew 28:19-20
Romans 6:1-2
Ephesians 2:1-5, 8-10
Romans 5:5-12
Luke 14:26-28
Hebrews 13:5
Psalm 23:1-6
1 Corinthians 1:23-31
1 Corinthians 2:9-12
Mark 12:29-31

Also referenced:

Sermons: *Salvation is Creation*
A Speck of Dust to the Son of God

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

Chapter Three

Why God Requires Repentance & Baptism

For the New Covenant, why does God require repentance and baptism? There are a lot of people today who preach a ‘Christianity’—let’s come back here to Ephesians, the first chapter, and here’s what they claim: this is an advanced teaching from Paul, so therefore we don’t need baptism today.

Ephesians 1:12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ... [So, you trust in 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). So they say you receive the Holy Spirit after you believe. So if you recite the little prayer, I mentioned before, ‘Oh, Jesus, forgive my sins, I believe in You, and, Savior, enter into my heart’—you’re now saved. And that is entirely wrong. That is a false gospel. That isn’t true.

So today we’re going to find out why baptism is necessary for the New Covenant. Now, let’s come to Acts 10, first. We know that in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came to all the apostles in preaching, of course, they were baptized with the baptism of John. And Peter got done preaching the sermon and he said what? *Repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* So this becomes an important step. Now, the way that these people who say all you have to do is believe; the way they get around that is saying this: ‘That was just for the Jews. We don’t have to do that today.’

Acts 10—we know this is the thing concerning Peter being sent to Cornelius, and when Peter gets there, this is after he had the vision of all the different unclean animals and so forth. And he never ate anything common or unclean—so this is not a vision which says it’s okay to eat anything you want. And if you really want a stomach-turning thing to watch on television, watch this fellow where he eats all kinds of things from every country in the world—eats grubs and worms and ants and monkeys and snakes and eels. If you’ve ever seen anything with a snot-eels, oh that’s terrible, That’s a wicked job. I saw that on “Dirty Jobs” and...but anyway, imagine people eating those things! And he was showing how he went down into Mexico and this really got me. He was eating deep-fried pork food and the delicacy was deep-fried pork stomach. Now you know that’s got to be filled with parasites and everything—the worst thing you could eat!

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So here with all these unclean animals and creeping things, it was in vision; and the vision was to tell Peter that God is going to deal with the Gentiles. So God had to work with Cornelius, answer his prayer. He sent a messenger to Peter. The messenger came, and...

Acts 10:16: “Now this took place three times... [of the unclean animals] ...and the vessel was taken up again into heaven. And as Peter was questioning within himself what the vision that he saw might mean, the men who were sent from Cornelius, having inquired for the house of Simon, immediately stood at the porch; and they called out, asking if Simon who *was* surnamed Peter was lodging there. Then, as Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you; now arise *and* go down, and go forth with them, doubting nothing, because I have sent them’” (vs 16-20). So God was dealing with the Gentiles directly. Now this is an unheard of thing, as we’ll see a little bit later.

Gentiles, who were not circumcised, nor had they been attending synagogue. So this is (you might say) a revolutionary thing. So this is why God had to do that. “And Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius *and* said, ‘Look, I am the one you are seeking. For what purpose have you come?’ And they said, ‘Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man... [Of course, God was answering his prayers being of the Italian band.] ...and one who fears God, and who has a good report by the whole nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house, and to listen to words from you.’ Then he called them in to lodge *there*. And on the next day Peter went with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa... [that’s right on the seacoast. Joppa is probably up there—I forget exactly where it is. I think it’s south of Tel Aviv. And Caesarea is down further south.] (v 24): ...And on the next day, they came to Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them *and* had called together his kinsmen and *his* intimate friends” (vs 21-24).

Now this becomes a very important section to understand how God is dealing with people. It’s not like it was being dealt with under the Old Covenant. There, anyone who wanted to take the Passover had to be circumcised if he was a Gentile. All native-born Israelites had to be circumcised on the eighth day. And, as we discussed last time, ***circumcision of the flesh does not change the heart***. Circumcision of the flesh did not bring salvation. It gave them permission to live in the land according to the circumcision through Abraham. And they lived in the inheritance that God promised Abraham to give them.

Now notice what happened “...as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshiping *him*.... [And he said, ‘Kiss my ring; kiss my feet. For I am the first Pope.’ *No!* *It doesn’t say that!* The Catholics would really love it to say that, but it doesn’t!] ...

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But Peter raised him up, saying, ‘Stand up, for I myself am also a man.’ And as he was talking with him he went in ... [apparently they were talking as they were walking in] ...and found many gathered together.... [Now, v 28 is a key, key, key verse. Important to know, to realize what this means, to understand something of the difference between Judaism and God’s way—or as we have the series: *Scripturalism vs Judaism.*]And he said to them, ‘You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race....’” (vs 25-28).

Now, mark this clearly: ***Nowhere in the Bible does it say that!*** This is a law of Judaism, the oral traditions that the Rabbis added to the laws of God. So what God was knocking down was the teachings of a man. How were they to treat them under the Old Covenant? *They were to love them as themselves*—correct? And if any stranger wanted to take the Passover or offer an offering—if he was uncircumcised he would have a Jew take it in and offer it; if he was circumcised, he could bring it into the court of the Gentiles and they would take it in and offer it. But they could associate with Gentiles, there was nothing wrong with that. So this added law, that the Jews gave for Judaism, God was knocking down. Now, we’ll see another one here in just a minute.

“...‘But **God has shown me that no man should be called common or unclean**.... [Now, there’s a difference between *common*; and there’s a difference between *unclean*. Let me explain it how the Jews...And this is also another Jewish teaching. I can explain it to you on how they made bread; from *The Code of Jewish Law*. If a Jew was making the bread—knead it and pound it and make the bread—and it was cooked in a Jewish home in a Jewish oven, *it was clean*. It’s not talking about clean or unclean meats. This is talking about just the Judaism’s version of clean and unclean—nothing to do with clean and unclean meats. Nowhere does the Bible talk about clean or unclean people unless they have a disease or sickness. And there was a way when they were unclean, what they would do when they were healed.

Now, if the bread was made and kneaded in a Jewish home, under the supervision of Jews, but it was a Gentile that was actually handling it, it was “common”—which meant it could be used for ordinary meals; could not be used for anything on the Sabbath or anything like that.

Now, if bread became unclean it would be this: It was made by a Gentile in a Gentile house or establishment, baked by a Gentile and sold to a Jew. They couldn’t eat that because that was unclean bread. So this is what it is talking about here. They had various categories of people:

- Common—would be those who were more Jew-like
- Unclean—would be those who would be more tribal-like

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Now, v 29—Let's go on and see what happened here, because this becomes important: “For this reason, I also came without objection when I was sent for. I ask therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?” And Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and *at the ninth hour* I was praying in my house; and suddenly a man stood before me in bright apparel, and said, “Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.... [Now that's also important to understand, because an uncircumcised Gentile could not have his prayers answered directly by God. So here he's undoing more of the problems of Judaism.] (so he was instructed—v 32): ...Now then, send to Joppa and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter; he is lodging by *the sea* in *the house* of Simon, a tanner. When he comes, he will speak to you.” Therefore, I sent for you at once; and you did well to come. So then, we are all present before God to hear all things that have been commanded you by God” (vs 29-33).

Now notice, v 34 becomes key: “Then Peter opened *his mouth* and said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that **God is not a respecter of persons**... [Whereas the Jews would separate them all out in different categories. So this is revolutionary; and God had to do it because (as we'll see a little later on) Peter had a relapse into Judaism.] ...But in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), You have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed, *Concerning* Jesus, Who *was* from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all *the* things that He did, both in the country of the Jews [Judea] and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging *Him* on a tree. *But* God raised Him up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses who had been chosen before by God, to *those of us* who did eat and drink with Him after He had risen from *the* dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to fully testify that it is He Who has been appointed by God *to be* Judge of *the* living and *the* dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness, *that* everyone who believes in Him receives remission of sins through His name” (vs 34-43).

Then we have something for the first occurrence. In order for God to completely show that, yes, God was dealing directly with the Gentiles who were not circumcised; and calling them to salvation He did something very special. Let's read it:

Verse 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message. And the

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believers from the circumcision..." (vs 44-45). That is the circumcision party. The truth is, if God had not done this, there were so many of the Jews who were still steeped in Judaism—had not come out of Judaism—that they would not have gone to the Gentiles to preach. They would have restricted it to just Jews.

Now, hold your place here and come to Matthew 28, and let's see something else. Come right to the last part of Matthew 28 and we will see the command that Jesus gave and what they were to do. And I don't think it sunk in, because it was 'to the Jews first' then later to the Gentiles.

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [By whose authority was this taking place with Cornelius and those with him? *By the authority of God;* and Jesus resurrected ascending to heaven, was God. He had all authority, so He was the one making the change in Acts 10. But it hadn't quite sunk into the thoughts of all the apostles yet.] (now notice v 19): ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, **baptizing** them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... [So, they were to go into all nations and baptize. **The command to baptize!** Now, *all nations* doesn't mean just the Jews. So everyone is to be baptized.] ...Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.... [And even Paul said—later on, late in his ministry—that if anyone comes and doesn't preach the sound words of Jesus Christ, you're to withdraw from them. Showing that the teachings of Jesus were to be taught to the Gentiles as well. Because part of the new, modern evangelical belief, without baptism, is that we just take the nice teachings of Paul. No law! No Old Testament! No repentance! You just believe. Well, this is quite different—isn't it?] ... Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age'" (vs 18-20).

So, let's ask some questions here:

- Completion of the age has not happened yet, has it?
- This means we're still going to all nations—doesn't it?
- This means, when God calls anyone, anywhere, regardless of their race—and they have been led to repentance—what are they to do with them?
- *They're to baptize them and teach them the teachings of Jesus—correct?*

Now, remember, one of the teachings of Jesus was this: "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God." So, you see, when you put all the Scriptures together, you get an entirely different view of what the Bible is teaching. But if you go through and you pick

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a verse here and you pick a verse there, and you give your opinion of it, and then you make that a statement of belief, then you're going to get yourself in trouble.

Now, let's come back here to Acts, the tenth chapter, and let's see how God put His stamp of authority on preaching and teaching to uncircumcised Gentiles. And then we'll see the "storm" that came up after that.

We'll repeat Acts 10:44, again: "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon those who were listening to the message. And the believers from the circumcision **were astonished**... [Now, why were they astonished? Well, *they remembered when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)*; and all the apostles were speaking the inspired message in all the different languages that the Jews spoke where they were scattered throughout the Diaspora. So they remembered that and they were just dumbfounded that God would do this. God would do this with uncircumcised Gentiles! So this then opened the door of preaching to the Gentiles.] ...they were astonished as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out... [So, what God did was give them the Holy Spirit before they were baptized on a **one-time** basis, not setting a precedent for doing it continuously from then on (as we will see). On a one-time basis to show and to prove, yes, God was directly dealing with the Gentiles.] ...For they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God.... [So here these Italians were probably speaking in Aramaic and Hebrew and glorifying God.] ...Then Peter responded by *saying*, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?.... [So even after that they were baptized.] ...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 45-47)—and of course, he did.

Now, look what happened, Acts 11. Whenever you go against the establishment of a manmade religion of Judaism, which God was breaking it right here, you're going to have some hard times. And even those Jews who were converted, they didn't quite get the fact that God was going to deal with the Gentiles directly. After all, they weren't circumcised. That's why the last time we ended up: it's not the circumcision of the flesh, but the circumcision of the heart. And that's very important for the New Covenant. We'll see that in just a bit.

Acts 11:1: "Now the apostles... [that is the other apostles] ... and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God... [I can just imagine what happened. Some of those Jews who were there said, 'I'd better run back and tell everybody what happened down here and tell them what happened with Peter and that God gave the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles.' So they heard

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it.] ...And when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the circumcision*... [And that means the circumcision party] ...disputed with him... [They were still clinging to the manmade law: you shall not keep company with an uncircumcised Gentile. That is not going to contaminate anyone spiritually, because it's of the heart and of the mind and not of the flesh.] ...saying, 'You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them'.... [(we'll see about this in just a bit here) So they were confronting him. They said, 'Peter, don't you know any better than that? Don't you know that we've never done that? Don't you know that we have always had all the Gentiles circumcised?'] ...But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them, saying..." (vs 1-4). Then he told them what it was all about—explained the whole thing. You can read that.

Let's come down here to v 15: ““And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came upon them, even as *it* also *came* upon us in *the beginning*. Then I remembered the word of *the Lord*, how He had said, “John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the Holy Spirit*.” Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to dissent? Do I have the power to forbid God?”.... [That's why this is recorded here—so we know it—however, as we will see, this did not change completely the minds of those who were steeped in Judaism.] ...And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed granted repentance unto life’” (vs 15-18).

Now, let's see another example of baptism. Let's come here to Acts 19, and we're going to see, I think, a very important principle here concerning baptism; and the end result of baptism is to receive the Holy Spirit. Now it's not recorded any other time that the Holy Spirit came before they were baptized, except in the instance of Cornelius to open the door and pave the way for what needed to be done. But then they would baptize after they had repented, after the preaching. But just like everything else, sometimes the first time God does something that is entirely different, He has got to show the way.

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?’.... [Hmmmm, very interesting, because where we started out the premise was: if you believe you receive the Holy Spirit—right? That's what certain people believe. But it's not true, so Paul was asking the question.] ...’Have you received the Holy Spirit after you believed?’.... [notice their answer]: ...And they said to him, ‘We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit.’

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Then he said to them, ‘Unto what, then, were you baptized?’ And they said, ‘Unto the baptism of John’” (vs 1-3). So they had already been baptized. But if you don’t receive the Holy Spirit after being baptized, then what we’re going to see, you need to be baptized again. So believing leads to repentance, and repentance leads to baptism, and baptism leads to the Holy Spirit.

“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.... [Now this was to show Paul that he was to stay there in Ephesus and preach, which he did for three years. So here we have a very important section which tells us that if you’ve been baptized and you don’t have the Holy Spirit you’ve got to be baptized again to receive the Holy Spirit.] ... And all the men were about twelve. Then he entered into the synagogue...” (vs 1-8)—and so forth, and you can read the rest of it.

Let’s look at another account in Ephesus, so let’s come to Galatians, the second chapter. Because repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit all has to do with justification. And this is entirely different than the Old Testament circumcision and offering animal sacrifices for justification in case of sin. And back then, as long as they (the men) were circumcised, they could keep the Passover. But now it’s entirely different. You have to have the circumcision of the heart and mind and you have to be baptized and have the Holy Spirit to take the Passover—entirely different!

Galatians 2:11—here we have Paul’s rebuke of Peter, when Peter regressed back. “But when Peter came to Antioch, I withheld him to *his* face because he was to be condemned...” So that’s how serious this whole issue was. Now this becomes important to understand: Who was Peter? *Well, Peter was one of the leading apostles*—Peter, James and John—right? Peter was the one who was more of the spokesman. So you could say that Peter was one of the leading apostles. Who was Paul? *Paul was called later and he said he was the last of the apostles, and considered himself to be the least of the apostles*. So when we have Paul rebuking Peter, it’s over a point of truth and you can see there was no rank as to who was the big ‘mucky-muck’ among the apostles. The Truth of God was the important thing.

“For before certain *ones* came from James... [Now James, the brother of Jesus, unfortunately yielded to the circumcision party and that caused a lot of problems later on (we won’t get into it today) up in Jerusalem. (so we’ll just restrict ourselves here). But if you come from Jerusalem with the authority of James, hmmmm]: ...he was eating with

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the Gentiles.... [Remember what the problem was: you cannot associate with or come into the house of one, or eat with Gentiles—a law of Judaism. So here Peter, he had learned the lesson from Acts 10 (as we read). He was eating with the Gentiles—no problem! no difficulty!] ... However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the circumcision party*" (v 12). A little political pressure here.

Now here's some politics involved. Those from James came down and said, 'We're from James, what are you doing eating with these Gentiles? Up in Jerusalem we don't do that. We still separate.' Jerusalem had a problem. "...being afraid of those of *the circumcision party*. And the rest of *the Jews* joined him in *this* hypocritical act, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.... [And Barnabas was one of the other apostles to the Gentiles. Remember, Paul and Barnabas went out together.] ... But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel..." (vs 12-14). What was the 'truth of the gospel'? *That I should call no man common or unclean*—right? That you could go in and associate with them. If they were baptized, had received the Holy Spirit, they had the circumcision of the heart. We'll talk about that next, because this becomes important and we will see why you need the circumcision of the heart. And that's so important because there are many people who get into self-improvement things: they can improve, they can change, they can make amendments to their life, they can discipline themselves, and things like this. But that's not the way of conversion. ***Conversion only comes from God's Holy Spirit.*** And conversion only comes with repentance and baptism. And we will see the reason for baptism before we're done here.

"I said to Peter in the presence of them all... [Now, this is very embarrassing, wouldn't you think?] ...'If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles... [that is associating and eating] ...with the Gentiles [and anyone] and not according to Judaism... [There is the key, and that's what it is in the Greek: *Judaism*. Not a law of God. Nowhere did God say you shall not eat with the Gentiles.] ...why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?" (v 14). '*Judaize*' means *you go eat over there, because you're not circumcised; while we eat over here because we are called and we are the special people of God, and you Gentiles are second-rate citizens*—which they were in the synagogue. They had a special place for Gentiles—proselytes, as they were called. And even though they were circumcised, they couldn't associate with Jews in the synagogue, so they had the place for the Jewish men, the circumcised Gentiles, and then the women were in the back. So you know, things are a little different today—aren't they?

Now, you have the same thing with Judaism today—the

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Orthodox Jews. That's why you need *The Code of Jewish Law*. You need to read that in order to understand what it really means *Judaism* or *Judaism and Jewish law*—and what it is to Judaize. The Jews say that Judaism is everything in the Old Testament. So Protestants come here and they say, ‘Compel the Gentiles to Judaize. We're all Gentiles and that means everything in the Old Testament is done away.’ No! And I bettcha if you asked them, ‘Have you ever read *The Code of Jewish Law*?—I still have a few copies, first come, first serve basis, I'll send it to you. It is part frustration when you read it, part stupidity, part hilarious when you come to the laws they have for on the Sabbath; and other laws when you come to what they do on Atonement, where they take a white chicken and they kill it and then they circle the white chicken over their heads so that they have forgiveness of sin and atonement. No! Don't believe in Jesus. Don't get baptized. No! Get a white chicken, sacrifice it and whirl it around your head.

And I remember when we were watching the news, Doris said, ‘Look at that! A white chicken around his head. Do they really do that?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ You find that in the *Code of Jewish Law*. Now it's about a thousand pages thick, with thousand and thousands and thousands and thousands of laws and prayers. And if you saw a Gentile that was a giant, you were to say a certain prayer, and say, ‘God, have mercy on him.’ And if you saw a Gentile who was a midget, you had to say another prayer.

“...why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize.... [In other words, ‘you're uncircumcised, you have no business being with us Jews. You go eat over there!’ So Paul couldn't let this go.] (v 15): ...We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the Gentiles*—Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law...” (vs 15-16). Now, the tragic mistake that all the translators of the Bible have made is this: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, the Greek does not read that. It is ‘works of law’—referring to which law? *The laws of Judaism for justification*. Or, as long as the temple stood, the law of sacrifices for justification. But that only justified you to the temple. Since God is dealing directly with you, as we saw God was dealing directly with the Gentiles, the whole situation has entirely changed. And there has to be repentance and baptism and remission of sins.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law... [If you have the New Testament (*Faithful Version*), you can read in there what is meant by ‘the works of the law’—and it fully explains that.] ...but through *the faith of Jesus Christ*...” (v 16). Now, what is *the faith of Jesus*?

- You believe that He is Savior.
- You repent of your sins.
- You are baptized.
- You receive the Holy Spirit.

- And you are justified to God the Father, in heaven above.

What law is that? *It's no law.* You repent because it's of the heart. You are baptized because then you enter into a covenant relationship with God' and God is directly dealing with you. Yes, you do keep the commandments of God, because God says so and we ought to, and we cannot continue in a state of justification if we're living in sin. So there you have the whole thing.

Because it is only through the sacrifice of Christ and His shed blood and your standing with God in order then to have contact with God. It's not just a matter of modifying your behavior; attending a church; being in a certain place; separating yourself, as with the Jews, from Gentiles. None of that makes you right with God, because it's the inner mind and the inner heart that needs to be changed, and that can only be changed by faith and belief, as we will see.

Now, let's continue on—v 16: “Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ, and not by works of law... [Yet, that's what they did prior to Christ being resurrected from the dead. They went to the temple, they offered the sacrifices, but that didn't justify them to God, it only justified them to the temple.] ...because by works of law shall no flesh be justified.... [Just remember, it's simply this way: ***No work of any law can replace the death, the shed blood and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*** No law can replace repentance of sin from the heart, and baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.] ...Now then, if we are seeking to be justified in Christ, *and* we ourselves are found to be sinners, *is* Christ then *the* minister of sin? MAY IT NEVER BE!” (vs 16-17). Because that's what they were doing. They were sinning by separating, because that was not obtaining justification with Christ. That was following the teachings and edicts of men, which is sin.

Verse 18: “For if I build again those things that I destroyed, I am making myself a transgressor.... [Christ doesn't approve that. So this tells you an awful lot about tradition—traditions of the Jews; traditions of the Catholics; traditions of the Protestants; traditions of Islam; traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism—all of that combined.] ... For I through law died to law... [Now, how did he die to law? *Through baptism!* He died, not to the keeping of the commandments of God, but to the laws of justification that were under the Old Covenant and in Judaism—**both!** He died to it] ...in order that I may live to God.... [Now, here becomes part of the key of baptism, as we will see.] ...I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me.... [And that's the whole total different spiritual operation. The operation of the laws of justification by works had nothing to do with the heart, had nothing to do with eternal salvation.

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Therefore, you cannot achieve eternal salvation by doing the things which were never meant to do it. You have to follow what Christ shows here.] ...I have been crucified with Christ... [we'll cover that in just a little bit] ...*Indeed*, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me For *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (vs 18-20). That’s all a part of spiritual justification.

So he says: “I do not nullify the grace of God...if righteousness... [which can also mean, in this case, justification, because that’s what it’s talking about] ...is through *works of* law, then Christ died in vain.” (v 21). Because then you could do it yourself, you wouldn’t need the sacrifice of Christ.

Now, let’s see how all of this applies and works together, because this becomes very important to understand. Let’s come to the book of Romans, again, chapter three. We’ve already covered a part of this, but we need (as we did in the short series in being in right standing with God) to review it so we can understand what is happening here.

Romans 3:3: “For what if some did not believe?... [You can read the Old Testament, there were Jews who didn’t believe; they apostatized, they didn’t believe God even in the Old Testament; they didn’t believe that Jesus was the Savior, the Messiah.] ...Shall their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God?.... [Just because some people might have the Bible, but they don’t believe it, does that mean that God doesn’t exist? Does that mean that it nullifies that God’s promises are no longer applicable? *No!*] ...MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather... [here’s the key] ...let God be true but every man a liar, exactly as it is written... [And here is what we need to look at]: ...‘That You [God] might be justified in Your words, and might overcome [the evil one] when You are being judged by men’ ” (vs 3-4). Very important translation in the Greek. It is in the passive—when You, God, are judged by men, or are being judged by men. How do people judge God? Well, part of it is, that when people think they are so good, or they have a good attitude, or they have what they think is good, and they come to God and say, ‘God, because I think this is really good, You have to accept it.’ Or like with the Jews, and the laws of Judaism, they say, ‘Oh, because we thought of these and these are really good, God, You’ve got to accept them.’ If God doesn’t accept them, well then they get mad at God.

You could take this when you’re being judged of God, someone will say, ‘Oh well, the Bible can’t be the Word of God, the Bible’s filled with myths. And everyone I’ve ever known that’s been religious, it’s nonsense!’ It’s like one of the books that’s just been written by an atheist called *The God Delusion*. And he gets after the Catholic Church, which is mostly what he’s angry at. Well, I can see why he would be

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angry at the Catholic Church and the things that they do, because they have nothing to do with God whatsoever. So he judges God by what men do.

- Does that do away with the faithfulness of God?
- Does that do away with the laws of God?
- Does that do away with sin?
- Does that do away with the need to repent?
- Does that do away with the need to be baptized?

NO!

So, let's read on—v 5: “But if our unrighteousness brings to reality God's righteousness, what shall we say?....” You look out into the world and what do you see? You see murder, you see sin, you see adultery, you see pedophilia, you see lying and cheating and stealing, and all of these things happen on a daily basis.

I talked to a woman who used to work in an emergency room at a hospital, and she told me if you want to see all the dregs of the world, go spend Friday and Saturday night at the hospital: stabbings, looting, drugs, overdose, accidents—all come into the emergency room. That'll give you an eye-opening as to what human nature's all about and what people do—yes, indeed! And those things all happen because why? Because people sin! So, what does that do, when you see all of that sin, or unrighteousness, what does it do? *It brings to reality the righteousness of God and His laws and His commandments and His goodness*, that there's got to be a better way than what's passing through the emergency room here at the hospital—or whatever the circumstances are in anyone's life.

“...what shall we say? *Is God unrighteous to inflict His wrath?*”.... (v 5). People say, ‘Oh, why would God do that?’ I mean, you can read Ezek. 9 and there will be some people come unglued and say—when God said go in and kill all of the young and old, men and women, children, spare none—‘God is evil.’ Well, they never think about how people have turned their backs on God, live their lives in sin, lifted up their—like some sort of haughty person—lift up your nose and walk away from God; or say, ‘Well, God doesn't exist.’ Well, God is going to judge. People don't think what they do to God, they only think about what happens when they're judged by God because they sin. And then something happens because they're sinning. And what happens when people reach to the depths of sin and there is nothing left? Well, the ones who are doing what is right repent and come to God—which then is the first step.

So let's go on: “...*Is God unrighteous to inflict His wrath?* (I am speaking according to man's view).... [because they don't like it. Why did God drown all those people before the Flood; why did He drown them in the Flood? Well, you go back and read it: Everyone was

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wicked and evil and corrupting God's way and God was living on the earth with human beings. So, people will say, 'If God would come down and tell me what to do. I'd do it.' *No!* You wouldn't! You'd find another excuse not to do it. So He judged them.] ...MAY IT NEVER BE!... [That God is unrighteous.] ...Otherwise, how shall God judge the world?" (vs 5-6).

If there were never any consequences for sin, how would you ever learn what is right from wrong? You'd never learn. If everything you did was like a video game and you popped back to life and everything was just fine, you'd never know about sin—right and wrong, good and evil. And that's why God has put those laws so they automatically happen.

Now he continues on—v 7: "For if, by my falsehood, the truth of God has shown itself *to be* supremely great, to His glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner?.... [Because the Jews were saying, just like in Gal. 2] ...But not, according as we are being blasphemously charged, and according as some are affirming *that* we say, 'Let us practice evil things in order that good things may come.' Their condemnation is deserved" (vs 7-8). And isn't that always what happens? When people steal, do they know they're stealing? *Yes!* What happens when they get caught? *Oh well, I didn't know;* or *Well, I was just with this person, I wasn't doing it.* Well, why were you in there stealing? *Well, he has all this money and we don't have anything, and why does he deserve to have all of this, so we just took it because it's due to us.* Rather than saying stealing is wrong. You can take and apply that to any of the laws of God.

- Why do you have another god before you when the true God is the only one Who can really work in your life?
- Why do you make idols and bow down and worship them when God says don't do it?
- Why do you take the name of God in vain—not only in swearing and cursing—but following false religions?
- Why do you reject the Sabbath to keep Sunday for Protestants and Catholics and keep Friday for the Muslims and the Buddhist and Hindus don't have any day, but they go along with Sunday because that's all a part of it?

I've talked to those who used to be Hindus and they say the Hindus just take any religion that comes along and if they want to add it to Hinduism, they add it to Hinduism. And they gave an example. To the pagan goddess in Hinduism, they would come and give an offering of a coconut, where they would break the coconut open and then they would pour the milk out as an offering to the Indian goddess. Well, the Catholics

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in India have allowed the Indians, who are supposedly Catholics, to do the same thing to the statue of the virgin Mary. Perfect example: "Let us practice evil things in order that good things may come."

Verse 9: "What then? Are we of ourselves better? Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—ALL—with being under sin.... [Everyone is under sin because they have sinned against God. The only way out of sin is through Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit of God.] (so then he continues on—now I'm going to read to you the evening news, if you'll bear with me—v 10): ...Exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one—**not even one!**.... [Hmmmmm! Sounds like candidates for political office—doesn't it? Sounds like priests and popes—doesn't it? It sounds like the 'ne'r-do-wells on the street and the homeless—doesn't it?] ...There is not one who understands; there is not one who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; together they have all become depraved. There is not even one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one! Their throats are like an open grave; with their tongues they have used deceit; the venom of asps is under their lips... [You can apply any name you want there—right? I'm thinking of some politicians that are trying to win a couple of states in the primary on this coming Tuesday, March 4.] ...whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. **There is no fear of God before their eyes**' " (vs 9-18). Now, that's the state of human beings.

God has provided a way (we'll see in just a minute). He summarizes this, v 19: "Now then, we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.... [Now, who's under sin? *The whole world*. 1-John 5:21 says the world "lies in wickedness!" All the world is under sin. Then he says, v 20]: ...Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through *the law is the* knowledge of sin.... [Now then, he explains a very important thing, which the *King James Version* is absolutely the worst translated verse in the New Testament, and it has caused no untold end to confusion about keeping the commandments of God. So here is the right translation]: ...But now, *the righteousness of God...* [which we will see is justification] ...*that is* separate from law has been revealed..." (vs 19-21)

It's not stated in any law. It's stated in

- repentance,
- belief,
- baptism
- and receiving the Holy Spirit—which then is the circumcision

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of heart

(as we will see here in just a minute and we will understand why baptism is required). Now, it's separate from law. When you read the *King James* it says, 'without the law and the prophets.' That's incorrect! Because 'without' means what? *The absence of.* 'Separate from' means *law is still there, but justification is separate from law.* Hope you understand it. This is the final point. Once you grasp it, you'll understand it.

"...*that is* separate from law has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even *the* righteousness... [or *justification* would do just as well there] ...of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God..." (vs 21-23). So if the world is under sin, and all have sinned, and all have come short of the glory of God, how then does one get right with God? So this does overlap in it, why God requires repentance, baptism and the Holy Spirit. Because the only way to overcome sin is a change within; not a modification of behavior without. You need the modification of behavior without when there is a change within. And here's how it starts, we've covered part of this:

"Even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; *But* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past..." (vs 22-25). Remember this: ***All sins are past.*** Now, there will be sins in the future. Let me give an example:

Tomorrow you may sin. Do you know what that sin is? If you knew exactly what that sin would be, would God forgive you for doing it tomorrow by asking forgiveness today? Let's use an example: 'God, I know that stealing is wrong, but tomorrow I'm going to rob a bank, please bless me that I'll get lots of money.' *Wouldn't happen!* Catholic Church sells indulgences for money! You can have your sins in the future forgiven. But you see, since you don't know what you're going to sin, and there are choices you have to make—every human being has to make those choices—therefore, when a person sins, whatever the sin is, it immediately becomes in the past. Because as soon as you sin, it's over—right?—past tense. God does not forgive ***future*** sin. But when you sin, He will forgive when you repent. But He's not going to forgive you—say, 'Okay, Lord, I'm going to give \$100,000 to this church and please forgive all my sins in advance for the next five years.' How's that for a deal? The priest would say, 'That's fine!' God would say, 'You're

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insane!' That's the whole basis of the Catholic system. Have Mardi Gras today and have 40 days of 'Lent' and you're forgiven. Now on 'Lent' you'll have some ashes put on your forehead. And I never will forget a couple of Catholic politicians who were US Senators, on Ash Wednesday they had to give a news conference and guess what you saw on their forehead, to let everyone know, 'I was righteous and went to the priest today and kept Ash Wednesday.' You've had your reward.

God expects repentance. Repentance means *you turn from your sins*. Let's just review that in a minute here. Let's finish this for the sins that are past—v 26: "Through the forbearance of God; yes, to publicly declare His righteousness [or justification] in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is of the* faith of Jesus." Which we just read about there in Gal. 2.

So let's review the process here and then we will talk about baptism and circumcision of the heart. Come back here to Romans 2. Even though we're sinners, even though we may fall into the depths of very deep sin—and of course, the depths of sin is in the eye of the beholder. You can see someone who's in the depths, the grips, of addiction and think: 'Oh, that is really bad. God, I'm so thankful that I am so good.' ***You're both in the depths of sin!*** You need to have compassion for the one who is in it. But what does God do when someone is in misery and crying out and saying, 'Oh, what am I doing with my life?'

Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" God begins working with that sinner to lead them to the consciousness that they need to change—he or she needs to change. And he or she really begins to understand: 'I need God. I am not complete in myself.' And that's the whole lesson of human nature. ***We are not a complete entity unto ourselves. We need God! We need His Spirit!*** And when a person comes to that point in their life and in their mind, God leads them to repentance and begins to expose their sins for what they are. And be thankful God doesn't reveal all your sins all at once to you, because it would be so overwhelming you couldn't handle it. And I talk about that for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Then let's review this again. Let's come down here to v 13: "Because the hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." So there's repentance. And 'repentance' means *quit sinning; turning around, going the other way*. And that means you are what? ***You're keeping the law.*** But it says "shall be justified" because the individual has not yet been baptized. So that becomes the next step.

Now then, we've already talked about (Rom. 3) the death of

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Christ and His shed blood being applied to us. Now, let's come over here to Romans 6 and let's see about baptism, and why baptism by full water immersion is required. And like I've explained, whenever I baptize I joke with the person and say, 'If I held you under the water you would truly die.' But I don't because this is a symbolic death. And the truth is this: Christ, Who is the Lord God, Creator of Old Testament, created all mankind, judged Adam and Eve, gave us a nature that was subject to sin because of rejecting God, died to cover that sin. Christ's crucifixion is personally applied to each repentant sinner because He's the Savior of all mankind. And no one else can be Savior. So it's not a light thing to say, 'Oh, I believe in Jesus, Yes, forgive my sins. Lord, come into my heart.' Never happen! False!

Because Christ died, you have to die; because you enter into a covenant. Now let me explain about a covenant that is different than a testimony. If you have a last will and testament you can change it at anytime you want to before you die—correct? *Yes!* If you enter into a covenant, it can never be changed because you must do something to prove you will do what you have said when the covenant is engaged. Which is this: In order for Christ to bring in the New Covenant, He proved that He would bring it in because He died! Now human beings, when they enter into a covenant—when they had animal sacrifices—they would take those sacrifices and cut the animals down the middle, lay each half of the animal on each side, making a path. And those who were participating in the covenant were saying... Now, the covenant is not valid until it's ratified, and it's only ratified after the person then walks the trail down between the animals and looks at all the guts and blood and everything spilled out there, and declare that if 'I do not keep my word, I will become as these animals.' That's what Christ did back in Gen. 15.

Christ died for us. He demonstrated His love and His loyalty and His willingness by dying. He rose from the dead so we can be justified. Now, we have to demonstrate to God our own personal sacrifice by a symbolic death—just as Jesus died—only it's by baptism. And you cannot enter into covenant with God unless you bring the covenant sacrifice of your baptismal death. Now let's see that here:

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?.... [And there are even who say today, 'Well, after you've accepted Jesus you can do anything you want and it really doesn't matter, you're still going to be saved.'] (Paul says): ... MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin... [Now, how do you die to sin? *By baptism!*] ...how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?.... [Baptism brings you in (as we'll see in just a minute) a conjoining to the death of Christ. You are buried with Him.

And it is your covenant death. That's why Paul said in Romans 7, when the law revived, he understood 'I died.' Well, if he died at that instant, how could he write the book of Romans? You have to 'die to sin.'] (notice): ...as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death. Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death... [that's why you go completely under the water—immersion.] ...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" (vs 1-4).

- In the spirit of keeping the commandments of God,
- loving God,
- loving our neighbor,
- loving each other.

Verse 5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death... [that's through baptism] ...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... [which is the sin within] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; Because the one who has died *to sin* has been justified from sin. Now **if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him**" (vs 5-8). That's what the meaning of baptism is all about.

Now, what does this do to us mentally and spiritually? Let's come back to Colossians, the second chapter. Now you become more complete, because the truth of the matter is, you are not totally complete until the resurrection takes place because that's the plan of God for those who receive the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 2:6—this shows what we also do after baptism; but it shows also what baptism and the Holy Spirit do to us in our heart and mind—circumcision of the heart: "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, be walking in Him... [How do you receive Him? *Repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit.* That's why God requires baptism.] ...Being rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, exactly as you were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy and vain deceit... [that is false prophets, and so forth.] ...according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; And you are complete in Him..." (vs 6-10)—as far as your standing with God goes. Once you've repented and been baptized and received the Holy Spirit, you are complete in Christ. You don't need Mary. You don't need the saints. You don't need Allah. You don't need any of those things. You need God the Father and Jesus Christ—you are

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complete.

“...Who is the Head of all principality and power... [now notice v 11-12] ...In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... [Now, that is a *spiritual* circumcision, ***of the heart!*** as Paul said.] ...Having been buried with Him in baptism... [You bury the old man. You’re co-crucified with Christ. You’re conjointly part of the death of Christ. You come out of the ‘watery grave to walk in newness of life.’] ...by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. 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” (vs 10-13).

That is why repentance and baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit is required—so that you have the circumcision of the heart and the mind. And what that does then, that gives you something entirely different that you cannot have in any religion of this world, which is this:

- You now have access, through Jesus Christ, to God the Father in heaven above.
- He is our High Priest.
- He is the one Who is dealing with us.
- He is the one Who is living in us.
- He becomes then our continual atoning sacrifice, so that we can constantly go to God and have our sins forgiven—day-by-day-by-day. That’s why the model prayer is, ‘Forgive us our sins, on a daily basis, as we forgive those who sin against us.’

Now, that’s why God requires it. So this is a tremendous thing! Now, what then God wants us to do, is

- to grow in grace and knowledge,
- walk in His way,
- develop the character of God,
- develop the mind of Christ,
- develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit,
- let our lives be changed within, with God’s Spirit.

And as I’ll explain on the first day of Unleavened Bread, how God does that with us.

Once we’re baptized, God then, with His Holy Spirit, begins revealing the hidden sins within. Because the real evil is within and that needs to be wiped out. That needs to be changed. That’s why we keep

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the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so that we understand that only Christ can take away the sins, the deep sins within, that need to be removed. They can't be removed any other way except by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the circumcision of the heart and of the mind. That's why God requires repentance, baptism and circumcision of the heart. And you enter into that covenant with Christ. You pledge your life unto death, that you will be faithful to God, just as Christ pledged His life unto death to reconcile you to God. That's why we're co-crucified with Him.

Scriptural References:

Ephesians 1:12-13

Acts 10:16-45

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 10:45-48

Acts 11:1-4, 15-18

Acts 19:1-8

Galatians 2:11-21

Romans 3:3-26

Romans 2:4, 13

Romans 6:1-8

Colossians 2:6-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

Acts 2

Ezekiel 9

1-John 5:21

Genesis 15

Romans 7

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Scripturalism vs Judaism*

Book: *Judaism—Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?*

Baptismal Counseling and Ceremony

Each person who desires to be baptized should be counseled to determine whether the individual has truly repented to God the Father of his or her sins, and has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Baptismal counseling should cover the following:

The person must understand what sin is—the transgression of God's commandments and laws. Each one must realize that the sacrifice and the blood of Jesus Christ is the only payment for his or her sins.

Another purpose of baptismal counseling is to determine whether the individual has the fruits of repentance and the desire to live God's way of life and keep His commandments as magnified by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

After these two things have been determined, the one doing the counseling needs go through the Scriptures of "Counting the Cost" with the person desiring to be baptized. The passages which best cover "Counting the Cost" are Luke 14:25-33 and Matthew 10:32-38. As counselor goes over these Scriptures with the person, you need to determine whether he or she has made this covenant commitment in his or her life before God the Father and Jesus Christ. This covenant of eternal life is an irrevocable, total dedication of one's life to God the Father and Jesus Christ until the end of physical life.

Then, the counselor will need to explain the complete meaning of baptism by going through Romans 6:1-18. The person desiring baptism should know that baptism is by full immersion in water, symbolizing the death and burial of the old self—and that the rising out of the water symbolizes a new beginning, one's walk in newness of life.

Here are the words of the baptismal ceremony. Prior to baptism, it would be best to go through these words of the baptismal ceremony so that the one being baptized can fully understand the significance of baptism. These words are to be recited by the one who is doing the baptizing while he is in the water with the one who is being baptized:

"Have you repented of your sins? Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior for the forgiveness of your sins? Are you ready to bury your old sinful self and life into the baptismal covenant death of Christ Jesus in this watery grave? Are you going to walk in the way of Jesus Christ, keeping His commandments, and love Him with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being and with all your strength?"

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After receiving an affirmative answer to each of these questions, you should continue by asking:

“What is your full name?”

The one doing the baptism, repeats the person’s full name and says, “Because you have repented of your sins, which are the transgressions of God’s holy, righteous and perfect commandments and laws; and because you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior for the forgiveness of your sins, Who is your Lord and Master in heaven above, sitting on the right hand of God the Father as your Intercessor and Mediator and your King in the coming kingdom of God; and because you are burying your old sinful self and life into the covenant death of Christ Jesus in this watery grave for the remission of your sins; and because you are determined to walk in newness of life, in the way of Jesus Christ, keeping His commandments and to love Him and God the Father with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your being and with all your strength, I baptize you, not into any sect, denomination or organization of the world, but into the name of the Father—because you will bear His family name for all eternity as His son/daughter; and of the Son—because His life, sacrifice, death and resurrection brings the forgiveness of your sins; and of the Holy Spirit—because the Holy Spirit comes from God the Father and into your mind as the begettal to be a son/daughter of God, and will lead you into loving obedience to God the Father and Jesus Christ now, and when Jesus Christ returns, God will in the first resurrection grant you eternal life as a son/daughter of God in glory! I do this in the name of Jesus Christ, that is by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ—**AMEN!**”

After baptizing the person, the one doing the baptizing should lay hands on the head of the individual and pray for the begettal of the Holy Spirit and commend them into the hands of Jesus Christ and God the Father—**AMEN!** To finalize the baptism, the one doing the baptism should look the newly baptized person in the eyes and say, “On the authority of Jesus Christ, your sins have been forgiven!”

With your baptismal death in the watery grave, you pledge to God that you will be faithful until you die. You also symbolically die to sin, to the world, and to the vanity of self and human nature.

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Moreover, you pledge that you will love God the Father and Jesus Christ as Jesus commanded: “ ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22:37-40).

Your love for God becomes the most important aspect of your life—above everyone and everything else. Jesus said, “Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who *is* in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who *is* in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s enemies *shall be those of* his own household.

“The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it” (Matt. 10:32-39).

Fundamentally, what is at stake is eternal life or eternal death! That is your covenant pledge to God the Father and Jesus Christ—sealed with the symbolic covenant death of baptism

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