

The True Meaning of Baptism

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What is the true meaning of baptism? Most of us have been baptized for many, many years. Let's go back for all of us, old and new, and let's look at the true meaning of baptism. 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 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
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's not a sprinkling.
6. It is not for infants and children—because it has to be conscience decision by the one being baptized.
7. It is not a ritual—it is a ceremony, but it is not a ritual.

If you were baptized in another church, or even in a Church of God, should you be baptized again?

First of all, let's look at the Old Testament for just a minute and let's understand something concerning the Old Testament. Even with the covenant with Abraham—which he received when he was in uncircumcision—as a prelude and a token of the covenant that was made, there was physical circumcision.

Genesis 17:9: "And God said unto Abraham, 'And you shall keep My covenant...'" 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.

Verse 10: "'This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you. Every male child among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. And a son of eight days shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with silver of any foreigner who is not of your seed. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought

with your silver, must be circumcised. And My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant'" (vs 10–13). That means *an age-lasting covenant*.

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 that 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.

Now at 8-days-old, the male 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. I think it's very interesting to understand, that only the males were required to be circumcised. However, at marriage, the females participated in the marriage estate through the conjugal relations of husband and wife.

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. Deuteronomy 10:12: "And now, Israel... [you can put your own name there, because this is what God requires of all of us] ...what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

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.

Verse 13: "To keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command you today **for your good?**" 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 Deut. 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.

Verse 14: “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belong* to the LORD your God, the earth also, with all that is in it. Only the LORD had a delight in your fathers to love them... [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] ...and He chose their seed after them, you above all people, as *it is* today” (vs 14-15).

That's why it's very important in *The Christian Passover* book that you read and you study the three chapters concerning the covenant of Abraham—showing the physical seed and the spiritual seed.

Verse 16—here we get into the spiritual operation of this: “Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stiff-necked.” 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.

Verse 17: “For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords...” Of course, all the other gods of this world *are not* gods! 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, the mighty and awesome God Who does not respect persons nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger in giving him food and clothing. Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve Him, and you shall hold fast to Him, and swear by His name. He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, Who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen” (vs 17-21).

Then he just reiterates, v 22: “Your fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons. And now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of the heavens for multitude.” 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*.

Let's see who does the circumcising. It says ‘circumcise the foreskin of your heart’ (Deut. 10); now it says that **God** will *circumcise your heart*.

How do you put the two together? 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

Deuteronomy 30:6: “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.” 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. In spite of all the things that God did for Israel and the Jews, nevertheless, it did not solve the problem concerning sin. They were justified to the temple but they were not justified to God the Father in heaven above. Please read that in *The Christian Passover* book.

Romans 3:9: “What then? Are we of ourselves better?.... [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.’ 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).

What if a person is good in this society? 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. Please understand, not all good is from God. There is the knowledge of the tree 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.

Verse 13: “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.*’

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. Come back to Matthew, the third chapter; this shows us the beginning of baptism. 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, *some* sins. They would bathe when they were done, like they would be unclean seven days and then on the eighth day they would bathe and be clean. The only other ones to bathe in that manner were the priests. They had to bathe before they went in to offer the incense and go into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement.

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.’ 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.

Matthew 3:1: “Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent... [Baptism requires something entirely different: you are to REPENT!] ...for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand’.... [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). Contrary to opinion, the Jordan River is plenty deep enough to have water to be baptized in.

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. A sunken ship is below the water—isn’t it? 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...” (vs 6-7). ‘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...*’” (v 7). 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 coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance” (vs 78)—or answerable for an amendment to life.

So, ‘repentance’ means *that you come to the knowledge and understanding 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.

Verse 9: “And do not think to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham *for our* father’... [we are circumcised] ...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.” 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!*

Notice how kindly he spoke to them, v 10: “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.... [the second death and the Lake of Fire, which we will see is related to baptism] ...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 ‘Hallelujah, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.’ *That is demonic, spiritual confusion!* God is not the author of confusion. Baptism by fire—since ‘*baptizo*’ means *to be immersed*—considers those who commit the unpardonable sin will be cast into a lake of fire, which then is *molten lava*. You are *submerged* in molten lava, which means you are burned up. 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.

Verse 12: “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”—because no one is going to put it out. That’s how baptism started.

Let’s get to the heart and core of the real meaning of baptism. It says in John 4 that Jesus baptized, yet, He didn’t—it was His disciples who baptized.

Acts 2:36—Peter preached: “‘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).

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*.’ God is the One Who does this. This is a sorrow, a deep sorrow, an amendment of a way of life and you resolve in your mind to turn and go the other way. We’re going to see that it is actually God Who is doing this.

I remember when I was baptized, and I was leading my life and I knew

- nothing of God
- nothing of sin
- nothing of right
- nothing of wrong

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. 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. 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. As soon as they brought me to

church I always left—I was really a renegade that way. As 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. I had no ‘religious’ background at all.

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.

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 the radio station in three years because I listened to the classical music station and that’s the only thing I listened to. Most nights I was working when the World Tomorrow program was on KGO at 9:30. 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 drives me up a wall—so I changed the station and I heard the World Tomorrow program.

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. 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—that 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.* ‘Well, when did you become religious?’ 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.’ 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?* 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.

The reason why I’m saying this is because ***it is God that leads you to repentance; it is God that opens your mind!*** 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. God will deal with each one of us at our own level. Whatever your circumstances were, God has dealt with you.

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 Why? Because ***‘by grace are you saved and that not of yourselves.’*** God is the One Who does the calling.

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.’ 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. 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 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! 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. Cannot 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:

Verse 44: “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.’....” (vs 44-45).

- 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” (v 45).

Verse 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.’” 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.*** There is a sorrow of this world. So, it has to be a greater sorrow than of the world.

Acts 2—Why were they ‘pricked in their hearts’? Many of them lived right in the area of Judea, right there in Jerusalem where the temple was.

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 were 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, through what Peter was preaching, and it 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. That's why they were pricked in their hearts.

They said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Acts 2:37 "...Men and brethren, what shall we do" 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. Then I knew I had to be baptized. So, I went down on October 18th, because I was baptized the next day. I went down in my little old Nash Rambler, and as I was going down toward Pasadena, it was Highway 99, and you had to go over the 'grapevine.' I remember that stretch right out of Bakersfield—maybe you'll remember it. There's this straight stretch where there are these big eucalyptus trees, and I was listening to a World Tomorrow program and it happened to be on repentance. I was listening very intently and it really convicted me in heart. 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. 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. Then the second day on the 19th I was counseled for baptism by Richard Plechette and Clarence Hughes and was baptized.

The whole purpose of being baptized is to bury the old sinful self. But the result of it is to receive the Holy Spirit, because unless you receive the Holy Spirit a baptism is only a dunking! Or as one man put it, 'A short bath with clothes on.'

Verse 38: "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.' That is what you want to receive—the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God because they have now repented of their sins.

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. 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.*

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] ...but into the name of the Father because He will beget you with His Spirit....

(go to the next track)

...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.

Let's see what kind of repentance that we need. 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.

Let's see God's graciousness as extended here, Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my

soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for **You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive...** [This is in mind for all of us; whenever you do sin, God is ready to forgive whenever you truly repent.] ...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You” (vs 1-5).

Psalm 103:1: “Bless the LORD, 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 forgives all your iniquities...” (vs 1-3).

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. What about sins you can't even remember? *That's why there's the operation of baptism!* 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.

“...Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies” (vs 3-4). 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!*

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. 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... [**You must believe!**] ...may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

Here's how it is done when we repent. Psalm 51:1: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (vs 1-2). 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.

Verse 3: “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.” That's what happens when God leads you to repentance. Your sins are just standing right up.

Verse 4: “Against You, You 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

- honor your father and mother
- you shall not commit murder
- you shall not commit adultery
- you shall not steal
- you shall not bear false witness
- you shall not covet

That's why the law is given! Then with the power of the Holy Spirit, to convict you of sin, so 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 evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts...” (vs 4-6).

After you confess your sins and after you are baptized then here is the growing part, which 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 You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop...” (vs 6-7). Scrub me clean—you can liken it unto—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 You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.” (vs 7-11). That's what baptism is all about. That will take place.

Rom. 6 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. 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.

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?” How do you die to sin? *Through baptism!* As we know, every year we renew our baptism through the foot-washing. You can read that in *The Christian Passover* book.

Verse 2: "Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?" (vs 2-3).

There is great meaning with baptism. That's why you are submersed under water. 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..." Since it is a covenant relationship that you are entering into—between God the Father, Jesus Christ and you personally—you are being conjoined into that death. Christ's sacrifice *paid for your sins!* That's why you are baptized *into* that death. Another reason you are baptized into that death is that it is a *covenant pledge*. **A covenant pledge is NOT TO BE broken.**

Once you make that covenant pledge, you're buried with Christ in the watery grave. You have pledged that as you come out of the watery grave you're going to walk in *newness of life*. If you go back on that covenant pledge—and that's not to say that you won't sin:

- reject God
- reject Christ
- reject His commandments

—which there are some who have done it knowingly—you then have pledged your death in the *Lake of Fire!* That's something you need to understand. That's why you're baptized into His death. 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" (v 4). In the Spirit of God; in the commandments of God.

Verse 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." *God is going to grant you eternal life in power, in splendor, and in glory!* That's something to understand.

Verse 6: "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."

Meaning that we're to no longer live in sin, walk in sin—but because of our human nature we will see that we do sin. We have, upon repentance, forgiveness available. Only those who are truly in Christ have that forgiveness available. That's the encouragement in it.

- 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!*

Here's the kind of commitment that we need to have, 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

Luke 14:25: "And great multitudes were going with Him..." 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...' (vs 25-26). 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" (v 26). The Greek there is 'ou dunatai'—*the strongest negation of having no power* to become a disciple of Christ. That's how important baptism is.

Verse 27: "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 dunatai'—*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 [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 27-33).

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. 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. *We have to put the spiritual things first!*

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, mind, 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! 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.

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 Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life... [in this world] ...shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life... [in this world through baptism] ...for My sake shall find it" (vs 37-39).

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.

John 14 shows what we are to do. This was given on the Passover night just before they left to go out when Jesus was arrested. Let's understand why today's world wants to get rid of Christ. They cannot stand this:

John 14:6: "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!* 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 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, here's how you begin to know God:

Verse 15: "**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*. 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've 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 today is to destroy the knowledge of God!*** 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.***

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments and is keeping them..." You have to have them and keep them. Remember, we're no longer to live in sin. Sin is *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 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... [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. **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" (vs 23-24).

If you reject anything in the Bible, ***you are rejecting the Father!*** 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! That's Whom you are rejecting.

Let's see what we are to do after we are baptized. We're to live our life differently. Brethren, I was just thinking 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!

Colossians 3:1: "Therefore, if you have been raised together with Christ... [that is out of the watery grave (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). That shows you how you are to overcome.

Let's see that after we're baptized one of the things that you need to understand is that *you don't overcome human nature all at once*. 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.

The Apostle Paul makes this very clear. We'll just paraphrase some of it—you can read Rom. 7. 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. 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.

Here Paul, he says, Romans 7:9: "For I was once alive without law; but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.... [How did Paul die? *By baptism, that's how he died!*] ...And the commandment, which was meant to result in life...",

(vs 9-10)—which we read 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... ['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..." (vs 10-13). 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 13-14).

Even after his baptism he said this, because he understood that his own nature was evil inherently and only God can change it and only God can help you overcome it. 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.' You can also read of that in *The Christian Passover book, The Nature of Man*.

What happens after baptism when you find yourself in that situation, lo and behold you've sinned. Once you have been baptized, now you are under the grace of God, which 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 you sin*, if it not a 'sin unto death'—that is the unpardonable sin and rejecting Christ. 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... [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... [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... [we don't have a sinful nature] ...we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins..." (vs 6-9).

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'

That is a lifelong thing. I'm still doing that after 40 years of baptism. 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. When I do, I confess to God. If you hurt or harm somebody else you may have to confess to them and repent to them.

Verse 9: "If we confess our own sins He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 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." 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.

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 life.

Verse 2: "And He is **the propitiation** for our sins..."—*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.'

Notice, lest we get conceited: "...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (v 2). 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.

Verse 3: "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.... [doesn't matter who the person is] ...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 3-6).

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.

Let's look quickly at two other things. The circumcision without hands, 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... [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. 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). {note sermon series on *Colossians*}

Paul 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). That is a greater circumcision than the circumcision of the flesh.

Should you be baptized again if you were baptized once? *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.

Let’s 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?’....” (vs 1-2).

The whole point of the matter is to receive the Holy Spirit. 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 2-6).

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.* 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, you rent your garments, *but not your heart.* 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.

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 working with them. Then they are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. Sometimes people *just don’t understand the basis of baptism* when they’re baptized and they don’t receive the Holy Spirit when they are baptized. One other thing that’s important: You not only **must you repent**, but **you must also believe.**

Acts 8:37—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]. ...Then he answered and said, ‘I believe *that* Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’” You have to believe that to the very depth of your being and you grow in that, and you grow in the conviction, the love of God and the Truth of God after baptism.

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.**

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scripture References

- 1) Genesis 17:9-13
- 2) Deuteronomy 10:12-22
- 3) Deuteronomy 30:6
- 4) Romans 3:9-19
- 5) Matthew 3:1-12
- 6) Acts 2:36-37
- 7) Romans 2:4
- 8) John 6:44-45, 65
- 9) Acts 2:37-38
- 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
- 18) John 14:6, 15, 21, 23-24
- 19) Colossians 3:1-3

- 20) Romans 7:9-14
- 21) 1 John 1:6-10
- 22) 1 John 2:1-6
- 23) 1 John 4:9-10
- 24) Colossians 2:11-13
- 25) Romans 2:28-29
- 26) Acts 19:1-6
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- Deuteronomy 28; 10
- 1 Timothy 1
- John 4
- Matthew 19
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- Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- Sermon Series: *Colossians*

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