

Why God Requires Repentance & Baptism

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For the New Covenant, why does God require repentance and baptism? There are a lot of people today who preach a ‘Christianity,’ 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... [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). They say you receive the Holy Spirit after you believe. If you recite the little prayer, ‘Oh, Jesus, forgive my sins, I believe in You, and, Savior, enter into my heart’—you’re now saved. That is entirely wrong! That is a false gospel; that isn’t true.

Today we’re going to find out why baptism is necessary for the New Covenant. 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. Peter got done preaching the sermon and he said *repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. This becomes an important step. The way that these people who say ‘all you have to do is believe’ 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. He never ate anything common or unclean—so this is not a vision which says it’s okay to eat anything you want.

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: grubs, worms, ants, monkeys, 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.’ Imagine people eating those things! 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!

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. 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).

God was dealing with the Gentiles directly. This is an unheard of thing, Gentiles who were not circumcised, nor had they been attending synagogue. This is, you might say, a revolutionary thing. This is why God had to do that.

Verse 21: “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...’” (vs 21-22). 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.] ...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).

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. 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. ***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. They lived in the inheritance that God promised Abraham to give them.

Notice what happened, v 25: “And as Peter

was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshipping *him*.” 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!

Verse 26: “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” (vs 26-27).

Verse 28 is a key, key verse. Important to know and to realize what this means; to understand something of the difference between Judaism and God’s way {note sermon series: *Scripturalism vs Judaism*.

Verse 28: “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....’”

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. 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!* And if any stranger wanted to take the Passover or offer and 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!***

“...‘But **God has shown me that no man should be called common or unclean**” (v 28). There’s a difference between *common* and *unclean*. Let me explain how the Jews—and this is also another Jewish teaching—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 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.

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.

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. 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

Let’s go on and see what happened here, because this becomes important, v 29: “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’” (vs 29-31).

That’s also important to understand, because an uncircumcised Gentile could not have his prayers answered directly by God. Here he’s undoing more of the problems of Judaism.

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.’ Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that **God is not a respecter of persons**” (vs 32-34). Whereas, the Jews would separate them all out in different categories. This is revolutionary; and God had to do it because Peter had a relapse into Judaism.

Verse 35: “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 35-43).

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.

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

Let’s see something else, the command that Jesus gave and what they were to do. 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!* 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.

Verse 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.” They were to go into all nations and baptize. *The command to baptize!* Now, *all nations* doesn’t mean just the Jews. Everyone is to be baptized.

Verse 20: “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” 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?

Verse 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”

- 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!*

Remember, one of the teachings of Jesus was that ‘Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word of God.’ 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 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.

Let’s see how God put His stamp of authority on preaching and teaching to uncircumcised Gentiles. Then we’ll see the ‘storm’ that came up after that.

Acts 10:44: “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...**” (vs 44-45). 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 with uncircumcised Gentiles! This 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” (v 45). 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. On a one-time basis to show and to prove, yes, God was directly dealing with the Gentiles.

Verse 46: “For they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God...” 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?*’.... [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 46-48)—and, of course, he did.

Look what happened. 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. 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... [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 God gave the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles.’ So, they heard it.

Verse 2: “And when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the* circumcision... [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.

Verse 3: “Saying, ‘You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them.’” 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?’

Verse 4: “But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them, saying...” (vs 3-4). Then he told them what it was all about—explained the whole thing. You can read that.

Verse 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?” (vs 15-17). That’s why this is recorded here—so we know it—however, this did not change completely the minds of those who were steeped in Judaism.

Verse 18: “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.’”

Let’s see another example of baptism. We’re going to see, I think, a very important principle concerning baptism, and the end result of baptism is to receive the Holy Spirit. 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?’...” (vs 1-2). Hmm, very interesting, because where we started out the premise was: if you believe, you receive the Holy Spirit. That’s what certain people believe. *But it’s not true!*

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.’ Then he said to them, ‘Unto what, then, were you baptized?’ And they said, ‘Unto the baptism of John’” (vs 2-3). They had already been baptized. But if you don’t receive the Holy Spirit after being baptized, then what we’re going to see is you need to be baptized again.

- believing leads to repentance
- repentance leads to baptism
- baptism leads to the Holy Spirit

Verse 4: “And Paul said, ‘John truly baptized *with* a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ.’ And after hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Now when Paul laid *his* hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with *other* languages and prophesied” (vs 4-6).

This was to show Paul that he was to stay there in Ephesus and preach, which he did for three years. 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.

Verse 7: “And all the men were about twelve. Then he entered into the synagogue...” (vs

7-8)—and so forth, and you can read the rest of it.

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 withstood him to his face because he was to be condemned..." That's how serious this whole issue was. Now this becomes important to understand: Who was Peter? *Peter was one of the leading apostles*—Peter, James and John. 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.* 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.

Verse 12: "For before certain *ones* came from James..."—the brother of Jesus, unfortunately yielded to the circumcision party and that caused a lot of problems later on up in Jerusalem. But if you come from Jerusalem with the authority of James:

"...he was eating with the Gentiles..." (v 12). Remember what the problem was? *You cannot associate with or come into the house of one, or eat with Gentiles*—a law of Judaism. Peter had learned the lesson from Acts 10. 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. 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.

Verse 13: "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 13-14).

What was the 'Truth of the Gospel'? *That I should call no man common or unclean.* 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*. 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

But that's not the way of conversion. ***Conversion only comes from God's Holy Spirit!*** And conversion only comes with repentance and baptism. We will see the reason for baptism before we're done here.

Verse 14: "I said to Peter in the presence of them all... [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?'"

'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. Things are a little different today—aren't they?

You have the same thing with Judaism today—the Orthodox Jews. That's why you need *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. 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 betcha if you asked them, 'Have you ever read *Code of Jewish Law?*'

It is part frustration when you read it, part stupidity, part hilarious when you come to the laws they have for the Sabbath; and other ones 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 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" (v 14). In other words, 'you're uncircumcised, you have no business being with us Jews. You go eat over there!' Paul couldn't let this go.

Verse 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). 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. There has to be repentance, baptism and remission of sins.

Verse 16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law... [see footnote in *FV Bible*] ...but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ..." 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
- 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. There you have the whole thing.

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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.

Verse 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..." (v 16). 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.

Verse 17: "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!**" 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, Catholics, Protestants, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism—all of that combined.

Verse 19: "For I through law died to law..." 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.... [here becomes part of the key of baptism]: ...**I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. Indeed, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me....**" (vs 19-20).

That's a 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. 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.

Verse 20: “I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live. *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.... [that’s all a part of *spiritual justification*] ...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” (vs 20-21). Then you could do it yourself, you wouldn’t need the sacrifice of Christ.

Let’s see how all of this applies and works together, because this becomes very important to understand. We’ve already covered a part of this, but we need 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?” (v 3). 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!*

Verse 4: “MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, **let God be true but every man a liar**, exactly as it is written... [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*.’” A 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 angry at the Catholic Church and the things that they do, because they have nothing to do with God whatsoever. 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!

Verse 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?

- murder
- sin
- adultery
- pedophilia
- lying
- cheating
- 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 *people sin!* What does that do, when you see all of that sin, or unrighteousness? *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 nose—like some sort of haughty person—and walk away from God; or say, ‘God doesn’t exist.’ God is going to judge. People don’t think about 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. What happens when people reach to the depths of sin and there is nothing left?

The ones who are doing what is right repent and come to God—which then is the first step.

“...*Is God unrighteous to inflict His wrath? (I am speaking according to man’s view)*” (v 5). They don’t like it. Why did God drown all those people in the Flood? *Everyone was 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.

Verse 6: “MAY IT NEVER BE!... [that God is unrighteous] ...Otherwise, how shall God judge the world?” 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.

Verse 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?... [the Jews were saying (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).

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 I was just with this person, I wasn’t doing it. Why were you in there stealing? 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 us.* Rather than saying stealing is wrong. You can take an 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, 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
- receiving the Holy Spirit of God

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!**’” Hmmm! 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?

Verse 11: “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” (vs 11-13). You can apply any name you want there. I’m thinking of some politicians.

Verse 12: “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 12-18). That’s the state of human beings.

God has provided a way. 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.” Who’s under sin? *The whole world!* The world ‘lies in wickedness!’ (1-John 5:21). All the world is under sin.

Verse 20: “Therefore, by works of law there

shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through *the law is the knowledge of sin.*” 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.

Here is the right translation, v 21: “But now, *the righteousness of God...* [justification] *...that is separate from law has been revealed...*” It’s not stated in any law. It’s stated in:

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

We will understand why baptism is required. 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 *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...* [justification] *...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).

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. 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. Here’s how it starts, we’ve covered part of this:

Verse 22: “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!***

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—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, if 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 insane!’ That’s the whole basis of the Catholic system. Have Mardi Gras today and have 40 days of ‘Lent’ and you’re forgiven. On ‘Lent’ you’ll have some ashes put on your forehead. And I never will forget a couple of Catholic politicians who were U.S. 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 finish this for the sins that are past—v 26: “Through the forbearance of God; *yes, to publicly declare His righteousness [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. 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.’ 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. 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.

Verse 13: "Because the hearers of the law are not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." There's repentance. And 'repentance' means *quit sinning; turning around, going the other way*. And that means you are *keeping the law*. But it says "...shall be justified" because the individual has not yet been baptized. That becomes the next step.

Now then, we've already talked about the death of Christ and His shed blood being applied to us (Rom. 3). 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. 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; 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. 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! 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. Now, the covenant is not valid until it's ratified, and it's only ratified after the person walks the trail down between the animals and looks at all the guts and blood and everything spilled out there, and declares 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, His loyalty and His willingness by dying. He rose from the dead so we can be justified. We have to demonstrate to God our own personal sacrifice by a symbolic death—just as Jesus died—only it's by baptism. You cannot enter into covenant with God unless you bring the covenant sacrifice of your baptismal death.

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?" And there are even those 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, v 2: "MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin... [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?" (vs 2-3).

Baptism brings you into a conjoining to the death of Christ. You are buried with Him. It is your covenant death. That's why Paul said in Rom. 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.'

"...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 3-4). 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... [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.

What does this do to us mentally and spiritually? *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.

Col. 2:6 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: Colossians 2:6: “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.

Verse 7: “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 have 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 complete.

“...Who is the Head of all principality and power 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” (vs 10-11). That is a *spiritual* circumcision, *of the heart!* as Paul said.

Verse 12: “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 12-13). That is why God requires repentance and baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit—so you have the *circumcision of the heart and the mind!* 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

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.’ That’s why God requires it. This is a tremendous thing! What God wants us to do, is

- 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

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 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!*

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 1:12-13
- 2) Acts 10:16-45
- 3) Matthew 28:18-20
- 4) Acts 10:44-48
- 5) Acts 11:1-4, 15-18
- 6) Acts 19:1-8
- 7) Galatians 2:11-21
- 8) Romans 3:3-26
- 9) Romans 2:4, 13
- 10) Romans 6:1-8
- 11) Colossians 2:6-13

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- Acts 2
- Ezekiel 9
- 1-John 5:21
- Genesis 15
- Romans 7

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- *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins
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