

Preparation For Baptism

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Introduction-

Preparation for Baptism

Mainstream Christianity's view of water baptism fails to accurately represent the true biblical teaching on the subject. This holy and sacred ceremony has been distorted and corrupted by the traditions of men to the point that it has become merely a "religious experience." As with many doctrines of the Bible, men have misused and distorted the Scriptures to reflect their own viewpoints.

Baptism, by God's standard, is the most profound event that will ever take place in a person's life. If you are being called by God and considering baptism, it is absolutely essential to come to a full and correct understanding of this life-changing event.

Naturally, you'll have questions. For example: How do I prepare spiritually for baptism? What does God require of me in order to be baptized? And, what exactly takes place at baptism? These and other important questions will be answered in this booklet.

In preparing for baptism, you should realize that only God can know the heart: "[T]he righteous God tries the heart and the reins" (Psa. 7:9). A minister cannot truly know your heart—but can only offer counsel and come to a reasonable conclusion that you are truly repentant in your desire to be baptized.

This booklet will also cover the subject of re-baptism—for those who have already been baptized but are considering being baptized again.

This publication is primarily an overview. Because there is so much more to study and understand on this subject, additional material will be provided to help you in preparing for baptism.

God's Calling

Those desiring baptism must first answer and respond to God the Father's calling. Jesus made this absolutely clear in his teachings. "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). The word "draw" in the Greek is *helko*, which means "drawing by an inward power." It is important to understand that it is God Who does the calling. God calls you and leads you to Himself; you do not choose God. Jesus said, "You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain..." (John 15:16).

God searches the hearts of men to determine who truly wants to change their way of life and conform to His will. When He discovers such a person, He proceeds to call them and lead them towards baptism. But not everyone responds to God's calling—and God has given man freedom of choice, so that we can each make our own decisions. This will be covered later in this study.

If you have been called of God, you must respond by beginning to live His way of life. Then, He will lead you to a true understanding of the importance of baptism.

Counting the Cost for Baptism

Baptism is not to be taken lightly. It represents a person's lasting commitment that he or she will turn away from the ways of the world, with all of its lusts and entice-

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ments, and wholly follow God's ways. In considering baptism, be absolutely certain that you have made a definite determination in your heart to follow the will of God. Your whole desire should be to learn to love God and to rely on Him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). You should not be baptized if you have any doubt as to your belief in God or that His Word is the standard by which to live.

In preparation for baptism, you must "count the cost"—understanding that such a commitment to God is for life. There can be no turning back. At baptism, you enter into a covenant with God. Thus, baptism becomes the most crucial decision you will ever make! Jesus explains what it means to "count the cost" in the Gospel of Luke. He said, "If any man comes to Me, and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:25-27).

Christ clearly shows here that it is imperative that one be willing to give up everything—including the self—in order to truly become His disciple. This passage is sometimes erroneously taken to mean that a person must turn his or her back on their spouse, children, parents, etc. Quite the contrary—Christians have a responsibility to love and care for their families. What Jesus is expressing in this passage is that we are to love our families less by comparison.

Continuing, "For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has sufficient for its completion; lest perhaps, 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 that does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be my disciple" (verses 28-33).

Christ used the example of "counting the cost" to demonstrate what is involved when contemplating a major decision in life. Baptism is just such a decision, involving total dedication to God the Father and Jesus Christ. When you accept Christ as personal Savior, you proclaim your willingness to change and obey God in all things. Your earnest desire must be this: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30).

The Gospel of Matthew provides us with a similar quote from Jesus about "counting the cost." "Now then, whoever shall confess Me before men, that one will I also confess before My Father Who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, that one will I also deny before My Father, Who is in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be those of his own household. The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me, is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it: and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it (Matt. 10:32-39).

God the Father and Jesus Christ desire that you fully dedicate your life to them. This does not mean you should shun your family, friends or loved ones. However, if and when required, you must put God first—above all others.

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An excellent example of dedicating one's life to God can be found in the book of Genesis. It is the story of Abraham's calling by God and demonstrates his dedicated response. "And the Lord said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed'" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Notice Abram's immediate response: "Then Abram departed, even as the Lord had spoken to him. And Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran" (verse 4). There was no hesitation on Abram's part because he had true faith in God—which was counted to him for righteousness. Note also that Abraham did not forsake his family, but took them with him under his care (Gen. 12:5).

Abram, later named Abraham, left his home land and trusted in God for his well-being: "By faith Abraham, being called of God to go out into the place which he would later receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went, not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8).

This is what you and I as Christians face when we make a commitment to follow God and His way. It is simply not known exactly where God may take us. But whatever the future holds, you can be assured that God will be involved and will deliver you out of trials and tribulations. It is all a question of belief, faith and commitment to God.

"Counting the cost" for baptism is something you need to think deeply about before making any commitment before God. You must genuinely want to change your life and be obedient to God—regardless of circumstances. If you fully understand this and are absolutely repentant before God—and you accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior—then you are well on the road to baptism.

Defining Sin

Preparation for baptism requires an understanding of exactly what is sin. Sin is defined as the breaking of God's laws and commandments. Anything that a person does that is contrary to the laws and commandments of God constitutes sin. The apostle John wrote, "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4).

Jesus Christ put it this way, "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall practice and teach them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19). He also said, "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My Commandments" (John 14:15). God's laws and commandments are of the utmost importance to Him. Paul was inspired to remind us of what God said through the prophet Jeremiah: "I will give My laws in their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds" (Heb. 10:16). These passages clearly prove that the laws of God have not been abolished, as some wrongly assume.

When God formed man in His own likeness and image (Gen. 1:27), He instilled within each individual what is called the "spirit of man" (Zech. 12:1)—which makes possible the human mind. Thus, each person is free to make choices and decisions for themselves, whether good or evil. This was God's decision from the beginning, that mankind would have "freedom of choice."

Adam and Eve were created sinless—but with the same freedom to choose be-

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tween good and evil. God instructed them to not eat of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:17). But through the deception of Satan the devil they defied God and ate of the forbidden tree—and sin entered into humankind. Because of this original sin, mankind became subject to Satan’s influence—resulting in what Paul calls the “law of sin and death” in every individual (Rom. 7:14-25).

The father of all sin (John 8:44), Satan’s rebellion against God began before the world existed. “You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you” (Ezek. 28:15). Satan tried to exalt himself above God’s throne (Isa. 14:13), but was cast down to the earth in shame. This caused Satan to have a deep-seated attitude of resentment toward God.

Since Adam and Eve, Satan has directed his attacks at those whom God has chosen. And Satan would like nothing better than for a person to sin against God by not keeping His laws and commandments. And sin seemingly lies around every corner. God’s laws and commandments are designed to protect us from harm by defining sin. Without the laws and commandments of God, we would never know what is sin and what is righteousness (Psa. 119:172).

The “wages [what we earn] of sin is death...” (Rom. 6:23). God gave mankind two choices, the option of receiving eternal life or eternal death. He stated, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, that both you and your seed may live” (Deut. 30:19).

This verse is talking about eternal life and death—and this is a personal choice that you too must make.

When one sins, it is directly against God. King David understood this principle. In his prayer of repentance he said, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge” (Psa. 51:4). This passage shows that God will be justified when His judgment comes. No one will be able to say, “You didn’t tell us.” God has provided His Word so that everyone can understand what sin is—and how to overcome sin by baptism and by the blood of Jesus Christ.

You need to grasp the fact that everyone has the “law of sin and death” working within themselves—and that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). David understood this: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa. 51:5). The apostle Paul added, “Therefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and by means of sin came death; and in this way, death passed into all mankind; and it is for this reason that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

Understanding the significance of sin is vital in preparing for baptism. Does this mean that after you are baptized, you will never again sin? No, for we all stumble from time to time. But after you are baptized and have begun to strive to live God’s way, you will no longer live in sin, as does much of the world.

How then can one be free from the clutches of sin and be accepted by God—and stand before Him in righteousness? Because of God’s love and holy righteous character, He has provided a Savior Who takes away the sins of the world. The apostle John wrote, “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 [one who takes our side] with the Father; Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:1-2). Propitiation means a continuous atoning or ongoing source of mercy.

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Jesus Christ came to this earth in order to die for the sins of mankind. John the Baptist made this important statement: “Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was the epitome of God’s love for mankind. This selfless act provided a way for mankind to be forgiven for their sins and transgressions.

As you prepare for baptism, it is absolutely essential that you go to God the Father and confesses your sins before Him. If you are honest and sincere in your quest for forgiveness, He will not only forgive your sins but will also forget them. At that point, you will stand before God cleansed by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave this example to be followed: “But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly.” Upon heartfelt confession, God accepts our repentance and totally forgives the sins.

Notice this encouraging psalm: “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in steadfast love. He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:8-12).

The prophet Micah related a similar passage: “Who is a God like You, Who pardons iniquity and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not keep His anger forever because He delights in mercy. He will turn again; He will have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities. Yea, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:18-19). Your commitment to God is to recognize that you have sinned against Him, confess your sins, and believe that they can be forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ.

In preparing for baptism, you need to carefully reflect on your life, examining how you have lived—and develop a deep desire to change your former ways. You can accomplish this by making God a part of your daily life, yielding to God in every way.

Be encouraged, God loves everyone—and wants to play a big role in your life!

Understanding Godly Repentance

Most so-called repentance today is not genuine, and is nothing more than an emotional experience or a fleeting feeling of remorsefulness. If you have godly repentance, however, you will produce the fruit that God desires—which is change. You will demonstrate an earnest desire to change your life completely and live according to God’s will. By earnestly seeking genuine repentance, God, in turn, will grant you the gift of repentance, teaching you how you should live. God is able to do this by the power of His Holy Spirit, which will be covered in the next section.

Worldly, human repentance includes much outward emotion, often conjured up because of guilt. But true repentance before God comes from a person’s innermost being, and results from a person wanting to change their life completely. Genuine repentance is vital if you are to establish a relationship with God—for God is not interested in those who are superficial, but in those who truly desire a close and personal relationship.

The Greek word for “repentance” means a turning about—such as in actually abandoning sin and moving away from it. In essence, it is a fundamental and thorough change in one’s own heart from sin and toward God. A repentant person’s heartfelt desire in life would be to change themselves—in their innermost being—into the type of

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person that is pleasing to God. Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). If you are to develop the mind of Christ, you must earnestly desire to repent daily of sin.

A perfect example of repentance can be seen in David’s prayer before God after his affair with Bathsheba and the death of his child. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (Psa. 51:1-3). David was confessing his sins before God with sorrow and lamentation. This is the kind of repentance—and humility—God desires to see in you.

David continued, “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. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let Your free spirit uphold me” (verses 9-12).

David exercised godly repentance—and God, in His mercy, listened to David and forgave all his sins.

God’s greatest desire is for everyone to come to repentance. The apostle Peter wrote, “The Lord is not delaying the promise of His coming, as some in their own minds reckon delay; He is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9).

When you come to God in genuine humility, remorseful for the sins you have committed, He will forgive your sins—and cast them away. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psa. 103:12). Notice Isaiah 43:25: “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins.” Upon godly repentance, God is able to remove your sins even from His mind.

Isaiah also wrote: “ ‘Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool’ ” (Isa. 1:16-18).

Indeed, God has provided a way for us to completely change our lives—through repentance and water baptism. When Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost in 30 AD, there were those in attendance who were fully convicted by his preaching and wanted to learn more about God’s way of life. Peter told them, “Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). The key is repentance—turning around and going the other way—so that sins can be forgiven.

Jesus Christ preached exactly the same thing when He came into Galilee saying, “The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Christ was showing that repentance and belief in God go hand-in-hand—and are required for water baptism.

Repentance is an ongoing process which takes place daily. A repentant attitude demonstrates humility and shows God that we fear Him—which means to stand in awe of His almighty power. Repentance also means that we are willing to fully submit to God’s will—to keep the commandments of God. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely My commandments” (John 14:15).

Having an ongoing repentant attitude means that we are walking in the light of God. The apostle John wrote: “That which we have seen and have heard we are report-

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ing to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ. These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full. And this is the message that we have heard of Him and are declaring to you: that God is light; and there is no darkness at all in Him. 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. However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (I John 1:3-10).

Again, repentance leading to baptism is only the start. After you are baptized, receive God’s Holy Spirit, and begin to grow in grace and knowledge—and begin to draw close to God (James 4:8)—you will over time come to an even greater depth of repentance.

Understanding the Holy Spirit

Following genuine repentance and baptism, God freely gives us the gift of His Holy Spirit. As previously stated, there is a “spirit in man” that God has formed in every human being (Zech. 12:1). But even with this “human” spirit, man is still incomplete—another Spirit is needed in order to fulfill our potential as members of God’s family. When you are baptized and receive God’s Spirit, you become a complete person—and possess the power needed to lead a godly life. This profound gift will guide you in your spiritual life, enabling you to overcome all things.

Under the New Covenant, the laws and commandments of God are written in our minds—inscribed in our hearts (Heb. 8:10; 10:16). The gift of the Holy Spirit imparts the very mind of Jesus Christ. As mentioned earlier, Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). Without the Holy Spirit from God this would be impossible!

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come after His resurrection and final ascension into heaven. He said to His disciples, “And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: Even the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you” (John 14:16-17).

This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, 30 AD, when the apostles were gathered together. “And when the day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day, was being fulfilled, they were all with one accord in same place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like the rushing of a powerful wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1-2). This was the gift of the Holy Spirit, which had come upon them, just as Jesus had promised. While the Holy Spirit comes from God, it is not a separate entity. (For a thorough understanding of the Holy Spirit, additional material is available upon request).

When you receive the Holy Spirit, you become a begotten child of God the Father. “For you are a temple of the living God, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.... And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:16-18). The Holy Spirit was not offered under the Old Covenant; but because Je-

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sus paid the penalty for man's sins with His blood, the Holy Spirit has been offered under the New Covenant. "Behold! What glorious love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!" (I John 3:1).

The Holy Spirit must be utilized if it is to be of help. You can exercise the Holy Spirit by praying to God, by studying the truth of His Word, and by having a close personal relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit will reveal the truth of the Scriptures to you as you draw close to God. "But when the Comforter comes, even the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that one shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you" (John 14:26).

Stephen, who was martyred for Christ, confronted the Sanhedrin concerning their resistance to the Holy Spirit. "O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so also do you" (Acts 7:51). We too must be careful to never resist the Spirit of God.

As you build a close, loving relationship with God, His Holy Spirit will guide you in all things—giving discernment, wisdom, knowledge and a true understanding of the Scriptures. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you can go forward and build on the foundation laid by Jesus Christ.

The Meaning of Water Baptism

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. He preached about repentance of sin and the importance of being baptized. He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). Continuing, "Then went out to him those from Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (verses 5-6). Baptism is by full immersion—thus "much water" was required (John 3:23).

After accepting Jesus as personal Savior, you must be baptized by complete immersion in water for the remission of sins. Various religions use different forms of "baptism"—such as sprinkling, pouring water over one's head, bathing in oil. However, the Scriptures clearly show that water immersion is the correct form of baptism. Note Jesus' example: "And after He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately out of the water..." (Matt. 3:16).

The meaning of baptism is found in what it pictures. Water baptism symbolizes the death and burial of the "old self." The water pictures the grave, wherein the "old self" is dead and buried. Coming up out of the water symbolizes one being raised to a new life in Jesus Christ. "Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Paul added, "Therefore, if anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

Following baptism, hands will be laid on you so that you may receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit of God. At that very moment, you become a begotten son or daughter of God. "According to His own will, He begat us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings" (James 1:18). From that point forward, you must strive to live by the laws and commandments of God—and, over time, develop the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5).

After godly repentance for the forgiveness of sin and baptism by immersion, you are justified and put in "right standing" with God the Father. Paul explains how this takes place. "But [you] are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption

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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” (Rom. 3:24-25).

As a newly converted believer, you will live in a continuous state of grace before God. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in the hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance brings forth character, and character brings forth hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (Rom. 5:1-5).

Through baptism, you are given a new beginning—because the “old self” has been buried in a watery grave. With diligent, determined effort—and the help of God’s Holy Spirit—you can begin the lifelong journey toward the Kingdom of God and eternal salvation.

What Takes Place at Baptism?

You and the minister will both enter the water, which must be sufficient for total immersion. The minister will then ask you some very important questions concerning your commitment and readiness for baptism. You will be told that you are not being baptized into any organization, but into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (because it comes from the Father).

Following a prayer affirming your commitment to God, the immersion takes place. After you come up out of the water, the minister will apply the laying on of hands and ask God for the begetting of His Holy Spirit—commending you as a newly begotten Christian into the hands of God the Father and Jesus Christ. The baptism is complete, and there is great rejoicing over you as a new brother (or sister) in Christ.

God the Father, Jesus Christ and the angels will all be rejoicing as well. Jesus said, “I tell you likewise, there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine who have no need of repentance” (Luke 15:7).

Who Should be in Attendance

This is your decision. You may prefer to have only a few close friends and family members attend, or you may choose to invite many brethren and family members. You may prefer to be alone with the minister, which is proper as well.

What Happens After Baptism?

After baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to walk in “newness of life.” From that point forward, you will naturally desire to develop a close relationship with God, to learn as much as possible from His Word, and to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18). Will you stop sinning automatically? No! Sin will always lie “at the door”—but it can be suppressed and conquered through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. However, as a new Christian, you will not be living in sin, as does most of society.

Jesus Christ said, “Even the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and

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shall be within you” (John 14:17). The Holy Spirit of God will prick your conscience whenever you have evil thoughts or do wrong things. This is how God’s Spirit works to help us repent and go forward in submission to Him.

You will definitely face trials as you grow spiritually. Trials are God’s way of building character in us, but His Holy Spirit will guide you through such difficulties. God wants you to rely on Him for all things; when you humbly come to Him in prayer and ask for His intervention, He responds. This is His promise to all who have been called of God. (Please read and study I Pet. 1:1-9 and James 1:2-5.)

What about Re-baptism?

Some have asked about being re-baptized. Re-baptism is strictly administered on an individual basis and depends largely on the circumstances involved. For example, a person may be a candidate for re-baptism if they have come to see that they were not properly prepared at the time of their original baptism. Perhaps they were pressured into baptism, which should never be the case. Some may have been baptized in a church organization in which they were not given a proper scriptural foundation. Perhaps some have not had the required laying on of hands.

If one feels strongly that he or she needs to be re-baptized, this is between them and God—and they should not be denied such a request. Finally, there may be occasions involving a demon problem which make re-baptism necessary.

Summary

God’s greatest desire for you as an individual is that you become a member of His Spiritual Family—and baptism is the first step in that direction. If you are considering baptism, ask God for His wisdom and guidance—for He has promised, “In no way will I ever leave you; no—I will never forsake you in any way” (Heb. 13:5).

If you have read and understood the information in this booklet and feel you are ready for baptism, please contact us. We will be most happy to assist you in this life-changing event.

God bless you as you prepare for this most wonderful and momentous occasion!

Wayne Stenhouse

Your Calling

Fred R. Coulter — December 15, 2002

Just recently back in New York they had two profound meetings. It was a gathering of all the major religious leaders in New York. They came there from around the world to try and figure out a way how they can bring all the religions together, and use the religions as a bridge to help bring peace, and to work with governments so that there can be peace brought to the world. And then they had the meeting of all the government leaders in which they are planning to make the United Nations the big world government. Now they know at the present time they can't do it as quickly as they would like, but one comment that our infamous President Bill Clinton made was that, he says, "It's time for the United Nations not to stand between, but it's time for them to take a stand"—meaning a full fledged military government that can intervene whenever it desires to enforce its will.

Then I read the declaration that they had there and I'll just summarize some of the things that were there. They said that the UN Charter is inspiring all peoples of all nations. I never knew that. They said that they want to bring all the underdeveloped nations so that they can be developed and share in the wealth, which means communism—we'll take it from the rich and give it to the poor. And Bill Clinton said there that in that one room, the UN General Assembly, there were the leaders from the governments of this world where they could, if they set their minds to it, to bring peace to this world. So you had all the great people there. And it reminds me of this; let's go to Psalm 2. Now, at the Feast of Tabernacles I'm going to cover this a little bit more on days five and six about the coming UN government and so forth. But here is what they do. This is exactly what they were planning here. Psalm 2:1: "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?" That's what they are doing; this is a vain thing because every proposal they have there to bring peace to the world, to share the wealth for the world is part of the plan of anti-Christ, meaning someone who takes the place of Christ, meaning that they are going against Christ and being in His stead. Now I'm sure that all of those gathered there in New York didn't say to themselves, "Oh, we're here as anti-Christ." But that's precisely what they were there for, both the religionists and the governments.

Now notice: "The kings of the earth set themselves... [That's what they're going to try and do. Not only will they try and do, they will do.] ...and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed... [Because all of their proposals are to do what Christ alone can do. They want to give the blessings that only God can give by taking it away

from Israel and giving it to the poor and let them live in their sins. You cannot live in your sins and receive the blessing of God but that's exactly what they are proposing to do. God does not save us in our sins; He saves us from our sins, and that's what is so important to understand.] ...*saying*, Let us break their bands asunder... [That is, do away with anything having to do with Jesus Christ and God the Father.] ...and cast away our cords from us" (Psalm 2:2-3). Now we're going to do this ourselves.

Now, brethren, this has an awful lot to do with us because we are the replacements for them. Did you know that? God has not called you just to be a good person in this world, though you should be. God has not called you to succeed as a famous person in this world. God has called you because, as it is with all of us, we're the opposite of that.

Let's go to I Corinthians 1 and let's see that. When we're done with this study, we are going to see that God is the one Who is going to place us there. So ***our calling is greater and bigger and more awesome and more fantastic than we have ever supposed.*** Now we have heard it in the past but I think a lot of it has been like Job where when he was finally confronted with the reality of himself, he said to God, "I've heard of You with the hearing of the ears but now my eye sees You." So I want to see if we can grasp and understand with the understanding that God gives us the great calling that God has called us to. And God is doing it in a way that's different than men would do it.

When you're running a company and you want the company to be successful, you reach out and you do what? You look for the best qualified person, don't you? You look for the one who has the right education. You look for the one who is a success. You look for one who is diligent, one who has applied himself or herself. And if you can get someone who's super rich that has the connections, he may be able to really make your company be successful. Satan likes to call the strong, the intelligent, the wise, the beautiful, the handsome, and then give them the world. ***God calls us because we're rejected of the world*** and God is doing something entirely different in a different way, in a different manner. God is doing what man would say is impossible. Would you want to start a new company by hiring those who are failures, sinners; by hiring those who have been morally derelict; by hiring those who maybe have a police record; by hiring someone who really doesn't know how to work, really doesn't know how to present himself? No, you wouldn't do that. But that's what

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God is doing. God is doing it contrary to the way the world does it.

Let's pick it up here, I Corinthians 1:18: "For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is foolishness... [So he's going to do the things that look foolish to the world.] ... but to us who are **being saved**..."—showing that salvation is a process.

Let's go to I Corinthians. 15 for just a minute; we'll come right back here. Because the question came up earlier: could you lose your salvation? *The answer is, if you turn your back on Christ, yes, you can, no doubt about it.* You are saved when you are called and you are baptized; you are saved from Satan the devil and your sins.

You are being saved as the Apostle Paul writes here. Verse 1: "Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the *same* gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, *and* in which you are now standing; By which you are also being saved... [Present tense passive participle—you are being saved. Now, in this case it's a verb. The other one is "who are being saved" which is a participle. It's a present tense passive noun in the Greek.] (Now notice): ...**if**... [Here's that nasty little word. The **if** is *never on God*. Why? *Because God is perfect*. He has given us the choice.] (So it is): ...**if** you are holding fast [keep in memory] *the* words that I proclaimed [preached] to you; otherwise you have believed in vain... [Now I bet that's in the *New International Version*, too.] (Now notice): ...you are also being saved, **if** you stand in the gospel which was preached...[paraphrase of the previous verse] [You have to remain in it.] ...and if you keep in memory what I have preached unto you...[paraphrase of the previous verse]. ...Unless you believe in vain" (vs 1-2). Now we can apply that to a lot of people that we've known, right? *Yes, we can.* Are there people who are not standing in it? Are there people who have forgotten the commandment which says, "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy?" *Yes, there are.*

Now let's go to Romans 5 and then we'll come back to I Corinthians, the first chapter. Now we are to stand in those things as He said in I Corinthians 15; but here again we have something else that we stand in, which is very important for us to realize. Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith... [And we believe that, we are justified by faith. We keep the commandments because God commands us to; and we keep them because no sinner is going to enter into the Kingdom of God living in sin. He's called us out of our sins; forgiven us our sins; saved us from our sins. We are not to live in sin nor will God save us in sin but we are justified by faith because we believe in the sacrifice of Jesus

Christ.] ...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace... [the grace of God which covers you like an umbrella from which comes:

- the love of God,
- the hope of God,
- the faith of God,
- the redemption,
- the sanctification to Holiness,
- the Spirit of God.

All of those things are the gift of God, which come as the gift of grace—and we need every bit of it. We need **every** bit of it, no question about it.] ...in which we stand... [So there again, *we have to stand* and I think it's about time that we all really start standing for God. Every one of us in everything that we do.] ... and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance. And endurance *brings forth* character...." (v 2-4).

And I think all of us can say with one voice, we have some experience, haven't we? Have we learned from that experience? *Yes*. Has that come from trials? *Yes*. And that's very important because living in this world, we're always going to have trials. Even have our own household against us. Matthew 10 says that very clearly. "The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. He that loves his wife more than me is not worthy of Me"—and so forth. That's all part of it, whatever our difficulty is. Because we're so filled with weakness as we're going to find out, the only way we're going to stand is by grace. When you come to the Feast of Tabernacles and you look at our motley crew—and it is a motley crew—of the rejects, the cast-asides, the elderly, the gimpy, the sick and all of those things. Is God pleased in it? *Yes, He is, very pleased.* We'll see why. We'll understand why. He's very pleased. "And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (v 5).

So having the love of God and His Spirit is the most important thing. Because you can be the smartest, you can be the richest, you can be the most powerful, you can be the most handsome, the most beautiful, the most perfect specimen of flesh and unless you have the Holy Spirit of God, you're nothing. Now that's amazing!

Now, let's come back here to I Corinthians 1:18: "...but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.... [And that's how we're going to make it into the Kingdom of God, brethren. 'Not by might, not by strength, but by My power,' says the

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Lord, 'by My Spirit.')] (Now, here we are, v 19): "For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise... [Isn't that something? Everything that these men have thought of, but especially all of the foolish doctrines about the nature of God and philosophy and the meaning of life.] ...[He's going to] destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will nullify the understanding of those who understand' Where *is the* wise? Where *is the* scribe? Where *is the* disputer of this age?... [All you have to do is turn on and watch Larry King Live. You can see them. Put on CSPAN, you can see them. Go to the United Nations channel, you can see them.] ...Did not God make foolish the wisdom of this world?... [And the final test is coming with the whole United Nations thing, and God is going to show that's not going to work.] ...For since in the wisdom of God the world through *its own* wisdom did not know God..." (vs 18-21). Now, what happens when the world does that? What happens when a person or the leaders or the wise or a society does not know God? The most important thing is to know God.

Let's go to Romans 1 and let's see what happens, because God is far more involved in this world than we would suspect. And here is how God brings all of this to nothing. Where's the civilization of ancient Greece? *Gone*. Where's the civilization of ancient Egypt? *Gone*. Babylon? *Gone*. Let's try some modern ones: The Soviet Union? *Gone, all gone*. Why? Verse 18: "Indeed, *the* wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men... [I may have covered this recently but this fits in here.] ...who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."

Where are all the wise that now look at the original text of the Bible and say, "Oh, no, we've got to remove this and we have to remove that and we have to take away this and we have to get rid of the other thing. When I was a cook, when we were out of anything, and if you are ever in a restaurant and you hear the cook tell the waitress "86," what you ordered, they don't have. That means we're out. So, what they've done is they've "86'd" God. They've taken Him out of all the books, all the teaching, all the classrooms, and now they're actively teaching what? *Witchcraft*. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest among them, for God has manifested *it* to them" (v 19).

Now, I have a question here: When God shows you something, does He hold you responsible for it? *Yes, indeed*. I imagine there are going to be a lot of people who are going to say, "God, You never told me." And Christ is going to say, "Did you have a Bible in your house?" *Well, of course, everyone had a Bible in their house*. "Did you read it?" *No*. "Well, I was responsible for making it get to your house for

you to read." *But my Aunt Martha gave it to me*. "It doesn't matter who the messenger was; I sent it." ***Without excuse!***

"For the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse; Because when they knew God... [Now, there's a penalty that happens when you know God and you reject Him.] ...they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful; but they became vain in their own reasonings... [And boy, are they not doing that with what they know about the genetics today? My! *Yes, they are*. I think they are going to clone people or already have. I think they're going to create robots that will look like human beings that will be just computers—didn't glorify God, became vain in their imaginations.] ...and their foolish heart was darkened.... [But they said they were enlightened. And always the darkness that comes from Satan, he says is a light but is darkness.] ...While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools... [Oh yes, how wise they are. They set up their colleges, their institutions, their think tanks, give each other certificates and awards and money and things like this. Oh, it's amazing, isn't it?] ...And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed creatures, and creeping things. For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness..." (vs 20-24).

So there comes a point where God intervenes in the lives of people and societies to turn them over to it and I think we are right here or maybe even past that. And what does it always affect first? *It affects first the sexual lives*. This is why there was evolution. This is why they rejected the things that were in the Bible even when the Anglican Church in England in the 19th century was still teaching some of the Word of God. The Huxley's, Aldous Huxley who was one of the founders of the United Nation's has said that ***we had an erotic revolution***. We wanted no restraints, nothing concerning God. That we would be free and at liberty to do whatever we chose to do. So, at that point, what does God do? "For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to disgrace their own bodies between themselves. Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie; and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the one Who is Creator, Who is blessed into the ages. Amen.... [And worship of the created can be anything—a person, a movement, an organization, an institution.] ...For this cause, God abandoned them to disgraceful passions; for even their women changed the natural use of *sex* into that which is contrary to nature; And in the same manner also the men, having left the natural use of *sex* with the woman,

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were inflamed in their lustful passions toward one another—men with men shamelessly committing lewd *acts*, and receiving back within themselves a fitting penalty for their error” (vs 24-27).

Now it's going through the whole world. It's called AIDS. Now it affects many people. “And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them to a reprobate mind, to practice *those* things that are immoral” (v 28). So we have one, two, three times God gives them over.

The fourth time you find in II Thessalonians, the second chapter: “...because they did not love the truth, but loved a lie, He gives them over to strong delusion.” Now, living in a world like that, may that will tell you how hard we have to fight to hold onto the Truth. Then you can just read the rest of it but all you're doing is watching nightly news.

Now, let's come back to I Corinthians, the first chapter. But the world thinks it's wise in their wisdom. We don't need to know God. No! I Corinthians 1:21: “For since in the wisdom of God the world through *its own* wisdom did not know God, it pleased God to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching.” Because with God's Spirit he's doing many other things than just what is done in preaching. Something happens on the Sabbath when we come on the Sabbath day, and it happens in such a way that it's not like any other day because the Sabbath is a day which God has appointed for us to fellowship with Him. And we fellowship with Him how?

- By studying His Word,
- by fellowshiping with each other,
- and fellowshiping with Him with His Spirit in obedience to Him, in grace that He gives to us.

Sabbath-keeping is part of grace, by the way, because you establish law through grace. It's very profound. This world has it all upside down, ***absolutely upside down***, and we look foolish. Here we are, this small little group, and to some people that would be very foolish. But if it's the preaching of the Word of God to save them that believe, then it's serving an eternal purpose. Verse 22; “For *the* Jews require a sign, and *the* Greeks seek after wisdom; But we proclaim Christ crucified. To *the* Jews *it is* a cause of offense, and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness. But to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom” (vs 22-24). So now, we are in a category where God then gives us his strength and his power rather than being turned over to our own devices. The worst thing in the world you could ever do is just turn a person over to their own devices and then let Satan loose on them and then they become totally corrupt.

Now, v 25: “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men... [Which men count the Gospel but foolishness, so that's why he says it because there's no foolishness with God.] ...And the weakness of God is stronger than men.... [if there be any weakness with God. But his weakness is what? *He has mercy*. But that is ***not weakness***, that is a strength. But the world would count that weakness so that's why he brings it out here. Mercy is stronger than that.] (Verse 26—here's the whole key): ...For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*.... [And we can put in there probably *zip*. I think he's being kind here in writing it this way, though there are some. But how many governors or senators, either at the state level, national level, how many city councilmen, how many public officials, county counselors or supervisors do we have in the Church? *None, none*. How many have received the Nobel Peace Prize for intelligence? *None*. A lot of us would be lucky to have a GED.] ...Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world... [So if someone says you're foolish and they're in the world, agree with them because it's true. But God doesn't expect us to remain that way. We'll see that in a little bit.] ...so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are...” (vs 25-28)—that which is counted as nothing!

So if the world doesn't recognize you or know you, don't worry about it. That's why God called you. If you're down and out and depressed and problems come along like that and difficulties and people seem to shun you, push you aside, don't worry about it. ***That's why God has called you.*** For what purpose? *To bring to nothing the things that are.* And that's your calling. And that's an impossible thing that God is doing, and how he's doing it is through the process of conversion and growth and overcoming and knowledge, and building the character of Christ in us.

Now, let's come to Ephesians 2 and let's see that. It's quite a thing that God is doing. And the world can't see it being done because why? *It's being done in your heart and in your mind.* Ephesians 2:8; “For by grace you have been saved... [In the Greek it means *having been saved from Satan and your sins*. So we've seen **having been saved**, (*past tense*), **are being saved**, (*present tense*). And in Romans 5 it says **we shall be saved**, (*future tense*), which is when? *At the resurrection*. So those are the three stages of salvation.] ...For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves...

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[You can't originate it from within. And this is where Protestantism never gets it. They quote this scripture and turn around and do precisely the opposite by saying that you don't have to keep the commandments and whatever you feel is right with God. So if whatever you feel is right with God, then whatever you do is from yourself. Do you understand that?] ... and that not of yourselves... [And the Greek there it comes from the word 'ek' which means *out or from yourself*.] ... *it is* the gift of God. Not of works, so that no one may boast.... [But with ones that God has called there's not too much boasting that we can do, is there? *No*.] (Now notice verse 10—and here's how God is going to do this—the impossible, unseen work of God, if you want to put it that way.): ...For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works... [All commandment-keeping constitutes good works. So does love and faith and hope and self-control—all the fruits of the Spirit.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (vs 8-10).

Now, why did God do this? Let's come back to I Corinthians 1:29: "So that no flesh might glory in His presence.... [Now you stop and think about what if Job was really right. As I mentioned many times, when I first read the book of Job, I thought God was wrong. I really, really did. Job could get up there and say, 'I made it myself.' No, he's going to say 'By the grace of God I made it.'] ...So that no flesh might glory in His presence. But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God... [Now this where we receive the power and strength to overcome. This is where then we change from being the foolish things, the weak things, the base things, the despised things, that which is not; this is where that is changed internally as you develop the character of Christ:

- through His love,
- through His laws,
- through his word,
- through fellowshiping with God
- and all of that.]

...But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption..." (vs 29-30)—which then you can add to v 24 where he says: "...God's power and God's wisdom." So the more you know the Bible, the more you understand the Scriptures, the more the wisdom of God you have; because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Isn't that amazing? That is really quite a thing that God is doing. Now notice, v 31; "So that, as it is written, 'The one who glories, let him glory in *the* Lord.' " Not in the self. It's all going to be praise and honor and glory to God. It's not going to come from us. Because I tell you what. Through grace we're all going to make it by the skin of our teeth.

Now let's go to II Corinthians 12 for just a minute and see why God has chosen to do it this way. This is why God has chosen to do it this way. Here's why God does that. Let's pick it up in II Corinthians 12:8: "I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me... [Now, what God did, it says he had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, so that means an angel of Satan to buffet him. What for? *To keep him humble*, because he was one of the wise, he was one of the mighty. And he was taught personally of Christ. So, sometimes God gives us something or a weakness. Let's just understand this, I've learned in all the years of being a minister that God leaves every one of us with a weakness or two that He does not take away from us. Other things He helps us overcome and take away from us. There is always one or two things. It could be lifelong problems. Why? *For the very purpose that we won't glory in the flesh*, that we look to Him for salvation, we look to Him to help us to overcome. So he besought the Lord three times that it might depart from him.] ...But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness'.... [So that's why God has called us and all those that He has in the condition that we read there in I Cor. 1.] ...My power is made perfect in weakness.... [Because when you're weak and know that you're weak, what are you going to do? *You're going to cry out to God*. Then you will have the strength of God.] ...Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (vs 8-9). So that's why God has done it.

Now, let's come over here to Galatians 6 and let's understand something that he said here, what man really is. Now you wouldn't be able to tell this to the Olympic stars down there winning all these races and gold medals, because they think they're the greatest. Galatians 6:3: "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself." Now the first time I read this before I was baptized, I read it this way, "*For if a man think of himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself,*" however if he's really something he doesn't deceive himself." How's that for a little vanity? What it's saying is that **man is nothing**. And you couldn't convince all those athletes down there that man is nothing, no.

Okay, let's come over here to I Corinthians 2 and let's see what God is going to do. Now, notice what God is going to do. He's going to do something in addition to that that's profound. So, what I want you to do—we're coming up to the Holy Days—and what I want you to think about is—**what God has blessed you with the knowledge that He's given you of His Word**; and I want you to think about that—**that is all a part of your education and training to rule the world**. I want you do understand that. Now I

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Corinthians 2:1; “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with superiority of speech or wisdom, in proclaiming the testimony of God to you. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling *when* I was with you; And my message and my preaching *was* not in persuasive words of human wisdom; rather, *it was* in demonstration of *the* Spirit and of power; So that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God.... [And that’s where it needs to be. That’s why God has called us in this weak condition that we are in, so that we have faith which is the power of God.] ...that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God. Now we speak wisdom among the *spiritually* mature; however, *it is* not *the* wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nothing” (vs 2-6).

Can you imagine what would happen—try and picture this scenario. Here are all these world leaders back there at the United Nations General Assembly hall. They’re to come together to solve the problems of the world and they are the wealthy, the important. They are the powerful. They are the shakers. They are the movers. They could command and a missile of destruction could be sent. Can you imagine if someone went up there and got in the pulpit and said, “All you rulers of the world are coming to nothing, God says so.” I think that’s about all you could get out before the security guards would be up there to take you away and all of those out in the audience would be in the greatest, biggest huff in the world—“Look at this kook, who does he think he is?” You could almost write the script for it. Yes! That would happen. But they’re coming to nothing.

Verse 7, “Rather, we speak *the* wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom* that God foreordained before the ages unto our glory Which not one of the rulers of this world has known (for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory)...” (vs 7-8). Now v 9, here is the tremendous and fantastic thing, brethren. And this is for us to really understand and realize.

(go to the next track)

Verse 9: “But according as it is written, ‘*The* eye has not seen, nor *the* ear heard, neither have entered into *the* heart of man, *the* things which God has prepared for those who love Him.... [And that’s why the love of God is so important. That’s why that has to be stressed first. You may be weak. You may be nothing. You may be sick. You may be old. You may have emotional problems, depression problems. You may have job problems. You may have all of those

things. but *if you love God, you have the greatest secret in the world*. If you know His plan, and we at the end time know it probably with greater understanding than at any time in the whole history of the Church. That’s something!] ...which God has prepared for those who love Him.... [Even at that we’re going to see a little later that it’s like looking through a glass darkly.] ...But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God” (vs 9-10). And that’s one thing I desire to understand. I desire with all my heart to understand the deep things of God that are in the Bible.

Now continuing on, v 11: “For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God.... [Now to count the blessing of the Spirit of God is a tremendous and wonderful thing, and you have been sealed with the Spirit of God. You have been given understanding through the Spirit of God, through the Word of God.] (Now notice, v 12): ...Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, **so that we might know** the things graciously given to us by God; Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order to* communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*” (vs 11-13). Then he says the carnal man, the natural man, can’t understand it. They just can’t understand it.

Now let’s go to Ephesians 1 and let’s understand something—***that we are sealed***. I covered part of this at the Feast but not this part of it: ***where you have been brought into the knowledge and understanding of the secret purpose of God***. Think of that! What if you—wherever you may live—what if you said, “Okay, I’m going to run a survey, and I’m going to go up to every person that I meet walking down the sidewalk and I’m going to say, ‘I’m doing a survey, would you just answer one question? What is God’s purpose?’ ” And I don’t think there would be anyone who could tell you. Now when you consider that God’s purpose is unfolded through the Holy Days and through His Feasts, then that’s why they are so great. That is fantastic. It’s a marvelous thing that God has given His Feasts and given the understanding through them. Now here, Ephesians 1:11: “Yes, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose... [So God has called you and chosen you and in choosing you He has predestinated you] ...according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will... [This is why the daily model prayer is: **Your will be done, not our will be done**; because God’s will is greater than our will and better than our will. Lots of times we try and go up

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and complete God's will with our plans. Now Abraham and Sarah tried that with Hagar, and you can't complete God's plans and purpose with carnal means. So now we've been stuck with the Ishmaelites all through these years. That's something. You talk about actions having a long-term consequence. Wow!]

(Now notice): ...according to the counsel of his will... [For what purpose?] ...That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory" (vs 11-14). So we have been sealed, brethren. That's something! And for a purpose.

What is God's purpose that He is working out here? Let's look at some of the things that He tells us what his purpose is. Let's come to Matthew 25. This shows what it is, that we "should be to the praise of His glory." What is it that we are going to do? That's why the Protestants can never know the purpose of God, because they don't keep the Sabbath or Holy Days. The Catholics can never know what it is that you go to heaven. Well, what do you do in heaven? Well, at least the Catholics say you have a beatific vision. The Protestants can't tell you really because they don't know.

Here's what it's going to be. Let's pick it up here in verse 14: "For *the kingdom of heaven* is like a man leaving the country, who called his own servants and delivered to them his property. Now to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one; he *gave* to each one according to his own ability, and immediately left the country. Then the one who had received five talents went and traded with them, and made an additional five talents. In the same way also, the one who had *received* two *talents* also gained two others. But the one who had received the single *talent* went and dug in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Now after a long time, the lord of those servants came to take account with them.... [That's the day of judgment. There's a reckoning.] ...Then the one who had received five talents came to *him* and brought an additional five talents, saying, 'Lord, You delivered five talents to me; see, I have gained five other talents besides them.' And his lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant! *Because* you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord'" (vs 14-21).

Now it shows in the parallel account there in Luke 19—let's look there—just hold your place because we'll go back and forth between it. He even defines it more. What is the "joy of the Lord" that

they are going to enter into? So, here it is, Luke 19:16; "And the first one came up, saying, 'Lord, your pound has produced ten pounds.' Then he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second one came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds'" (vs 17-19.) And then the ones who didn't do what they should do didn't receive anything and were cast into the Lake of Fire.

Now, let's come to Revelation 2. It shows what we're going to do. This is what God has called us to do. Revelation 2:26: "And to the one who overcomes, and keeps My works unto *the* end, I will give authority over the nations... [Did He not say to the apostles that 'you will sit on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel'? *Yes, indeed.*] ...And He shall shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces; as I have also received from My Father..." (vs 26-27). You're going to have to exercise that power

- with judgment,
- with mercy,
- with love,
- with understanding,
- but with full authority of God.

Now, here, Revelation 20—let's read it again—here's what God has called you to do, v 6: "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection... [Let's understand something: *blessed* and *Holy* are words that apply to God. Is that not correct? You will have an existence as God has an existence though not the same glory. Now that's a tremendous thing, brethren! And let me assure you that ***only those in the first resurrection are going to be in that category.*** Please understand that. That's something. God has called us to the ***greatest*** thing if we can just grasp it.] ...Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Now if you're reigning, you're ruling, correct? ***Yes.***

Now, let's go back to Daniel 7. Let's see where that's even here in what we call the Old Testament. Now here's what we're up against today. v 25: "And he... [that is, the 'little horn'] ...shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into His hand until a time, times, and dividing of time." Now that's the anti-Christ. This is the one who's going to enforce the world government. And they will have on the international court—they're already working it up—they will have hate crimes. And if you preach against any

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religion, talk against any people, you have committed a hate crime and they can issue a warrant for you, say, in Israel. They can arrest you here in the United States. You have no rights. It supersedes all national law and you can be hauled before that court—just like that. That's how Matthew 10 is going to be fulfilled, that you're going to be brought before councils and kings and governors.

Now v 26: "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey Him" (vs 26-27). Now that's what God has called us to do. That is profound!

Something else more important than that. Let's come back to Revelation 3—let's see more about this. Revelation 3:8: "I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door... [Now this can be a door for preaching. It can also be a door of understanding, that we can have open to our understanding the deep things of God.] ...and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength... [God delights in that, doesn't He? That's why we're called in the condition that we are called.] ...and have **kept My word**... [Now that tells you the whole story right there.] ...and have not denied My name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie—behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you" (vs 8-9).

Now, can you picture the great of the world coming before your feet to worship you? Take that little scenario I did about standing up before all those leaders and saying God is going to bring you to nothing. If they repented instantly they would bow down right there. Can you imagine that? Now you see, "no flesh will glory in His presence." There it is right there and that's why God has called us in the weak condition that we are. You have a little strength. "Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the time of temptation... [which I showed was not the Tribulation, but the coming worship of the Beast before the Tribulation sets in. And the making of the idol unto the Beast, which will be the female figure, the goddess, Gaia, called Mary, called the Virgin of Guadalupe, etc., all around.] ...which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.... [It's going to be a worldwide event. So that's something.] ... Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your

crown" (vs 10-11). In other words, there are a lot of people out there trying to get you away from God. Trying to get you away from the Truth, trying to tell you it's not important; it's not relevant. Look how happy I am now that I'm not doing it any longer. I don't have any trials. Well, then, you haven't been called, because Paul said it's through "much tribulation that we will enter into the Kingdom of God." You can also understand this; if they say, "Everything is perfect and sweet and lovely and nice now and I don't have any trials." Well, Satan is not after you at all right now, is he? *No*. See, there are more ways of looking at things. If you view it from the eyes of God it will be much different than it appears to other people.

The comment was made, going back to "have been saved, are being saved and shall be saved," showing here that if you lose your crown you can lose salvation. You're not once saved, always saved. "No man"—that means no man can take you out of the hand of God the Father and Christ, but you can refuse and take yourself out of His hand if you so choose to do so.

Notice: "The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (vs 12-13).

Now, how are we going to accomplish this then? Are we taking any courses at all on how to rule the world? Now, don't shake your head yet. We're certainly not taking *Future World Economics 101*, are we? And we are not certainly taking *How to Rule Over Five Cities 101*, are we? But we are learning, not only the law—let's come to I Corinthians 13. The whole key in all of this, even that little bit that we are has to be lost in Christ. That's where the strength really comes from. I Corinthians 13:1, here is the training program, right here. Now, the 'though' could also be 'if': "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love..." And it should be love because the Greek there is 'agape.' And I think I finally figured out why some books have 'agape' translated as *charity* and others as *love*. Because of the committees that they had with the *King James Version* of the Bible. *Charity* is a Latin word for *love*, 'charitee'—so those who wanted to put a little sprinkling of Latin in there translated it *charity*. Now to us today, 'charity' means *relief for the poor*. But this should properly be translated *love*.

Now notice: if you had all these accomplishments—now just think what the world would think of

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you if you could speak every language in the world. And to top it off, you could even speak some angelic language, which they don't know anything about. Now, can you imagine how Bilhelm Clinton would be exalted in his own eyes if he could do that—or any man? "...but do not have love, I have become... [Now the word in the Greek, *as* is not there.] ...I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal... [Meaning just so much dissonance. Just like the clanging of bells with no meaning to it. Or another way to look at it is if you scrape something backward on a blackboard, you know the funny noise and creak that makes and what it does to your nervous system. And here's what everyone wants—v 2—here's how you build a church. Was it built on prophecy?] ...If I have *the gift of prophecy*... [Yes. Do people want to know? Yes. I've got an article right here; look at this, from one of the tabloids, *The World Weekly News*: "Experts Etiquette for the Second Coming of Christ: What You Should Say if you Meet Jesus in Person." How many prophecies have we had of the return of Christ? I'll do a little prophesying here, which is this: *He's going to come at the set time that He has pre-determined according to the schedule that God the Father has given Him.*

Now, at that time, it's going to be a time when men think he's **never** going to come. And that's why all religions will amalgamate because they will be convinced that Christ won't return. Because you have to do away with that factor even in the Protestant churches in order to get them to buy the one religion thing. Everyone wants prophecy.

Now notice: "If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge... [knew everything there was to know] ...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love... [Why, if you could remove mountains—I tell you what—if you got in a road rage and you were driving down the freeway, you'd say, 'God, drop that mountain on that guy behind me, he's too close to me.' You would use it destructively. But what is harder to move than a mountain? *The carnal mind*. Conversion is harder.] ...but do not have love I am nothing" (v 2). It's as if you don't exist, because ***love is what we are learning to do to rule the world.*** That's what it is. Because then, love is also the fulfilling of the Law, so it fits in knowing and understanding the Law. But you cannot understand the purpose of the Laws of God unless you understand His love.

Now notice v 3: "And if I give away all my goods... [Now it says here 'to feed the poor' (*KJV*), but in the Greek, it means *you could even give it away for a good cause*. Recently there was a man who gave \$80 million to the Smithsonian Institute. He had already given them \$20 million before that and they really don't know what to do with the \$80 million

because they don't have the plan formulated to use the \$20 million. What did it get him? *Thirty seconds on national TV*. Maybe he was sincere in doing it but if he doesn't love God, what good does it do?] ...and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned... [Now, you talk about self-sacrifice for a cause. Remember when the Buddha priests in Viet Nam, in protesting the Viet Nam War they would cover themselves with gasoline and sit there in a stoic, lotus position and then strike a match and burn themselves up.] ...but do not have love, I have gained nothing."

Now, here's how we learn to rule in the Kingdom of God—v 4: "Love is patient *and* is kind... [That way you'll have those you rule over wanting to do what they should do. This is the opposite of the bureaucracies of this world, especially the IRS. Can you imagine a WIRS, the World Internal Revenue Service, collecting taxes for the anti-Christ? Anything but longsuffering and kind. They don't even warn you. They just come and take everything you have.] ...love envies not..." So whoever gets a reward in the Kingdom of God for this or that or the other thing. Not like James and John. They even got their mother involved and said:

"Mom, can you talk to Jesus for us?"

"What do you want, son?"

"Well, ask if I can sit on his right hand and John over here can sit on his left hand."

So she went up to Christ and said, "I desire something of you, Lord."

And He said, "What is it?"

She said, "That these two, my sons, one to sit at Your right hand and one to sit at Your left hand."

And He said, "Woman, you don't know what you're asking. For it's not Mine to give. The Father is going to give it to whom it belongs."

Then the other ten found out about it and had almost a knockdown, drag-out argument. They were mad.

Then Christ had to say... Let's go back there, let's go to the book of Matthew 20:24. "And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers. But Jesus called them to *Him and* said, 'You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them... [And as you know, this dominion then is 'katakuriueuo'—*hierarchy down* like the Catholic Church.] ...and the great ones... [These are the religious leaders here] ...exercise authority ['katexousiazō.'] over them. However, it shall not be this way among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever would be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life *as* a ransom for

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many” (vs 25-28). And they left from there. So that’s how we’re learning to do it, by serving and helping right now. Do it in an attitude of love. Not only just an attitude of love but have the love of God.

Let’s come back here to 1 Corinthians 13:4:

- “...envies not...” Not going to be lusting after things.
- “...does not brag about itself...” That means it doesn’t boast in itself. ‘Why, I did this. Now, let me tell you, way back when...’—sometimes we need to tell some of the stories but there are some people and all they can do is talk about themselves. And who do they love then? *Themselves*. You try this; next time Larry King Live has on one of these movie stars or something, you watch how they vaunt themselves.
- “...is not puffed up. *Love* does not behave disgracefully...” That is, in a rude—how shall we say—an arrogant way.
- “...does not seek its own things...” Because when you seek to love someone else and help them, who provides for you? *God does*. You do these things not so that you can gain something but to help the other person so that they can be uplifted. God will take care of you.
- “...is not easily provoked...” And I think we all flunk that one.]
- “...thinks no evil...” Well, we’re flunked out on that one. But this is how we train to be kings and priests, by learning to exercise love.
- “...Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. *Love* bears all things...”

And boy, I tell you, when we start ruling in the Kingdom of God, we’re going to have to bear a lot, aren’t we? We’re going to have to really exercise the love of God because this earth is going to be in terrible shape. There are going to be hundreds of millions dead. There are going to be people who are shell-shocked, demon-shocked. There are going to be those who will be—there was this movie about Alcatraz, the three that escaped and then the one that they put in there and illegally tortured and turned the man into an animal—literally turned him into an animal. I saw the first part of the movie. I couldn’t stand watching any more of it so I just turned it off. I can’t stand that kind of thing, that anyone would do anything to another human being like that. But there are going to be those. We’re going to have to open the prisons. There will be the tortured and the maimed. One thing that’s going to be, when we have the power to heal them, the power to have God’s Spirit to raise them up. That’s going to be something. But we’re not going to be able to do it unless we have the love of God.

- “...bears all things, believes all things...” That is, of course, not a lie, but believes all things concerning the truth.
- “...hopes all things, endures all things. Love never

fails...” So this is how we’re going to succeed in ruling the world. Think of that. God has given the plan right here. Here it is.

- “...But whether *there be* prophecies...” Now, these are prophesies of men, not God’s, because Christ said of His prophecies, ‘heaven and earth will pass away but my word shall not pass away.’ So these are prophecies of men. They shall fail. Have they failed? Have they? *Yes, over and over again*.
- “...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease...” Because God is going to restore the languages, one pure language to all human beings. And I guarantee you it won’t be Hebrew because Hebrew is not a pure language. Hebrew is filled with all kinds of pagan names and things. And the Kabbalah written in Hebrew is Satan’s witchcraft book, the very depths of Satan. So you can guarantee it won’t be Hebrew. So all the sacred names, just take a bow and go on. Don’t bother us with those silly doctrines. If you don’t love God, it doesn’t matter how you pronounce the name of God. You have lost it.
- “...whether *there be* knowledge” (vs 4-8). That is, knowledge as we have it today, it’s going to vanish away. We’ll have the true knowledge of God. When we teach history, we’re going to teach the true history.

And I’ve often thought of this: I wonder what it’s going to be like in the Kingdom of God. We want to know what it was like at the time of the Flood. Well, we’ll just have Noah teach us. He can tell us, he knew. He put up with it 120 years. What was it like building the Ark? He can tell us, yes. And I imagine, you stop and think about it, if man has the ability to do all of these video things that we have now, don’t you think that God has got the whole history recorded? Remember, Christ said, “I’m the Beginning and the Ending.” We’ll be able to know all of that. So, that’s why knowledge as we know it today shall pass away.

“For we know in part... [And that’s just what it is today. As much as we know of the Word of God, it’s still in part. As much of the Holy Spirit of God we have, it’s still in earnest.] ...and we prophesy in part... [And that’s true. We go along—now I know it will make some people mad but I’ll guess at some things, ring my cowbell so you’ll know that it’s not doctrine. And what we know in prophesy, it’s still in part. And the greatest way to understand prophesy is to look at it after it’s fulfilled and then you can see it in all of its great detail]. ...and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come... [And this is what we all long for, that which is perfect.] ...then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I rea-

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soned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see* face to face..." (vs 9-12).

So, even what we know today is like looking through a glass darkly. But let's understand the great calling that God has given us—***to rule the world***. Now that's pretty powerful stuff. People spend money, fortunes, travel, anything, if they could gain power to rule the world, and God is giving it to us at no cost ***except our lives devoted completely to God***.] "...but then *we shall see* face to face... [What's it going to be like to know God face to face? That's something! I think about it every once in a while. It's hard to really keep your mind on it, but what would it be

like to see Christ face to face, and God the Father face to face? Man, that's going to be something.] ...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known... [Then he gives the way to ensure that all of this will take place.] ...And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love... [And 'abideth' (*KJV*) means *they are living*. These are living, spiritual things.] ...but the greatest of these *is* love" (vs 9-13).

And if you do these things, ***you will rule the world and you will fulfill His calling***. So don't look at things as they are now. Look at what God has called us to, and it is tremendous, brethren.

FRC:

Scripture References:

- 1) Psalm 2:1
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:18
- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
- 4) Romans 5:1-5
- 5) 1 Corinthians 1:18-21
- 6) Romans 1:18-28
- 7) 1 Corinthians 1:21-28
- 8) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 9) 1 Corinthians 1:29-30, 24, 31
- 10) 2 Corinthians 12:8-9
- 11) Galatians 6:3
- 12) 1 Corinthians 2:2-13
- 13) Ephesians 1:11-14
- 14) Matthew 25:14

- 15) Luke 19:16-19
- 16) Revelation 2:26-27
- 17) Revelation 20:6
- 18) Daniel 7:25-27
- 19) Revelation 3:8-13
- 20) 1 Corinthians 13:1-4
- 21) Matthew 20:24-28
- 22) 1 Corinthians 13:4-12

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- Matthew 10
- 2 Thessalonians 2

God's Personal Calling

Fred R. Coulter — March 24, 2004

Today we're living in a time when the ends of the world have come upon us, and we live in this generation. And we live in times where there are so many things going on and the prophecies that are being fulfilled are just actually being literally fulfilled before our eyes. And as I covered this morning, we don't know exactly when the time is. But, how are we to live our lives? That's the important and key thing—because we have to not be dragged down by the world. *We live in the world, but we're not part of the world.* And sometimes this is difficult. And since we still have human nature, and sin comes upon us and situations come upon us—and we tend to be overwhelmed, we're going to be confronted with problems in everything that we do going down the road. And so, we need to have the strength of Christ *in us*. Now, *Christ in us* is the “hope of glory.” And that's what we need to focus on.

Let's come here to Colossians, the first chapter. Let's see how much God has done in dealing in our lives. And I think one of the most important things that we need to understand is: How is God dealing in our lives? Now, sometimes it's very easy to think of God being way out there—wherever His throne is—and we don't know how far that really is, actually.

Let's come to Colossians, the first chapter. With God's Spirit, and with God's Word, and with what God is doing, we need to understand something: ***Every one of us is important to God.*** We need to also understand something else: *God did not call us to a religion to be good people in the world.* Yeah, we are to be good people in the world, that's true. Yes, we are to let our lights shine. But He didn't call us for that alone. That's a by-product of what we do. He called us for the most important job that there is, that can be offered to any people, anywhere, at any time. The tremendous and profound and wonderful things that God is doing. Now, just to show you what God thinks of you, let's review just a couple of Scriptures before we get into Colossians one.

How do you come to God? John 6:44 says: “No one can come to Me [Christ] unless the Father... draws him...” Let's think on that for just a minute! Because I don't want you to feel that God is way out here and you're way down here. Now, how did you come to know what you know? How do you come to be here and part of the body of Christ? ***Because God the Father drew you!*** Now how important is that? That's fantastic, brethren! God has called you—and all that He has called—and He's given you of His Holy Spirit. And God the Father and Jesus Christ are

involved directly in your life, every minute of the day, even though you may be working wherever you're working or doing whatever you're doing in the daytime. God is involved in your life every day!

Now here, in Colossians 1:9: “For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*... [that's a report that came back to Paul of the people in Colossi] ...do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding... [That's what God wants to be for you! Now, if you've had a difficult time studying the Bible or having Bible study, think about ***God's goal for you*** in that. Because you're being prepared for the greatest job that has ever been. You're being prepared for eternal life. You are being educated and taught so that you can be a very son or daughter of God.] (like it says here): ...in all wisdom and spiritual understanding... [but there's something that we need to do] ...That you may walk worthily of the Lord...” (vs 9-10).

Now, how do you ‘walk worthy’ to the Lord? Let's just summarize it this way:

- ***you walk in faith***, because God has called us to a way of life;
- ***you believe in hope***, because it's the hope of eternal life that you're here;
- ***and you live in love***, as Christ said.

Those are the three things that give us the strength and the energy to do the things that are pleasing to God and walking ‘worthy of the Lord.’

Now, continuing: “...being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy... [So, look at it this way: Regardless of what happens in your life—and there are going to be some tough things coming down the road as we get toward the end—that you continue with all endurance. And whatever you have to go through to suffer that's what ‘long-suffering’ is. And remember, since God is with you every minute of every day, He is there suffering with you when you have ‘long suffering.’ He is there enduring with you when you are ‘enduring.’ He is there helping you to give you joy and love and understanding. What God has called us to is a tremendous thing.] (v 12): ...Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified...” (vs 10-12).

We've heard in the past: ‘Well, you better qualify for the Kingdom of God or you ain't gonna be there.’ Well, that's true. But, who qualifies you? Yes, we have our work to do, that's true. We've got a lot of

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work to do. We've got to do it right. We have the things in our personal lives. We have the things in our families. We have the things with the brethren. We have our personal growing and overcoming. God has not called us to a stagnant life or a stagnant way of life. He has called us to an exciting, powerful thing that He has called to do. Whether that is prayer—like we had here just before the services this afternoon—praying for those who are in trouble and difficulty and sickness. That is a sacrifice to God. That's important.

Now notice—He 'qualified' us for what?: "...for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light..." (v 12). Now, what is an 'inheritance'?

Come back here to Romans 8—hold your place, we'll come back to Colossians ^[transcriber's correction] 1. Now, in the course of everyone's life—because of the way that things are—our parents die, aunts and uncles die, and every once in a while you receive and inheritance. Now, that inheritance is real, isn't it? It is concrete, isn't it? What kind of inheritance are we going to have? We are going to receive a powerful inheritance, indeed! It's not going to come easy, we have things to do. We have things to go through. We have trials that we have to endure. We have things we have to overcome. We have sins we need to repent of. We've got laziness that we've got to get rid of. All of those things are true.

Let's pick it up here in Romans 8:14—here's how our lives are to be led: "For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God... [Now, the Spirit of God isn't going to make you do it. It isn't going to pull you; it isn't going push you; it will lead you by your choices, by your desire, by your love for God—and *it will lead you.*] ...these are *the* sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father'.... [That means that, just like I started out, it is the Father Who does the drawing. Now stop and think of it for just a minute. The great Sovereign God—God the Father—Who rules the vastness of the universe; Who sent His Son to die for you so that you so that you can live. ***He Himself has called you!*** You, individually! That's what's so important and profound for a great and tremendous calling. And we can call Him 'Abba, Father.' We've got children here. Your children come up, get on your knee and say, 'Daddy.' That's a good example of that.] ...The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, **we are also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...**" (vs 14-17). What did Christ inherit?

Hold your place, let's go to Hebrews, the first chapter. We'll come back to Romans 8—and I hope

you don't run out of fingers here. So brethren, this is a joint project by God the Father and Jesus Christ to deal in your life directly. Maybe this will help get rid of some of the lackadaisicalness, because what is true is this: No minister can beat sin out of anybody, or preach it out of anybody. But, through the sacrifice of Christ, the power of God's Holy Spirit and the vision—because it says: 'Where there is no vision the people perish'—and the vision not meaning that you see like a moving picture, but you have a focus on what God is doing in your life, and why God is doing it.

Hebrews 1:1: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things..." (vs 1-2). Now, what does 'all things' mean? *The universe!* God doesn't do things for nothing. He didn't create the universe out there that it isn't going to be used. No, ***He created it to use it!*** Now, let's just give another example. If you own a piece of property that's yours, isn't it? You put in your will: when I die I want to give it to so-and-so. When you die they inherit the property and it becomes theirs. Now, let's apply the same thing here. Jesus Christ is the Heir of ALL things. And we'll see where that puts us. Is the universe a physical thing out there that can be seen—just like if you own land, you can stand on it? *Yes!* That's what He's inherited. Now notice: "...by Whom also He made the worlds... [And He made it ***for the very purpose of calling us.*** Think on that!] ... Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high; Having been made so much greater than *any of* the angels, inasmuch as He has inherited a name exceedingly superior to them" (vs 2-4). Because He never called any of them His sons, or begotten by Him.

Now, let's come back to Romans 8, and let's complete part of the picture here. We just read it there, v 16: "...that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God **and joint heirs with Christ...** [who what? *Who inherited 'all things.* You have a real, joint inheritance coming. That's why when He says, 'to those who overcome' and are 'into the joy of the Lord'...] (Now, notice there's another catch that comes with it): ...—if indeed we suffer together with Him... [So there are going to be times when we are going to suffer. But how do we get through these times of sufferings and difficulties. Now, I'm not going to ask anybody to raise their hands if you have never had a trial. Because I don't think anybody's hand would be raised—we all have them. I have mine, you have

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yours—and God gives that to us, because God wants to know what is in our hearts. Are we going to trust Him in everything? Or, are we going to be like the ‘seed sown by the way’ or ‘sown into the thorns and thistles’ that we give up. No!] (Now notice what happens here if we suffer together with Him, because there is a reward for that): ...so that we may also be glorified together with Him” (vs 16-17).

Now, let’s just think about this for just a minute. We’ll go one more verse here, v 18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” Now, they, just recently, perfected the technology where they can take almost 3-D pictures of babies in the womb. How many have seen that on the news? Some of you did—fantastic, isn’t it? And they found that at 12-weeks old, these babies are moving their arms or moving their legs or practicing walking; they’re opening their mouths or opening their eyes; they’re smiling; they’re reacting if they hear noise because it comes right through the mother’s abdomen and right into the embryonic fluid, which then transmits the sound to their ears. So they hear! So here’s this new life. At eight weeks the baby is fully developed, but you see, we’ve never thought of it this way. After a life has been conceived, that life has it’s first existence in its mother’s womb. And it grows to a certain point. In this life, in the womb, it’s not able to see, it can hear a little bit, but it practices all the basic things it will need when it’s born into the world—to begin to live—sucks its thumb and so forth, so it gets a little practice for nursing.

Now, when the baby is born it’s quite an event, and here comes a brand new life, that it has to take its first breath. The first thing that it must do is breathe and it’s never done it before. So likewise, when we are resurrected. Now the baby is born, it breathes, has to be fed—all the things that go along with living. And you can see how temporary human life is. And isn’t it amazing how much vanity we all have in spite of the fact that we could die in just a snap of a finger. Then God calls us and opens up our mind, gives us His Spirit, puts the very seed of begettal in our minds, in the spirit of our minds, to become then the begotten children of God, yet to be born at the resurrection. And this is what it’s talking about here, that we can be glorified together with Him. Now when we are born again at the resurrection, we are going to be different and we are going to do things for the first time that we have never done—just like when we were born from our mother’s womb, *voila!* we did things we never did before.

So you might say that there are the three categories of your life:

- 1) In the womb,

- 2) in the world

- 3) and born again into the Kingdom of God.
- Amazing thing, isn’t it?

So we’re going to have to suffer some things. As we look down the road and see how this world is really going, excuse the expression: “to hell in a hand-basket”—which it really is. There’s going to be a lot of suffering, and there’s going to come a time when we’re going to be despised. And there’s going to come a time when we won’t have the time to study, to pray, to overcome like we do now—which gives it a far higher priority, when we understand it, than perhaps we’ve even thought of. “[They] *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” So you see, Paul is writing here *so that they will be inspired*:

- the *desire* to overcome;
- the *desire* to repent;
- the *desire* to love God;
- the *desire* to change;
- the *desire* to be in the Kingdom of God.

Now, if you have that then you won’t ever have to worry about being zealous or not.

Let’s come back to Colossians, the first chapter. So what I want you to do today, with what I’m going to bring this afternoon is: ***I want you stir up the Spirit of God in you for that desire.*** I want you to see, in your minds eye, as it were, that

- God Himself is personally dealing with you;
- God is helping you;
- God has given His Spirit to you;
- God loves you;
- Christ loves you

and wants you to change and grow and overcome to receive the greatest blessings that you could possibly receive.

Now let’s come back here to Colossians 1:13: “Who has personally rescued us... [Now, as I mentioned in the *All About the New Testament*, there is a special verb in the Greek which is called ‘the middle voice verb.’ And we’re going to see this again in Ephesians, the first chapter. But this means that the subject *God* is also the final recipient of the action; so it could be translated *himself* or *personally*. So I translated it here]: “Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [Have you ever thought of that? Why are you here and not there? *Because God Himself has ‘personally rescued you from the power of darkness.’*] ...and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love.” in other words, we are all under the jurisdiction of Jesus Christ and subject to the Kingdom of God, though the Kingdom of God is not here because the Kingdom of God is not of this world. It is to come! But we’re going to be a part of that.

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Now, let's come down here to v 26: *Even the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints; To whom **God did will**... [Anything that you understand is **by the will of God**.] ...to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory...* That's why Christ is in us. Not only are we going to share the inheritance with Him at the resurrection, but He is in us now. And we are, as Paul says in I Cor. 3, we are a temple of God. God wants to live and dwell in His people at this point right now. That's His whole purpose.

Now let's come to II Corinthians 6:14. Just like we covered this morning, we are not to love the world; we live in it, we're not of it, and so forth. "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.... [So there are things we have to watch out for; there are things we have to do: we have to live our lives correctly and so forth.] ...For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: 'I will dwell in them and walk in *them*...' [And you could also say, 'enjoy with them and suffer with them.' And as it says a little later on, 'and sup with them.' God the Father has called us, through Jesus Christ, to a personal, fellowship relationship with Him: through study, through prayer, through living and walking in God's way. That's a tremendous thing! And in that, God is with us every minute of every day in everything that we do. Now that's a tremendous thing when you understand that.] ...I will dwell in them and walk in *them* and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.... [So God says of the world]: ...Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,' says *the* Lord, 'and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says *the* Lord Almighty" (vs 14-18).

That's why God called you—God loves you; God desires you. He didn't call the rich, didn't call the mighty, didn't call the great, didn't call the famous—He called you and me for a great and tremendous purpose far and beyond anything that the world could ever think of. Because it hasn't ever entered into their minds, or they have never even thought of it. But, it has to be through God's Spirit that we understand it.

Now let's come to Ephesians, the first chapter, and let's see what we need to do here. If there's any one thing I want you to remember from this mes-

sage, which is this—because I know, as I've experienced in my life—many times you're going to come to a trial where you're walking through your "valley of death." Whether it be because of sickness; whether it be because loss of a loved one; whether it be because of loss of job; whether it be... whatever the circumstances may be. And there are going to be times when you're going to have to come to God and understand that without God there is nothing. And He's going to bring each and every one of us to the point that we are going to totally trust in Him for everything. And if I could say, that's a summary of every trial and difficulty that comes along—that's the whole purpose in it. Because then, just like the little baby in the womb is practicing to walk and to suck its thumb, so likewise when we are living in this world and the trials and difficulties we go through, we are learning ***to walk with Christ, to trust in that faith, to believe in that hope and to live in love.*** That's how we learn.

• Now, let's come to Ephesians 1:3 "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ..."

- Is it not a heavenly thing that God the Father has called each one of us?
- Is it not a heavenly thing to receive the Spirit of God?
- Is it not a heavenly thing to understand the Word of God?—which God gives us, because only He can give us the understanding? *Yes it is!*

Now notice v 4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself... [That's an awesome statement, isn't it? So when you get down to the bottom of your 'valley of death' that you have to walk through, ask God for the strength and power and Spirit to help you. Because ***He has personally chosen you for Himself***. I don't know about you, but that overwhelms me! But that's how great and fantastic and vast that the promises of God are.] ...before *the* foundation of *the* world... [That's His plan that He had before the foundation of the world.] ...***in order that we might be holy***... [Now think about that! God is Holy, right? *Yes!* And like He says in Lev. and Peter wrote in I Peter 1, 'be Holy because I am Holy.'] ...That we might be holy and blameless... [because you're in a relationship of grace and mercy and kindness] ...and blameless before Him in love; Having predestinated us..." (vs 4-5). This is our predestination: this is why God has called us. Just like when a new life is conceived in the womb, it is predestined—that if everything goes the way it should—to be born in 9 months as a son or daughter of that mother and father.

Now when you're waiting for the child to be born you're all anxious, you're all preparing, every-

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thing has to be just right. And when the time comes—I remember when Richelle was born, my mom and Delores and I and the three boys, we were down at Salt Shaker in South Pasadena and we're sitting there eating, and Delores says, "Oh, I'm going to have it." And here we just got served. And we said, "Oh no, this can't be." So we all started eating like horses that never had had any hay. We got out of there and we had a mid-wife deliver the baby. We got home and the mid-wife got there and within two minutes Richelle was born. And my mom was right there and she said, "It's a girl! It's a girl!"

Now look, let's understand something: don't you think there's going to be joy in heaven by God the Father and Jesus Christ and all the angels when the resurrection takes place?! *Yes, indeed, without a doubt!* "Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, **according to the good pleasure of His own will**..." [That's how much God is involved in our lives. I tell you what: I don't think that you will—once you really grasp this—ever have an excuse for not praying or studying or trying and overcoming. God will bless you that much more.] (Now notice what this is do—v 6): "...To the praise of the glory of His grace... [that's why we have the grace of God. That's why we live under His grace.] ...wherein He has made us objects of His grace in the Beloved Son; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence... [and furthermore, God has taken you into His confidence. And He has revealed to you what the world does not know.] (It says right here): ...Having made known to us the mystery of His own will... [The Family of God.] ...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself; That in the *divine* plan for the fulfilling of the times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *Yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will; That we might be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ..." (vs 5-12). The purpose of God—when you understand it with His Spirit—

- is to **inspire** you to love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being.
- And to **inspire** to love your neighbor as yourself.
- and the brethren as Christ has loved us.
- And to **inspire** us to desire, with ever fiber in our being, to be in His Kingdom.

That's why God has called us. That's why we do the things that we do.

Now let's come to Ephesians 3—and this is my favorite part of the Bible. It has more to it; it tells more of the plan of God than anything else, right here. As we go through this, let's just let the words sink in. Verse 11: "According to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, In Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith. So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for* your glory. For this cause... [This is how Paul looked at the problems and difficulties in his life. This is how we need to look at the problems and difficulties which are coming on the world—and we're going to be confronted with just like we have never, ever, ever expected. So keep this in mind.] ...For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named... [And you have a new name coming.] ...That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *And* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [That is of God's plan. And then after we're born into the Kingdom of God at the resurrection, to go on from there for all eternity!] ...And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God**" (vs 11-19).

- That's your purpose.
- That's your calling.
- That's your inheritance.
 - And may that inspire you
 - and give you vision
 - and hope
 - and understanding
 - so that you can ***walk in faith, believe in hope and live in love.***

Now, we'll conclude here, v 20: "...Now to Him Who is able... [and that means to *have the power*] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 20-21).

Brethren, God is directly and personally involved with you and in you and loves you, has a purpose for you. And all that He called. Always keep that focus and vision in mind.

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 2/6/08

God's Personal Calling

Scripture References:

- 1) John 6:44
- 2) Colossians 1:9-12
- 3) Romans 8:14-17
- 4) Hebrews 1:1-2
- 5) Romans 8:16-18
- 6) Colossians 1:13, 26
- 7) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 8) Ephesians 1:3-12
- 9) Ephesians 3:11-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 3
- Leviticus
- 1 Peter 1

God's Calling

Fred R. Coulter – January 4, 2005

Living in the world that we live in today:

How is someone going to find God?

How is God going to find us?

What gives you the right to be right as compared to others being wrong?

What makes you think that you have the Truth and others don't have the Truth?

How can the majority be so wrong?

Well, the Bible shows us that Satan the devil is deceiving the whole world. And it also tells us that the world is eating off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There are many good things in the world. But—and if you don't have the tapes, you can go online, they're on there, too: *Good Works, Evil Works, Etc.*—there are four there. Not all good comes from God. Let's put it this way: not all *apparent* good—and that which can be defined as benefits—come from God. Remember what Satan said to Jesus during the temptation. He said, "If you will bow down and worship me"—now he's also called "the god of this world" and he's the one who blinds the minds of those who don't believe. But he said to Jesus, "If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world."

- Now, would you not think that that is a benefit?
- And how many people have striven to rule the world? And empires?

Currently there is a movie coming out—and it was also on the History Channel—*Alexander the Great*. But he died! So out of all of this, how does God operate? And out of all of this, how does God fulfill His promise that we see here in Matthew 16?—so let's turn there. Jesus Christ gave this promise—and I will come back to this with another sermon about the keys that God gave to Peter, but we won't focus on that at the present time. Let's come here to v 13 and let's see how God operates: "Now after coming into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus questioned His disciples, saying, 'Whom do men declare Me, the Son of man, to be?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But you, whom do you declare Me to be?' Then Simon Peter answered *and* said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered *and* said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona... [which means 'son of Jonah'] ...for flesh and blood did not reveal *it* to you, but My Father, Who *is* in heaven' " (vs 13-17).

There is the first key: ***God reveals Himself to those that He calls.*** Now we'll see how He does it! And it's really quite an amazing thing because in doing so, the world doesn't know it. So that's quite an amazing thing that God is doing.

Now, v 18: And I say also to you, that you are Peter... [which in the Greek is 'petros' meaning *little rock*.] ...but upon this Rock... [meaning *a great massive cliff*—and that's why in the New Testament I have a full footnote explanation of that.] ...I will build My church... [Now, what does this tell us? This tells us right here—as affirmed in other places—that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. And who is going to do the building? *Jesus Christ*. He will build His Church. Now we will see how He calls, how He builds, etc.] (Now notice the rest of this verse): ...and *the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it....* [In other words, it will never die out.

And I always had fun when I was pastoring in Salt Lake—I pastored there six years in WCG—and I remember one time I was...they sent a letter into Pasadena and said, "I want a visit of one of your ministers and talk about baptism and so forth." So they sent the letter to me, so I went out to see this man. And this man's name was Job—which he pronounced job. And so I get there, and five minutes after I get there and we're talking, there's a knock-knock on the door and two elders from the Mormon Church come in. And he says, "I had you come over because I would like you to debate them as to which is the right church." Well, needless to say, I had done a lot of study of the doctrine of Mormonism. And the basic sum of it is this: The Church died out and God raised it up through Joseph Smith, and he was back in New York someplace. Well, historically speaking, there was a Church of God Seventh Day less than 50 miles from where Joseph Smith allegedly had the vision from God. And the first clue that it was not the true God was that he fell on his back. Whenever anyone has an encounter with the true God they do what? *They fall on their face!* Don't they? *Yes!* Then I turned to this Scripture and I said, "Well, now let's read this." And I said, "Jesus promised that the gates of the grave—or the gates of hell as it is in the *King James*, which the Greek word is 'Hades' which means *grave*—shall not prevail against it." And I looked at them, I said, "Now, I'm confronted with a problem: Either Jesus lied or Joseph Smith lied. And since Jesus does not lie, I accept His word, and therefore what Joseph Smith said could not be true because it contradicts the Word of God and Jesus Christ Himself." And I got up and left. No use continuing the argument.

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Now, as we find in the Gospels, Jesus specifically called and chose 12 disciples and by time we come to, after His resurrection, there were 120 that were meeting in the upper room (Acts 1). So from the time of Jesus' resurrection until the end of the age here's what God is going to do: let's come to Luke 24. So somewhere on earth this is always going to be being done, whether it's in the local area; whether it is by today with the mass media and communication that we have today. Here's what he said, let's pick it up here in Luke 24:44: "And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures..." (vs 44-45).

Now there is another key thing. I want you to write down these key things:

- 1) God reveals Himself to the individual personally—now we'll talk about this a little bit later on.
- 2) In order to understand the Scriptures, Christ has to open the mind.

That becomes a very important thing.

- Because if we **follow** the Word of God,
- and **believe** the Word of God,
- and **live by** the Word of God,
- and we have the Spirit of God,
- and our minds are opened to the Scriptures,

then we know things—not because we're great or because we're important, because we'll see in a little bit, we're not!—but **because God has done it!** So we're not standing up and saying, "We are right because we are people and the world is wrong because we judge them so. What we find out is: God is the one Who says the world is deceived. God is the one Who controls who He calls and opens their mind—and we'll examine that in just a little bit here. When we get to some of these other things about God's calling and how God dealt in our lives, if you have comment or two to add to it, you might think about it. How is it one day you were going along minding your own business and then something changed—because it did. Just like here. With the apostles something changed that didn't happen before, right? Remember, before this time, He said, "Oh, you of little faith! Slow to believe! Why are you hard-hearted?" You open their minds to understand the Scriptures.

A change! That's important because today a lot of people read the Scriptures. And just like when I was back in Goshen for the Feast, I checked in on the religious channels back there because we don't have any down in our cable network where we are. And so I went on the religious channel and here's Charles Stanley. Now, he was giving a sermon going right down the line: this Scripture/that Scripture, this Scripture/that Scripture, this Scripture/that Scripture—and

I said "Hey! Right on." Then he gets to the end and he says, "Now all you need to do is believe in your heart and Jesus comes into your life." And I never can figure it out: Why do Baptists—who used to believe in baptism—say you don't have to be baptized today.

Now then, v 46: "And said to them, 'According as it is written, it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from *the* dead the third day. And in His name... [This is how God works. First way He works: He uses those that He has chosen to do this]: ...in His name repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. For you are witnesses of these things'" (vs 46-48). Then He said, 'You go to Jerusalem and you'll be empowered to do so.'

Now, come to Acts, the first chapter and let's see how long this was going to continue. So first of all:

- 1) God has to reveal Himself
- 2) God has to open your mind to the Scriptures.

And remember, when He opened their mind to the Scriptures, that was what is called today the Old Testament, correct? The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, yes, indeed. Now we come here to Acts 1, and here's what He told them—v 4: "And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to 'await the promise of the Father, which,' *He said*, 'you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.' So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority; But you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and **unto the ends of the earth**' " (vs 4-8). Now that is quite a prophetic statement, too. Because now the apostles are still witnessing to all nations "unto the end of the earth" through their word.

Let's come here to Matthew 28—we'll see how God and Christ also said He would work. As we're turning there we also know that He said there would be false prophets, right? And He also said, "Don't let anyone deceive you," correct? So He put it upon us. ***It is our individual obligation to prove the Truth.*** And if we do, God will open our minds to understand the Truth—and we'll see how He does that in just a bit. But here's what He said, v 18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations... [Now, disciples are learners of Jesus Christ. And as I've men-

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tioned many times, the whole goal and purpose of a disciple is to become as the teacher—and Christ is the Teacher, correct? *Yes!* That's the whole goal. That's the whole purpose.] ...baptizing them **into** the name of the Father... [because we receive the begetting from God the Father, don't we? *Yes, indeed!*] ...and **of** the Son... [because it's through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we have our sins forgiven.] ...and **of** the Holy Spirit..." (vs 18-19).

Now notice, it's **not** 'in the name of the Son, in the name of the Holy Spirit.' It's 'in the name **of** the Father and of the Son, and **of** the Holy Spirit.' Now question: Are all three involved, though this does not prove a trinity? If you look back at it from today's point of view, as has been taught in so many churches, you can think that it is trinitarian. But it's not! It is showing that God the Father is involved; Jesus Christ is involved; and as Jesus said in Acts 1, 'You will receive power of the Holy Spirit.' And the Holy Spirit is involved. Because **you cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ**, as we will see, **without the Spirit of God**.

Comment was made (from audience): It's not in the name but **into**—in other words, the person doing it is only a vehicle because what? *You're going to bear the name of the Father*. Not the Church. Not the minister. This is really an amazing thing that God is doing. And as I was thinking about this, I was struck by the fact that what is really needed is a good book on church history. Now there are several books out that different ones have written and so forth, which are pretty good. And I'll see if I can get the information on that. What you might do, you might try "Giving and Sharing" or the "The Bible Sabbath Association." I think they have some fairly good ones there. Because church history, as the world writes it, is not about the history of the True Church of God, but it's the history of how the counterfeit church came about. Which, in the New Testament is called 'the mystery of iniquity' or 'the mystery of lawlessness—which Paul said began in his day and would last until the return of Jesus Christ. So here we have these two systems coming down now side-by-side.

Now let's finish here: "Teaching them to observe **all things that I have commanded you**..." [Now that's an interesting study, isn't it? You might go through the New Testament and say, 'What did Jesus command?' And also with that, you can see with the Sabbath, what did He show by example concerning the Sabbath—not only declaring Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath, but what He was doing in good and healing and teaching and things like this. That is how the Sabbath is to be used.] ...And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age' " (v 20).

Now then, how does God do it? All right, let's see how God does it. Let's first of all come to John 14. It's quite a process that God does. And it's something that the world does not know. And it is something that happens to an individual as God is dealing with that person. And we can bring in some of our experiences here in a bit. John 14:15—we'll see the beginning of this: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age..." [So this is a promise to all that God calls.] (Notice v 17): "...*Even* the Spirit of the truth..." (vs 15-17)—and that is a key that God deals with when He begins to call someone.

Not only does God work through our lives and circumstances and situations, but let's understand that one of the key things that comes along when God begins to call us is this: **What is the Truth?** When you begin asking that question and begin reading the Bible—because today now we have the Bible, which is a great and tremendous blessing that we have it. And that's why there are so many today that want to destroy it by corrupting it. That's Satan's attack so that people won't understand the Word of God. Well, God is not going to be denied! And the Word of God is **never** going to die out. It will always be there. So today we have made our way through some of these corrupt versions, that is true. But, it is the Truth that you seek. And Jesus said in another place, "Your word is the Truth." And John wrote in another place, I John 2:21, that "no lie comes of the truth." So then, when someone is interested in God and wants to know about God and get in contact with God and God begins working with that individual, one of the things that they are confronted with is: do they want the Truth? And if they want the Truth then what do they do? If they have the Word of God and they study the Word of God and begin to understand some of it, and then they look at the religions of the world and they say, 'Wow! Look at all these things that aren't right.' And yet, all those things were going on before you even came to this point, right? Never gave it a thought!

...*Even* the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it... [So this is an operation that is accomplished without other people being able to observe necessarily what is going on.] ...but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you..." (vs 17). So here, this is quite a statement. When God begins dealing with a person—and we'll see how He does this in just a little bit—it is a spiritual thing that occurs, and God's Spirit is **with them**. That's the first change that takes place.

- Then begins to convict them of Truth,
- begins to convict them of sin.

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- begins to convict them of how the way of man is—that seems right but leads unto death.
- And how then the carnal mind is “enmity against God” and “deceitful above all things.”

And all of this is the Spirit of Truth *leading* that individual to repentance—if they continue on that course. And we know that God is the one Who is doing it.

Then He says here: “ ‘...and shall be within you.... [That’s another key thing. There is a difference in God’s Spirit begin *with* you and *in* you. God’s Spirit being *with you* is to *lead you to the Truth*. God’s Spirit being *in you*—after repentance and baptism—puts you in a relationship with God that God Himself has begotten you with His Spirit and your whole goal and purpose now is to grow and change and develop and overcome to be in the first resurrection and be a son of God.] (Then He says): ...I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also. In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you.... [And of course, when He was resurrected then they saw Him. They understood that. Now then, He ascends into heaven, correct? Now notice, here is the key—we’ve gone over this many times and this is fundamental]: ...The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him [or reveal Myself to him].’ Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’.... [Here’s how God begins to do it.] ...Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him’ ” (vs 17-23). Now that’s a very important thing to understand: ‘make Our abode with him.’ And we will see that it also means *in him*. Very important! Having to do with the Holy Spirit.

Then here’s the dividing line. Here is where the difference comes between those in the world and those that God is dealing with, and Christ is manifesting Himself to those individuals, but not to the world. They can be standing side-by-side and unless the mind is opened they don’t know what’s happening. “ ‘The one who does not love Me does not keep My words... [You can just apply that to anything.] ... and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me’ ” (v 24). So, what are we dealing [with] in all these things comes directly from God the Father.

Let’s look at another Scripture here in John and then we’ll look at some in Revelation and we will

see the operation of how God does it. John 6:44: “No one... [Because God is the one Who is doing it.] ... can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.... [So the truth is, when we begin to understand the Word of God and the Truth of God—and we’ll see, as it said there in Rom 10, ‘a preacher has to be sent. How shall they call upon him whom they have not heard?’ And ‘how shall they hear unless someone be sent.’ God does the sending. Those who are to do the preaching, do the preaching. And God does the ‘calling.’ *The Father draws him.*] (v 45): ...It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God....’ ” And that’s where all the teaching comes. We may of the words in print, but what does it do to our minds and in our hearts? How is it that we come to the understanding of these things except it is that God Himself is teaching us? And that is something that only you can experience as you study and as you draw close to God, and as you begin praying.

I don’t know about you remembering your first prayer, but I remember my first prayer—and it was: “God, help me. I’m down here and I really need Your help and You’ve said, ‘Seek and you’ll find, ask and you’ll receive.’ I need some help.” And that was the extent of my prayer. Which also illustrates another point—so we’ll just inject this here. Here are the four keys that God uses in a person’s life to bring them to Him:

- 1) **Trouble**—especially trouble you can’t solve.
- 2) **Trauma**—we experience something that leaves a lasting, life-long impression upon you.
- 3) **Trial**—you’re going through an experience that is beyond your ability to cope with. And you realize your inadequacies. So God uses these things.
- 4) **Temptation**

And now, through all of this then, God begins to convict you—if you’re willing to be convicted. Now if you *trouble, trauma, trials or temptation*, you don’t yield to God, you blame God and condemn God, well then He’s not going to deal with you. He will let you go your way. But if you’re convicted because of evil, personal evil and sin in your life and in the world, and you begin to understand human nature; and if you come down to a point in your life—and lots of times God will use sickness or accident or in addition to it, where you’re lying there in bed and you think, “Oh, God, why am I here? Is there a purpose in life? Who are You and where are You?” Well, God uses all these things. Now how does God respond?

Let’s come to Matthew 7. Speaking of things God always uses. God always uses the technology at

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hand. When the printing press came, did He use the printing press? *Yes, He did.* When radio came, did He use radio? *Yes, He did.* Television? *Yes!* But who follows quickly behind with all the falsehoods? *Satan the devil!* Now we have the internet, and God is using that, too. And so is Satan, trying to bury everything. But the ones that God can call, He can lead them and He can bring them to where He wants them to be if they are doing the things that we have said and seeking the Truth and so forth. So we'll see how God responds.

Temptation—well, maybe you're under a great temptation of Satan the devil and you want out of it. For example: What if you're living in San Francisco and all there are around you are homosexuals and you have great temptation to get involved with them—and you cry out to God to help you out so you don't get involved. And He answers that prayer. So you seek God to deliver you out of it.

Matthew 7—let's see a promise that Jesus gave and then we will see how He fulfills it. And it's reciprocal. Verse 7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you.... [Of course, we know then if you're asking in Truth, you want to know the Truth, it'll be given to you.] ...Seek, and you shall find.... [So there has to be an initiative on our part. We'll see how God responds.] ...Knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened" (vs 7-8). And of course, the Greek means *seek and keep on seeking, ask and keep on asking, knock and keep on knocking*—and God will respond.

Now let's see how God responds. Come here, first of all, to John 4. Who's God looking for, and how is He going to find them? Quite profound! The earth is a big place, isn't it? There are billions of people on the earth. I'm convinced and know that God is not—probably, but undoubtedly—doing far more than we know, through far more people than we ever thought. For example: We have one man in Egypt seeking God. All alone! All he has is the Word of God. He does have a computer. He has gotten online. He has come to our website. He's asked us what to do. It's really quite a thing and he lives in such a society that he's very fearful for his life. But he's still seeking God. Now, let's see how then, since we're commanded to seek, let's see how God responds.

John 4:20—because a lot of people think you have to be in a certain place to worship God. Not today! You have to have a certain *heart* to worship God. The place doesn't matter. But it used to be said: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain... [that is Mt. Gerizim near Samaria] ...but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said

to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father.... [Yet today, you can write to Jerusalem and you can put a prayer on a piece of paper and pay so much and they'll go out and stuff it into the Wailing Wall out there. Maybe that's why the Wailing Wall is ready to collapse, there's so much paper stuffed in there. And a lot of people think that will guarantee an answer to that prayer. Look, you could fill the earth with paper, but if your heart isn't right, you're not going to get an answer.] (Now, v 22): ...You do not know what you worship.... [That's a whole other sermon topic—most people don't know what they worship.] ...We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth... [There it is, right there. And we'll see *how* God responds. It says here, as we go on]: ...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner.... [So how's God seeking?] ...God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (vs 20-24).

All right, let's see how God does this. What if there's someone out there just saying, "Oh, God help me in my life. I really want to get my life squared around. I really want to understand about you"—whatever the circumstances may be. Does God hear that prayer? *Yes, He does.*

Let's come here to the book of Revelation. Let's see something and—how shall we say—a use of God's Spirit which is not the begetting of the Holy Spirit, but the use of God's Spirit to fulfill what God has promised here in seeking those who worship Him. Revelation 1:4: "John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia: Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before His throne..." What are the seven Spirits? What do the seven spirits do? *Obviously, they have a job to perform, don't they?*

Let's see it repeated again—Revelation 3:1: "And to the angel of the church in Sardis, write: These things says He Who has the **seven Spirits of God** and the seven stars. I know your works, *and* that you have a name as if you are alive, but are dead."

Revelation 4:5: "And proceeding from the throne were lightnings and thunders and voices; and seven lamps of fire, which are the **seven Spirits of God**, *were* burning before the throne."

Revelation 5:6—and this tells us a little bit more about the seven Spirits; what do they do? "Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and before the elders, *was* standing a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and

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seven eyes, which are the **seven Spirits of God** that are sent into all the earth...”

So these seven Spirits are sent. You might liken them unto spiritual, seeing eyes and robots that God send into the earth. What do they do? *They seek out those who are seeking God.* So I believe when a person first is being drawn by God, one of these Spirits is doing the work, and to see if they will continue to follow after God and do the will of God. And then Christ becomes more involved. Because look, Christ is the one Who is doing it, isn't it? *Yes!* The seven horns and that Lamb are likened to the seven churches, right? The seven Spirits then are sent into all the earth.

Now, let's come to II Chronicles 16 and let's see it further described.

(go to the next track)

Now let's come to II Chronicles—I said 16—but let's go back to chapter 15 first and we'll learn another very important principle here; because God has set before every human being life and death, blessing and cursing, and He wants us to choose life, to love Him—but He leaves the choice up to us. God is not going to force us. God is not going to make us do something just for the sake of doing it. Otherwise that would abrogate free choice. “Free choice” has to be *free choice* or we would just all be robots. And so, He leaves it up to us—but He works with us. Now, II Chronicles 15:1: “And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: And he went out to meet Asa [King of Judah], and said unto him, ‘Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; **The LORD is with you, while ye be with him**... [it's a mutual thing] ... **and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you**’ ” (vs 1-2). Now that's a principle that we can apply to every single human being in the world. Not only was this a true statement that he made, but it was also a prophecy, because then what happened? Asa got all the people of Judah together and they all made agreement that they would seek God, that they would do His commandments—and God heard them and answered them and gave them rest from their enemies all around about. And he took down the idols and the groves and took down his mother from being queen—removed her from being queen, and the grove that she had made and so forth.

Then he came to a point where he didn't do what God wanted him to do. Let's come to II Chronicles 16:7: “And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of

Syria escaped out of thine hand.... [Which then is a fulfillment of this prophecy, that ‘as long as you are with God, God is with you.’] ...Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. **For the eyes of the LORD** run to and fro throughout the whole earth... [Those are the seven Spirits of God. So not only does He have his angels, who are running and controlling things on earth, but He has His eyes, which are the seven Spirits, which go through the whole earth to see and seek out those who are seeking God.] ...to show himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him.... [In other words, a repentant heart and repentant attitude and so forth.] ...Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars’ ” (vs 7-9).

Now, you can go back and you can analyze the life of David—how he did well until the affair with Bathsheba; and from that time he had trouble from that time forth. God was still with him but he had troubles. So here we have the principles. This is how God begins dealing with individuals and the world doesn't know it. So this means that even...we could take it this way: What if you are an independent prospector who virtually lives in the hills alone and you have a Bible. And you begin to seek God. He can find you and you can find Him.

Now let's look at some other things that go along with this. Let's look at a principle. Just put in your notes: Matthew 22:14: “Many are called but few are chosen.” Now why are few chosen? The answer is because *you repent!* Because they come along, just like the Parable of the Sower: The cares and riches of the world choke out the Word so that it's not profitable. You have those who get excited for a short time, but give up on it because there's a little trouble and difficulty that comes along. Then you have those who fall into the good ground and so forth, and they produce. So that's why there are “many called and few chosen” because *few* repent.

Now when a person repents and yields themselves to God—let's come to Acts, the second chapter and let's see this in action. We'll come back to this with another sermon—I plan on giving a sermon in the very near future about “what do you mean the administration of death *vs* the administration of the Spirit?” But here on the day of Pentecost when God poured out the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and all the 120 who were there, and the apostles began speaking and preaching simultaneously in many languages—and how many thousands and thousands were there at the temple we don't know. But let's see the result of it after Peter preached and said, “You with wicked hands have taken Christ and have killed

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Him”—and let’s see what he tells them to do: Acts 2:36: “ ‘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, we’re going to see there’s another aspect of repentance that comes along with it, which is the knowledge and conviction that since Christ died for our sins, our individual sins have their part in killing Christ.] ...Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’ ” (vs 36-38). Remember, a lot of those people who were there were probably some of the same ones in the crowd who were saying, ‘Crucify Him! Crucify Him!’ when Jesus was brought up to be judged by Pilate. So it really go to them, and their repentance was profound at this point.

Now notice: “ ‘...and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.... [Now, we’ve seen how the seven Spirits work as God’s eyes, to be with an individual. Now then, we’re going to see how the other part of that is fulfilled, as Jesus said, ‘Holy Spirit is with you but shall within you.’ We’ll see what happens here.] ...For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, as many as *the* Lord our God may call]’ ...So the way that a person is chosen, as we will see, is that they answer the call.] ...And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who joyfully received his message were baptized; and about three thousand souls were added that day” (vs 38-41).

Now we don’t know how many people were there at the temple. I’m sure that there were probably 30-40 thousand all jammed in there on that day of Pentecost. And they all heard the same thing, but only 3,000 repented. When we look at our small groups we think “3,000—Wow! That’s a lot.” But 3,000 out of that whole group there was really not that much. But we see several things involved here: God does the calling and we do the repenting. Now you can put in your notes there: Rom. 2, which is this: “The graciousness of God *leads us* to repentance.” That is if we respond to God.

Now when that happens...let’s come back here to John 15:9 and let’s see what Jesus said to the apostles. Now, once we repent and receive the Holy Spirit of God we’re to grow in the grace and knowledge and the love of God. And after baptism and the receipt of the Holy Spirit, which is a beginning, then we are in training for eternal life. That’s quite an amazing thing when you think of it that way—we’re

in training for eternal life—really an amazing thing! That’s why, when you strip away all the façade of religion, and all of the do-goodism—because people want to do go and be thought of as good, and a lot of them are sincere and upright in the world—God just hasn’t called them, that’s all. God has His time for them later on, as we know through the Holy Days. But here, John 15:9: “As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you... [So we now have a love coming from Jesus Christ as expressed in His sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. So just put in your margin there: Isa. 53 and the prophecy of His death; and Psalms 22, and so forth. And that Jesus went to the cross looking for the joy that lied ahead and despised the shame—*for us!* And all those down through history that He has called.] ...live in My love.... [the *King James* says ‘abide’—but that means *to live, to remain, to stay*; ‘live in My love.’] ...If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full” (vs 9-11). And of course, that’s a prophecy. The fullness of joy is going to come when? *It’s going to come at the resurrection*, is it not? *Yes, indeed!* He said in another place, ‘In this world you will have tribulation. But be courageous, I’ve overcome the world.’ So this ‘fullness of joy’—yes, we have joy now, true, absolutely! But to be FULL of joy is going to be at the resurrection.

“This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you.... [And this is the challenge, isn’t it? *Yes, because has called us from diverse backgrounds and different things and so forth.* And to learn to love one another can only come through the Spirit of God and has to be exercised.] ...No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you” (vs 12-14). Now stop and think about this: You ever thought of it that Jesus is not only your Lord and Master and High Priest in heaven about, but ***He’s also your Friend!*** And a friend in the biblical sense is someone who we would say in today’s language: ‘true blue’—meaning:

- someone you can trust;
- someone you can love;
- someone who is for you;
- someone who is going to help you
- someone who cares for you—and all of that.

And He says, v 15: “No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father.” Which is quite a thing, isn’t it? How do we know the plan of God? *Because Christ reveals it.* Just go out into the world. Look at the phi-

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losophy books. Look at the religions. *None of them can tell you what God is really doing.* And Satan has been in there and mixed everything up so they don't know. I think if you take and look at the religion of Hinduism, you can see the great confusion that is there, and they don't know what the plan of God is. If you've been a bad boy or a bad girl you're going to be re-incarnated and become a fly, and then you're going to have to work your way up through all the levels of souls until you can again possess a human body. And if you do good then you're going to make it to nirvana. Or you can ask the Protestants or the Catholics—you go to heaven. Well, how does that happen when the Bible says there's a resurrection. So He let's us know what He's doing.

Now v 16 is a key one—this ties in with what we covered there in John 6:44: “You yourselves... [and that's interesting because in the Greek that is the ‘middle voice verb’—which means *you of your own initiative of yourself*.] ...did not choose Me, but **I have personally chosen you**... [I gave a sermon recently on that—*God's Personal Calling*. And this is what's so marvelous, brethren, and God wants us to always remember and not forget: ***God the Father and Jesus Christ are personally involved in our lives.*** And They do it by His Spirit. And They do it because They love us. And that's why when you have something where men are put between you and God, that's not right. ***You have direct connection to God the Father and Jesus Christ!***] ...personally chosen you and ordained you, that you should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you.” Now, that's a tremendous promise. I mean, that is something!

Now, let's look at the Holy Spirit. We saw there you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. When that happens—that comes at baptism and the laying on of hands—and then God's Spirit comes within you to unite with the spirit of your mind. And that is what is called the “begettal” of the Holy Spirit. We're begotten of God. Now just like when we were first conceived in the flesh, our fathers begot us and our mothers delivered us. Begettal comes first, birth comes after nine months of gestation period for human beings. So likewise when we are begotten of the Holy Spirit that is a begettal and the birth—being born again—does not take place until the resurrection. That's one of the reasons I have the appendix in there: *What Do You Mean, Born Again?* And what is meant by “being born of God.” Because there's so much confusion that's out there in the world.

Now, let's see how all of this comes together with the Spirit of God. Let's come to Romans, the eighth chapter. I just want to remind you what we

read earlier in John 14: where Jesus said, “If you love Me, My Father will love you and WE [now that's two] will come and make Our abode with you.” In other words; “live in you by the begettal of the Holy Spirit” which is the earnest, as we'll see in just a bit, that God gives us. Here in Romans 8:6 it defines it a little bit more—this is the way the world is: “For to be carnally minded *is* death... [‘There's a way that seems right to a man, the ends thereof are the ways of death.’] ...but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace, Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God... [And we were all enemies of God at one time, weren't we?] ...for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in the flesh, **but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you**” (vs 6-9).. [Now, didn't Jesus say, ‘The Spirit of Truth is you and shall be **within** you’? *Yes!* That takes place at baptism and laying on of hands. Now then, God views us—even though we're still walking in the flesh—now we are His Spirit-begotten sons and daughters. And now He's going to re-create Himself **in** you with the mind of Christ and the begettal of the Father! So that, at the resurrection...

Let's go back and look at the physical birth again. Baby is begotten, grows and develops, and it actually does everything in the womb to prepare it to be ready for birth: sucks its thumb, opens its eyes, it smiles, it yawns, it sleeps, it practices walking by kicking its feet and moving its arms and things like this. And all mothers know that's the thump, thump, thump, beat, beat, beat that they feel while they're carrying their children. And just before the baby is ready to be born, she feels like she has a watermelon in her and the baby becomes quite still after it comes in the head-down position first—with the exception of perhaps a breech birth, which occasionally does happen. Then the baby is born. Now, it immediately has to do something that it never has done—that is, breathe. And it breathes the rest of its life—[in] voluntarily. God put that in there, [in]voluntarily until death. Isn't that an amazing thing?

Now likewise, when it comes time for the resurrection, when we are born again out of the grave, Bang! all of sudden things are going to be entirely different, aren't they?—as a spirit being! But just like the baby in the womb had to prepare for physical life, so likewise, when God calls us and gives us His Spirit and it is dwelling within us, this is preparing us to be born again at the resurrection.

Now, let's read it here and we'll see the two aspects of the Spirit of God from Christ and from the Father. Verse 9 again: “However, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God is indeed

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dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.... [There's another dividing line which the world cannot see. God sees it. God knows it. He's given the Spirit. God is the one Who makes the decision—and no man.] ...But if Christ *be* within you... [We're going to see one of the things that we are to do is to grow in the mind of Christ.] ...the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you... [Very interesting statement, isn't it? Who is this referring to? *This is the referring to the Spirit of the Father*, which was in Jesus, correct? *Yes!*] (Notice v 9): '...But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ...' So this fulfills the verse where it says, 'We will come and make Our abode with him.' Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of Him Who was within Christ.] ...Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that **dwells within you**" (vs 9-11).

Let's look at one other thing, come back to Romans 6 and let's look at the meaning of baptism so we can get to the point of receiving the Holy Spirit this way. Now, why does God do it this way? *He does it this way*:

- to ensure that through His plan there will be those who will be the firstfruits and in the first resurrection
- because the world, being cut off from God, He's going to save at a later date, and He doesn't want anyone to 'miss the boat'—if we could put it that way.

That's why He said in another place, "I would you were hot or cold." In other words, those in the world are "old"—God hasn't called them. He isn't dealing with them; and He will deal with them—as we know—according to the Last Great Day.

Now, when God calls us and we're baptized—let's pick it up here in Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?.... [Now, that's what baptism is. It is a death. And we'll see what kind of death. Yes, it is a symbolic death. And I've always raised everyone out of the water. But the truth is, if you stayed under the water you would literally die.] ...Or are you ignorant that we, 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; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life" (vs 1-4). Our lives are going to change.

- Now we are converted.
- Now we walk in the way of God, the way of the Lord.
- Now we keep His commandments.
- Now we love God.
- Now we trust God.
- Now we believe God.
- Now we walk by faith.

Totally different than when we were baptized.

Verse 5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death... [Now, remember the Scriptures which Jesus said: 'If any man come after Me, let him hate his father and mother'—that is to love God more in comparison to—'father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, children, lands and yes, his own life also and does not pick up his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.' So that shows how we are conjoined to His death. And how the very sacrifice of Christ is applied personally and individually to our lives.] ...if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of **His resurrection**.... [that's the hope we look forward to] ...Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed... [So now then, when we're raised out of the watery grave, we have a job to do: grow in grace and knowledge, and that the body of sin might be destroyed. That we overcome sin. We overcome human nature.] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin... [Now notice, it **doesn't say you will cease** sinning. You're **not enslaved** to sin—doesn't rule over you.] ...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). So that's what we look forward to.

Let's come to Ephesians, the first chapter, and let's see how this is described by the Apostle Paul. Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians are those very, very spiritual books which God inspired to be written by the Apostle Paul, so we can all draw closer to God. So we can all receive the fullness of gifts and of His Spirit. In Greek, almost the whole chapter is one long sentence. Bad English! But let's look at it here, let's see what he says—v 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ..." To receive the Holy Spirit of God, is that not a spiritual blessing? It says, 'heavenly things'—I think the *King James* says, 'places'—but in the Greek it is just *heavenlies*. Having the knowledge of the Truth of God, is that not a blessing? Having understanding as God gives us understanding concerning His prophecies, is that not a blessing, as we understand them? *Yes!* And here's the thing we need to realize:

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- God has called us because we are the weak of the world.
- God has called us because we are counted as nothing by the world.

And as a matter of fact, as far the world is concerned, who are we? That's why God has chosen us the way that He has. Because God is going to do something absolutely magnificent! He's going to take that which the world rejects and is going to convert them with His Spirit and teach them with His Word so THEY can rule and reign on the earth with Christ. Quite a thing, isn't it? So that THEY can be in the firstfruits and be in the family of God the Father. Tremendous and high calling.

So those are all the "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly things..." [They're heavenly things because they didn't come from the earth, they came from God! Including His Word.] (v 4): "...According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be holy and blameless before Him in love; Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will..." (vs 3-5). Now, isn't that something? We can call God 'our Father.' That to me, as long as I've been preaching and teaching, is really a very overwhelming thing to me. What a fantastic blessing that that is! Now then He talks about how He has made known His will to us.

Verse 13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the truth..." [So we come back full cycle to where we began, right?

- The Word of God;
- the Word of Truth;
- how does God begin calling you:
 - by convicting you of Truth;
 - by giving you knowledge]

...the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing... [and other Scriptures show 'baptized'] ... you were **sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...** [comes from God the Father and it is the begettal from God the Father to be His sons and daughters. And it also gives us the mind of Christ—Phil. 2:5: 'Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.' So we're sealed.

Now we are set apart from the world, spiritually speaking. The world looks at us, we're walking around, they cannot see or understand what God is doing in our lives—unless they notice we keep the Sabbath; unless they understand we've done things to help them and because they're our neighbors, we love them, etc. But still they don't understand that we are sealed with the Spirit of God.

Now notice, v 14: "Which is *the* earnest of

our inheritance... [In other words, this is the down payment that God has given us. This is the guarantee that God gives us. That we will make it to the resurrection if we are faithful. And He provides everything for us so we can make it, regardless of the trial, regardless of the difficulty, regardless of the struggles that we go through. Like I mentioned in one tape: "**Remember, when all else fails, God loves you.**" When everyone has deserted you and the world hates you and no one cares for you and no one loves you and you feel alone and cut off and things are just miserable and down and rotten, **remember God loves you. And He's given His Spirit to you so that you know that.**] ...*the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession... [We have been purchased by the blood of Christ. **We belong to God.**] ...*to the* praise of His glory."

Now the rest of the Bible and the things that we will learn will teach us the things that we need to do. Let's come over here to Ephesians 2 for just a minute, and let's see the things that God is going to do with us. It's through the whole exercise of growing in grace and knowledge: through prayer, through study, through fellowship. Look at it this way: Look at every Sabbath and every Holy Day—and this is the way I try to look at it in preparing for teaching and preaching, which is this: ***It is an opportunity to be educated and taught God's way in preparation for eternal life.*** And this means that, as we use and apply the Word of God in our lives, with the Spirit of God in our lives, we develop the very mind of Christ. We're able to understand that God is going to give us His Divine nature at the resurrection. So, this way then, Sabbath and Holy Days become a very profound and important thing that we do and observe. Yes, we have to put our effort into it, that is true, yes! And as someone who teaches and preaches, I need to put myself into it and ask God to help me, to inspire me, that I may know His Word, that I may understand it, that I can teach you. That's why when you look at the religions of the world and all of the authority and overlordship and things that they have, they are so **far removed** from what God wants. God has something **greater** for us! And that's what His calling is.

Now notice what He's going to be doing, v 8: "For by grace you have been saved... [God's mercy, love, calling, forgiveness, repentance, giving of the Holy Spirit—that's all included in grace] ...through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God... [and that's why when someone dies, it's very, very instructive. Unless God gives eternal life, they can't save themselves. So a lot of people, because we keep the commandments of God, accuse us of trying to earn salvation. There is no way you can earn salvation—it is a gift of God, by grace. We keep His com-

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mandments so we can have the mind of Christ. We keep the Sabbath and Holy Days to be educated spiritually to be His sons and daughters.] ...Not of works... [we have works to do] ...so that no one may boast.... [It's not going to be a contest at the resurrection, going something like this: 'I was the first one to find Christ.' If you don't believe that, go back and really study the book of Job.] ...For we are His workmanship... [Now we become the workmanship of God.] ...created in Christ Jesus... [Christ formed in us, the mind of Christ] ...unto *the* good works... [of love, and faith, and peace, and hope and joy and self-control. Of the 'good works' of keeping the commandments of God like He said. Of the 'good works'

of loving our neighbor as our self. Of the 'good works' of loving each other as Christ has loved us.] ...created in Christ Jesus... [God the Father, after you receive the Holy Spirit, is doing a work within you *to create you in Christ*. To prepare you for the resurrection.] ...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (vs 8-10).

So that's how God works. It's quite an amazing thing, isn't it?

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 2-10-08

Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 16:13-18
- 2) Luke 24:44-48
- 3) Acts 1:4-8
- 4) Matthew 28:18-20
- 5) John 14:15-24
- 6) Matthew 6:44-45
- 7) Matthew 7:7-8
- 8) John 4:20-24
- 9) Revelation 1:4
- 10) Revelation 3:1
- 11) Revelation 4:5
- 12) Revelation 5:6
- 13) 2 Chronicles 15:1-2
- 14) 2 Chronicles 16:7-9
- 15) Acts 2:36-41
- 16) John 15:9-16
- 17) Romans 8:6-11
- 18) Romans 6:1-8
- 19) Ephesians 1:3-5, 13-14
- 20) Ephesians 2:8-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 1
- John 2:21
- Romans 10
- Matthew 22:14
- Romans 2
- Isaiah 53
- Psalm 22
- Philippians 2:5

Also referenced:

Sermons: *Good Work, Evil Work, Etc.*
God's Personal Calling

See Your Calling

Fred R. Coulter — April 27, 1991

Many people are asking today, what is wrong with the world? And everybody sees so many things that aren't working right, that are going wrong. Government isn't working right. Schools aren't working right. Nothing seems to be going right, and everyone is asking, "why?" *We need to have better education.* Well, you can't teach without standards. You can't teach without values. And if there's any one thing about the public schools that's true, they cannot have any values. Teachers cannot say, "Children, this is right" and "Children, this is wrong." Neither can you do that in society, because society has gotten to the point that they are told that right is wrong and wrong is right. And those who do wrong and those who do evil you shouldn't condemn.

Let's go back to Isaiah, the fifth chapter, because God talks about time, and prophecies of a time, just like we live in today—exactly like we live in today. And it causes a lot of difficulties even for those who are called of God. Isaiah 5:20: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil..." And of course, we know—and we will see—that it is the leaders, all kinds of leaders.

Turn back to Isaiah 3:12. Of course then, you have a lot of people growing up in society that now we have generation upon generation—3-deep and 4-deep and 5-deep—that don't know anything about God. Yet, it's ironic that the Bible is the most published, the most studied, the most read book in the world. But society has also rejected God. And it's the leaders that have done it. Verse 12: "*As for my people, children are their oppressors...* [Anytime in history this is more true than ever before. Why? *Because the teachers teach the children that the parents are the enemy, and that the parents are wrong.* And the whole curricula, the whole modus operandi and philosophy of the schools is: we must save the children from their parents. And therefore, the parents have no input into the school. Oh, they say, 'Come and participate in PTA, we want to hear it.' But they never listen and they never act upon it.] ...and women rule over them.... [That is so true—women rule over men. And there's nothing more damaging or frustrating than that. And that's the way that it is because God made it that way.] ...O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." So it's the leaders: the teachers, the politicians, and the religious leaders in particular.

Now let's go back to Isaiah 5—these are the ones that are saying that "evil is good and good is evil"—v 20: "...that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for

bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink" (vs 19-22). And the same principle would apply to drugs. And they're still trying to legalize drugs. And can you imagine what would happen to this society. We are being assaulted. Some people call it 'a cultural war.' Well, it's more than a cultural war. It's Satan going around 'seeking whom he may devour.' And we, as the people of God, have to live in this terrible, evil world, and figure out somehow how do we survive? And of course, let me just mention here: 'strong drink'—don't think that didn't know about what we would call 'opium.' Maybe they didn't know about what we call 'heroin,' today; because they didn't have kerosene to break it down like we do today. But they certainly had drugs. They certainly had marijuana. Hashish, by the way, is one of the oldest things that people have smoked and taken in all of history. And do you think those in Southeast Asia just let the poppies grow until all of sudden one day someone decided, 200 years ago, "Oh, let's get opium out of this"? No, they had it for centuries. So, it's possible that 'strong drink' could refer to those things that have drugs added to them. Do you think that the craving for drugs by carnal people is any different today than the carnality of people back then? *Hardly, hardly at all.*

"Which justify the wicked for reward... [And all you have to do is just look at congress. Just look at the judges, just look at the society.] ...and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!.... [For even people who are wanting to do good, don't know whether it's really worth it to do good. Because, after all, they're like fish going upstream, and there's only a little trickle of water there that's left for them to stand in. All the water is rushed by them. There's nothing left. But here's what's going to happen]: ... Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel" (vs 23-24).

There's going to be absolutely no changing society until you reverse what I just read here. Until the society runs by the laws of God. And of course, you know that's not going to happen in our lifetime. It's going to happen when Jesus returns. No political movement. No organization of churches is going to change what God has set His hand to do, period. It's going to happen. But we look around and we see the society deteriorating around us.

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Let's go to Romans, the first chapter, and we will see again, reiterated for us, when any society rejects God, that when any society gives itself over to the ways of the devil, then these things are bound to happen. Look at the Soviet Union. They proclaimed that they would bring the Egalitarianism—which is another high-sounding name for Communism—to everyone in the Soviet Union. They would bring wealth. They would bring riches, and all the workers would work together and “we will have wonderful society.” They are suffering the penalty of rejecting God. *Yes, they are!* Because ***no nation can survive when it rejects God.*** That's not to say that a nation is going to be perfect, but the Bible says, “Blessed is the nation whose Lord is God.” And even Gorbachev had to go hat-in-hand and literally bow at the feet of the Pope, and acknowledge that even this paganized Christendom of Roman Catholicism is better than what they had in the Soviet Union. And then the final coup-de-grace on them has been the Chernobyl incident. So, the Soviet Union is going down, but every other nation is also in varying degrees of disintegration and degeneration because of the same thing. So here in America and the Western society where we have the knowledge of God, what are we doing? *We're denying it. We are turning our backs on God. We are going backwards!*

And here is how the whole thing works: Romans 1:18: “Indeed, *the* wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness... [ALL ungodliness is going to have some kind of correction, some kind of penalty, some kind of wrath! Now, just to show you—well, I'll cover it a little bit later when we get into the deceptiveness of the human mind. It's really interesting what has just happened here recently.] ...[so it's revealed against] all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness... [Now immediately for those of you who know your Bibles, when we hear the word ‘Truth’ what does this spring in your mind? *Your Word is Truth.* Jesus said He was the Truth. He was the way. So they hold the Word of God in unrighteousness. They hold the Truth in unrighteousness. Now let's see what happens.] ...Because that which may be known of God is manifest [revealed] among them... [And it certainly has been. And everything, as we will see, that has been made] ...for God has manifested *it* to them; For the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made...” (vs 18-20).

And I always get a kick out of these astronomers. They're striving like crazy to put up more instruments into the heavens; to have bigger and better telescopes with which to see the heavens; discovering countless billions of galaxies; looking out into the heavens and declaring that maybe they have even

seen the center of the universe—which I doubt. And they don't know what to make of it. And now the “big bang” theory doesn't work any longer—and all of their other theories don't work either. But God has shown them the magnificence of His creation and His glory. But they turn around and just ignore it. So a penalty comes on everyone for that! And eventually down to the society.

These things reveal “—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse... [No astronomer is going to say, ‘Well, when I had education, I was taught the theory of evolution.’ God is going to tell him, ‘You should have known when you looked up and saw these stars and you saw these planets, and you saw all of these magnificent things that you could see with the technology you have.’ Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful... [So God has to have the glory because He's Creator. And after all, can the created say to the Creator, ‘What are You making?’ *No he can't.* So here's the first thing that happens when you don't recognize God. When you don't give Him the glory. When you're not thankful. When you do not give God the power and glory that is due Him. Now, to understand that, you do not even have to know about the commandments of God. We could say that you could understand moral good and still acknowledge God and then you wouldn't bring a lot of these difficulties upon you. But, when people reject God and reject His Word, then this happens]: ...but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (vs 20-21).

This is what is the guiding principle of the politics of this world today, right here. And they're just bringing one penalty after another penalty upon this whole society. And we'll see what those things are in just a minute.

“While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed creatures, and creeping things.... [And we have that today manifest in all of this ‘save the animals but abort the babies.’ Completely perverted, wrong, upside-down and silly and stupid and vain and foolish values. And where does that lead? *Well, we'll see, because God does something.* It's not just happening to happen, but there comes a point then in which God intervenes and He does something. He causes something to happen. He gives them over to their own evil.] (v 24): ...For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to disgrace their own bodies between themselves.... [as we are confronted in this society with every evil, with every gargantuan thing concerning sex and that's where it begins. If

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you're going to reject God, then somewhere down the line, shortly after that, you're going to have beginning of perversion of sex, which then is an escalating and multiplying factor in the value and morals of society.] ...Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie... [And of course, the ministers are the ones who say, 'Well, you don't have to do this, you don't have to do that, you don't have to do the other thing. Well God, way back then, that's a different God than we have today.' And of course, that is a lie.] ...and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the one Who is Creator, Who is blessed into the ages. Amen. For this cause, God abandoned them to disgraceful passions; for even their women changed the natural use of sex into that which is contrary to nature; And in the same manner also the men, having left the natural use of sex with the woman, were inflamed in their lustful passions toward one another—men with men shamelessly committing lewd acts, and receiving back within themselves a fitting penalty for their error" (vs 22-27).

One of those final payments is AIDS. Now, it is coming from the religious leaders. How many heard this week what the Presbyterian Church was voting on and discussing. Did any of you catch that in the news? *None of you did.* The Presbyterian Church now has said that "we have to give up all of these old standards. We cannot condemn homosexuality. We cannot condemn pre-marital sex. We cannot condemn masturbation. None of those things can be condemned at all, because we live in an enlightened age." Now this follows on the heels of what the Episcopalians have done. And I read part of this before, but needless to say, there is an article in the religious section from Time Magazine where this so-called Episcopal bishop, who is the one who ordained a homosexual priest, married two homosexual men, says there's no such thing as the virgin birth—that it's all a myth, it's all a fairytale. And so what we really have, we have those who are pretending to be religious leaders, leading the way into the total degradation of the society. And you can see it reflected in everything in the whole world. Not only the way people talk, the way people think, the way they act; their sex morals; their standards, their ethics—the whole thing. You can see it on television. You can hear it in the movies. And all of these things are a result of God gave them over to these things. That's the penalty! That is the wrath of God that is revealed from heaven—on a continuous, ongoing basis.

"And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them to a **reprobate mind**..." (v 28). [Now, what is a 'reprobate mind'? A 'reprobate mind' is a mind that cannot think correctly. And I call you to typical examples: homosexuals—male and female; ministers—

like the ones I have referenced here, the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians and any other minister who would do those things; our judges; our courts; our police system; our political system. They cannot think. They cannot reason. Now, just to give you one example. We've been inundated to death with this beating of the policeman beating this man—what was his first name: [Rodney] King is his last name. And it showed what they did. Now, I'm not agreeing that he should be beaten like that. I'm not saying that was in any way right to do.

But just to show you the perversity of the human mind with the same circumstances. The reason that these police are in trouble is because a man stood on a balcony with a TV [camera] and recorded the whole thing. Which showed down in the lower right-hand corner the time of the day and the minutes and everything like that, as it was going on. Well, last night the police confiscated the TV camera from some thugs, caught robbing and stealing and beating. And they recorded all of this on a video. It showed the time, the day, showed the ones doing it, showed the ones that they beat up and robbed—and it was black on black, by the way, for those who have any prejudice involved. Guess what the defendant's attorney said? To show you perversity of reasoning. The same attorney, if he were to prosecute the policeman who beat up on the man, would say this proves and concludes what they have done is wrong. Turns around—now it's not the same attorney, but you know how attorneys are?—he turns around and says in the case of these thugs that recorded their own, by their own hands, recorded their own crime, bragged about it, did braggadocio interviews afterwards. The attorney for the defendants say that we shouldn't be able to use this video because it's been shown on TV and it's discriminatory against "my defendant."

Don't even have the brains to realize that the camera can't lie. The camera can't do a thing but record what was done. But you see the perversity in the thinking of two almost identical cases. Now you can take that same kind of reasoning, where down is up and up is down, and right is left and left is right, and three is four and seven is ten—and that's the way that people think today.

God gives them over to that. Now as a result of what happens after they've been given over to this kind of thinking and reasoning—verse 29: "Being filled with all unrighteousness... [Now, I'm going to read you your TV guide, right here in just a few verses. This is your TV guide]: ...all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil dispositions; whispers... [Oh, and aren't people tried in the newspaper today? Oh, yes! Just like this *Unauthorized Biography*

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of the Reagans. What was her name? Kitty Kelley—wasn't that her name, she put it out. She never even talked to them. People she claimed she interviewed, never even talked to them! Complete hoax. And that's one little, teeny, little just almost nothing in the blip of the evil that's going on in the world.] ...Slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boasters, **inventors of evil things and practices**; disobedient to parents, Void of understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful; Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death... [Now, there's New Testament doctrine, which says what ought to be done with these people. They are worthy of death! And the Apostle Paul, the apostle of grace—who in the rest of the book of Romans tells us about the grace of God—says these people are worthy of death.] ...not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit *them*" (vs 29-32).

Now in the midst of all of this, we have a lot of religious people, don't we? We have them preaching, we have them teaching—let's go to Matthew, the seventh chapter. And Jesus told us about these kinds of things and these kinds of preachers, and these kinds of episodes that would take place. Matthew 7:15—Jesus warns: "But beware of false prophets... [There are many kinds of false prophets. They're not just prophesying false things. They are teaching false things. They are acting upon false things. They are telling other people to do things, which are false and wrong. Not just in the religious sense alone. But when you get down to it, everything in life that has to do with God, which is everything—then has some sort of what you would call religious overtone as far as people would perceive it. But there are a lot of religious pretenders out there who follow right along with this]: ...who come to you in sheep's clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits" (vs 15-20).

That is by their lives. By the way that they live, which means that as Christians we have excise and put away from us more and more of the things that are emanating from Hollywood, from movies, from TV, from the literature, from the newspapers. We have to protect ourselves from this thing—and we do. And it's difficult for us living in the world, isn't it? I mean it's one thing to stand up and say, "Oh look, the world is all this wrong." or "Look, these

religions are wrong." But what do we do? We have to get down and ask that question, which we will see here in just a little bit.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven.... [So you've got a lot of religious pretenders out there.] ...Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness [iniquity]' " (vs 21-23) In the Greek it is '*anomos*' which means *against the law*.

What did the Apostle John say concerning these religious pretenders? There were religious pretenders there. Let's go back to I John, the second chapter. Let's see how then we can judge these things, and how then we can begin to protect ourselves from this sort of thing. I mean, let's think about it for a minute: Are we affected by the world around us? *Yes!* Look at Lot and his family living in Sodom. Was his family affected by it? Was Lot affected by it? *Yes!* II Peter 2 says that he was frustrated every day because of the deeds of the wicked. But remember what happened when Abraham intervened to try and spare Lot. God said that if there were only ten people in Sodom that he would spare the whole city, if there were ten that were righteous. So the angels came to take Lot and his family out and his son said, "Oh, don't bother me, dad, with that nonsense. You and your religion." And he was even so bad that when the angels came to the door and all the homosexuals came beating down the door to try and get hold of these angels for their 'night of convenience' that Lot went out and even offered his own two daughters to them—which shows you that it did affect Lot! I mean, how would you feel if you were one of the two daughters and you own dad went out there and said, "Look now fellas, leave these other guys alone, but you can take my daughters." Now, how would you feel? So it did affect him. Okay, so the angels solved the problem so it wasn't done—they struck them all blind.

Then what happened after they fled. Well, his wife turned around because she didn't believe what the angels said, and she turned into a pillar of salt. And then, Lot didn't want to go into the mountains, so then the angels said, "Go to Zoar, which is this little city over here and I'll let you go over there." Then when they got of there, where did they go? *They went up into the mountains to a cave.* Then what happened? He was so despondent he got drunk and the two daughters said, "Oh, we're here alone and how are we going to have

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children?” So they committed incest with their father. And so each one of them had a baby by their own father—called Moab and Ammon.

So, does the society around us affect us? *Yes!* Well, let’s hope it doesn’t affect people that much that they get into it. But here is the guide that we can know. Anything that comes to us—whether by words that we hear in person or on radio or television or record or recording, whatever, or by friends and acquaintances—here is how we judge it: I John 2:3: “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (vs 2-3). That’s a very basic way for you to keep your sanity. You don’t necessarily have to be rude to these people. Sometimes you do. Sometimes you have to be absolutely rude to them because there’s nothing else they understand. And that comes under the category of hating evil. In other words, to keep this thing from coming in upon you and upon your life, you have to be firm to them. And the only way to get rid of them is to do like Jesus did, insult them. Sometimes you have to. I’m not saying go out and insult people. Please do not misunderstand.

Now, Abraham was in a similar society, wasn’t he? Way back when. So, if you feel like you’re alone, you are! Abraham was alone. God came and said, “Abraham, I want you to leave the home of your father and your mother and I want you to go into a land that I’m going to show you. And I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.” So Abraham obeyed and he got up and he left. Well, I won’t go through the whole story of Abraham, but was not Abraham alone? Was not even Abraham affected by his own human weaknesses? *Yes, he was.* Remember when he went into Egypt, he said, “Oh-oh, now what am I going to do? My wife is so gorgeous [even though she’s older], that the Pharaoh’s going to ‘Oh ho boy!’ He’ll kill me and take her for his wife.” Shows a lot of faith in God, doesn’t it? And so what did Abraham do. He said, “I know what I’m going to do. You’re my sister.” And then you know the story that happened. Pharaoh found out and said, “Now, why did you lie to me and say that she was your sister when she was your wife?” Abraham had nothing to say.

Then we come down to the time when he’s about ready to receive the inheritance—about 12 years from it—and he’s striving like mad to have a son, because God said that out of his own loins he would have a son. So Sarah said, “Now look Abe, this isn’t going to work, here’s my handmaid.” So now we’ve got this Arab/Israeli problem from that day to this. So the society and the events around us *do affect*

us! But we still have to live in the world and keep our sanity and keep right with God. So, let’s see how we can keep our minds on that and really understand what we need to do.

Let’s go to Luke 5:32—and here is something that is absolutely, completely, always true. And this is for all those religious pretenders. “I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance.” So don’t feel as though you’ve done so badly that you cannot repent. And God is going to cast you aside. If you feel guilty or struck because you’ve done something you shouldn’t do, God came to call “sinners to repentance.” And so, that’s what’s to keep in mind. God knows, God understands, and He realizes. How much has God done to go out of His way to bring us out of this mess; to help us out of the world? o we’re out here in the world and things don’t go the way we think they ought to go and we fall down flat on our face. Now what do we do?

Let’s go to Romans 5 and we’ll see. God did this before we even existed, before you could even say we were even thought of. Sometimes we are, we just seem to be overwhelmed with the way the world is. Now, sometimes we can get away from it and get in and close the door behind us and we feel must better, much relieved—and pray and study and do the things we need to, and of course, that is true. But here in Romans 5:6: For even when we were without strength... [just like people in the world we had no control over what we were doing. We didn’t know right from wrong. We didn’t understand good from evil. We didn’t understand God from anything else. And we certainly didn’t understand what Jesus Christ has done for us. And we didn’t understand what God did for us through Jesus Christ.] ...at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, **when we were still sinners, Christ died for us**” (vs 6-8).

Now that’s how we are rescued out of this world: by coming to God, and by realizing that God has called us. So if we want to put any title on this sermon, we could entitle it, *You See Your Calling*. Now that’s how we can survive in an insane world. ***By seeing our calling***, that’s how we can survive; and seeing that God has provided the way for us. And lots of times we’ll go out and we’ll just be going on our way and we know we shouldn’t be doing this, but we’re still doing that and our conscience convicts us and we still go ahead. And then God works out circumstances to keep us from really doing bad. Have you ever had that? Well, God doesn’t want you to do it, so God is there to warn you, to rescue you before

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you go too far. Why? *Because “God commends His love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

“Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies... [Enemies of God! Enemies of Righteousness!] ...we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life**” (vs 9-10). Because Christ lives—and that is what is most important.

(go to the next track)

Let’s go to Matthew 22:14—and here’s a very encouraging verse if we understand it correctly, which I think we do. “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.” And why are few chosen? *Because few repent!* God chooses those who repent. He calls us. His goodness, His grace LEADS us repentance. We see the love God has for us. And we continually go back to this. So I want to focus in on the calling. And what is the thing that we need to do so that we can survive in this world, is to focus in on that calling. Because every single one of us are going to have circumstances around us which are against us. We are going to have circumstances which cause us to be discouraged and despaired; cause us to wonder why am I going through this. I want you to focus in on this: “that many are called but few are chosen”—and let’s see what this has for us.

Let’s go to John, the sixth chapter. You get discouraged, you get down, you’re tired of fighting the world. You’re tired of being against everything that’s around you because everything is so filled with sin and wretchedness and rottenness and you want to just pick up your TV and throw a rock through it—or whatever you want to do. Or you’re sitting there watching a least a decent show on television and then comes on an X-rated ad of some kind. It’s absolutely incredible. And it just destroys your thoughts and everything like that, because it will happen.

John 6:44—here’s what the focus in on the calling: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Did God call you to succeed or to fail? *God called you to succeed.* God called you because the One Who controls the universe—the **Father**—He activated in your life and **chose you!** So therefore, there aren’t any circumstances, which can be against you as we’ve covered in other things before. **GOD has chosen you.** So you can’t go around and say, “Oh boy, I’m the most important person on earth. Ha, Ha, Ha.” You don’t go to that extreme at all—but GOD has called you. **You are His.**

Now let’s focus a little bit more on this calling. Let’s go to I Corinthians, the first chapter, and let’s see what it is that God has for us. He has called us through His grace. I Corinthians 1:3: “Grace and peace *be* to you... [Now ‘grace’ is the most important thing that you can consider and think on and realize. God’s grace to you, which means that:

- God called you.
- God knows what you are.
- God knows your weaknesses.
- God is not going to condemn you for those weaknesses IF—when they get the better of you—you repent and return back to God and focus in on your calling.

That’s what’s so very important. If you get discouraged and down, focus in on the calling of God. And what it will do: it will not lift you up in pride, but it will humble you in awesome—as we sang in the song—adoration of God and what He has done for us.] ...Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father... [directly from God the Father to you] ...and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus; And that you have been *spiritually* enriched in Him in everything, in all discourse and knowledge...” (vs 3-5).

Now, this is important. Notice how he starts out 1 Corinthians, because after the third chapter, the rest of Corinthians is a disaster, as far as the behavior of the brethren. As far as their own personal problems. But notice what he starts out here in verse 6: “According as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; So that you do not lack *even* one *spiritual* gift while you are awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will also strengthen you to *the* end... [I want you to understand that. ‘To confirm that...’ **He will see you to the end**, whatever the end may be. Like it was for the Corinthians here, they all lived and died before Christ’s return. That’s going to happen to some of us. But God is going to ‘confirm us to the end.’ Or whether we live to see the return of Christ. I used to think, boy it’s going to be great, living to see the return of Christ. I’m not so sure of that now. I’m not so sure that I necessarily want to live physically in the flesh, to go through all of the events to the return of Christ. I don’t know if I can bear that. If I have to, God will give me the strength to confirm it to the end.

- So God isn’t going to leave you alone.
- God is not going to reject you.
- God is not going to cast you aside—if you keep your eye on your calling.

“...that you may *be* unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ... [Blameless—without blame, without fault.] ...God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called into *the* fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our

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Lord” (vs 6-9). Tremendous isn’t that? Tremendous encouragement. And that’s what we need to focus in on.

Let’s come clear over to here to v 26—now there are many things we could read in between, but I want to focus in on our calling. And remember, Jesus came to what? *To call sinners to repentance*. And of course, we’re all sinners, continuously, all the time because we are not perfect. And there is one way then we can really keep our minds focused on our calling, as we will see in a minute. “For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are [mighty] wise [men] according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise... [And if there’s anything that you can see that is absolutely true, that is it. Now, anytime anyone gets to feeling that they really know something, Paul says, ‘You know nothing as you are.’ And anyone who gets to thinking that they are something, remember what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar—go back and read Daniel 4, if you don’t remember that.] ...Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world...” (vs 26-27).

Yes, we’re weak in the flesh. What did Jesus say: ‘The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.’ What did Paul say: ‘The things I really want to do—that is to please God—I don’t do them. When I want to do good, evil is present with me.’ And so he’s got this battle going on continuously. We’re weak. Does God know that that is so? That we are weak? Does God understand that? Now some have different weaknesses. Some have physical weaknesses. Some have character weaknesses. Like Abraham, he had a character weakness in that he really fudged on the truth, when he shouldn’t have. And even his son, Isaac, did it. And it runs in the family, I guess. And then look at what happened to Jacob. You go through the whole story there. And then, poor Jacob, poor guy, he had a miserable life. It’s tough enough with one wife, but he had two wives and two concubines and it was miserable—and 12 kids. And look at the way his kids treated him! Look what they did to Joseph. And there were 17 years of pretending that the other sons of Jacob let Jacob think that Joseph was dead. So much so, that Jacob would go out and sit under the tree and hold that bloodied coat of Joseph—that they put he goats blood on it and said, ‘Well, your son is dead.’ Then you know how God turned that all around.

So there are the weaknesses! “...the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are

counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; So that no flesh might glory in His presence. But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption...” (vs 27-30). Now that is what God is doing *for* us and *to* us. And I think sometimes if we learn the lessons of living in this evil world—not that you’re out there in it partaking of it and doing the things that the world does—but you’re still affected by it. And if you can let those things affect you in a way to turn to God, to see your calling, to see what God has done for you—

- then you can survive this world;
- then you can survive the things that are going on;
- then you can realize, well, there’s even hope for them, and the day is coming when God is going to change all of that, too, including every one of them.

Now, let’s focus in on something else here concerning that. Let’s see I Corinthians 6:9. Paul makes quite a statement here concerning what people are that God has called. Remember, he called sinners to repentance. “Don’t you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit *the* kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves as women, nor homosexuals, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit *the* kingdom of God. And such were some of you; **but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God**” (vs 9-11). So what should this cause us to do even more? *Respond to God in the same kind of love that He responded to us in.*

Let’s go to Mark 12—here’s what we need to do. Here’s the key on keeping our bearings in this world. Here’s what we need to do to keep our minds on the calling that God has given us. We don’t look to the circumstances around us, because the circumstances around us—and if the economy keeps going the way it is the circumstances around us are going to become third world very quickly. It could happen very quickly. So we don’t look to the circumstances around us as the primary factor in our lives. Now, that’s hard to do. You can’t ignore what’s around you. But ***your salvation does not depend on the circumstances around you.*** That’s what I want you to understand. You have to ignore them enough that you can overcome the frustrations of it, and so that you don’t fall into the pitfall and trap as Lot did with the coming out of Sodom.

Mark 12:30—and here is the very key that is important. We need to do constantly! “ ‘And you

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shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is the* first commandment.... [This is the first thing to do. This is how we keep our sanity in such an evil, topsy-turvy, corrupt, Sodom and Gomorrah world that is here. We love God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, with all of our being—

- and think on our calling;
- and think what God has done to call us;
- and think what God has provided for us.

Study on that. Pray on that. And do as we need to do: 'bring every thought into captivity unto obedience to Jesus Christ.' And put in the good and take out the evil, through the very power and Spirit of Christ.] (Then He says): ...And *the second is* like this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' " (vs 30-31). And of course, the brethren, as Christ loved us. And that's what's so important. That's what's so special with the Sabbath, and our getting together with God's people. That's what the Church and fellowship is all about. Not all of the other problems and difficulties that we've associated with in the past: of organization and control and power and who's in charge, and all of these things. That doesn't mean a 'hill of beans.' God could care less. Unless you love God; unless you love your neighbor; unless you love the brethren, then all of the other is really meaningless. So that's why we need to focus in on it.

But, what I'm talking about here is your individual self-preservation in this world. The self-protection that you need does not come from yourself, but it comes from God. And that comes from loving God in this way: with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all of your strength. That's where it's at. That way then, you don't have to run around and realize the world is condemned and all you are is doom and gloom and misery and rottenness. Because the world is going to become more miserable. The world is going to become more rotten, and there isn't a thing you can do about it.

Tell me—even though I commend all of those who are doing the operation rescue in trying to stop abortions—where does abortion really begin? In the clinic or in the minds of the individuals involved? *In the minds of the individuals involved.* And that's why I said before, if this French abortion pill ever comes on the market, then abortion is no longer a question as to a political movement. Abortion becomes the decision of the individual woman. And it still is! And living in the world where good is called *evil*; and evil is called *good*, there is nothing that you can do about it from the point of view that you're going to change the world. Now, maybe you can help one person; maybe you can help some people; but you're not going to change the world because why:

Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world." So that's why if you focus in on the world, you're going to get discouraged and despondent.

Let's go back to I Corinthians, the second chapter, and let's see the tremendous blessing and gift that God has given us. Focusing in on the calling, he said, "Brethren, see your calling." What of this calling that we are to see. It is going to be something which only God can provide us with. And if we turn to God with this kind of love, He will provide for us what we need. I Corinthians 2:9: "But according as it is written, '*The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him*'.... [Notice the key there: 'those that love Him.' How? *With all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your being.* That's how!] ...But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit... [because God has called us, and God has given us His Spirit, and God has given us the understanding. And sometimes the world crowding in, we get so concerned with getting along in this world, that we get our minds off our calling. And we don't respond to God the way that we need to. So therefore, we're not loving God the way that we need to. So we need to do the things we know we need to. And we know we need to when we know we're not, don't we?] ...But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God. For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God" (vs 9-11).

Because God has called you. **Focus in on that calling!** Whatever the thing is which weighting you down. Whatever the circumstances in the world is that is bothering you. Whatever the trouble. Or whatever it may be. **Go to God!** If you repent, there is no sin that God cannot forgive. Because if you don't repent, then you've committed the unpardonable sin, because you haven't repented.

- Did God forgive Saul for murdering Christians? *Yes!*
- Did Jesus forgive the harlot that washed His feet with her tears and her hair? *Yes!*
- Did Jesus forgive the man with the withered arm? *Yes!*
- Did He let the woman go who was falsely condemned, taken in adultery? *Yes!*
- Did He heal the man who was blind who did no sin? *Yes!*

"Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God... [You can't earn it. You can't work for it. But God has

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freely given that to us. And that is fantastic.] ... Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order to* communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*. But *the* natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God... [And that's why the world is so frustrating to Christians, because you don't want to receive of the world—and yet, you are in it. So what we have to do is pray the prayer that Jesus prayed. He said, 'I pray for them, Father, that You keep from the evil one. I pray not that you take them out of the world (sometimes we wish God would) but that You keep them from the evil one.' That's what we need to pray; that's what we need to focus in on.] ...for they are foolishness to him..." (vs 12-14).

Let's go to Ephesians, the second chapter, and let's focus in on this love that God has for us. Ephesians 2:2—and these are basic Scriptures which we've covered before. But the thing that I want to focus in on is this: There is nothing that can hold you back from God if you put away all of the weights and the difficulties and the problems and the crushing in of the world around you. God can relieve you of that. "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [And is now working with ever increasing power, with ever increasing intensity; with ever increasing means to try and get to those who are true Christians to get them to give up on their faith.] ...Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us...(For you have been saved by grace.)" (vs 2-5). That's what we need to focus in on:

- Our love to God,
- God's love to us,
- God's calling to us,
- our responding to Him.

And that's what becomes important.

Now, let's go to II Peter 1—while we are turning there, we'll just reiterate the last verse of II Peter 3, which says—v 18: "Rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." That's what we're to do Spiritually, constantly. And that's what is encouraging. And that's, brethren, why we have the Sabbath. That is our little island of rescue from the world—*every week!* And I'm so thankful for the Sabbath. And you stop and think, where on earth would you be without the Sabbath? Because as human beings, we don't have the intestinal fortitude nor the mental or spiritual ability

to resist and fight the world if we didn't have the Sabbath—our little island of sanity every week. We would soon get worn down like everybody else in the world.

Now, 2 Peter 1:10: "For this reason, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election [and that should be 'selection'—God elected to select you. In other words, God chose to select you. And that's what 'election' means. You didn't vote for God and say, 'I raised my hand for God.' That's like when Peter said, 'Oh Lord, we're not going to let you get crucified.' You don't raise your hand in an election for God.] ...sure; because *if* you are doing these things, you will never fall at any time." ***Never fail, brethren. Never fail!*** Remember what the Apostle Paul said, 'To confirm it to the end.' ***Never fail!*** And here's what we need to do—again focusing in on the calling of God.

Let's go back to II Peter 1:2: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord... [So, it's to be multiplied, to be increased.

- How? *Spiritually.*
- How? *By love!*
- How? *By obeying God!*
- How? *By responding to Him! By letting God—with His Spirit—help us close off the world that so often is like it's crushing in on us.]*

...According as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness... [Every tool you want is in the Bible. Every tool you need, and power, comes from God's Holy Spirit. It's tremendous, isn't it? Here we can live completely the opposite life of what's going on in the world, through Jesus Christ.] ... through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises..." (vs 2-4).

Now why would he say, 'exceeding great and precious promises'? Which are beyond our knowledge and expectation. Remember, Peter was one of those who went on the Mt. of Transfiguration and saw Jesus transfigured before his very own eyes. And that's what he said a little later in the chapter that he had burning in his mind. And what John said, 'We saw! We handled the Word of Life.' And these are great and precious promises—*exceeding* as it says here. "...Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* divine nature... [and boy, that's what all of us need to be focusing in on, because this old human nature, and this old flesh, it gets old and it wears out and that's just the way that it is. And again, there's very little that we can do about it. God says that if we live to be three score and

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ten, that's fine. If it's four score, that's by God's blessing. If it's any longer than that, it's by God's mercy.] ... Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* divine nature... [and that is right now though the Spirit of God that we have. So what did the Apostle Paul say: 'Stir up the Spirit which God has given you.' And how do we do that? *By focusing in on the calling that God has given.* And then we take these steps, as we will see here.] ...partakers of *the* divine nature... [And of course we know what is the ultimate of it: *be resurrected and be in the Kingdom of God*, correct?] ... having escaped the corruption *that is in the world* through lust" (v 4). So we can escape it. That's why the Sabbath is an escape, right? *Yes, it is!*

There are times when on the Sabbath, I think, "Boy, what am I going to preach on?" And on Thursday I don't have a clue. On Friday, I'm still thinking on it, praying about it. Then on the Sabbath, God gives me what is necessary to bring what God wants me to bring. And that is no credit to me, because it's the Sabbath and it's God's Spirit and it is God that is doing it. But because we escape the corruption of the world that is around us—by our little island of the Sabbath, which we have every week—then God gives a special blessing because of that.

Now it says, continuing here: "And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith... [here are the steps] ...add to your faith, virtue... [doing the things that are right] ...and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love [agape] *of God*" (vs 5-7). That's how we make our calling and our election sure.

Now, let's go to I John, the third chapter. We alluded to this, but I want to read it into the record, so that we have it here for sure. Verse 1: "Behold!... [means pay attention, look to, understand] ...What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!... [the children of God: '*teknon*'—that means His very own offspring.] ...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.... [Now that is something to look on, isn't it? We won't have to worry about anything in the flesh. We don't have to worry about the world that is going on. God knows the things that are in the world and God is going to take care of them in His due time and in His due way. So this then is *HOW* we survive in the world. Focus in on the calling

and the promises of God.] (v 3): ...And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, **even as He is pure**" (vs 1-3). What did Jesus say? 'Father, I will that they become *one* in Us. I in You and You in Me and Me in them that they may become *one* in Us.' Now that is tremendous!

Now let's close by going to Ephesians, the third chapter. This is the most encouraging place in the Bible, and I really think is one of the tremendous and wonderful things of the Bible that we need to focus in on. But let's go back to chapter one before we go to chapter three. Ephesians 1:17 ^[transcriber's correction]—and here's the whole prayer that the Apostle Paul was praying, leading up to this. Then we have forgiveness of sin through His blood, that God called us for His very own will and His pleasure and His goodness. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him. *And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the **hope of His calling**... [and that's the hope that we have in us, that we are going to be like Him, because we're going to see Him as He is; and we are the very children of God. And that's what we need to focus in on to be inspired to block out the world and to sort of shut off the world and all the evil that is there, because God has to handle that. We have to work on what we need to do, and here's how we do it:] ... what is the **hope of His calling**, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power" (vs 17-19).

Now let's go to Ephesians 3:14—and as those of you have heard me preach before, this is one of my favorite places in the Bible. This is the most inspiring and the most uplifting portion of the entire New Testament—in my own opinion and my own experience. And that when I'm in trouble and when I'm in difficulties, this is where I turn to so that I can turn to God and it's not me doing it, but God doing it because of what is said here. "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory... [From His very inner most being to you] ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man... [God's Spirit *in you*—that is going to block off the world around you. That is going to keep you in focus on your calling, so that you understand and make sure your calling] ...That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [That God is going to—through Christ—live in you!] ...*And* that being rooted and grounded in love... [To love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being—and that's what it

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is there.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [Because this is an ever-expanding thing. As I mentioned the other day, God's way in word and plan, is like a sphere. It's not like a line. And it's not like a circle. It's like sphere—it is full, it is dense, it is tremendous. There's an awful lot in it, and that's why Paul says right here that you may be able] ...to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [of the knowledge of God's plan and His calling] ...And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (vs 14-19).

Now, right at this minute if that doesn't block the world out of your mind and heart and take away all of the evil that is there, and unite your heart spiri-

tually with God—I know it does; you know it does—it does with me right now at this very minute, and I know it does with you right now at this very minute. And here's the key: "Now to Him Who is able to do **exceeding abundantly**... [because the 'eye is not seen nor the ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of men the things that God has prepared for those that love Him'] ...above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity" (vs 20-21).

Brethren, *that is how you can survive the world* that is around you—***by focusing in on the calling of God!***

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 2-15-08

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 5:20
- 2) Isaiah 3:12
- 3) Isaiah 5:19-24
- 4) Romans 1:18-32
- 5) Matthew 7:15-23
- 6) 1 John 2:2-3
- 7) Luke 5:32
- 8) Romans 5:6-10
- 9) Matthew 22:14
- 10) John 6:44
- 11) 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; 26-30
- 12) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- 13) Mark 12:30-31
- 14) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14
- 15) Ephesians 2:2-5
- 16) 2 Peter 2:18
- 17) 2 Peter 1:10: 2-7
- 18) 1 John 3:1-3
- 19) Ephesians 1:17-19
- 20) Ephesians 3:14-21

Water Baptism/Justification

Beliefs of CBCG #11A

Fred R. Coulter

Now this is continuing in the series that we have been doing in the “Belief’s” booklet. Now, we’ve come to the section in the “Belief’s” booklet concerning *repentance*. Let me read the statement we have in the “Belief’s” booklet—let me just mention also, the reason we have the “Belief’s” booklet is because if someone says, “What do you believe?” We can say, “Well, if you’d like to read it, here it is.” Now, we can say, “If you’d like to have some sermons with it, you can receive them.

Repentance: Repentance is complete remorse and sorrow for one’s sins....

All sin is evil—you need to understand that. But not all sins are apparently evil to the person, until the conviction of God’s Spirit.

...Sin is the transgression of the laws and commandments of God. Repentance is the first step in the sinner’s reconciliation with God the Father and Jesus Christ. True repentance begins when God the Father opens a person’s mind to understand that he or she is a sinner against God the Father [and also Jesus Christ], and that his or her own sins had a part in killing Jesus Christ.

That’s important to understand. Since He died for sins (which He did)—He died for your sins. Then your sins had a part in the crucifixion of Christ, though you weren’t there, because it covers all of mankind for all time.

The graciousness of God the Father leads each sinner to repentance. Repentance moves each one to confess his or her sins to God the Father and to ask forgiveness, remission and pardon for those sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. True, deep, godly repentance will produce a profound change in a person’s mind and attitude, this is called conversion, which will result in a continuous desire to live by every word of God.”

Now, it can be put very simply: everyone who has the Spirit of God will desire to live by every Word of God, keep His commandments and do the things that please Him. Everyone who does not have the Spirit of God will seek every way possible not to obey. And that’s found in the statements of religion that Jesus did away with the law. Now, continuing:

The truly repentant person will turn from evil thoughts and ungodly practices and will seek to conform his or her life to the will of God as revealed in the Holy Bible and as led by the Holy Spirit. Repentance and confession of sins is an ongoing process in a Christian’s spiritual growth toward

the perfection of Jesus Christ” (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, pp 14-15).

And we could add to that through the grace of God. Because all of that is done by the grace of God.

Now let’s look at some Scriptures concerning this. Let’s first of all let’s come to Hebrews, the fourth chapter, and let’s see what the Word of God does. Now, for some people it’s very difficult to see their sins. And part of the reason is that the goodness that they have which they see does not come from God but comes from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” There are a lot of “do-gooders” out there. All that goodness comes from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” True goodness from God comes through His Holy Spirit and His Word.

Now, let’s pick it up here in Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword... [Now, I remember a movie—and I don’t know how they did it, but however they did it, it was something. This soldier had a sword that was so sharp that he whacked the neck of this other soldier and all it did was just show the blood line where it had cut. You could hardly tell that it went through, it was so sharp. Then his head fell off. And every time I read this I think of it.] ... piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints *and the* marrow, and *is* able to discern [that is a ‘judge’] *the* thoughts and intents *of the* heart. And there not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account” (vs 12-13).

So that’s what the Word of God does. Then, ***this brings us the conviction of sin.*** Now what do we do when we do that? *We have to go to Christ*, as he finishes here in v 14: “Having therefore a great High Priest... Who can empathize with our weaknesses ... [In other words, He is there to help us. He does feel it. And Wayne gave a sermon on *Does God Have Feelings?* He’s going to send it to me. Yes, God grieves. Yes, God has joy. Yes, God has feelings. So He is touched with our feelings. Now, very important point: the next phrase.] ... **but one Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet He was without sin....**” [So there’s every temptation every man has gone through. Every woman has gone through. God knows!] ... Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (vs 14-16). So that’s the way out of the dilemma of human nature.

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Now let's come back to Jeremiah 17—and as we're turning back there, remember the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee couldn't understand his own nature. Because he came to God and he said, "God," (as he prayed to himself, you know, he wasn't praying to God) he said, "I thank you I'm not like other men. I'm not an adulterer, an extortioner," add anything you want in there. Oh, of course none of those things God wants you to be, right? I mean, He expects you not to do those things, correct? And then he went on to say: "I tithe of everything I possess." And then he went on to say: "Thank you that I'm not like this publican down here." The publican was a tax-collector. Today they work for Uncle Iris [IRS]. And the publican down there, beating on his chest, crying out to God, saying, "Be merciful to me, a sinner." And Jesus said, "I tell you, that man went down to his house justified rather than the other." So he couldn't see that the goodness he was doing was required of God. But in the attitude that he had it, it was really a sinful attitude. Because John wrote that if you "hate your brother whom you can see how can you love God Whom you cannot see." And that's exactly what he was doing. And where was he doing it? *Right in the temple of God*. It's amazing what human beings do, isn't it?

Now, let's come here to Jeremiah 17:5: "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.... [That's why Christ is the Head of the Church. We're to follow no man. God provides teachers and elders, but He also wants all the disciples—that is all the brethren—to become as the teacher. And the ultimate Teacher is Christ, isn't it? So we have a long way to go.] ...For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited.... [on the other hand, notice v 7:] ...Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is" (vs 5-7). Now, lo and behold, that's New Testament doctrine, isn't it? Now what do suppose New Testament doctrine is doing in the Old Testament? It's all the Word of God, that's what it is.

"For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be anxious [that is 'careful'] in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.... [Always growing, always bearing fruit. Now, v 9—here's the way every human heart is. And this is the point we all have to come to in repentance. And it's a progressive thing. After we're baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God, then we progressively see how despicable our own human nature truly is. And I say 'ours,' because I'm including mine. My

human nature is no different than your human nature. And I have to war and struggle to overcome like you have to war and struggle and overcome. And Christ knows that. But His grace is sufficient to help us, to teach us, to lead us, to forgive us. And all of that's part of the process of repentance.] (But notice): ... The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways *and* according to the fruit of his doings" (vs 9-10). And so God is there.

So that's all a part of repentance. And this you do to God personally. It's not a public thing that you do. You do this personally. As Jesus said, you "go into your closet." That means a quiet, private place. I know when I first read that I went into my closet and about suffocated. I soon figured out that if I was in a quiet, private place I could kneel down and pray to God. This is between you and God. You're not to confess your sins to any man. And besides, God knows this. That's why He doesn't require you to confess sins to a priest; that I doubt that there is anyone who confesses sins to the priest that really tells *all the truth!* They want to admit only as much as they need to admit so they will feel good and then they can do their laps on the beads. But, when you come before God alone in repentance, it's between you and God. You can bear your soul to God. You can be truthful to Him. After all He knows, doesn't He? If He knows all the hair on your head then He knows every thought that you have. So that's why we need repentance.

Now, let's look and see what we are to do after—when we come to this point of repentance. Let's see who is responsible for that. Let's come to John, the sixth chapter. And this is what's so important. John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.... [So God the Father has to deal in your life to draw you. Now you stop and think about it for a minute: what a fantastic, absolute blessing that is, that God the Father, *Who is the Sovereign of heaven and earth* sends His Spirit to be with you to deal in your life, to draw Him to you. Now you have to be willing! And He brings you to Christ.] (Now notice v 45: ...It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God'.... [And that's what God is doing by leading you to repentance, He is teaching you. That's what God is doing when you study His Word, He's teaching you. And if you're reading the Bible now with *different* eyes than you had in the past, because God is opening your mind to understanding, it is God the Father Who is doing it.] ...Therefore, everyone who has heard... [and that also implies *responds*] ...from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me."

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Now, John 14—Jesus makes another statement. Because now is not the time that God is saving the world. God is not using George W. Bush to save the world. He's going to use Christ. He is using Christ now for the firstfruits. Now, let's pick it up here in v 6: "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." So both of Them agree. But what do They look for? They look for someone who is willing to repent. Now, you can seek after God. But you have to seek Him in Spirit and in Truth. Which means: if you don't seek God in Truth, you're not going to find the true God. That's why there's so many varieties of religions which God never originated.

Now, let's come to Romans the second chapter and let's see what else God does for us, So God the Father is the One Who intervenes in your life. He's intervened in all of our lives. I can look back and I can remember the time, you know, "hindsight is better than foresight." It's always 20/20. And I can remember when God began dealing with me and it had nothing to do with religion, but it had to do with a challenge of the professor who said, "If you believe the Bible and believe in God there's the door you can get out of this classroom." And that just really upset me. Not that I was a church-goer or believer. I wasn't a non-believer, I wasn't a believer, but that really set me off and I can look back at that time. I also remember when God did lead me to repentance and I was driving down to Pasadena to be baptized. And I remember the exact place on Highway 99 that I was crying and weeping and repenting as I was driving. And so all of you can look back and see and remember that point.

Since it's God the Father that is dealing in your life—now this will help you understand here 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**?" So that's how we come to repentance. We see ourselves for what we are. We realize we're helpless. We realize that we need God's help. And of course, the truth is, we remain helpless, even after that, because now we are going to depend upon God.

Let's come to I John 1:7, and let's see the process of repentance. "However, if we walk in the light... [and Christ is the light, and He gives us that light] ...as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.... [Now this is talking about those who have already repented and have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit of God—they need ongoing cleansing of sin every day. That's why the model prayer is: 'Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who trespass against us.' And that's a daily prayer.] ... If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins... [Now notice, we confess them to Christ] ...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (vs 8-9). Now, that's the operation of grace continually in our lives. That's how we confess our sins in repentance.

Now let's see the next step. Let's come to Acts 2:38—Now there are other Scriptures that you can read in the "Belief's" booklet that are there, and we'll end this review of repentance and then we'll get into baptism because they go together just like a hand in glove and nut and bolt. That is why it is so deceitful of the religionists who say: "Put your hand on the radio or television and receive the Lord." Now, there are many sincere people who do that. Especially if they're convicted of sin, they do that. But you *must* be baptized, **by full water immersion** because it is a burial into the death of Christ, as we'll see in just a minute.

Now after, let's come here to Acts 2:37—after they heard the sermon, let's see, v 36, here's the conclusion of the sermon: "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.... [This is the Scripture which tells us that *we* have had our part in crucifying Christ.] ... Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart... [Now Who led them to that repentance? *God the Father did!* On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was sent. And the Holy Spirit being the power of God worked in their lives.] ...Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' " (vs 36-38). Now when we get to the section on "justification" you will understand even a little more about that.

Now let me read the section on water baptism:

Upon genuine, godly repentance...

There is a sorrow of the world. And the sorrow of the world is not repentance to God. So that's why it's upon true, godly repentance

...and acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior, the believer must be baptized by complete immersion in water for the remission of his or her sins. Water baptism symbolizes the death and burial of each repentant believer—[which is] a spiritual conjoining into the death of Jesus Christ....

And remember, the death of Jesus Christ was a covenant death. And when you are baptized and put into

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that watery grave, you have joined in the covenant death with Christ.]

...Through this baptismal death, the believer becomes a partaker of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, and His blood is applied as full payment for his or her sins....

And then from that time forward is available through grace as a propitiation for our sins.

...Rising up out of the water is symbolic of being conjoined into the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the believer comes up out of the watery grave of baptism, he or she rises to [walk in] newness of life [which is the way of the Lord]. In order to become a new person, each baptized believer must be begotten with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. The believer is then led by the Holy Spirit to walk in loving obedience to God the Father and faith in Jesus Christ (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, p 15).

Now let's look at—we already looked at one of the Scriptures here. Let's, look at the meaning of baptism. Let's come to Colossians 2. This baptism does something for us, which is very powerful, which nothing else can do. Now it doesn't remove entirely the carnal nature that we have, but it does something to our minds. And this is by the operation of baptism, as we will see.

Let's pick it up beginning in Colossians 2:10: "And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power In Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... [and the circumcision of Christ is the receiving of the Holy Spirit. And the receiving of the Holy Spirit is the earnest or God's pledge or down-payment until the time of the purchase of the redemption which then is at the resurrection. So that is the circumcision of the heart.] ... Having been **buried with him in baptism** [that's how it's accomplished], **Having been buried with Him in baptism**, by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. For you, who were *once* dead in *your* sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has *now* made alive with Him, **having forgiven all your trespasses**" (vs 10-13). Now, we have other sermons to get into the detail things of the technicalities of Colossians, the second chapter, which we won't get into today, because we're talking about "water baptism."

Now, let's come to Romans, the second chapter, please; and let's see what this circumcision is.

Now, under the Old Covenant only the males were circumcised. In the New Covenant the circumcision of Christ, with the heart and the mind, is for both men and women. Now Paul explains that it has to be "in the Spirit." Now, let's pick it up here in 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 who *is one* inwardly... [And of course, this refers to Jesus. Not that you become a Jew, as Jews are today. Because Christ is to dwell in you and Christ was a Jew, and so this has to refer to Christ in you.] ...and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit and not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God" (vs 28-29). And so this is what baptism does for you.

Now let's come to Romans, the sixth chapter, and we'll see the whole operation put together here. This is what becomes very important. Let's begin right here in v 1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1). Now remember the quote that I put in *The Harmony of the Gospels* in the section on the Sermon on the Mount from Martin Luther? Who said, "Though your sins be strong, let the grace be stronger. Though you murder a thousand times a day, or commit adultery a thousand times, God's grace is stronger." That's a false grace, brethren. And unfortunately, that's one of the foundations of Protestantism. Paul says: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? [**God forbid**] MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?... [Because when you are baptized, you die to sin.] ...Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, **we were buried with Him** [and the Greek means: *co-buried*] though the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life.... [Meaning we don't walk as the world walks. We don't talk as the world talks.] ...For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection..." (vs 1-5).

Now in reading that, how could anyone believe that people go to heaven when they die? And yet, you can go to funerals and hear ministers say, "Well, you know, Aunt Mary's looking down on us right now from heaven." And I remember the two Protestant ministers that were on Larry King Live after the 9/11 event, and Larry King said, "Well, what about the young children that died in that?" The Protestant said, "Instant heaven, instant heaven!" Well we know the Truth of what is called and shown in the book of Revelation, which is the second resurrection. **It is the resurrection.** Christ made it very clear: "No

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one has ascended unto heaven except the Son of man who came down from heaven.” But when they reject the resurrection, they have to substitute going to heaven which is a lie, in order to justify what they’re teaching. So: “... be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection... [That’s a promise! That’s our hope!] ... Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin **might be destroyed**... [showing that it’s a process] ... so that we might no longer **be enslaved to sin** [not serve sin.] ... Because the one who has died *to sin* [through baptism] has been **justified from sin**” (vs 5-7). You are justified from sin. Being “freed” from sin gives the connotation that you shall never sin again after that—which is not true. You’re “justified” from sins, being past sins.

“Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, Knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also... [which means: *exactly in the same manner*] ...you should indeed reckon... [this means: *figure, calculate, base your life on this*] ...reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord.... [Now, here is the key, v 12:] ...Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body... [it’s going to be there to pull you down. It’s going to be there to tempt you because you still have human nature. But don’t let it rule. Don’t let it reign.] ...by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead... [again, showing a process; showing time; showing overcoming; showing growing in grace and knowledge.] ...and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace” (vs 8-14). That is if you have the Spirit of God, “sin will not have dominion over you.”

Now, you can just give yourself over to it, that is true. And if you reject God and sin willfully, then you have allowed it to have dominion over you. But it will not have dominion over you if you continually yield to God. That’s what it’s talking about here. If you are yielding to God and striving for the righteousness; if you’re going to God and drinking in of His Spirit, of His love, of His grace and all of those things, which build spiritual character, then sin will not have dominion over you. “...you are not under law... [now, we’ll talk about that a little bit later when we get to justification.] ...but under grace” (v 14). And that is true. You receive the Spirit of God, you are under His grace.

And as we saw, as we started out the chapter, what did it say? “What, shall we sin so that grace may abound” *NO!* He explains the process here. We are under grace. Grace does not give license to sin.

- Grace gives us access to God.
- Grace gives us the Spirit of God as a gift.
- Grace gives salvation to us as a gift.
- Grace gives us repentance, which comes from God—which is a gift.
- And grace means *gift*.

So there we have it. We are under grace. Now, under the Old Covenant, when they sinned what did they have to do? *They had to offer an offering*, correct? Because they were under law. **We are not under law**. Though we don’t reject the commandments and laws of God. Now that’s the hardest ones for the Protestants to figure out.

Now let’s go on. “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**... [He answers the question again. Then he explains it very clearly, and this is the whole process of growing and overcoming:] ...Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey” (vs 15-16). Now, the Greek there is ‘*doulos*’ which means *slave*. Ever have a bad habit you’ve had to overcoming. How about smoking? Chewing? Drinking? Gambling? Lottos? They can get a hold of people and just make them “slaves.” They’re slaves to it. Well, **we’re not be slaves to sin that we should obey it!**

Notice this: “...**you are servants of the one you obey**... [very interesting, isn’t it?] ...whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ... [Now, if you obey sin unto death, who are you following? *Satan the devil*.] ...or of obedience unto righteousness? [Whom are you serving? *God the Father and Jesus Christ*.] ...But thanks *be* to God, that you were *the* servants of sin, but you have obeyed from *the* heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you; And having been delivered from sin, you became *the* servants of righteousness” (vs 16-18). And becoming the “servants of righteousness, your whole life then becomes one of:

- loving God,
- serving God,
- growing in grace and knowledge,
- understanding His Word,
- and living His way.

That’s why we are peculiar people on this earth. Those who don’t like what God has, calls us “the followers of a cult.” But the real truth is: *a cult is any substitution for God’s way*. So what they label us, or others who keep the Sabbath, that’s exactly what they are because they don’t believe God! Now maybe

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you've never thought of it that way, but that's just the way it works out.

Now continuing, v 19: "I speak from a human point of view because of the weakness of your flesh... [You know, 'the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.'] ...for just as you *once* yielded your members in bondage to uncleanness, and to lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now yield your members in bondage to righteousness unto sanctification. For when you were *the* servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. Therefore, what fruit did you have then in the *things* of which you are now ashamed? For the end result of those things *is* death. But now *that* you have been delivered from sin and have become servants of God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end result *is* eternal life. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." (vs 19-23).

And that's the whole process. There it gives the whole meaning of repentance and baptism and the operation of the Holy Spirit of God in your life after baptism. And so, it's a completely different understanding than most people who profess Christianity in the world. When you truly understand the Scriptures, for what the Scriptures say, it gives you a far different story than picking and choosing different Scriptures and giving personal interpretations upon it, and then claiming that Christ has done away with the law so you have liberty and grace to do anything you want to. So that's the meaning of baptism.

(go to the next track)

Now we've come to the section in the "Belief's" booklet on "justification. Now, right next to the word "justification" put an equal sign (=)—equals "right standing with God through Jesus Christ." Now, as the Bible defines it—now we need to understand this: "everyway of a man is right in his own eyes"—or *just* in his own eyes. Even some of the most despicable crimes committed, even the 9/11 crimes, were justified by what? *In the name of Allah*. Human beings cannot operate unless they "justify." And that's what the deceptiveness of human nature does. God also has a "justification" which is profound and very important, because it puts you in right standing with God. And notice the sequence of how these have come: you have repentance, water baptism and justification. Because those are the steps of the operation that God has. Now, I'll read from the "Belief's" booklet here:

Justification: Justification is freely granted to the called and repentant believer by God the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Justification takes place when the believer's sins are removed by the blood of

Jesus Christ and he or she is put into right standing with God the Father. In order to receive God's gift of justification, a person must repent toward God, believe in the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and be baptized by [water] immersion. The believer is then cleansed from sin and is without condemnation, placing him or her in right standing with God the Father. This state of justification is called the 'gift of righteousness' because God the Father freely imputes the righteousness of Jesus Christ to the believer. (*Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God*, p16).

Now why is this so confusing in religious circles in the world? Because it is. They like to be justified for their past sins so they can continue in their sins. They don't exactly put it that way, but that's the sum of it. Let's look at a couple of Scriptures here and see if we can untangle it. And most of these will be in the book of Romans. Let's come to Romans 2:13: "(Because the hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Showing that upon repentance you have to keep the laws and commandments of God. In other words, if a person is not willing to obey God, he is not going to be "justified." It's that simple. Cannot be put in right standing with God. So the "doers of the law."

Now, let's look at another Scripture which has thrown Protestantism into a complete utter disaster—and that's why it's going to die. You know Protestantism is dying, you know that don't you? Now, let's come to Romans, the ninth chapter. Then we will come to a very tricky verse, and I think we can unlock the trickiness of this verse—and that verse is, before we get to Romans 9, come to Romans 10:4. Now, in one of my travels I turned on the TV and I saw Copeland's son preaching—first time I ever seen him preach. And he started right out there, Romans 10:4: "For Christ *is the end of works* of law for righteousness to everyone who believes" Bam! all the law of God is done away. Christ ended the law, there's nothing more to be kept. You think it's possible to take that one verse and throw out all the rest of the Bible. You think it's possible to *end* law. Try ending the law of gravity. Can't do it. Would Christ, Who is the Lawgiver, be the end of all law? That's what they assume. Now let's find out what it's talking about because this has great deal to do with "justification."

Let's come back to Romans 9:30, because remember, men made the chapter breaks. It flows right through otherwise. "What then shall we say? That *the* Gentiles, who did not follow after righteous-

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ness, have attained righteousness, even *the* righteousness that *is* by faith.”

- By believing in God
- By being baptized
- By receiving the Holy Spirit
- By walking in newness of life
- So forth.

“But Israel, although they followed after a law of righteousness, did not attain to a law of righteousness. Why?... [How did that happen? You know, just like the Pharisee and the publican.] ... Because *they did not seek it by faith, but **by works of law***.... [In every case in the book of Romans, with the exception of Rom. 2:14, ‘**the works of the law**’ should read: ‘works of law.’ Because in the Greek the definite article is not there, and with the definite article not being there it has a different meaning altogether. By works of law.] ...for they stumbled at the Stone of stumbling. Exactly as it is written: ‘Behold, I place in Sion a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense, but everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed’ ” (vs 30-33).

Now, Romans 10:1: “Brethren, the earnest desire of my heart and my supplication to God for Israel is for salvation. For I testify of them that they have a zeal for God... [There are a lot of people that have zeal for God—a lot of people. But notice:] ... **but not according to knowledge**.... [And that’s why I recommended that you read the book, *The Code of Jewish Law*. Because, if you haven’t read *The Code of Jewish Law* you do not understand what he’s talking about. The Jews have laws for everything to justify them to Judaism. **That does not justify them to God**. And they are all ‘works of law.’ So they have a ‘zeal, but not according to knowledge.’] ...For they, being ignorant of the righteousness *that* comes from God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (vs 1-3).

Now then, how do people today establish their own righteousness if you’re not a Jew? Well, the Catholics have established theirs haven’t they—eliminated the Sabbath and proclaimed Sunday as the day of worship. Confess your sins to the priest, partake of the seven sacraments, obey the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. That’s their own righteousness. **It’s not the righteousness of God**. Protestants, likewise following in their footsteps, do the same thing. They’re not submitting to the righteousness of God. They have a zeal for God, but “not according to knowledge” And being ignorant of God’s way they go about to establish their own righteousness. And whenever you find any time anyone does away with any of the laws and commandments of God, which we are to keep, they always come up with their own devices—which is their own righteousness.

It always happens. Some people don’t like the Sabbath so they keep Sunday. They don’t like the Holy Days, so they have Christmas, Easter, New Years, etc. *That’s their own righteousness*. Some people don’t believe in tithes and offerings so they have pledges. Well, that’s a substitute system. *That’s their own righteousness*. God has the best way through tithes and offerings. Whatever it may be. Same way with clean and unclean foods. “Oh, well, that’s not for us today.” Listen, don’t you think they could cook pork well done, way back when? *Yes!* The truth is you can cook pork well done and you look under a microscope and you still see the trichinosis in it. God had a reason for that. Now’s not the time. When I get to the section: clean and unclean meats, I’ll explain that the New Testament Church taught to eat clean foods.

Let’s go on. Now we’re ready for v 3: ...have not submitted to the righteousness of God.... [What were they seeking? *Their own righteousness*. How were they doing it? *By works of law*. Now we can understand v 4 very clearly, because v 4 cannot be taken out of context with what is there.] ...For Christ *is the end of works of law* for righteousness to everyone who believes” (vs 3-4). Because it’s talking about “works” of law. It’s not talking about **all** the laws of God. As Paul said, “God forbid.” Shall you murder and say “God, I have license.” So you bow down to an idol and say, “This is my god, like the Dalai Lama. I like to call him the “deli-lama.” He points to this little statue in an interview and says, “That’s my boss.” No! Christ is “the end of the works of law for righteousness to everyone that believes”—and that is the context. So that’s what it means.

“For Moses wrote *concerning* the righteousness that *comes through* the law, ‘The man who has practiced those things shall live by them’ ” (v 5). That is true, but there’s another profound thing which you can read in the *Passover* book, that under Moses **they were justified in the flesh**, to the temple, because they did not have the Holy Spirit of God. God does not give salvation to some people one way and salvation to other people another way. **He gives it to all people the same way**. And that’s why when you understand about the second resurrection those who have not been called now will have the second physical life for a first opportunity **because they never had it while they lived, because God didn’t call them**. So, God is (how shall we say the modern word today) God is fair. You got to have fairness—God is fair. Better way of putting it: **God is righteous and God is just**.

Now, let’s look at some other Scriptures concerning this. So, Romans 10:4 has absolutely nothing to do with the termination of the laws and command-

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ments of God. ***It terminates the works of law of sacrifices and rituals***—that's what it terminates.

Now, let's come back to Romans 3 and let's look at another difficult verse—and this really blew me away when I first read it. And I couldn't understand it. And that's Romans 3:20. And this is where they get all confused. Let's see if we can eliminate some of that confusion today. "Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him.... [When I first read that I said, 'What am I doing keeping the commandments of God?' That was a stumper for me. Then I went on.] ...for through *the law is the knowledge of sin*.... [I understood that. 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' I understood that. This next verse I didn't understand either:] ...But now, *the righteousness of God that is separate from law* has been revealed... [And I thought, 'How can you have righteousness without the law?' Because you read that and you think that is the absence of law. Does it mean the absence of law? Or does the Greek mean something else? We'll answer the question here.] (Then the next sentence here): ...being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets" (vs 20-21).

Now, those two verses seem, in the *King James*, very contradictory and reasoning in a circle and hard to understand. Now however, if you understand concerning "works of law"—now let me read it to you the way it should be translated and the way that it will be translated in the coming New Testament, here—and this is directly from the Greek: "Therefore by works of law... [Ah-ha, that is the sacrifices and rituals] ...there shall no flesh be justified before Him... [Why? *Because there's no repentance, there is no baptism*.] ...for through *the law is the knowledge of sin*.... [all the laws and commandments of God tell us what is righteous, and breaking that is sin. All of the rituals and animal sacrifices was a reminder of sin, year-by-year, as the Apostle Paul says.] (Now then, v 21): ...But now, *the righteousness of God*... [which is right standing with God in heaven above—separate, not 'without'; not the absence of, but ***separate*** from the law] ...*that is separate from law* has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets" (vs 20-21). Now, how did the sacrifice of Christ come? By law or by grace? *By grace!* Is that separate from the law and the prophets? *Yes*, even though they witness to it. It is a separate operation. It is a special, separate, spiritual operation that God does.

For example: If a person commits murder and then escapes. You can probably see some of these documentaries on television. There was an account of one man, he escaped, wasn't arrested. He went to Colorado and he lived an exemplary life. And lo and behold, twenty years later when they had, you know,

the *Most Wanted* on television; had his picture, someone recognized him and turned him in. Now then, just suppose he came before the judge and said, "Judge, look, I want you to overlook this murder, because after all I've lived a good life for twenty years." Did his living a good life for twenty years make right the murder that he committed? ***NO!*** The truth is, ***no law justifies you***, period. And in keeping the laws and commandments of God ***you are not seeking justification***. You are living in obedience. And that is a different operation.

Now that's why it says, Romans 2:13: "(Because the hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Because you can't be living in a state of sin when you're justified, ***you must repent and change your ways***, then you are not living in a state of sin. ***Then*** the blood of Christ is applied to your life and you are justified. Law cannot justify you.

Let's use another example: Suppose you didn't keep any day Holy or suppose you are a Sunday-keeper for years and years, and all of a sudden you find out about the Sabbath. So you start keeping the Sabbath. That's a good step. Now suppose you never go any further, you never repent, you're never baptized, you never follow through on it and it comes time of the resurrection and God says you're still a sinner. But he says, "Well, I've been keeping the Sabbath. When I found out about it, I kept it." And God says, "All your Sabbath-keeping previous when you were breaking it was required and all your Sabbath-keeping that you've been doing since then does not undo the sin which happened previously." So when people say that we are seeking to be justified by Sabbath-keeping, they are incorrect; because we are only justified by the sacrifice of Christ. ***And nothing, nothing, brethren, can replace the sacrifice of Christ to forgive your sins, period!*** No law! No person! No sacrifice! can do that whatsoever. And I say "sacrifice," I mean "animal sacrifice."

Now let's read on, how is it done?: Romans 3:22: "Even *the righteousness*... [which then is 'justification'—*being put in right standing with God*] ...of God *that is* through *the faith* of Jesus Christ... [you believe what God has said. You believe in the sacrifice of Christ and you believe in the blood of Christ, and that justifies you. ***Nothing else does!*** [Now notice: ...toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference." Because even to this day, the Jews say they have the corner on the God-market. "We're the chosen people," they say. Well, if you're the chosen people, thank you, I don't want any of that because I don't think you're too chosen being over there in Israel, called today. Unless, you just think about it, all they've gone through the

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years—they are not the chosen people, because they rejected Christ, then God rejected them, and that’s just the long and the short of it—and they have to repent like everybody else. And they have to accept Jesus Christ.

Now notice verse 23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God... [everyone has] ...*But* are being justified freely by His grace... [Not through law-keeping. Commandment and law-keeping is required. That’s why the ‘doers of the law’ shall be justified. The ‘hearers’ won’t. But they do not have the blood of Jesus Christ applied to them because they’re not willing to quit sinning.] ...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus ...[‘For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’] ...Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation... [which is continually atoning, cleansing sacrifice] ...through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past, Through the forbearance of God...” (vs 23-26).

Now, let me just clarify one thing here—we’re almost done—let me just clarify one thing: ***All sin is past sin!*** Now, what do I mean by that? Today, sitting here today, have you sinned tomorrow? No, because tomorrow hasn’t come, has it? How could you sin tomorrow, here today? It’s an incongruous statement. When you sin in a moment of time, as soon as you have sinned, it is past, is it not? *Yes!* So that’s why it is says “of past sins”—so that you cannot have something like the Catholic Church has of selling indulgence for future sin. And that’s in the very Bible they have, you know—which they read out of occasionally.

“...of sins that are past, Through the forbear-

ance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus. Therefore, where *is* boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? *The* law of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a **law of faith**.... [Now, how about that. There’s law and faith put together. The ‘law of faith,’ which means: *this is the rule of belief in God and the law by which now through faith you have your sins forgiven through Christ, rather than works of law of ritual and sacrifices.*] ...Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified by faith separate from works of law.... [It’s a separate operation. The way you can always remember it is this: ***Nothing can forgive your sins but the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ, period!***] (v 29): ... *Is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also *the* God of the Gentiles? YES! *He* is also God of *the* Gentiles, Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law” (vs 25-31).

And how is that established? So that you may love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being, and that you do it from the heart and not do it exteriorly just because it is there in the letter. And that is how you are justified to God—put in right standing with Him, which is a great blessing and privilege that God has done because He’s called you by grace. And the Great Sovereign of the universe has made you then—upon baptism and receipt of the Holy Spirit—one of His begotten children, and you await the resurrection and the return of Jesus Christ. That’s how you’re justified.

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 5-15-07

Scripture References:

- 1) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 2) Jeremiah 17:5-10
- 3) John 6:44-45
- 4) John 14:6
- 5) Romans 2:4
- 6) 1 John 1:7-9
- 7) Acts 2:36-38
- 8) Colossians 2:10-13
- 9) Romans 2:28-29
- 10) Romans 6:1-23
- 11) Romans 2:13
- 12) Romans 10:4
- 13) Romans 9:30-33
- 14) Romans 10:1-5
- 15) Romans 3:20-31

Books referenced:

- *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried, Hyman E. Goldin
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

Purpose of Baptism

Fred R Coulter – July 1, 1999

People want to know how we do the things that we do. We try and be as efficient as we can with whatever money that God sends us. And we're very happy that we have a Canadian office now, that it can be a benefit to everyone here. And I'm happy to be up here in Lethbridge tonight and be up in Calgary tomorrow. And it started out here in this area, it started out with Pauline—she was the first to call or write, I forget which. And since then God has just added by people reaching out to other brethren they know, giving them tapes or giving them literature. We're not out after numbers and we're not out after money—and it just dawned on me, here let's go to Matthew, the tenth chapter. You know, sometimes you go for years and you read a verse and you read this part in the Bible and even though you study the Bible every day, or even as I have done, I have translated the whole New Testament now—and we hope to have that available sometime first part of next year.

And here in Matthew 10:7: “And *as you are* going, proclaim, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal *the* sick. Cleanse *the* lepers. Raise *the* dead. Cast out demons. Freely you have received; freely give” (vs 7-8) And it finally dawned on me: ***freely you have received, freely give!*** And I think this: that this means that the brethren should not be merchandized—that is have a letter begging for money every month coming out to the brethren. Because if you do that then you're merchandizing and you're not getting it free, you're getting it by coercion, right? The way it is “freely given”—that if a person loves God from their heart, wants to keep the commandments of God—which includes tithing and offering—and they ***freely give***—then you don't have to go out and ask for money, because you freely receive and then we give back. And everything that we do we try and benefit all the brethren. We haven't spent money on property or lands, therefore, we're able to give out now—when we get the Passover book done and we're almost done with the second edition and that will be 440 pages. And it's going to be really a wonderful book. Because it's not just going to explain about the Passover, it is going to be a book explaining about the whole plan of God. And it will be about this thick, hard cover for all the brethren and everything that we're going to do is to give back to the brethren ***freely***—or who ever wants.

And so, I think it's very, very important that we understand that. We live within the budget that God gives us—and try and be prudent and have some reserves as you saw with the financial report from last year from the United States, and I'm sure,

Wayne sent one out here to all of you from Canada. Try and have some reserves so we can do the things that God wants us to do. Now, we've reached the point that we need a small office, because we've been crowded into two bedrooms in my home. So we've got a small office, 800 sq. feet, that we're able to get for \$800 a month for the whole thing. We don't have to pay any extra beyond that. And we're going to be able to do the audio-cassettes, video cassettes, do all the literature production and computer work and everything right down there in the office. We really need that.

But, I really feel—here let's go back to II Peter, the second chapter, and I feel one of the reasons God had to do what He did was because in merchandizing the brethren—that is asking for money, money, money, money all the time—it really sowed the seeds of destruction. Plus you put in there the hierarchy. Plus you put in there those who snuck in, the internal spies, unawares. How many were still in Worldwide when Stavrinides hit with his nonsense? I believe he was a long-term plant. Just sitting there to kill your faith; confuse you. But in this tape, which I entitled *How Satan Confuses You with Wrong Thinking* from this man in Tulsa, Oklahoma, he shows the way that the society is thinking today. Now when you couple that with the three tapes on the Jesuit Agenda—and I'll send you some extras so you won't have try and watch it at Sabbath services, because those are pretty long. So you can pass them around and maybe watch them at home or something like that. You will see the methods that Stavrinides used kill the faith within the Church. And then who was his follow-up man? Anybody guess, who was his follow-up man? *Herman Hoeh was an accomplice*. Who was his follow-up man? *Samuel Bacchiocchi*. ***To get you away from the Holy Days. To get you from the Passover***. Because Satan knows a very important thing. “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” So if he can get you to compromise one thing, especially concerning the Passover.

Now, I want you to think about this: There's really not much confusion concerning Trumpets, Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles, right? When is the fulfillment of Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles? *When Christ returns*, correct? Well, by that time it's too late for Satan anyway, right? But, how about Passover, Unleavened Bread and Pentecost—those are important for salvation to the Church, as well as the others. But these three Feasts that we have, they're the ones which put us in contact with God the Father and Jesus Christ today, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

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So if Satan can get you to miss the mark on any one of those, then he's got you on the come. And then the wrong thinking comes along. "Well, let's talk about what we agree on." And lo and behold, got ya! And that's exactly what happened. That's why there are a lot of brethren who are more interested in getting along with brethren and people than being right with God. So they come along and say, "Well, you believe in the 14th, that's all right, I believe in the 15th." Well, the 15th Passover is *not* a Passover and never has been a Passover, and if you keep the 15th you are not connected with Christ. It's that simple! And I put a new chapter in there—*The Passover of the Exiled*. And I have a wonderful quote from a Qaraite Jew, who are the Scripturalists of Judaism. They reject a lot of the Rabbinic stuff—almost all of it. And he says, "We do not practice anything on the 14th because we are not in the land. We are as an unclean thing because of our sins and the sins of our forefathers in whose steps we are walking. And in exile, we are as the Gentiles in their uncleanness, so therefore, we do nothing on the 14th." That is quite an admission! So the Passover, so-called of the 15th, is actually the Passover of the rejected, because they have been rejected of God, sent into exile, sent into captivity and scattered. So if we keep a 15th Passover, guess who we're joining; and Satan would love nothing better than to get the Church of God to do that so they would reject Christ. So now you need to see the stakes that are at hand.

Now here, back to this merchandizing thing—this all fits together. II Peter 2:1: "But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily... [now the Greek means *stealthily, sneakily*] ...introduce destructive heresies, personally denying *the* Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the way of the truth... [Now, that's what we live. That's why in the series that I've been doing on *religion*—and I'm going to do one more to finish it off—we are not a religion. People will look at us and say, 'Well, you're religious because somehow God is only restricted over here into this category they call *religion*.' That's the way they view it. We're not to be religious. We are to *live the way of truth*. We are to have direct contact with God the Father and Jesus Christ. We are to be the sons and daughters of God and the brothers of Jesus Christ. And I finished the last video that I did by saying, 'Who ever heard of calling a family—which God's way is—a *religion*?' That's how Satan deceives people. He gets them out of relationship with God and into a religion. Now let's go on:] ...will be blasphemed" (vs 1-2).

- Has the Sabbath been evil spoken of?

- Has the Holy Days been evil spoken of?
- Has eating of unleavened bread during the Days of Unleavened Bread been evil spoken of?

You know, some people can walk into a former Church of God now where you can keep Sabbath or Sunday, whichever you like. Come for Feast of Unleavened Bread, well you can leavened bread or unleavened bread, whichever you like. Or you can keep the "Lord's Supper" quarterly, as the Seventh Day Adventists do; or weekly as the Catholics do—whichever you like. And that's how they've muddled down all of the thinking.

Verse 3: "Also, through insatiable greed... [meaning: *to getting more and more money*. More and more and more and more and more and more.] ...they will with enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watching.... [Then he gives a warning. This is something for all of us to heed.] ... For if God did not spare *the* angels... [now think of that] ...who sinned, but, having cast *them* into Tartarus, delivered *them* into chains of darkness to be kept for *the* judgment; And *if* God did not spare *the* ancient world, but saved Noah, *the* eighth, a preacher of righteousness, when He brought *the* Flood upon the world of *the* ungodly" (vs 3-5). And then all the way down through the rest of the chapter there.

Now, if you don't have the study we've done on II Peter and Jude, well, by all means get it. Because when II Peter 2 and the book of Jude are put in together like that, that tells a tremendous story. Because though they are similar, they bring out certain facts, and you can see things that are happening today in the Church of God. So what you're going through, brethren, is no different than the Church of God has experienced from the beginning. You're going to have the trial of your faith by fire—and fire is the trial. So, that's what it means to *freely give* because your *freely receive*. And so, if we all do the things that God wants us to do, beginning by loving God—and that's a primary and important thing. Now, I'll mention a little bit more about that tomorrow. I think it's very important that we understand it, brethren. And I don't think that we understand how much *the thinking of the world has affected the Church*. Now, I want to give you an example of some of the false thinking, and then we'll get into the meaning of baptism, since we'll have a baptism tomorrow morning.

How many have seen the ad of Michelin where there's this little baby inside the tire, and it's on the top of a hill, and it's coming down the hill and the baby's going like this coming down the hill. And then it flashes down a little further down the road.

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Here comes momma duck and her little ducky-poos crossing the road. And it looks like that he's going to smash into it with the Michelin tire. All of sudden it stops and the ducks are safe and they walk across. The little boy is like this—real happy. I saw a documentary on the background for doing that ad. It's very interesting. It was done by an all-female advertising agency. And it was done to sell Michelin tires to women. And it was predicated not on one single fact as to how good a Michelin tire was. And I often wondered, when I saw that ad, why is this ad kind of kooky? And I finally figured it out after watching this documentary. They are not interested in the facts. They want to get you thinking emotionally. Now, you know what happened? That one ad increased sales to women 25 percent. That's what they're doing to the children in school.

Now, I want all you children to listen carefully. ***You must get the facts first!*** Don't let the teacher work on you to tell you about self-esteem and how you feel. Because how you feel has nothing to do with facts. Get the facts first before you get your emotions involved. How many lives have been destroyed when emotions get involved first? *Many, many!* And Satan is seeking to destroy your lives, though you are children, by getting you to think in wrong ways. Now emotion is not wrong, but get the facts first. What does God say first? He establishes that—let's go back here to Exodus 20 for just a minute—it's a most important thing. Yes we are to love God with all our heart and mind and soul and being, but we have to get the facts first, don't we?

- Can you have misplaced love? *Yes!*
- Can you love a false god? *Yes!*
- Can you be enticed with emotion? *Yes!*

So God gets the facts first. Now, this is for all of us, every one of us, because they have used this kind of thinking within the Church. Exodus 20:1: "And God spake all these words, saying, ***I am*** the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (vs 1-3). Fact! Before anything else. Fact is:

- God is God.
- God is Supreme.
- God is Lawgiver.
- God loves you.

Now then, you can start bringing in some emotion. God has given all of His commandments for our good. And He's given the fifth commandment to obey your father and mother that you can live long.

Now, I want all of you children to do this—and I'll bring it up also Sabbath: You read in the paper what young teenagers do when they get the car and they do what mom and dad tells them ***not*** to do. Is there any mother and father that tells your chil-

dren, "Go ahead and drive as fast as you can with as much booze under your belt as you can get in, plus a little cocaine, a little marijuana mixed in with it, and just see what you can do." They're dead! In the graveyard! Why? *Because they didn't honor father and mother.* So there's a reason for that. There's a reason and purpose for every one of the Ten Commandments here. When you understand that, when you realize that, then you're going to keep yourself from making mistakes. All young teenage girls, do yourself a favor sometime. I don't know if they have them anymore—they have so many abortion clinics, I don't think they have homes for unwed mothers—but ***it destroys your life*** because God intended for there to be marriage and children within marriage. God intended it, so that you can have a mother and a father that loves you, care for you, provide for you, teach you, educate you, show the right way to go. And that's the important thing. And when you get to feeling that you can turn off your mother and father and turn on television and turn on your friends and one of Satan's devices is to put a friend between you and your parents, that you have more loyalty to a friend than you do to your mother and father. That's important to understand. And also, children today have almost everything they've ever wanted. And if you don't get it—I've seen them in the store—temper tantrums! ***Unreal!***

Then you can go through all the rest of the Ten Commandments here. Let's talk about baptism now. Let's come to the book of Romans, the second chapter. Here's the beginning of baptism. There's a meaning for baptism, which is profound. That's why infant baptism has no validity before God, because you have to know what you are doing. And if you are two weeks old and you're brought in before a Catholic priest, and crying and screaming and yelling and not even know the language, don't even know how to speak, you don't even know who your mother and father is, and this gink with a turned-around-collar backwards and with his cold hands grabs the baby and gets a little water and goes (mumbles) and you're so-called baptized. ***That has nothing to do with God whatsoever.***

To be baptized, God has to do something in your life first! And you can all tell me a story. I told you a little bit about mine, how God led me to repentance. Now let's pick it up here, Romans 2:4—because something special and profound has to happen. Now you don't think it's so special, you don't think it's so profound because God is doing it in such a way that He's gently leading you to repentance. Verse 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**?" So God is the One Who's leading you to re-

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penitance. There has to come repentance first! Before baptism.

Now, hold your place here in Romans because we'll come back to it, let's go to John, the sixth chapter. There's something that's very important that we have to do which affects everything that we do. Which is this: ***you must believe God!*** Not just believe that there *is* a God, because the demons believe that and won't obey. There are a lot of people that believe that there *is* as a God, but they ***don't believe God!*** Now what's the difference between believing that there is a God and believing God? The difference is this: ***If you believe God, then you will do what He says!*** Now think of it this way also: All of the words of God contain the promises of God and the promise of eternal life. So that's why after feeding the 5,000 here in John 6, Jesus told them when they wanted to know what is the "work of God"—now let's read it right here, v 28: "Therefore, they said to Him, 'What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?'.... [so we can be fed.] ...Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent' " (John 6:28-29). You believe God the Father. You believe Jesus Christ. You believe on "Whom He has sent." That is believe in Christ, but then you have to believe the Father, because Jesus said, "If you believe in Me, believe in the Father."

Now belief is so important and profound because ***belief is what you operate on***, isn't it? *Yes!* Everything that you do, you do because you believe. Now whether it's a physical thing or whether it's a spiritual thing. To mail a letter, you believe that if you put it in a post office box, it'll go to where you addressed it, correct? You believe that if you have the money in the bank and you write a check on it that you can pay your bills. You believe that there's electricity in the lines so you turn on the electrical switch—that is unless the electricity's off. You believe the Word of God because it is Truth! And if you believe the Word of God then you're going to do the will of God. And that's what God begins to put into someone when He begins to call them and lead them to repentance, to see that each individual—and He does this individually in calling them—that his or her life is empty and sinless and it's futile to try and get out of it yourself, because you can't. That's why Christ is a Savior.

Now, come over here to John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him... [So when you come to the point that you desire baptism, God is working in your life. God is drawing you to lead you to repentance because He loves you, because 'He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.'] (Now notice): ...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). So who's doing the teaching? When you read the Bible, when you understand the Bible, when it does something to your mind—with the words of God as I recently wrote, which are 'spirit and truth.' It is God's Spirit which is acting in your life and in your mind to do it. So what happens then, you're all being taught of the Father. That's why, brethren, it is so important that whoever is going to teach or preach, teach and preach the words of God because there is nothing greater or better that can be taught or preached, is there, really? *NO!* If the words of God are truth, *which they are*; If the laws of God are truth, *which they are*; And if God sends His Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Truth, *which it is*. ***Then God the Father is the One Who's doing the teaching, is He not?***

In this one profound book—you probably heard me mention several times about the Library of Congress down in Washington, D.C.—this one book. That's why Satan likes to come along, just like with Adam and Eve and say to you, "Well, God didn't mean that here." *He's got ya!*

I recently talked to a woman who's an ex-Seventh Day Adventist, who's going down the road to give up the Sabbath—by saying, "Every day is my Sabbath." And I told her, I said, "That's not what God says. We're to worship God every day, but every day is not the Sabbath, because you got to work." "Well, Christ fulfilled the Sabbath for me." Have you heard that? *Yea! One of Satan's way*, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." Yes! That's why God has to do it individually.

Now, let's come back to Romans 2:12: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law..." Because they're sinning even though they have no knowledge of the law sin still affects them, right? The law of gravity is always in action.

And there's this man—I forget his name—on this video, it says, you know, God's law is very tolerant. You jump out of a plane at 12,000 feet with no parachute it's quite a while until you land on the ground. But when the law then is enforced—when you hit the ground—it's very *IN*tolerant! So, sooner or later it's going to catch up with you, whether you know it or not.

"...shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned within *the* law shall be judged by *the* law, (Because the hearers of the law *are* not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (vs 12-13). So that's one of the first things that God does. He leads to you understand that you need

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to keep the commandments of God. Then He leads you to understand that breaking them is sin—and you need to repent of your sins.

Now, let's go to Acts 2:38, and I'm sure through the years you know exactly what this says. So let's just read it into the record here, because this is something we need to understand concerning baptism.

- Now, you should never be baptized to go to a place of safety. *That's the wrong motive.*
- You should never be baptized so you can marry someone. *That's a wrong motive.*
- You should never be baptized because your brother, father, mother, sister were. *'Cause that may be the wrong motive.*

You're baptized because you repent of your sins to Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Now, when Peter gave this sermon—let's come back up here to Acts 2:36, very important. Not only was this talking to the Jews there that were at Jerusalem, but this was written down for our benefit. Because we need to understand this: In baptism the sacrifice of Christ is applied to each person individually—each one, individually—that's why you're baptized individually. "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 it takes a time to grow in the understanding of that, that ***your sins killed Christ***. And when you understand the greatness and the mercy of God's calling, to apply the sacrifice of Christ to you, and the whole meaning of baptism, it is going to open up your understanding and your relationship with God the Father so much greater, that it's going to be like a whole new life. That's why I have the one I did that I call *The Second Calling*. Because many people didn't know that though they were baptized.

Now notice what else it's to do, v 37: "Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?'.... [Now notice this is the same question that the carnal Jews asked so that they could get their food, 'what shall we do?' And He said, 'believe on Him Whom He has sent.' That is, believe on Christ. And if you believe then here's what you're going to do]: ...Then Peter said to them, 'Repent... [and repentance means: *stop, change, turn around, go the other way*, see that your life, living apart from God is without God and leading to destruction. And God, in His mercy, has called you. And you turn. And actually the Greek here means to—"meta" means *turn around*—"meta"—*change*.

- Go the other way.
- Go from your way to God's way.
- From your thoughts to God's thoughts.

- From your laws and rules to God's laws and rules.
- From your justification of your own actions to God's justification of your life.
- All of those.]

...*'Repent and be baptized... [now this is by full water immersion—I'll explain what that means in just a little bit.] ...each one of you... [You see this individually] ...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' "* (vs 37- 38). And the gift of the Holy Spirit is going to change your life. Now if the gift of the Holy Spirit has not changed your life dramatically, then ask God to grant you more of His Holy Spirit, grant you more of His understanding, so that your life can be changed. We are to become ***converted*** in this change. That's what Peter said, just across the page: Acts 3:19: "Therefore, repent and be converted..." ***Be converted!***

Now conversion is a process. There's initial conversion when you're baptized, receive the Holy Spirit. Then it's a process of "growing in grace and knowledge." Growing in God's Spirit. ***Hungering and thirsting*** after the Word of God and the Truth of God and Christ and hungering and thirsting after eternal life, which Christ alone can give. And ***learning to love God***. And, I tell you, I've had to learn some lessons, because I would have to say that in our experience in the Church we did not learn about the love of God, did we? Oh we learned about authority, we learned about hierarchy, we learned about the Sabbath, learned about the Holy Days, learned different things like this—but where was the love of God? The love of God was only what? *Outgoing concern*. So it gradually degenerated into what? *Fear, intimidation, and letter of the law*. No conversion! No conversion!

Now, how many have heard the tapes on *Genesis 15*—I'm sure all of you have. That's going to be in the Passover book. Actually there are three chapters on the covenant of *Genesis 15*—had to break it down, write it out so it would be easy to understand. Now, let's come back to Romans, the sixth chapter here. And here's what baptism really means. First of all, God the Father draws you, leads you to repentance, then you recognize that you're a sinner and you begin to have a burning feeling in you, some how, that you have got to have these sins forgiven. That you have got to have your life changed!

And so, what you do when you come to baptism is this: Let's pick it up here in Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?" (vs 1-2). Now, that's why in chapter 7 he goes through about all the difficulties of growing and changing and overcoming and getting sin out of your

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life, through the Spirit of God. Because another thing will happen. When you have the Spirit of God you will be able to perceive more sin in your life than you ever thought you had. Why? Is it because you're a worse person? And how can you end up being worse after you've been baptized so you can be better and spiritual? Well, the truth is, you're really not worse. You're really seeing sin for what sin is, which you could not do before you had the Spirit of God. So you will experience that. We're not to live in sin any longer, so what do you do? *You repent of it!* And you grow and overcome. And all of us—all of us—are going to have some weakness that we're going to have to just struggle with all of our lives. That's just the nature of human beings, because we have the "law of sin and death" in us.

Verse 3—very important: "Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, **were baptized into His death**?.... [Now, His death was the covenant sacrifice for the New Covenant. You're being baptized **into His death** means that you are also pledging your life to die in the death of Christ! That's why baptism is not for children, because you have to have a certain level of maturity and calling of God to understand that. You're baptized into His death!] ...Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism **into the death**..." (vs 3-4). Just as Christ was crucified; just as He was that sacrifice; just as He pledged His life to Abraham to do so.

(go to the next track)

So **baptism is a covenant death**—that's what it is. Now if you've never understood that before, ask God to help you understand it and realize that every Passover, with footwashing you're renewing your baptism. And ask God to help you comprehend it and know it and understand it, and let it become a deep part of your life.

Now there's good news. "...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been [planted] conjoined together in the likeness of His death... [Now, planted together (*KJV*) means *co-joined or knit together* in His death—so that what it means in baptism. Notice he carries this on a little bit further: —now here's the other promise:] ...in the likeness of His death so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed..." (vs 4-6). And this tells us that destroying the body of sin is a process—**might be** destroyed. Not done all at once, because:

- we have to grow in grace and knowledge,
- we have to grow in character,

- we have to grow in experience,
- we have trials that will be there

—and, another thing with trials: trials always turn out never to be the ones that you think you're going to have. Because what happens if you think that you're going to get a trial in a certain area then you're going to kind of gear yourself up for it, so you will be ready, right? So that one never happens.

"...that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might **no longer be enslaved to sin**" (v 6). Now notice, it doesn't say that you are sinless. It says you shouldn't **serve** it. It doesn't mean you won't be tempted. Doesn't mean that you won't sin. But it means you won't **serve** sin—meaning *you're not going to live a life in sin anymore*, because he started off and said up here: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?...how shall we live any longer therein? (vs 1-2). Verse 7: "Because the one who has died *to sin*... [through the operation of baptism] ...has been justified from sin.... [Freed (*KJV*) is not a good word here because 'freed' actually kind of gives you the connotation of *having no sin*. But this means 'justified from sin.'] ...Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him... [So again it's a matter of faith, a matter of belief.] ...Knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 7-11).

Now, when you're armed with this and the Spirit of God, then he says—v 12: "Therefore, do not let sin rule... [This means: *don't let sin have dominion, rule, in your life.*] ...in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace" (vs 12-14). Because **law cannot forgive!** Remember that. **Law cannot forgive! Law defines sin.** So if you look to law to do away with your sins, you're looking to the wrong thing. You have to look to the sacrifice of Christ and His mercy and His love and His forgiveness, which is grace. And **the only way you're going to overcome sin is by the grace of God.** No other way.

So if you have a problem and trial and you have a sin you're trying to overcome, you have something you have to clean up your life with and only Christ can do it, you go to God and you repent from the very depths of your being. You go to God and ask God to help you with His grace and fulfill His prom-

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ise that you can't do it, that He can do it. Then you are under grace! But if you say, "Oh, I broke the Sabbath this Sabbath therefore then, I'm going to keep the Sabbath perfect for the next ten—that's under law. Because all your good Sabbath-keeping for the next ten doesn't do any wit good in taking away the sin of breaking the Sabbath before, any more than a murderer who murders someone and runs off and is not caught for 20 years, has lived an exemplary life and they arrest him and he says, "Well, I've been a good boy for 20 years. Doesn't that forgive me for killing this man." **NO, it doesn't!** So that's why you need the mercy and grace of God.

Now, let's look at something else here. When we come to this repentance—let's go back to Psalm 51—and this is very important because the whole purpose of repentance is not to put you down, not to make you feel miserable,

- **but to purify you through faith,**
- **to cleanse your heart by belief,**
- **to give you God's Spirit through forgiveness**

Now, let's notice David's repentance here: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.... [And boy, his were whoppers at that point, weren't they? *Yes.*] ...Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest" (Psa. 51:1-4). So this is what God wants. That's why repentance. God doesn't call people to repent to intimidate them and put them down. God calls you to repentance so you can see your real self. So that you can see God! So that you can experience His forgiveness and receive his mercy and have your sins forgiven. And when He forgives them, He forgives them and removes them "as far as east is from the west." Now that's a real deal, isn't it? I mean, you think about that. Is God merciful? **Absolutely!** Should we take advantage of the mercy of God and sin? **Never!**

Verse 5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.... [He understood the depths of human nature. Not that his mother conceived him because she committed adultery—has nothing to do with that. Has to do with the nature of human beings being sinful. Now here's the result, v 6:] ...Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts... [that is your heart and your mind and your being. Because if that is there—and what is truth? *'God's Word is Truth.'* He wants it written on the inside of your heart and mind so that you live by it; you think with it; you act and do the things that you do because you

believe the Truth and you believe Christ.] ...and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop [which is strong cleansing], and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out **all** mine iniquities. **Create in me a clean heart,** O God; [that's what God wants] ...and renew a right spirit within me.... [Now notice, he said here, v 11:] ...Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.... [David sinned so bad, he was worried about losing the Holy Spirit. Now there are some people today who have gone so far from God they better come to the point that they need to realize how much further can I go and still have the Holy Spirit with me? So they need to repent and come back to God.] ...Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy free spirit*" (vs 5-12).

Now let's come over here to Psalm 86—very important Psalm, one that is very encouraging. When you get discouraged and you get down and you think, "Oh my, how will I ever overcome?" And sometimes the human nature battle gets so tough, because it is a battle, but we have the victory through Christ. Always remember this, beginning in verse one—notice how David prayed to God. Such deep heartfelt prayer: "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I *am* holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily" (vs 1-3). He is pouring his heart before God. Now if you're having a hard time praying, or you're not finding the time to pray and you know you need to, and you have a guilty conscience and you don't want to have a guilty conscience, well go repent of that. Take the Psalms, start praying by starting out reading the Psalms, apply them to yourself. Ask God to open your mind. Ask God to grant His Spirit, cleanse your heart—He'll do that! He'll restore you.

"Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. [Now, notice v 5:] For **thou, Lord, art good,** and **ready to forgive** [ready]; and **plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee**" (vs 4-5). So remember that. If you ever think that you can't go to God and repent, that's when you better go repent as fast as you can! I know many times, we make the mistake, we go along and we sin and we say, "Oh well, I shouldn't have done that, I know better than that. Well, I don't want to go pray to God right now because I'm too embarrassed. I'll wait until I can do better." Well, you can't do better. Because until you repent and take it to God it's still there, right? That's what's so important about God. God knows we're weak. God knows we have the "law of sin and death" in us. That's why Christ is our Sav-

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ior. He provided all these things to help us, to heal us, to raise us up spiritually.

Now, let's come back to the book of Romans. You will have a couple of tapes coming in a couple of weeks where I talk about human nature and the nature that Christ had. And so, I won't go through Romans 7, but I just want to cover some things here in Romans 8, which are very important and touch on this concerning having the Spirit of God.

Now, let's understand something here that's very important. Romans 8:1, as I covered, I think, during the Days of Unleavened Bread. "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation... [What religion does condemn you and hold you in fear and intimidation. But if you repent to God, there is no condemnation.] ...to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh... [not out after carnal things, not walking the way of the world] ...but according to *the* Spirit; Because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus... [and we just talked about that 'law of the Spirit of life':

- drawing close to God,
- praying to God,
- repenting,
- walking in every Word of God,
- loving God, loving your husband or wife,
- loving your children,
- loving your neighbor

—all those are all part of it. That's the 'law of the Spirit of life in Christ. Giving you the chance to grow in the mind of Christ. To overcome sin.] ...has delivered me from the law of sin and death.... [Because it hasn't been taken out of your system, so you're not free in the sense that you are without the 'law of sin and death'—that means you've been delivered from it through Christ.] ...For what *was* impossible for the law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; In order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit: For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh..." (vs 1-5).

That's all they talk about, physical things: to have, to get, to own, to see, to possess, to use. All of these are physical things of the world. And after a while you can begin to understand that. After a while, that's why when you really begin to comprehend it you're not going to want to watch television like you use to. You're not going to want to pursue after the physical things like you use to. Oh you may even do better in it, but it's not going to obsess every thought of your waking life. Now, there are going to be a lot of people who are pursuing after the flesh in the stock market. The day is going to come, all gone! Or what-

ever it may be. Look at the things concerning athletes that pursue after the goals of the flesh. What happens? *One day they get too old to do it.* And where are they? *Their bones are broken, their knees have been broken how many times and their legs and they're worn out;* then it's over with and now what do they have? You know, some of these football players that, you know, you watch them play football. Well they showed one episode of several men who were like tackles and centers and they can hardly walk. They were in pain from head to toe, day and night. What do they have? Maybe they won a Super Bowl, maybe they didn't. They're pursuing after the physical things. People can go out and buy cars, buy homes, buy clothes, buy toys. Be obsessed with all these physical things. And what do you have in the end? *And upset mind, disturbed spirit, nothing satisfies.* So we don't pursue those things. We don't walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

"...For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.... [And that means you live by every Word of God. You think by God's Word. You are concerned with how you are living; how you love God; how you love your wife; how you love your children; how you love the brethren—those then become the important things in your life.] ...For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace, Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God..." (vs 5-8). And as soon as the opportunity comes to sin, they do! And that happened down in Pasadena. The very first Sabbath that they announced that 'why it's okay, brethren, to eat unclean meat.' Do you realize how many church members—I won't say 'brethren' because they probably weren't—but how many church members were back in the foyer, in the auditorium in Pasadena, planning to go the Red Lobster and ***eat all the unclean food they could that very afternoon*** of hearing this sermon!

"...for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*. But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling..." (vs 7-9) And that is the whole purpose of baptism. God's Spirit is with you while He's calling you, opening up your mind, leading you, guiding you to repentance, drawing you to Himself. Then when you are baptized and receive the Spirit in you, that is the earnest of eternal life. That is the begetting from God the Father, that you will become His very own, personal, individual son or daughter. Just like with physical life every human being is different, special—unique. And everyone who's going to be born into the Kingdom of God will be special, unique and differ-

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ent—so much so, that God is going to give you a new name—name of Jerusalem, name of the Father and His new name. Now that’s something! I think that with the Spirit of God, we need to raise our eyes up, as it were, more to God and see more of God’s plan and how fantastic and great it is. And when that happens you’ll love God so much more. And when that happens you will be *anxious* to repent. You’ll be *willing* to change. You’ll be *wanting* to be converted. Then you’ll have no trouble praying, no trouble studying. Why? ***Because you’re motivated with God’s Spirit through faith and belief in His grace.*** That’s what’s needed in all of our lives.

“...However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, if *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.... [And that’s why all the scattering has gone on, to separate, to show.] ...But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you...” (vs 9–11). That’s what’s so important. Now, that’s a promise. He’s going to make alive your mortal bodies by His Spirit that is in you.

Now, hold your place here and come to I Corinthians 15. Did you know that you have a living, breathing, walking guarantee that you will have a spirit body? Did you know that? What is that? Let’s read it: v 47: “The first man *is* of the earth—made of dust. The second man *is* the Lord from heaven. As *is* the one made of dust, so also *are all* those who are made of dust... [And that means carnal, physical] ...and as *is* the heavenly one, so also *are all* those who are heavenly.... [As Christ is raised in His glorified form now. Verse 49, here’s a guarantee:] ...And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust... [What does that guarantee? That you’ll have a spiritual body? *Just look at yourself in the mirror.* The fact that you have a body and the Spirit of Christ in you is a guarantee you’re going to have a spiritual body. Let’s read it:] ...***we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one***” (vs 47–49). That’s quite a promise. That is a guarantee! God is not trying to keep you out of the Kingdom of God, brethren. God is not trying to keep you from being a spirit being. God is doing and providing everything to ensure that you ***will be!*** Now that’s the way we need to view God.

Now, let’s come back here to Romans 8:11: “Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live ac-

cording to *the* flesh; Because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live.... [That shows the whole process of overcoming.] ...For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God... [Now, that’s very interesting. It doesn’t say ‘as many as are pulled.’ It doesn’t say ‘as many as are pushed.’ You try this some time: you put a rope on the back fender of your car and you pull it real tight. Then you push on it and see if you can move the car. Never happen! You can put it in front and pull it, but God wants you ***willingly to choose to be led of the Spirit.*** And that’s different.] ...these are *the* sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the* Spirit of sonship, whereby we call out, ‘Abba, Father’ ” (vs 11–15). That close, individual, personal relationship with God, that Christ has provided into the Holy of Holies in heaven above. That’s what’s so important that God wants restored.

And I am convinced that He is going to destroy any Church of God that has a hierarchy, that sets itself to put ministers in positions and people over the brethren to cut them off from God the Father and Jesus Christ because you are called of God, have God’s Spirit, Christ is your Savior—you have that relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. The ministers are to minister and to teach. And if they teach and inspire and help and show the love of God, then the work of God, in each individual, will increase, because then they go to directly to God the Father and Jesus Christ. And the more that you experience that and do that, the more you are going to be sure of your salvation and your conversion and that you have God’s Spirit. And the more that you’re going to see how that we allowed all the fleshly things of a carnal, corporation and hierarchy and all of these things to take people away from God.

Now let’s go on here, v 16: “The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him.... [Now here’s how to count all the suffering and difficulties in the world that you’re going to come up with:] ...For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us” (vs 16–18).

And if you remember that, there will never, never ever be anyone who can come and take you away from God. That’s what’s so important. You will always know that in spite of everything God loves you. In spite of all the difficulties you’ve gone through, Christ has provided the way.

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 6-2-07

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Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 10:7-8
- 2) 2 Peter 2:1-5
- 3) Exodus 20:1-3
- 4) Romans 2:4
- 5) John 6:28-29; 44-45
- 6) Romans 2:12-13
- 7) Acts 2:36-38
- 8) Acts 3:19
- 9) Romans 6:1-14
- 10) Psalm 51:1-12
- 11) Psalm 86:1-5
- 12) Romans 8:1-11
- 13) 1 Corinthians 15:47-49
- 14) Romans 8:11-18

Also referenced:

Sermons:

How Satan Confuses You with Wrong Thinking
(from someone in Tulsa, Ok.)
The Second Calling
Jesuit Agenda (series)
Series on “religion”
Series on Genesis 15

Study Paper: 2-Peter and Jude

Book: *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

The True Meaning of Baptism

Fred R. Coulter – July 8, 2000

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

It is not an initiation

It is not to join an organization

It is not to be baptized into the name of any man or woman—such as the Seventh Day Adventists, they ask you, “Do you believe that Ellen G. White is a prophetess of God?” That is then not a valid baptism.

It is not an outward sign of inner-faith—though some people may considerate it to be so.

It is not a sprinkling—and we'll explain why it's not a sprinkling.

It is not for infants and children—because it has to be conscience decision by the one being baptized.

It is not a ritual—it is a ceremony, but it is not a ritual.

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

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

for an everlasting covenant” (vs 9–13). Now that means *an age-lasting covenant*. So that was from the time the physical circumcision—from the time of Abraham and Isaac; and in this case, even Ishmael—that came down to the time of Christ. But what we are going to see is this: the physical circumcision was only a type of the spiritual circumcision, which requires a greater change. And the spiritual circumcision is what's at the heart and core of baptism in the New Testament, as we will see later.

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

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

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

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

Now let's come to the New Testament, and let's see the basis for baptism, what God has done.

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

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

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

The True Meaning of Baptism

Now how is God going to solve this problem? God has to do something in it, which then begins to lead us to baptism. Let's go back and see the beginnings of baptism. We'll come back here to the book of Romans because we'll be there later. Let's come back to Matthew, the third chapter—and this shows us the beginning of baptism. Now the only other rituals that they had before was when they were unclean because of a sickness or an illness or unclean because of some sin. Not all sins required it, but some sins. That they would bathe when they were done, like they would be unclean seven days and then on the eighth day then they would bathe and be clean. Now then, the only other ones to bathe in that manner were the priests. And they had to bathe before the priest went in to offer the incense and go into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement.

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

Now let's understand something concerning the word "baptize." To baptize is the Greek word: '*baptizo*'—which means *to submerge*, even used in cases of a sunken ship. Now a sunken ship is below the water, isn't it? And we will see there ³is a reason for being put below the water and rather than sprinkling. Verse 6: "...And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them... ['Why, it's so nice to see you wonderful, sweet loving religious people here.

It's marvelous that you have come down. I have been waiting for you.' NO! he said]: '*...You brood of vipers... [Now, a Palestinian viper is some viper! And when he says, 'generation of vipers' (KJV) that's directly relating to the fact that they are the children of the Devil.] ...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance... [or answerable for an amendment to life. So 'repentance' means that you come to the knowledge and understanding—which we'll see in just a minute—that God leads you to that you are a sinner! Not only that you have sinned, but you are a sinner. Like the Apostle Paul said in I Tim. 1, he said that 'it is a truth that Christ came to save sinners of whom I am the chief! Answerable to amendments of life.] ...And do not think to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'... [and we are circumcised.] ...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham' " (vs. 6-9). So it's not all who come, as we read earlier about bringing unchurched people in. If they don't repent how can they be part of the spiritual body of Christ? If they don't receive the Holy Spirit of God what do you have? *You have a carnal church of do-gooders.**

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

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

Now notice: " 'Whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor,

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and will gather His wheat into the granary; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire' ” (v 12). Because no one is going to put it out. Now that's how baptism started.

Now we know that it talks about, in John 4 (we won't turn there, we'll by-pass it) let's come to Acts, the second chapter and let's get to the heart and core of the real meaning of baptism. But it says in John 4 that Jesus baptized yet He didn't, it was His disciples who baptized. Acts 2:36—after Peter preached, now this becomes important: “Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart...” (vs 36-37). Now this is important to understand. This is the first part of repentance. God has to do something in your life and in your heart and in your mind to lead you to this beginning point of baptism, which is called '*pricked in your hearts.*'

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

And finally, not saying anything, it finally got quiet. And he said, the very first words out of his mouth: “If there's anyone who believes in God and in the Bible there is the door. It will not be discussed in this class!” Well, that just got my hackles up. And that's what God used to begin to call me.

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

He looked at me, “Why?”

“Because of my religion.”

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

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

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

So I said, “Do you mind if I do it?”

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

But here in Romans 2, the reason why I'm saying this is because *it is God that leads you to repentance*. It is God that opens your mind. Now, I

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don't know what the circumstances were that God used to call you. Maybe it was a radio program, or a television program, or a booklet, or maybe it was one of your relatives, or maybe it was husband or wife, whatever the case may be. But **it is God Who does it**. The vehicle which He uses will be different because every person needs to be approached in a different way. So God will deal with each one of us at our own level. So whatever your circumstances were, God has dealt with you. Now let's pick it up here Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the [goodness] graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" And 'goodness' here is the same base word as 'grace.' Or could be called "the graciousness of God leads you to repentance." Why? **Because "by grace are you saved and that not of yourselves."** God is the one Who does the calling.

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

are. Desire to understand why your life is such a wreck and a shambles; and that you can repent to God because it's sin that's doing it. And God is the one Who leads you to it.] ...Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me' " (vs 44-45).

Now, let's come here to v 65: "And He said, 'For this reason, I have said to you, no one can come to Me unless it has been given to him from My Father.' " So the whole process of even being called to repentance is a gift of God—the **gift of repentance**. That's why they were pricked in their hearts. **It is the gift of repentance, which is graciousness from God**. Now, there is a sorrow of this world. So it has to be a greater sorrow than of the world.

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

That's what happened to me. I go t back and once I started keeping the Sabbath I began to understand things, which I didn't understand before. And then I knew I had to be baptized. And so in October—I went down on October 18th, because I was baptized the next day. I went down in my little old Nash Rambler, and I was going down toward Pasadena. It was Highway 99—remember Highway 99?—and you had to go over the "grapevine." And I remember that stretch right out of Bakersfield—maybe you'll remember it. There's this straight stretch where there's these big eucalyptus trees, and I was listening to a World Tomorrow program and it happened to be on repentance. And I was listening very intently and it really convicted me in heart. And so, here I'm driving

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along repenting and tears streaming down and, you know, it is a deep and emotional and spiritual experience that you will go through. And so, I got down there and I stayed in a motel, then the next day I went ahead and got a whole stack of booklets and spent a whole day reading booklets in the motel. And then the second day on the 19th then I was counseled for baptism by Richard Plechette and Clarence Hughes and was baptized.

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

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

So the way that I baptize is this—just a short summary here: "I baptize you not into any sect or denomination of this world...[and this is a covenant death which we'll talk about a little bit later] ...but into the name of the Father because He will beget you with His Spirit....

(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.

Now, let's continue on here. Let's see what kind of repentance that we need. Let's come to Psalm 86. Now we know that the New Testament says that the angels in heaven rejoice over every sinner that repents. Why? *Because repentance is such a difficult thing.* There is the sorrow of the world which is you've been caught and you're upset about being caught. Or maybe you did something and there is some remorse. But you are not sorrowed unto death. That is sorrowed unto the point that you understand that the wages of your life—being sin—leads to death; and that your life and your sins have killed Christ. That's why there's sorrow. Now, let's see God's graciousness as extended here. "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I *am* holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. **For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.**... [Now this is in mind for all of us; whenever you do sin, God is ready to forgive. Whenever you truly repent.] ...and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Psa. 86:1-5).

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

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

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Now here's how it is done when we repent. Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... [not only just in the physical thing of being baptized in water, but also spiritually in your mind—which we will see is the circumcision of the heart.] ...For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.... [And that's what happens when God leads you to repentance. Your sins are just standing right up.] ...Against thee, thee only, have I sinned... [because you understand you can sin against people, but God is the one Who gave the law, which says: 'love your neighbor as yourself.' God is the one Who gave the law: 'honor your father and mother.' Who gave the law: 'you shall not commit murder.' 'You shall not commit adultery.' 'You shall not steal.' 'You shall not bear false witness.' 'You shall not covet.' And that's why the law is given. Then with the power of the Holy Spirit, to convict you of sin, so that you will be like David was here. Only against God have you sinned—and have this in mind. Even if you were the only person on earth, your sins would have killed Christ because He created you!] ...and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts..." (vs 1-6).

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

Now, let's come to Romans, the sixth chapter, because this tells us more about baptism than anything else. Let's understand something concerning the New Covenant. The New Covenant is based upon the crucifixion and death, the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, and His resurrection. Now when we enter into baptism it is a spiritual death. That is why it is not a ritual but it is a ceremony. That's why it cannot

be an initiation into an organization because it is into Christ, as we will see. Now, let's begin here in Romans. 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?.... [Now how do you die to sin? *Through baptism!* And that as we know, every year we renew our baptism through the footwashing. You can read that in the Passover book.] ...live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?" (vs 1-3). So there is great meaning with baptism. That's why you are submersed under water. And it is the closest thing that you can come to, to die because you are buried. You are buried with Christ in baptism. Then you are raised out of that watery grave. Now, if we kept you under the water long enough, you would truly die. But I haven't been know to do that yet, so don't worry.

Verse 4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him though the baptism into the death..." Now since it is a covenant relationship that you are entering into between God the Father, Jesus Christ and you personally, you are being co-joined into that death. Christ's sacrifice did what? *Paid for your sins*. That's why you are baptized into that death. Another reason you are baptized into that death is this: Is that it is a *covenant pledge*. And a covenant pledge cannot be broken. If you do break it. Let me re-phrase it: **A covenant pledge is NOT TO BE broken**. Once you make that covenant pledge, you're buried with Christ in the watery grave. Now then, you have pledged that as you come out of the watery grave you're going to walk in newness of life. And that if you go back on that covenant pledge and, that's not to say that you won't sin because we'll cover that (I don't know if we'll have time on this tape or not, but we'll cover later) if you go back on that covenant pledge and reject God and reject Christ and reject His commandments—which there are some who have done it knowingly—you then have pledged your death in the lake of fire! So that's something you need to understand. That's why you're baptized into His death. Now please understand: God wants you to live, but He wants you to understand you're going to live by His way—and it is a way of life. It is not just a religion or something that you do. It's not just churching the unchurched.

"...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life.... [In the Spirit of God. In the commandments of God.] ...For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection... [Meaning that, God is going to grant you eternal life in power, in splendor, and in glory! So

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

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

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

Now let's pick it up here in Luke 14:25: "And great multitudes were going with Him... [and He said, 'Ya'll come into the synagogue now, all you unchurched just come in, we need numbers here. These rabbis are needing more money. They're needing more people. We need more pledges. You know, we need more good folk.' NO, NO, NO!] ... and He turned *and* said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father... [now I want you to understand: this is the **covenant pledge**, which we will see means *to love God more than*. This is pretty strong stuff.] ...and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.... [And the Greek there is '*ou dunamai*'—the *strongest negation of having no power* to become a disciple of Christ. That's how important baptism is.] (Notice): ...And whoever does not carry his cross... [Didn't we read that the old man may be crucified? *Yes*.] ...and come after Me cannot... [*'ou dunamai*'—the *impossibility of it*.] ... be My disciple. For which one of you, desiring to build a tower... [so He gives a parable about building a new life.] ...does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for its completion; Lest perhaps... [or that is *unfortunately*] ...after he has laid its foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, Saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish'? Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war, does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with

ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand? But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off, he sends ambassadors and desires the *terms* for peace. In the same way also, each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple" (vs 25-33). Now how do you forsake all that you have? Does that mean you put it up for sale and go live in a monastery under a pledge of poverty? *No*. It means that you love God more and all the physical things that are around you are counted as nothing. You don't set your heart on it. In your own mind you have sold it. Now remember the parable of the rich man? He was told to go and sell, literally. And he didn't do it, because he had great wealth (Matt. 19). Because he put the physical things first. So we have to put the spiritual things first.

Now, after we're baptized and come out of the watery grave, let's come to Matthew, the tenth chapter, and let's get a parallel account to this so you know that you're not to live by hatred. Of course you're to love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being. Love your neighbor as yourself. But in relationship to God, ***you are to love no one greater than God!*** That's what it means. Will it improve a marriage? *Yes! Because then Christ will be in you.* Will it improve your relations with one another? *Yes, because you love your neighbor as yourself.* And you love the brethren as Christ loved us. But here, Matthew 10:37: "The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross... [to crucify himself with Christ, through the watery grave of baptism] ...and follow [after] Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life... [that is in this world] ...shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life... [that is in this world through baptism] ... for My sake shall find it" (vs 37-39). And so, God has everything to give for you. What God wants you to do is to totally surrender yourself to Him. And then make that covenant with Him—that covenant of the watery grave—and then to receive the Holy Spirit.

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

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

Now let's come down here to v 21: “The one who has My commandments and is keeping them... [So, you have to have them and keep them. Remember, we're no longer to live in sin. And sin is what? *The transgression of the law.*] ...that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.” How does He do that? *By calling you! By opening up your mind to His Word and His truth—that's how He does it.*

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

Now, let's come to Colossians, the third chapter. Let's see what we are to do after we are bap-

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

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

Now let's come to Romans, the seventh chapter, and let's see that after we're baptized one of the things that you need to understand is this: you don't overcome human nature all at once. And one of the things that plagues people who have been recently baptized is “Whoop! I've sinned! Have I committed the unpardonable sin?” Because he or she figured in their own minds that “once I'm baptized I ought to be perfect.” You are baptized because you are imperfect. You are baptized because you are a sinner. And now you have to start learning God's way and learn to be led by the Holy Spirit of God. Now the Apostle Paul makes this very clear. Now, we'll just paraphrase some of it—you can read the whole seventh chapter beginning at verse seven, which is this: Once you are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God then sin becomes exceedingly sinful, because now you are convicted of it in your mind. Whereas before God called you, you weren't convicted of sin at all. You were just trying to do your own way, which you thought was right. And if something came along where you were not right, well maybe you could change or modify that; but it didn't lead to repentance and it didn't lead to obedience. And it didn't lead to a conviction of sin.

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

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in life... [which we read back there in Deuteronomy—‘for your good always.’] ...was found *to be* unto death for me Because sin, having taken opportunity by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*... [Because ‘the wages of sin is death.’] ... Therefore, the law *is* indeed holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good. Now then, did that which *is* good become death to me? MAY IT NEVER BE! But sin, in order that it might truly be exposed as sin... [That’s why you have a conviction of sin. By the Spirit of God which is leading you to understand that.] ...working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (vs 9-14). Even after his baptism he said this, because understood that his own nature was evil inherently and only God can change it and only God can help you overcome it. And only with the Spirit of God can that be done. That’s why you die in the watery grave of baptism. Then he shows the struggle that he would go through. There were times when he would sin and he didn’t want to sin. He wanted to do good but couldn’t. And then he said, “There is this conflict in me that I can only be saved of by Christ Jesus.” Now you can also read of that in the Passover book, *The Nature of Man*.

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

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

This grace then gives you access to God the Father so **when you sin**, if it not a “sin unto death”—that is the unpardonable sin and rejecting Christ. And just like Paul, he hadn’t rejected Christ, he just sinned, like any of us do. Then what do you do? *You go to Christ and repent!* Let’s see that here: I John 1:6: “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth... [and that actually means *practice the truth*, which is the Word of God.] ...However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another... [and notice, this is talking about those who have been baptized.] ...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, **cleanses us from all sin**... [or every sin] ...If we say that we do not have

sin... [that is we don’t have a sinful nature] ...we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us... If we confess our own sins... [Now, Who do we confess our sins to? No priest. You confess them to God. You get on your knees in the private, quiet place and repent to God:

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

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

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

Now, I 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.] (now notice v 2): ...And He is *the* propitiation for our sins... [now ‘propitiation’ means *constant atoning sacrifice*. His sacrifice is constant. Once for all—and you can put ‘all time’—so you come to Him and repent and confess your sins, ‘He is faithful and just to forgive your sins. Now notice, lest we get conceited]: ...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.... [Which, when you come to understand the Holy Days will show you how God’s plan is going to work that out. When it’s going to be done. Now is not the day of salvation for the whole the world. Now is the salvation for those that God calls,

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as we saw.] ...And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments... [that's after you've repented, been baptized, received the Holy Spirit of God, you walk in grace, you live in grace, you continue to confess your sins to Him, continue to keep His commandments. We know that we are in Him]: ...if we keep His commandments.... [that ties right in with John 14:15). ...The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.... [And that doesn't matter who the person is.] (Here's the whole key): ...On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected... [That is a lifelong process] ...By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (vs 1-6).

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

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

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

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

Now let's come to Acts 19 and see what Paul said to those who were baptized unto the baptism of John. Acts 19:1: "Now it came to pass *that* while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the upper parts *and* came to Ephesus; and when he found certain disciples, He said to them, 'Did you receive *the* Holy Spirit after you believed?'... [Because the whole point of the matter is to receive the Holy Spirit. And if you haven't received the Holy Spirit, any number of times you have been baptized are all false and fake baptisms.] ...And they said to him, 'We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit.' Then he said to them, 'Unto what, then, were you baptized?' And they said, 'Unto the baptism of John.' And Paul said, 'John truly baptized *with* a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ.' And after hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Now when Paul laid *his* hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them..." (vs 1-6).

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

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

So there are some cases when people need to be re-baptized—and I've re-baptized them. Sometimes they are baptized when they are too young and they come to a greater consciousness because God still is working with them. And then they are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. And sometimes people just don't understand the basis of baptism when they're baptized and so they don't receive the Holy Spirit when they are baptized. Now, one other thing that's important: You not only must you repent, but ***you must also believe.***

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

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

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 7-17-07

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 2:38
- 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
- 27) Acts 8:37

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Timothy 1
- John 4
- Matthew 19
- John 14:15

Also referenced:

The Christian Passover by Fred R. Coulter
Sermon Series: *Colossians*

Meaning of Baptism

Fred R. Coulter – June 1, 2001

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

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

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

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

Now let's talk about eternal life. God is calling you to eternal life—to *share in the existence of*

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

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

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

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

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

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actively involved in our lives. And Christ is involved in our lives. But because it's such a profound thing and it's not just an ordinary occurrence and God is not calling everyone at this time, therefore, you are required to enter into a covenant with Him. **Whenever God deals with His people He enters into a covenant.** And baptism is a covenant. Jesus said it is the New Covenant. Now Jesus being our Savior then, the One Who died for our sins and being the Author of the New Covenant, He was telling this to His disciples. Let's come here to v 51: [He said,] "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven... [and He contrasts that just to the bread that people eat to sustain their physical lives. Now this bread is unusual because it says:] ...if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

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

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

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

Now, let's come to John 14 and see how He does this as He begins to call people. Because something happens; something different happens to you, which then we can say is the working of God the Father through the Holy Spirit. Now here, John 14:15—now this covenant that we enter into—we're going to have two baptisms this afternoon, so if you want to

stick around for that, by all means do—this covenant is based upon this right here: "**If you love Me, keep the commandments**—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter... [now, I'm going to read it the way that it should be translated.] ...that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be **within** you" (vs 15-17).

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

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

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God within them. God knows who He is calling because He sent the Spirit to draw them.

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

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

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

Now, let’s go a little bit further—v 20: “Teaching them to observe all things that I have com-

manded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age” So this is a process which is going to continue right on down from the time of Christ, right on down to His return.

Now let’s come to Romans, the sixth chapter, and let’s see the meaning of baptism defined even a little bit more. Now when we are baptized, it is **a formal act of making a covenant with God**. And when you make a covenant, you pledge your own death to fulfill it. That’s what Christ did when He prepared for the New Covenant, didn’t He? He pledged His own death. “This is My flesh and this is My blood.” Both of the New Covenant. Now, when you enter into baptism, it’s defined here in Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin... [‘sin is the transgression of the law’—no you can’t] ...so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin...” (vs 1-2). So baptism is a burial—that’s why you go all the way under the water and you have to be called and you have to be knowledgeable of what you’re doing, and you have to have repented of your sins. So therefore, infant baptism is a false baptism. An infant doesn’t know anything. All it knows is that it’s getting sprinkled—you couldn’t even define that. So then they generally cry and weep and wail at the infant baptisms. Now, I saw one baby by the Russian Orthodox, and I didn’t realize it, their infant baptism, they go right in the water three times. And boy, those kids are really howling and screaming after the third time.

We died of sin, therefore we don’t “live any longer therein?... [It doesn’t mean that we don’t sin. We do because we still have a sinful nature and we’re overcoming. But God forgives us again upon repentance, because then we’re under His grace.] ...Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death... [So this becomes part of the covenant death that you enter into.] ...Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death... [the definite articles are in the Greek. **The** death of Christ and **the** death of the covenant:] ...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life” (vs 2-4). Our lives are to change.

We no longer live to the self, *we live to God*.

We no longer live to please ourselves, *we live to help and to serve*.

We no longer live our lives in a way, the way that we want to, because now *we’ve got to go a new way*.

In the counterfeit of Protestantism is that “you’re born again.” Well, that’s a misnomer. You’re not born until the resurrection, then you’re changed from flesh to spirit. But we’re to “walk in newness of life.” Here,

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hold your place here and let's go to Ephesians, the second chapter. And we see the operation of this explained by the Apostle Paul. Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins, In which you walked in times past..." (vs 1-2).

Now, let's understand something—because God is calling you out of the world, He is calling you from a world that is filled with sin—cut off from God, having no true understanding of God. They may have some understanding of God. They may understand some parts of the Bible, but having no true, spiritual understanding of God. So He makes you alive—"...you were dead in trespasses and sins, In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [which is Satan the devil], the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [Now you see the difference here. Jesus said, 'If you love Me, you'll keep My commandments. If you don't love Me, you won't keep My commandments.' So when you're out in the world that 'spirit that works in the children of disobedience'—that's everybody.] (Notice v 3): ...Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of the world. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us... [so it's a powerful thing that God the Father does to call you, to love you, to reveal Himself to you, to reveal Christ to you.] ...Even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)" (vs 3-5).

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

You *have been saved* from your sins by baptism.

You *are being saved* if you continue in the Gospel.

You *shall be saved* at the resurrection when you are changed from flesh to spirit.

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

live by every Word of God, and that's how we're to walk in them.

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

You're not free of sin. Because when you start reading Romans, the seventh chapter, about we do the things that we don't want to do and so forth, it's showing how human nature is there. And why does God leave the human nature in there? *For us to overcome. That's so we will appreciate and love and understand that God's way is so much greater.* We come to abhor sin! And then we come to the point—let's understand something, too: When you are first brought to repentance, that is an initial thing that God leads you to. But as you grow in your Christian life, as you walk in the way that God wants you to go in, you actually come to deeper repentance as you continue to walk in the way of God. And you come to a deeper repentance because you begin to love God more, you understand what God is doing, you see that you understand what Christ did for you and all the brethren. And so your repentance becomes deeper, like I covered this morning. You come to a point that you understand that **there is nothing that you didn't receive**. So baptism is a start. And it's marvelous that God has done it this way.

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

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

Now then, but here's something that you have to do. Let's ask a question. Let's go to Luke 14. God does not expect anyone to be perfect in knowledge before you're baptized, because we're to grow in grace and knowledge after we're baptized. But He wants us to enter into the covenant with both eyes and heart and mind wide open. Which is this—Jesus made it very clear—v 26: “If anyone comes to Me... [this is called *counting the cost* by the way—count the cost.] ...and does not hate his father... [Now this means to love God more in comparison to:] ...and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.... [And that means in the Greek, *the strongest impossibility of it becoming so*.] ...And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple; For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for its completion?...” (vs 26-28). So all of us, before we're baptized, we sit down and we count the cost. In each particular life it's a little bit different of the things that you count the cost for. But you're entering into a covenant death with Christ.

He died for you, *you die for Him*.

He took the literal death, *you take the spiritual death*.

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

Now, He says in another place that you “take up your cross daily.” Meaning that you may be confronted with problems even on a daily basis. But *al-*

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

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

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

(go to the next track)

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

So there will be trials that will come. Now God doesn't throw them upon you right away—Psalm 23. We can have this absolute confidence of God. And this is one, when I first heard it as a kid, I wondered, “why on earth did they ever say it.” I could never get past the first verse. Because I never attended church, and I wasn't in a religious family. But I had an aunt—Aunt Grace—and that's the only thing I knew about grace was my aunt. And whenever I heard this expressed: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.... [I thought now why, why would anyone say, ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’ and not want Him? And I couldn't figure that out. It means *I shall lack nothing*.] ...He maketh me to lie down in green

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pastures... [that so you're going to be fed spiritually, from His Word.] ...he leadeth me beside the still waters... [because He will bring peace to you]. ...He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness... [those are the good works that we are to walk in.] ...for his name's sake.... [In spite of everything:] ...Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me... [because Jesus said, 'I will never, no not ever, leave you or forsake you.']. ...thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies..." (vs 1-5). Now maybe in your own way you'll experience that sometime. I've experienced that! In the presence of my enemies, God allowed me to do the *Harmony of the Gospels*. And though every evangelist within the Church was against me. When it was all said and done, Herbert Armstrong thanked me for it and said, "I wish more ministers would write books." And you can only say, "That's a table prepared in the presence of my enemies." It does not matter the circumstances that will come upon us, because this covenant of baptism that we go through and that we enter into, God is going to guarantee it. He has sealed it with His blood, with His death—and God cannot lie. And He has promised it, so therefore it shall be.

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

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

Now then, I Corinthians 1:23 [transcriber's correction]: "But we proclaim Christ crucified. To *the Jews it is* a cause of offense... [and they haven't gotten over it to this day] ...and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; But to

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

Now remember what we read earlier, and we did last night, that God is going to make the synagogue of Satan come and worship before our feet. Now, you know who the synagogue of Satan are? Those are the rich, establishment people of the world, that control the governments, that control the money, that control the corporations, that control the universities and education. Those big high mucky-mucks of the world, they're going to come and worship before the saints of God! To know that Christ has loved us. And that's how He's going to bring them to nothing.] ...**So that no flesh might glory in His presence**.... [We are to glory in God] ...But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; So that, as it is written, 'The one who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*' " (vs 29-31).

Now then, as we grow in our Christian understanding, and as we grow in studying the Word of God, and as we use the Spirit of God in our lives, then something else begins to happen. It doesn't happen all at once. So that's why it is really quite a miracle for new people to come in amongst our midst, because what we generally receive and I generally teach is to those who have been in the Church for years and

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years and so it's at a higher level. I understand that there are some things that are difficult to understand when you first come in contact with us. But stick with it, you'll make it—because God is able to do it.

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

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

Verse 10: "But **God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit**: for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God.... [And that's why you're to hunger and thirst for the Word of God, 'for you shall be *filled*.'] ...For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God.... [Whatever you understand about the Bible, thank God for it, because He's opened your mind to understand it. Isn't that an amazing thing? God reveals it.] ... Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God..." (vs 10-12). When you receive the knowledge, do you get a bill in the mail next month? Credit Corporation of Heaven is

sending you a bill for \$500—you better pay or you'll be cut off with credit. No, it's freely given to you.

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

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

Now I want you to understand something, when you have an experience like that—and I know you probably are going through it—you love and appreciate things so much better, don't you? Because now you have a chance to tell those that maybe if you died you wouldn't have an opportunity to say, "I love you" and "Thank you" and all of these things. So God, likewise, is doing the same thing with every one of us. When we die the baptismal death and are buried in that grave, we rise out of that grave so that we can walk "in newness of life" and love God. That's why Christ said here, when He was asked, "What was the first and great commandment?"—Mark 12:29: " '*The first of all the commandments is, 'Hear... [listen—one of the things you're going to learn is that God expects you to obey His voice. And His voice is recorded right here in the Bible.] ...Hear, O Israel... [now, you just put your name there] ...Our one God is *the Lord, the Lord* And you shall love *the Lord* your God with all your heart... [because you've been raised from the dead, literally, through the operation of baptism] ... and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is the* first commandment" (vs 29-30). It's the primary thing in your life. That's what 'first' in the Greek means—it's '*protos*'—*primary, the first*. Now we read last night about a church that lost it's first love and they had to repent, because they started doing works of social things instead of loving God.*

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

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

So we’ll have a baptism here a little later. But I think it’s very important that we all understand it,

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

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

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

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 6-5-07

Scripture References:

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

Also referenced:

Sermons:

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

Book:

- *Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

God the Father's Calling & Baptism

Fred R. Coulter – October 26, 1996

Now today I want to talk a little bit about your calling and baptism. And for most of us this will be a review, but it's something that we need to know and understand, because we may have some baptisms here this coming week—so I want to be sure and cover this so we can understand it. Not only understand it, but something to realize that as we are going down our Christian walk we need to re-evaluate this and make sure that our commitment to God and everything is the way that it should be.

Let's first of all go to Matthew, the third chapter, because this is where we first, in the Scriptures, encounter baptizing. And this is the beginning of the baptism of John the Baptist—and he was the one preparing the way for Jesus Christ. Let's begin right in Matthew 3:1: "Now in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'.... [The first thing that we need to know and understand concerning our relationship with God is that it must begin with repentance. And we'll see why repentance as we go along.] (v 3): ...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, And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (vs 1-6).

Now the confessing of the sins has to be to God, **because God alone forgives sin**. It cannot be to a priest. It doesn't mean we don't say we confess our sins in that particular sense. If someone says, "I've been a sinner," I don't want to say, "Well, how bad a sinner have you been? Tell me everything." That's what the Catholics would do. No! You tell **God** everything. Everything is between you and God, that's what's the important thing. That's why when we went through the section there in Romans, the third chapter, that we have to—in this repentance we have to confront our own evil human nature. Now some human nature is in degree, by outward manifestation, not as evil as others, by outward manifestation. But nevertheless, we all have the law of "sin and death" in us, and the potential is there for everyone to be a great and a tremendous sinner, even if a person has led a reasonably decent life because they've been taught some of the precepts that have been in the Bible, which has helped them along the line. That still doesn't change the fact of the inherent sinful nature that human beings have.

Now notice, God is not going to be fooled! And not everyone is going to be able to do so. And it's interesting that we have here: "But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism... [Now, these were the religious leaders. These were the ones who should have known who he was. These were the ones who should have known the Word of God. So this is why God is not calling a lot of Catholic priests today. Or He's not calling a lot of Baptist ministers today. Because they're not going to admit that they have been wrong. And they are not going to see the sinfulness of their nature. So if that happens, we'll then have to use the same kind of message that John the Baptist did.] (This is what he said): ...he said to them, '*You* brood of vipers... [now, that's not very nice, is it? That's not very polite, is it? I mean this is being mean and nasty and attacking these great religious leaders, correct? Well, no, it's stating the truth.] ... who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath?' " (v 7)

Now just as an aside: this ought to tell us just seeking to go to a place of safety to escape the wrath that's coming isn't going to work. Verse 8: "Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance..." Now what does this mean? I have a marginal rendering in my *King James* which says: 'answerable to amendments of life.' So repentance then brings about a **change of life**. It brings about a change in your heart and mind and your attitude because you begin to understand your own nature. That's the most important thing. Then you begin to see the righteousness of God, which we'll cover here a little bit later.

Now notice v 9, is very important: "And do not think to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'... [So, in other words, starting with John the Baptist, he was saying it doesn't matter who your ancestors were. **What counts is repentance**.] ...for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.... [then he gives a warning:] ...But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance... [Now, he was projecting forward to the ministry of Christ. And we'll look at that in just a minute] ...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 that's the whole purpose of being baptized, **to receive the Holy Spirit**.] ...and with fire" (vs 9-11) Now this is a projection to the lake of fire at the end of the age when all of the wicked are consumed. So that's why

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it's very important that we understand the Scriptures and understand where these things fit.

The "baptism of fire" is not something one should seek after and desire like the Pentecostals say. They say, "You've been baptized in fire." That means if you've gotten up and made a fool of yourself and shouted and yelled and screamed and—when you understand what that is, when you understand that method, that method of shouting and yelling and screaming and losing control of your mind to another power is in every false religion of this world. The Hindus do it. The Buddhists do it. The Muslims do it. There are certain Catholic sects that do it, etc. But that is the first step in getting you to follow in the wrong way—to follow the wrong spirit.

Now, how many remember Ramani Maharshi, whatever his name was, up in Oregon. He lasted what, about three years. Well you will see on the Jesuit Agenda tapes that they had some videos of what went on in their meetings. When they gave over to the shouting and yelling and screaming and just—the whole purpose was to devoid their minds of thought. Now, whenever you come to a situation where the devoiding your mind of thought is a step in the process, you know that's the first step into demonism! Because then that eliminates the barrier of the demons between you and them *and invites them in*. So "baptism of fire" has nothing to do with the Pentecostal or similar Pentecostal type experience. It has to do with being cast into the lake of fire because you are an unrepentant sinner. And that follows right along here with repenting and bringing forth fruits for repentance and so forth.

Now, let's go to John, the fourth chapter, and we will see where Jesus then also baptized, but we will see that He had His disciples baptize instead of Himself. John, the fourth chapter—you can go back and read the last part of John, the third chapter, where John saying: "I must decrease and He must increase" and so forth, because that's all a part of leading up to John, the fourth chapter. John 4:1: "Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, (Although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples)..." (vs 1-2). Now, they were called to be apostles, so it was perfectly all right for them to baptize. So, we find that Jesus did.

Now, let's look a little bit more concerning baptism and what we are to do—let's go to Matthew 28. Now Matthew 28 has been used and used and used and used to preach the two commissions of the Church: the great commission, which is to go to all the world; and the other commission: to feed the flock. And these kind of run in cycles. And these cy-

cles run according to when and what and how God opens or closes the doors to do any particular one. I firmly believe right now that God is closing the door of media because it is so completely controlled, that you cannot really preach the kind of convicting message that you need to preach to really reach out to new people. I believe He will open the door again when, and I feel especially with the new information highway and the new technology that we can use with computers, etc. I think then will be a time of really reaching out, because then we can go from computer to computer uncensored. And that will be exactly what we will need to do. So we just pray that God will give us wisdom and understanding in what we need to do and how we need to do it, so we can at the right time. But I'm convinced that the Church right now has enough—I'm speaking in general everywhere, all Churches of God—there are enough problems and upheavals involved that it is not a good place to bring brand new people. So God will have to provide the way.

Now let's come to Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father... [Because it is through the begetting of the Holy Spirit that we become a son or daughter of God. Now, I want you to notice in particular here very carefully. It does not say 'and **the name of the Son**.' It says, '**of the Son**' because it's through the sacrifice of Christ that it makes it possible.] ...and **of the Son**, and **of the Holy [Spirit]**... [not the 'name of' in the latter two cases, because the Holy Spirit is what seals us with the earnest of the promise until Christ returns and we receive the fullness of salvation.] (Now notice, v 20): ...Teaching them to observe all things... [Now, that is a broad command, isn't it?] ... **all things**... [that means you're not exclude anything. You're not to leave out anything.] ...all things that I have commanded you... [And of course then, this statement means: *and everything that He inspired the apostles to write*, which is contained in the Scriptures for us today; because Christ's words are the living words of God. And when they have been recorded for us, then it becomes part of what we need to be doing.] (So that's why He says): ...all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age' " (vs 18-20). Now this really means *until the close of the age or the end of human rule on the earth*.

Now you might want to put in your margin there: Revelation 11, because that's when the seventh trumpet sounds. Here now, let's just turn to Revelation 11 here for just a minute. I know it's a little aside, but let's go there because I think this will help us give a fuller understanding of what He's saying

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there in Matt. 28. Revelation 11:15: "Then the seventh angel sounded *his* trumpet; and *there* were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign into the ages of eternity.' " That is the end of the age, right there! Now there are many, as we know from Scripture, there are many atrocious tribulations and things to happen leading up to it. But this is the **official end of the age**, right here! And He said, "I'm with you until the end of the age." Now, what's going to happen at the "last trump"? *We're all going to be raised from the dead or changed instantly and then we're going to be with Christ.* So that will finish everything that was started here in Matt. 18:20.

All right let's carry this forward just a little bit further now. Let's come back to the Gospel of John again, please. And let's come to chapter six. And let's ask the question: How is that we are called? Now God uses many methods, many means, many different things. As in the case of the Apostle Paul, He might reach down and call him directly. Bang! Knock him right off his horse while he's on his way to Damascus. With others He might use the Word that He has given in the Bible. With others He may use a friend. With others He may use someone in the family. God will use many and different means for calling. Now then, when there is a calling, then a person has to answer the call. That's why the Scriptures say: "Many are called but few are chosen." Now, why are there few chosen? *Because the real truth is, few repent!* Repent in the way that they need to toward God. Now many people become sorry in their condition. But that doesn't necessarily mean that that's repentance. I mean, we've all experienced that as children, and we've all experienced that with our children, haven't we? And many times they're sorry, especially that they got caught doing something wrong. But that may not necessarily be the kind of repentance unto salvation. It's a different kind of repentance and God wants it from the heart.

But, here's how it starts, here's how that repentance starts—John 6:44—now, God's doing this particularly and individually. We don't know exactly everything that God is doing everywhere. Of course, we couldn't because that's God's business. But we know what God is doing with us, and that's what we need to focus on here. God isn't going to do this haphazardly. God is not going to do this like a shotgun effect. "Well, let's go ahead and send out this huge explosion and whatever comes back to Us that's what we'll take." No, He does it on an individual basis. Verse 44: "No one... [and the Greek there is '*anthropos*'—which means *human being*.] ...No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him.... [Now, what we're going to see is a joint

operation of God the Father and Jesus Christ beginning to work in the life of the individual. God is not doing this in a haphazard way. The Father has to 'draw' you. That's why you've heard me say many times, when everything else is upside down and against you, always remember **God the Father loves you. Jesus Christ loves you.** So don't worry about the circumstances around. Now how does He draw? Well, we'll see in just a minute.] ...and I will raise him up at the last day" (v 44). So what we have in this statement is "the beginning and the ending" don't we? We have the **beginning of the calling**, don't we? And we have the **ending being the resurrection**, isn't that correct? *Yes!* And Jesus said what? "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last; which was and is and is to come." So that's all contained in here.

Now v 45: "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me." So then you have to respond to God. How do you respond to God? *It is when you hear the Word of God* or you read something that is in the Scriptures that is convicting; you read something that gives you a greater understanding of God and you want to know more of God. And the more you know of God the more He reveals your human nature. Because a human being without being led of the Spirit of God could not stand to accept the **truth of the evil of human nature**. Now we'll see how this fits in with the righteousness of God when we get back into the book of Romans again.

So God begins to deal with us that way. Now let's go to Romans, the second chapter. I know we've already covered part of this, but here's another aspect of it that we didn't necessarily cover when we were going through our study in Romans. Romans 2:4—this is another very important thing in how God deals with us. And another aspect that we need to understand concerning not only how God deals with us, but how God wants us to see ourselves in relationship to Him and also to show us that God is not interested in destroying the sinner. God is interested that the sinner repent—that's what's important. "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?" Now that's why God reveals to you your sinful nature; so that you can see the goodness of God. Not only the goodness of God, but this has to do with the **graciousness of God**. God is now exercising His grace to call you; to lead you to repentance; to begin to show you that human nature is evil; and then lo and behold, one day something will happen in your mind, if God is working with you, which is this: **You come to the conclusion that everything you've done in your life has been wrong, even**

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though you may have done good things along the line. It's always ended up in a difficult mess, because that's just the end-result of human nature. Now human beings can't take that and really face it. But if God is leading a person to repentance they will begin to understand that. And being led in this kind of repentance, you will also begin to understand it between you and God alone. What do I mean by that? I mean this: That you will actually, in your own way—whether it's prayer, or whether just thinking, or whatever—you will begin to confess to God really how bad you are. That's all a part of God working with you and leading you to repentance.

Then what does He want done? Let's go back here to Acts, the second chapter; because whenever we're talking about repentance and baptism we have to come to Acts, the second chapter because this is the most important place. Now, Acts, the second chapter was on the day of Pentecost, we know that; we've covered that; we have gone through it. But let's ask a couple of other questions:

- Were there not a lot of people there at the temple who had seen Jesus, who had heard Him?
- Some maybe even healed by Him?
- Or maybe some of their relatives were healed by Him?
- Were they not there trying to find out what God was going to do because they heard that back at the beginning of the count for Pentecost that there were those who saw Jesus resurrected from the dead on that day?
- And don't you think there were a lot that God brought there because He was calling?
- And when God deals with people what did we learn in Romans that is true? *We learned this: to the Jew first and then the Greek*, correct?

So here's where God began dealing with the Jews. And I think God began dealing with them long before they arrived here on this day of Pentecost. Because if we put together what we read in John, the sixth chapter, that God is the One who draws—the Father does. Then the Father had to be doing this work leading up this Pentecost, because something profound happened at this Pentecost.

Now after he explained to them about what happened, let's pick it up here in Acts 2:32: "This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this that you are now seeing and hearing.... [The power of God's Holy Spirit given to men.] ...For David has not ascended into the heavens, but he himself said, 'The

Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand Until I have made Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.' " Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance... [or that is of an absolute truth from God] ...that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (vs 32-36).

Now, why would he say this to all of them? Because when you get down to—who were actually the ones who physically crucified Christ? *Was the Roman soldiers*, was it not? But why was He delivered to the Roman soldiers? *Because the Jews delivered Him at the behest of Pilate. Or Pilate delivered Him at the behest of the Jews*—let's correct that and back up. And what we're really finding out is that this is expanded out to include all human beings. Now how can all human beings have a part in the crucifixion of Christ? Especially us. Now, we're over 1900 years removed, so how can that be? Well, it's this: "*the wages of sin is death.*" Now Christ took that death for every human being upon Himself, did He not? *Yes, He did!* So therefore every human being, if they come to Christ, has to realize that his or her sins had that part in the death of Christ because He paid the penalty. He is the one Who took it upon Himself. So that's why he said that "you have crucified.

Verse 37: "Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart... [In other words, their consciences were moved—*the goodness of God had led them to repentance.*] ... and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '**Repent**... [Because now you know about human nature and sin in yourself; and the death of Christ and His resurrection.] ...**and be baptized**... [And baptism means *by full immersion.*] ... **each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...**' " (vs 37-38). [Now that does not conflict with Matt. 28:20, because the way baptism is accomplished is: it's in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit for the remission of your sins—and this is done **IN** the name of Christ. Now what does that mean? *That means that this baptism is just like Christ doing it.* Just like in John 4 it said that 'Jesus baptized, yet not He, but His disciples.' So when it's done in the name of Jesus Christ, it's as if Christ is doing it. That's what's important for us to realize; because Jesus Christ and God the Father want you to have a personal relationship with Them. Yes, we do have collective things we need to do together, that is correct. But unless we have the right personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, how can we do anything for God? **Well, the truth is we can't!** So this is why it begins here.

All right let's carry this a little bit further, let's come to Romans, the tenth chapter. And here's how these things then come about. We saw it with the preaching of Peter. We also will see it here in what

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happens after that and how we are to know and how we are to grow and all of this. And God will do it in many different ways, as I mentioned. But let's begin right here in Romans 10:8: "But what does it say? 'The word is near to you... [That is it's talking about the Scriptures. God has provided a Bible for you—and isn't that a miracle? I mean in such an evil world, you consider that the Bible is a best seller every year and there are billions and billions printed and given and distributed and sold. That is a tremendous miracle!] ...The word is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart'... [In other words, a language you can understand] ...This is the word of faith that we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth *the* Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from *the* dead, you shall be saved.... [Now this is not the only thing you have to do, rather this is a summary statement telling you the overall parameters of where you need to begin, so that you can be saved!] ...For with *the* heart one believes unto righteousness... [and that is the thing. If you are convicted in heart—didn't we read back in Acts 2, they were 'pricked in heart'? *Yes, so they repented.* So with] ... *the* heart one believes unto righteousness, and with *the* mouth one confesses [that is to God in repentance] unto salvation Because the scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed'.... [Whosoever—God is going to call whoever He wants. God is the One Who's doing it: individually, person by person by person by person.] ... For there is no difference between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all *is* rich toward all who call upon Him. For everyone who calls on the name of *the* Lord shall be saved" (vs 8-13). Call how? *In repentance, in sincerity, in truth, in crying out to God, knowing what your own human nature is.*

And also, as we will see when we come to Rom. 7, another thing occurs on an ongoing basis. Not only in leading you up to repentance and baptism does God begin to reveal your human nature, then another thing takes place, which is then He begins to reveal the beginning of sin, which is thoughts in your mind. And sometimes you wonder, after you've been baptized for years, "Now why do I have this thought?" Well, the only reason that you recognize that it's wrong is because the Holy Spirit of God that is in you is revealing that it's wrong. And then you can ask God to purge it away—and He will do that. Now, sometimes it takes a quite a bit of time, because some of our minds have been pretty programmed for a long time, so then it's a process of overcoming.

Now, v 14: "How then shall they call on *Him* in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in *Him* of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?... [So God then is saying He has a responsibility to send a

preacher and a teacher so that they will know.] ...And how shall they preach, unless they be sent? Accordingly, it is written, 'How beautiful *are* the feet of those who announce the gospel of peace, and those who announce the good news of good things!' But all have not obeyed the gospel because as Isaiah said, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' So then, **faith**... [is what we're talking about] ...**comes by hearing**... [This is important! We saw how first you have to hear what God is doing to lead you to repentance, correct, and answer the call? *Yes.* But then you hear the Word of God. You read the Word of God. You study the Word of God. And we are able now in this age to do so in a very profound way that has not been able to be done in ages past.] ...and hearing through *the* Word of God" (vs 14-17). So this is what it needs to be: you need to hear the Word of God. You need to hear what God says, not what a man says about their belief in the Word of God. ***But the Word of God!***

"But I say... [Now this is something which Paul said here:] ...did they not hear?... [This, I believe, is also a prophecy for our day today. Do you believe that God is going to let Satan's greatest civilization come on this world without everybody hearing about it? And there are many different kinds of witnesses out there—telling about the coming one world government, one world religion, many different witnesses. Now, they may not all be called of God at this particular point, but at least they are witnessing to the truth of the political, economic and religious reality that is happening out there. And then out of that, ***God will call.***] ...Yes, indeed, *for it is written*, ' "Their voices went out into all the earth; their words went out even to the ends of the habitable world" ' " (v 18). That's why I believe that's a prophecy and it has not been completely fulfilled yet.

So this then is how we come to the point that we say, "Okay, I know God is dealing in my life. So it really doesn't matter what the initiating thing [is] which brought you to this understanding. Now, I talked to a man who said that years ago, when he was just a young fella (he was only 4-5 years old), he would go in every night—and this was 38 years ago—he would go in every night with his grandpa and sit down to the radio and listen to *The World Tomorrow* and Herbert W. Armstrong. And he said through his whole life he could never get away from Sabbath-keepers, though he tried. And so finally God just **convicted** him in heart and mind that he needed to repent and get right with God and quit all this stupidity and horsing around that he had been doing in his life. So here was something totally separate and removed. Others deal within a family. It comes about that way. Others deal because of a friend. So many different ways God is able to bring those, so they will hear.

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Now let's go back to Acts, the third chapter now, and let's see what is to happen when we repent. Then when we repent and are baptized and we come to these places. We come to these points that we need to. Then something takes place. Acts 3:19—this was another sermon that Peter was preaching: "Therefore, repent and be converted... [Now, conversion is something that takes place over a period of time. An ongoing process is called: *growing in grace and knowledge*. Which is leading you to a deeper calling and conversion. Now if you haven't heard the tape: *God's Love and Your Second Calling* (That's *The Love of God* #7 in the current series). For all of you who have been in the Church a long time, go back and review that one. Because that just shows the process of this conversion and growing in grace and knowledge continues all the rest of our lives. Which is very important for us to understand.] ...Therefore, repent and be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out..." So repentance, though there is a major initial repentance—which then leads us to baptism—there is also a continual, ongoing repentance as we find ourselves growing and overcoming and finding sin in our lives and things like this. That's why Christ is at the right hand of God as our High Priest. That's why He is there as a 'propitiation'—and a propitiation means *a continual source of forgiveness upon repentance through grace*. Always there. So all of this is contained in this statement.

Now, hold your place here and let's go the Gospel of John, chapter one.

(go to the next track)

Now we'll cover this a little bit more in detail when we again come back to the book of Romans and talk about "grace" in greater depth. But here in John, the first chapter, I want us to understand something. Because what is going to happen down the road will be this: You initially discover what a sinner you are. Then you understand that you have sinful nature and God reveals sinful thoughts that you have so you can repent of them as you're going along. And this is able to be accomplished through the grace of God, sacrifice of Christ, which is continually applied to our lives.

Now then, then we come to another—how should we say—understanding of the grace of God, which we need to then understand beyond just the initial. Because not only to you need the grace of God to lead you to repentance, you need the grace of God to continuously live under. And we all need that because of the sinfulness of human nature. Because as we learned last week, you can't save yourself. God told that to Job. So you can't start out with mercy and forgiveness of grace and then end up with works, and

accomplish it with your own works. Now you have your works, but they have to be wrought in Christ.

Now, as we covered—let's just review this here because it fits in right here. Now, John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh... [or that is 'became flesh'] ...and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth.... [Now this is a spiritual fullness. So then he reviewed:] ...John testified...And of His fullness **we have all received**, and grace upon grace" (vs 15-16). Now this really means: *we have all received and grace upon grace*. And this is to inspire us to want to ***really let God mold us*** in His image according to His grace.

- Now question: Is Christ ever going to run out of grace? *No!*
- Is Christ ever going to run out of truth? *No!*
- When you have God's Spirit—which, after you're baptized and receive the Holy Spirit or God's Spirit is with you before baptism leading you to repentance—does God know when you sin? *Yes!*
- So what does He want? *He wants you to repent, because there is the grace there to cover it.*

And as we covered in our series in the Epistle of John, there are "sins not unto death." Now a "sin not unto death" is a sin then to which you repent. A "sin unto death" is one that you won't repent and refuse to repent and don't understand that you have sinned or refuse to recognize that you have sinned. And it's by a willful choice. But here we have "...grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses... [which is fine and true and good and should be] ...*but* the grace and the truth... [that is *for salvation*] ...came through Jesus Christ" (vs 16-17).

So, when it is: "repent and be converted," let's understand that that's what it means in this whole process. And it is a process. There is an instantaneous change when you are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. But there is a greater change as you grow in grace and knowledge in your Christian walk down through time. And that's what we need to know and also understand.

Now since we're here in the book of John, let's come to John 14:6. Again, this will reinforce what we read in John, the sixth chapter, and this is the conviction that we need to come to, and this is the understanding that we need to come to. "Jesus said to him, 'I am **the way**, and **the truth**, and **the life**...' [He is that way *alone*. Now, we've covered this many times in the past. This is one of my very favorite verses. And the reason is, is because it tells us some-

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thing absolutely, eternally dogmatic, which is:] ...[He is] **THE way!** [Not 'a' way, but 'THE way.'] ...[He is] **THE Truth!**... [Not only is the Word of God truth, but HE Himself is True, and He is THE Truth!]
...and **THE life:** no one comes to the Father **except through Me.**” And I tell you, all these world's religions are going to violate that. They are going say anybody can come anyway they want, and there are many ways and Jesus was only one of many. And you know that's a false message, right down the line. He is **THE only way**, **THE only truth** and **THE only life**. And **He alone can give it to us**.

Now, let's carry this on a little bit further, let's see some other things. Let's come to Matthew 20, because God calls many different people in many different circumstances, many different walks of life, many different ages: young, old. So here in Matthew 20 we have a parable, which gives us some understanding concerning this. Let's pick it up here beginning in verse one. So it's never too late to repent. It's never too late for God to call you. Matthew 20:1: “The kingdom of heaven shall be compared to a man, a master of a house, who went out early in the morning to hire workmen for his vineyard. And after agreeing with the workmen on a silver coin [that is a denarius] for the day's wage, he sent them into his vineyard. And when he went out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; And he said to them, ‘Go also into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ And they went. Again, after going out about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did likewise. And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all the day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’....” (vs 1-7).

Now, this can be not only in time, in age of life—that can also apply, we can apply it there—some are young, some are old. It can also apply in the time of God's plan. Some were called, like the apostles and the first disciples back there as we saw in Acts 2—these were the ones who began. Then we have right at the end, like the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude are like those at the eleventh hour. Now let's read on and see. So this can apply to age. This can apply to time-circumstances in God's plan. Now let's read on:

“...He said to them, ‘Go also into my vineyard, and whatever is right you shall receive.’ And when evening came, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the workmen and pay them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.’” (vs 7-8) This is also telling us something that's important: From a human perspective, God deals with fairness in a different way. Now what do I mean? We've grown

up in a society where we have equality, supposedly—it's not there. I mean when you really understand it. And we are dealing in a society that you have unions and worker's rights and things like this. But that does not apply to what God is going to do, or is doing. So He started with the last. Now, from a human point of view this was not fair. So God doesn't do things that are fair. **God does what He's going to do because He's God!** If we all understand that then that's fine.

“And when those who *were hired* about the eleventh hour came, they each received a silver coin. But when the first ones came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a silver coin.... [So, it doesn't matter if you're called at nineteen and then the whole rest of your life is devoted to God; or if you're called at eighty and whatever remaining years you have left are devoted to God. It doesn't matter if you are called in the first century, the second, the tenth, the fifteenth, the twentieth century or the twenty-first century, you're all going to receive eternal life. That's the whole lesson of it.] ...And after receiving *it*, they complained against the master of the house, Saying, ‘These *who came* last have worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have carried the burden and the heat of the day.’ But he answered *and* said to them, ‘Friend, I am not doing you wrong. Did you not agree with me on a silver coin *for the day*? Take *what* is yours and go, for I also desire to give to the last *ones* exactly as I gave to you. And is it not lawful for me to do what I will with that which *is* my own?.... [Now Job should have read that first] ...Is your eye evil because I am good?’ **So the last shall be first, and the first shall be last; for many are called, but few are chosen.**” (vs 8–16). So there we have it right there. Great lesson for us!

- Now, what does God expect us to do when He calls us?
- What do you do with something that is evil and worthless and no good—being human nature?
- What do you do with it?

Well, like everything that is evil and no good, you have to get rid of it. But getting rid of it is different than the process of just junking it and saying, “We'll start new.” Starting new—let's go to Luke 14—it's a different thing. **Each person has got to come to the point that he wants to get rid of the self.** That's the whole point in repentance and conversion. Now the secret is, you're really not going to get rid of the self all at once; but it's going to be step-by-step-by-step-by-step, as you grow in grace and knowledge.

So let's begin here in Luke 14:25. This is very important for us to realize and understand. This

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is an ongoing, re-commitment that we make every year, as part of the covenant. Because when we're baptized then, we make a covenant with God, which is an everlasting, eternal covenant that He's making with us. So then it's everlasting and eternal with us back to Him. "And great multitudes were going with Him; and He turned *and* said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother... [Now, we will see in Matt. 10, it means *to love less in comparison to*. But, maybe even your own relatives will take it as this *lack of love* as 'hate,' because you won't do things for them because they are your father or mother or husband or wife, because God has a greater something for you to do. And many relatives take great offense at that. So this is what He means here.] ...father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also... [That's all a part of calling and conversion—to really see what a mess. I've seen that. I look back and see and all I can say is, I'm thankful for God's mercy and kindness and graciousness and forgiveness that He has made it possible. And we'll all see that.] ...his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (vs 25-26). Now, this again is a very definite, dogmatic, separating point, which is this: 'cannot' means *it is impossible to be*. The Greek there is '*ou dunamai*' which means there is *no power, no power* to make you His disciple unless you come to this conclusion and conviction in your heart and mind.

Verse 27: " 'And whoever does not carry his cross... [Now, that means whatever the difficulty and problem there is in your life that comes along.] ...and come after Me... [we have to go after God] ...cannot be My disciple.... [it's an impossibility]For which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has *sufficient* for *its* completion; Lest perhaps [which means *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?.... [overwhelming odds. But, you need to realize that the battle is not between an army. If you're going to resist and fight God, what He's saying here: you're really going to lose. That's what He's saying. So you need to count the cost.] ...But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off... [Christ has not returned.] ...he sends ambassadors... [which is likened unto a peace offering—repentance. I'm drawing the analogy a little broad here] ...and desires the *terms* for peace.... [Now, what are the conditions of peace that we've seen, that God gives us? *Repent and be baptized*. Those are the conditions of peace. Then we have

peace with God.] ...In the same way also, each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple" (vs 27-33).

Now, that doesn't mean that you give up everything and just walk off into the wilderness. Because, you can do that, but you can sit in the wilderness and say, "Oh God, I've given all of this up." But you can sit there in your own mind and say, "Boy, I really wish I had it." So you really have not separated yourself from your things. You may be physically removed from them, but you haven't separated them mentally. So you can even be in the middle of all your things and completely separate yourself from it spiritually and mentally and fulfill what He has required here.

Now, let's go to Matthew, the tenth chapter, and let's see another part of this. And again, these are basic Scriptures that we have gone over, but maybe in the light of this calling and baptism and so forth, this will shed a little bit different light on it. Matthew 10:37: "The one who loves... [Now, as we know, when you read that, it means 'anyone who is loving'—'eth' (*KJV*) is present tense.] ...The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me... [That's why we know the 'hatred' is not hatred in the sense that you despise them and reject them. But it means *you love less in comparison to* your father and mother and so forth. So that's why you put the two together and we're able to understand it that way] ... is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.... [Again, always a present tense thing. Because as you have your Christian walk, you're going to have different troubles from time-to-time, which may be more or less intense; more or less different. And so that's why it's put in this term in the present tense. You must be taking up the cross. You must be following, and if not you're not worthy of Him.] ...The one who has found his life shall lose it... [In other words, if you say, 'It's not worth it for this for God, and you go your own way to save your own physical life, you're going to end up losing it. Because God is in charge of everything anyway, correct? *Yes!*] ...and the one who has lost his life... [giving it up and growing and overcoming with grace and knowledge and growing conversion] ...for My sake **shall find it**" (vs 37-40). Which means **true, eternal, profound life forever!** That's what He's saying here. That's what's important for us to realize.

Now, let's come to Romans, the sixth chapter; and I know when we eventually get there in our study in the book of Romans we will go into it again in detail. But let's go here to Romans, the sixth chapter, because this tells us the whole operation. And this is why every year, we have the Passover, which re-

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news the covenant of baptism. We have the Feast of Unleavened Bread—which is getting rid of sin; God getting rid of it for us; we putting it out of our lives together, jointly. We go back and we review our baptism. So let's pick it up here in verse one, Romans the sixth chapter. Let's go back to the last verse in chapter 5. Romans 5:21—just the next verse up: “So that even as sin has reigned unto death... [the ‘wages of sin is death’] ...so also might the grace of God reign through righteousness... [So now then you're going to enter into a whole new phase of living with the grace of God. And grace is to **reign**, it is to **rule**, to **inspire** you—not to go sin, but to inspire you to **desire to overcome**. To inspire you to **desire to seek God**. To inspire you to **desire to want eternal life** with all your heart and mind and soul and being. That's what it's for. That's how it reigns: **through righteousness!**] ... unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?... [No, that's not how grace abounds. Grace abounds: **grace upon grace**, as we saw; if we're truly loving God, yielding to Him.] ...MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin... [So that's what the operation of baptism does, it makes you ‘dead to sin.’ Or that is, it makes you ‘dead to sin’ and human nature is a motivating force in your life—that's what it is. Because baptism in effect is a substitute death. Dead to sin] ... how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus... [Now, that's an interesting phrase because it is true: **into** Jesus Christ. So it is more than just symbolic washing away of the sins. It is a great and a deep, profound covenant that you're making with God.] ...were baptized **into His death**?... [And baptism by full water immersion is, in fact, the closest thing you can come to symbolically dying; because you're put under the water and unless you're raised up out of the water you're dead, correct? That's why He has it that way, so you understand that. And it is also **completely under the water** because] ... Therefore **we were buried**...[that's what you do with what you don't want, you **bury** it. Bury the old human corpse as it were.] ...with Him **though the baptism into the death**; so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life” (vs 1-4). Now, how is this ‘newness of life’?

- It's being led of the Spirit of God!
- It is walking in the commandments and laws of God.
- It is living under the grace of God.
- It is walking in His way and loving God with all your heart and mind and soul and being.

That is the “newness of life.”

“For if we have been conjoined together... [So what is happening in baptism is this: Jesus Christ

is symbolically taking you and putting you with Him in His death, because He bore your sins. So now He wants you to co-join in your death with Him. He died for you as a substitute sacrifice of God so that **you** don't die, but that **you** may have eternal life. So that's why you are ‘co-joined’ and the Greek means *co-joined*. Not only just together. It's not a side-by-side affair. It is together—co-joined.] ...in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.... [Now there again, the beginning and the end, correct? *Yes!*] ...Knowing this... [Now, this is what we are to always understand as we're growing in grace and knowledge.] ...that **our old man was crucified with Him** ...” (vs 5-6).

That's what He counts it, that's why He says that ‘you have to bear your cross’ and come after Him because you, in joining Him in death—co-joined—you have been crucified just like He has been. Now, that takes some real grasping to understand, but that is the depth of what it's meaning. And I will have to tell you this: that all of us have understood this **after** we have been baptized a long, long time. Isn't that true? I did not understand this when I was first baptized. God led me to repentance and I knew I had to be baptized. And I knew that when I was baptized that I received the Holy Spirit, but I did not know at the day—and that was October 19, 1960—I did not know at that time what the future had for me at all. And I'll just have to tell you it's *far different* than I may have ever imagined or thought. Because we have to walk by faith regardless of the circumstances around us. And so this is what it means: “That our old man is crucified with Him” jointly—again, co-joined in that crucifixion with Christ. “...**in order that the body of sin might be destroyed**... [Because getting rid of **sinful human nature is a process**, that's what it's telling us here.] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin” (v 6). That's what it means! Doesn't mean that you won't sin. It is that *you won't serve sin*. Who are you going to serve? *God the Father and Jesus Christ*. You will have sin, but you put this away by repentance and coming to God.

Now, let's see how this operates as we go on in v 7: “Because the one who has died *to sin*... [and you might insert right there: *by baptism*. The one who is dead by baptism, because that's how God reckons you.] ...has been [freed or loosed] justified from sin... [because God has forgiven it. Now also, it paves the way for you to become step-by-step free of the ‘law of sin and death.’ Now, we'll cover that we get to Romans 7 a little bit more.] ...Now if we died together... [jointly dead with Christ—same thing, ‘dead with’ means *jointly dead*] ...with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him... [so then that is the hope of all Christians] ...Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no

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more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all... [and that is for the sins of the whole world. But particularly and individually applied to each one who repents. Now is that not a marvelous thing, indeed? *Yes it is, that God is able to do that to everyone of us.*] ...but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also... [Now, here's how we're to live our lives and the way it is to be, then, after we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit:] ...you should indeed reckon... [that is *calculate*—this is how to figure your life] ...yourselves **to be dead to sin**... [You calculate that. You know you have sin to overcome, but you're dead to it because you're not going to live in it any longer. You don't want to live in it any longer. You hate it. It's miserable.] ...but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule... [that is rule and dictate your life] ...in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof.... [So that is showing that it is there and we overcome it.] ...Likewise, do not yield..." (vs 7-13). ***Don't let it reign! Don't yield yourself to that!***

And this can only be done with grace, brethren. I want to tell you something that's very important: In the past we've heard it: "*You get the sin out of your life! You overcome! You work on your problems!*" Now, that is a truism, but that's not how you overcome, spiritually. The way you overcome spiritually is: ***ask God to help you love Him with all your heart and mind and soul and being.*** And you come to understand the greatness of God's grace. And you come to understand how God is dealing with you in this way. And I'll tell you, something will happen. All of those problems that you focus on will begin to drop by the wayside because you're focusing on seeking God. And when you do that, these problems will be overcome in the process of that.

Because then you are not letting sin reign in your mortal bodies, "...do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, ***yield yourselves unto God***.... [That's exactly what I'm talking about here: *through His grace.*] ...but yield yourselves, [Now how?] **as those that are alive from the dead** [that's how] and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace" (vs 13-14).

Now, we'll cover that in depth when we get there, because this is a deep and profound thing we need to understand. Meaning that you're in this relationship with God through grace. Verse 15^[transcriber's correction]: "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**.... [Then he goes on showing here:] ...Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (vs 15-16). And this is a short summary of how we grow and overcome and grow in grace and knowledge.

So, baptism means that you understand that ***you are going to be co-joined in the death of Jesus Christ.*** That He is going to count you in the same death as His. But He is also going to then resurrect you when He returns so that you will have the same life that He has, and be in the family and Kingdom of God. So this is why baptism is important. And also, we need to go back and realize it. Not only is it a beginning step when we're baptized, but also is something to renew and review and go back and ask God for a greater conviction of it as we grow in grace and knowledge through the years.

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 5-22-07

Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 3:1-11
- 2) John 4:1-2
- 3) Matthew 28:18-20
- 4) Revelation 11:15
- 5) John 6:44-45
- 6) Romans 2:4
- 7) Acts 2:32-38
- 8) Romans 10:8-18
- 9) Acts 3:19
- 10) John 1:14-17
- 11) John 14:6

- 12) Matthew 20:1-16
- 13) Luke 14:25-33
- 14) Matthew 10:37-40
- 15) Romans 5:21
- 16) Romans 6:1-16

Also referenced:

- *The Jesuit Agenda*
- *Sermon: God's Love and Your Second Calling*

Saved by Baptism

Fred R. Coulter – October 12, 1987

Well this Sabbath will be just a little bit different than the other Sabbath's we've been having, and will be a good break from what we've been having. So, what I want to do is just cover several different questions that have come up. One of them here is Acts 10:47: "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord... [it should be translated 'they begged or urged Him to stay or remain with them] ...Then they besought him to remain... [for an extended period of time or] ...*for* a number of days" (vs 47-48).

So the question is: How is it that they received the Holy Spirit *before* they were baptized? And *why* did they receive the Holy Spirit before they were baptized? And then it automatically brings up another question: Can God give the Holy Spirit to someone under special circumstances, before they are baptized? And then the question automatically comes up after that: If they received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized, why do they have to be baptized? Which then gets down to the thing that you have in a lot of modern Protestant things: If you receive the Lord and believe with your heart then you'll receive the Holy Spirit and they don't even bother with baptism. So *why did this occur?*

All right, let's go back. Whenever you want to find an answer to a question, then you *always go back to the very basics*. Then you can answer the question, and then you can figure out what it really should be and why. First of all: Who calls us? *God calls us*. It says "the Father draws him" (John 6:44). Now then, to whom does God give His Holy Spirit? No, back up, that's not quite yet. God draws them. How does God draw an individual? He surely doesn't throw down a rope or throw down a string or send you a telegram or write you a letter. How does God draw an individual? Now, He draws different individuals in different ways:

- through working mentally and spiritually with a person's mind;
- through their circumstances or trials;
- through death of a loved one;
- through escaping a disaster right at your right hand or your left hand, and yet you live and the other person doesn't;
- through a personal experience;
- through the wretchedness of sin;
- through all of these factors God can call a person, work with their mind.

All right, let's go back to John 14, and let's

see another key, basic Scripture, and that is this: When the father begins to draw a person and it is spiritual, what happens? Now, each one of us can look back in our lives and there was a time we were just going down the road of life, dodee, dodee, dodee, dodee, ping! You know, something happened. Something changed. We can look back and say, "Yes, that's when God began to call us. But what did He do? What did God do? John 14:17—Christ said He's going to send the Comforter. He's talking to His disciples at the Passover. He's telling them what He's going to do when He's gone. So He said that He would send "*Even* the Spirit of truth, which **the world cannot receive** [it is impossible for the world to receive the Spirit of God. And we'll see why.] ... because [#1] it perceives it not, [#2] nor knows it... **but you know it**... [that is the Holy Spirit. Now, I'm not going to go through and explain about the 'which' and the 'he' the 'him' (*KJV*) and so forth and the reasons for that, at this particular point.] ...because it **dwells with you**, and shall be **within you**."

Now, how do you know it? What happens to you that you know something of the Holy Spirit of God when you're being called? *You begin to understand the Bible—the Bible begins to make sense!* And when you read the Bible, you can understand it. What has happened? *Your mind has been opened*. How? *Because God's Spirit is **with** you*. And He says, "shall be **in** you."

Now, let's go back up here to v 15: [Jesus said], "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the truth..." (vs 15-17). And then we come to v 17 that we read. All right, keeping the commandments of God have something to do with the Holy Spirit coming to you. All right, how is that possible? *You begin to recognize that you're a sinner; and you begin to see that your life is miserable; and you begin to cry out to God*. Then He sends His Holy Spirit to be with you. Now, there are some people who, at that point, may not answer the call—because it says, "many are called, but few are chosen." So that's what you could say is a "call." Now, does a person get more than one call? *I don't know*. A person can only answer it literally once, though. I mean, if you answer God's calling and receive God's Spirit within you and are baptized, then that's a final decision.

Now, let's take this another step further. Let's go to Acts 2:38—here's a very basic Scripture. And here is one, which seems to be kind of the reverse of

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what we find in Acts, the tenth chapter. All right, Acts 2:38: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ ” That is *after* you’re baptized, not before you’re baptized. However, you go back to look at the whole chapter here and that’s when God sent the Holy Spirit for the power of preaching upon the apostles—and then upon all of those of the 120. And then Peter preached and then he told them to repent. Now, the question is: Was God’s Spirit there present with all of those? *Yes, it was with*, not in—*with*. So here we see the first operation that’s happening, right? So then Peter said, “Repent and be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” which then is an individual begettal in the individual after they are baptized.

All right now, let’s go to Acts 5:32: “And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him.” So there again we have commandment-keeping involved, don’t we?

Now, so far we have dealt only with those who are apostles or Jews who have been called of God, or those who followed Christ during His lifetime were subsequently baptized, received the Holy Spirit. So we have all of those. Then we come in time and we have a different set of circumstances. Let’s go to Acts, the eleventh chapter—when they came back from this journey down here to Cornelius, then we’ll go back to chapter ten and we will answer that question then. Acts 11:2: “And when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the* circumcision disputed with him, Saying, ‘You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them.’ But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order...” (vs 2-3). In other words, as everything happened, saying to them, so forth, everything that happened. So then he tells the story that he went to Cornelius’ house.

Now, let’s go back to chapter ten and let’s pick it up here in v 28—After he had gone to Cornelius’ house—let’s summarize it this way: Up to this point, God had only dealt with those who were Jews or Israelites. Now, He had a problem with Judaism in relationship to Gentiles. But here was a Gentile. Let’s just begin here in verse one before we get to verse twenty-eight. Let’s begin here in verse one so we can do like Peter did and go through the thing in order: “Now *there* was in Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a centurion of a band that is called *the* Italian *band*, A devout man who also feared God with all his house... [So he feared God. It showed that he didn’t fear the god’s of the Italians or the nations, but he feared God.] ...both in giving many alms to the peo-

ple and *in* beseeching God continually *in prayer*.... [So here’s somebody who’s already seeking God. Of course, Peter didn’t know this.] ...He clearly saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming to him... [where he was in the house, *to him*] ...and saying to him, ‘Cornelius.’ But as he fixed his eyes on him, he became afraid *and* said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ And he said to him, ‘Your prayers and your alms have gone up for a memorial before God’ ” (vs 1-4). Now, that would be rather startling, wouldn’t it? To be praying, I don’t know how he was praying. I don’t know if he was on his knees. I don’t know if he was in a garden. I don’t know where he was, but anyway, he was praying. And the ninth hour is considered about three in the afternoon, and that’s when they offered the incense at the temple. That is what is called “the hour of prayer.” And you also find that in Luke the first chapter where Zacharias, John the Baptist’s father, went in at the “hour of prayer” and offered the incense.

“ ‘And now send men to Joppa, and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter. He is lodging with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by *the* sea. He shall tell you what you must do.’ And when the angel who had spoken to him departed, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who continually waited on him; And after relating everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.... [I wonder what the soldiers were thinking at that time?] ...And on the next day, about the sixth hour, as these were journeying and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray... [Now, that’s about noon.] ...And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they were preparing *the meal*, a trance fell upon him; And he saw the heaven opened; and a certain vessel descended upon him, like a great sheet, bound by *the* four corners and let down upon the earth; In which were all the four-footed beasts of the earth, including the wild beasts, and the creeping things and the birds of heaven. Then a voice came to him, *saying*, ‘Arise, Peter, kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘In no way, Lord; for I have never eaten anything *that is* common or unclean.’ ” (vs 5-14).

Now, have you ever read anything in the Old Testament, which says this is a “common” food? It’s either clean or unclean, right? Nothing “common.” Now, the word “common” here refers to the Jewish practice of classifying food, which is this: Unclean obviously refers to the things that God has said are unclean—all the wild beasts and four-footed things and creeping things and snakes and reptiles and all this sort of thing. But what does “common” refer to. “Common” can refer to a food that is called “clean” by God, but has been handled by a Gentile. So, if you have a loaf of bread—and of course, in the book, *The Code of Jewish Law*, there are many instances of

this—but if you have a loaf of bread that is made, kneaded and baked by a Gentile servant in your own house, it is “common.” Or if you have a Gentile kill an animal and handle it, though it be clean by the definition of the Bible, it is “common.” That’s why you read about what is called “kosher” food. Now, what is “kosher” food? Kosher food that is supervised, handled by, prepared by Jews—no Gentiles involved.

Now, they also classified people. Let’s go on from here—v 15: “And a voice *came* again the second time to him, *saying*, ‘What God has cleansed, you are not to call common.’ Now this took place three times, and the vessel was taken up again into heaven. And as **Peter was questioning within himself** what the vision that he saw might mean [I guess so!], 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.’ 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 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 accompanied him. And on the next day, they came to Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them *and* had called together his kinsmen and *his* intimate friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshipping *him*. 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 and found many gathered together. And he said to them, ‘You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race....’ ” (vs 15-28).

Now, you will not find that law in the Old Testament. This was a Jewish law. You are not to be in the presence of them. You are not to eat with them. You are not to be with them because they are “unclean” things. They are beasts, they’re animals, they’re less than human—and Jews today still think that. I mean you can read many of the Jewish writings and they will treat all other people in pretty much that category.

“ ‘...But God has shown me *that* no man should be called common or unclean’ ” (v 28). Now,

if you have something that you have done for a long time: you have never kept company with a Gentile; you have not fellowshiped with them; you have not eaten with them; and you know for sure that God has never dealt with any of the Gentile nations as God has dealt with Israel. Now then God is going to do something different. So God has to show, by a miracle, what He’s going to do. So he said, 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. Now then, send to Joppa and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter; he is lodging by *the* sea in *the* house of Simon, a tanner. When he comes, he will speak to you.” Therefore, I sent for you at once; and you did well to come. So then, we are all present before God to hear all things that have been commanded you by God’ ” (vs 29-33).

Now that would be quite a, quite a situation wouldn’t it? Here they’re all gathered—I don’t know how many he had in his household. I don’t know how many soldiers were there. I don’t know how many servants he had. But apparently he had a pretty big household.

“Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that **God is not a respecter of persons**. ... [Whereas, Judaism teaches that God *is* a respecter of persons.] ... 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 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.’ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those

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who were listening to the message. And the believers from the circumcision were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out” (vs 34–45).

There is the key. God had to do something supernatural to show that He was going to work with the Gentiles in that particular way. You can go back with Stephen and the Eunuch—how that they went down and were baptized in the water. But apparently the Eunuch was one who had been circumcised and was a proselyte. So that put him a different category than an uncircumcised Gentile. So we’re dealing here with uncircumcised Gentiles. And of course, this became a big bone of contention all the way through. You know all the things that happened concerning circumcision, non-circumcision, and all the difficulties that took place. That’s part of it.

“For they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify 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*?’ 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). So this tells us three things we know for sure:

1. God is the One who calls us.
2. He sends the Holy Spirit to be with us.
3. The Holy Spirit is to be gotten in us.

It can happen in most cases after baptism. In *extraordinary* cases, such as this, only to show the apostles that God was going to deal with the Gentiles, that it happened before. ***This is an extraordinary situation.*** Now if God just wanted to deal with them, aside from the apostles, he could have given the Holy Spirit before Peter came. Or He could have given the Holy Spirit without Peter ever coming. But He didn’t do it because He wanted to show the apostles that now He was going to deal with all nations; and how was He going to deal with all nations. After all, to change from circumcision to non-circumcision, when God commanded that they be circumcised, is a tremendous change! ***I mean, a tremendous change!*** And after all, didn’t God say that if someone wanted to partake of the Passover and a stranger wanted to become part of Israel, that they had to be circumcised. And no uncircumcised person could partake of the Passover. Now we’ve got something totally different. Now we have the circumcision of the Holy Spirit, which is of the mind, which is of the heart, which is not of the flesh. And how is God going to prove this? *By doing the exact same thing for the Gentiles that He also did for the Jews by sending the Holy Spirit.* Only in this case, to show that God was calling them beyond any shadow of doubt, they received the Holy

Spirit just prior to baptism. Now this is the only case where it shows it. It doesn’t show that now God is going to give the Holy Spirit any differently than He did before, by repentance and baptism, but here was an exceptional case recorded for us so we would know that God was going to deal with all people, and not just the Jews. So that’s why He did it.

Now, we also have the account of the 144,000—and the 144,000 are sealed in their foreheads by an angel of God. Apparently they receive the Holy Spirit before they are baptized. So, I don’t know of any other instances where the Holy Spirit has been given before baptism—unless you heard of any. Have you heard of any? No, I haven’t heard of any. Could God do it before a person is baptized? I mean, ***God could!*** However, you would then have to then know them by their fruits: that they would obey God; that they would keep His commandments; that they would love God; that they would believe with all their hearts and so forth. And if that were the case and a person were not baptized, then they would seek sincerely to be baptized, because that’s also a part of the commands that have been given, that they should be baptized.

Then the question becomes: Would this also apply then to people who are ready to die, repent of their sins, die a few minutes later, whatever? *I do not know. I could not answer that question, because we are to “walk in newness of life” after we’re baptized.* We are to live by God’s Holy Spirit. And I am sure that in many cases when a person knows that they’re going to die, almost anyone is going to do anything in some emotional thing. Now whether they truly repent in that particular case, I do not know. However, if that were the case then, there wouldn’t be much need for the second resurrection. (comment from audience) Oh yeah, for it to carry through to the second resurrection, they act upon it at that time. That may be something, but as far as them receiving salvation that instant, then, everyone would wait until the last and be baptized—not be baptized, but just repent just before they die; and so then you could have the “holy unction” that the Catholics have or the “last rites” or whatever. Then you could do that at the last minute. So, well, He said: “I say to you today that you will be in paradise with Me.” But He didn’t say *when*. So he could be in paradise at the second resurrection.

So this is an extraordinary situation. And I think only a one-time situation where God had to show the apostles what He was going to do. (comment from audience) Oh yeah, sure. Well, that’s one of the reasons why He gave the Holy Spirit in such a powerful way on the day of Pentecost at the temple area, because He was intervening to change what He was doing. God had worked through the

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temple system. God had worked through the priests and Levites all that time to that Pentecost. And so, He had to do something supernatural to show He was not going to use that system anymore. So along those lines, the same thing here, He had to do something supernatural to show that, in fact, **He was going to work with all nations**. And to change where, God showed that circumcision would not be required. I know for a Jew that's something! (comments from audience) Yeah, no, that's true, a person really hasn't proved anything to God on their death-bed anyway. I would say, yes, it's correct to say that without baptism you do not have salvation because they were baptized just right after they received the Holy Spirit.

Now, let's go to one other place here, to answer that question. Let's go to Acts 19, and this will help answer that question. Without baptism you probably—let's put it this way: without baptism, even if you're given the Holy Spirit; this is a one-time thing what we read there in Acts, the tenth chapter. It didn't repeat itself other places, just that one time. Now when we come to Acts 19, we have something entirely different here. Now, let's begin right here in v 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... [Now, these were followers or learners, whatever.] ...He said to them, ‘Did you receive *the* Holy Spirit after you believed?’.... [Now here's a whole different set of circumstance.] ...And they said to him, ‘We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit’ ” (vs 1-2). So God did not perform this supernatural thing all the time. This was a one-time event in Acts, the tenth chapter, to show and teach Peter [and] the apostles, that God was now going to deal with the Gentiles. So they said, “We haven't even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

“Then he said to them, ‘Unto what, then, were you baptized?’ And they said, ‘Unto the baptism of John’.... [Now, this also shows that unless you have the right baptism—and John's baptism would be as close to the right thing as you could get, right?—but what did John tell them: ‘Believe on the One Who is coming after.’ Now, based upon this, I have re-baptized people because they may have been baptized one time, long ago, and especially some in the Church of God Seventh Day; brought up the question: ‘Well, I don't know if I have the Holy Spirit of God or not, but, you know, I do believe and I want to follow God.’ And I have re-baptized them because they have felt that they did not receive the Holy Spirit of God. They weren't against God. They were following His way, they were trying. So we have here those who were baptized under the baptism of John.] ...And Paul said, ‘John truly baptized *with* a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should be-

lieve in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ’ ” (vs 3-4). So, what does it mean “believe”? *You have to believe and be baptized*. That's what it means. Because they were baptized by John “for the remission of sins” or unto repentance.

“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 5-6). Well now, this was to convince these people that they did have truly the Holy Spirit at that time, and they needed to be re-baptized; and also to be a sign to Paul that he should stay there and preach and teach. Now, whenever they spoke in tongues, I am sure—and I am convinced in my own mind—that it was languages that the others understood. Has to be intelligent. Languages that the others understood. We know Paul understood Hebrew. We know Paul understood Latin. We know Paul understood Aramaic. We also know that he understood Greek, because he wrote in Greek. So, if you come to people here who are in Ephesus, who are Greeks, who never spoke Hebrew, and they start speaking in Hebrew and glorifying God, well, you know that's from the Holy Spirit. “Then he entered into the synagogue *and* spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (v 8).

Now, let's look at another case. So here we have a case of the baptism of John and not receiving the Holy Spirit. With Cornelius we had the case of believing in God, following God, wanting to know more about God, but God had not dealt with the Gentiles. So then He sends Peter, and while Peter is talking, this supernaturally happens, so he says who can deny them being baptized. But **they were baptized! They were baptized!** So the question is: Can you be saved without baptism? *I doubt it because baptism is such an easy thing to accomplish, and that God would provide the circumstances to make it possible*. But it also possible to be baptized and not receive salvation.

Go to Acts 8:5—here's the case: “Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them.... [Now I don't know all the circumstances about this either, but he preached Christ unto them. So this apparently shows us that only certain people should baptize and lay hands on for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Because Philip went down there and he preached. We know the whole situation that took place] ...And the multitudes listened intently with one accord to the things spoken by Philip when they heard and saw the signs that he did, For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many of those who had *them*; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that

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city. But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city... [You know about Simon Magus, I'm not going to go into all of that] ...and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one. To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' Now they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the gospel—the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed; and after being baptized, he steadfastly continued with Philip; and as he beheld *the* signs and great works of power that *were* being done, he was amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them..." (vs 5-14).

Now, why would they send Peter and John? *Well obviously they knew who Simon was.* You're not going to go through Samaria. It says he was there a long time. You know the incident of Jesus and the woman at the well—the city of Samaria. You also know that in Samaria is Mt. Gerizim where then that goes back to the problem of the Jews—the renegade Jews and the Jews that came back under Ezra and Nehemiah (you can read that and how the renegade Jew who was one of the priests. Didn't want to get rid of his Gentile wife.) You have the situation. You have intermixture of those from Babylon being there at Samaria. So you add that to the fact that Jesus told them, 'Don't go into any of the cities of Samaria.' So here they send down Peter and John because they knew something was up. "Who, after coming down to Samaria... [that is geographically come down because Samaria lay, geographically, at a lower elevation] ...prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; For as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (vs 15-16). So we find through the combination of this whole thing that there has to be the *repentance*, there has the *baptism*—obviously these have to be right, and there has to be the *laying on of hands*. And that repentance has got to be from the heart, otherwise you're not going to receive the Holy Spirit.

Now notice: "Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money, Saying, 'Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit' " (vs 17-19). So even though Simon was baptized, he didn't receive the Holy Spirit. Why? (1) *He was not obedient*, (2) *he wasn't repentant*. He be-

lieved. So it shows that people can believe certain things, even be baptized, but unless they repent and unless their heart is right with God, they aren't going to receive the Holy Spirit anyway. So we have quite a mix of circumstances here, don't we, in baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit. So it shows that, you know, the ultimate judge of it all, God is going to give the Holy Spirit. So you know the rest of the account there.

Now, let's ask another question: What if a person is baptized *truly*, repentant *truly*, receives God's Holy Spirit *truly*—now what happens when they sort of let things slide? Or what happens if a man gets in the way and they get bitter at a man and somehow they're bitter toward God, but they really don't hate God, they're really not bitter toward God...

(go to the next track)

...but what do we do then? In other words, the question becomes this: Once a person is baptized and receives the Holy Spirit of God, how far will God let them slide before then they are no longer considered acceptable for the Kingdom of God? Let's just ask that question.

Let's go to II Timothy, the first chapter—now this shows what we need to do in case we find ourselves in a situation where we have been letting things slide, not growing in grace and knowledge as we should have been, not really using the Spirit of God as we ought to have used it, but we haven't become disbelievers. We may be upset. We may have different things wrong in our lives. And I don't know how far God would let the things slide, I couldn't tell you. So we'll look at a couple of Scriptures and see. II Timothy 1:5—It says that he had tears of joy and so forth: "When I remember the unfeigned faith *that is* in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice—and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also. For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness" (vs 5-7). And there are times when we have to do that. There are times when we have to 'stir up' the Spirit of God within us, because anyone can let their guard down, surely. Anyone has enough trouble overcoming sin. So how far is God going to let a person go?

I can answer the question best this way: Revelation 2 & 3, because here we have the message to the seven churches. Now you can go through and you can pick out the things that God will let happen to an individual. And he tells them all to repent but two of them. The first one, they had a lot of works—

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now, I'm not going to read any particular Scripture here, I'm just going to go through and summarize each one here:

- The Church at Ephesus: The thing He had against them is that they had lost their first love. They had become more social. They had become more caring about people than caring about God. So He told them to repent.
- Then you come to the next one—the next Church—and they were weak and miserable and in tribulation and persecuted and poor. But God said they were rich and He didn't have anything to say against them.
- Then you come to Pergamos and boy, he's got a lot to say against them. He says He's even going to fight against them. That they even hold the doctrine of Balaam, hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Now that shows allowance of quite of bit of false doctrine within the Church, but it's still part of God's Church.
- Then we come to Thyatira, that they have those that eat things sacrificed to idols; they've committed spiritual fornication. Some of them have even delved into satanism a bit and have come out of it. And God says they are to repent. Obviously then, they have to repent.
- Then you come to chapter three, to Sardis, and He says, "You have a name that you're alive, but you're dead." And He says just strengthen the things that remain, "I'm not going to require very much of you, just strengthen the things that remain and I won't blot your name out of the book of life."
- Then you come to the Church of Philadelphia, and these people have been faithful.
- And then you come to the Church of Laodicea and they are "lukewarm" and have problems of being "rich and increased with goods" and sex sins referred to there as "the nakedness." And yet He says, "Repent." He says, "Be zealous" and He would still save them.

So God shows there can be a great number of different problems once they receive the Holy Spirit of God, but they haven't yet rejected God. Now, let's go to I Corinthians, the third chapter, and here again we have a situation—and too many times though, rather than continually striving for what we should do to be the best we can. A lot of people ask, "What is the minimum I can do to be saved," because that's all they want to do. So there are many "psychological" things here—I hate to use the term—but there are many thoughts and things that people use to try and minimize

what they ought to do. In other words, if a person is to get into the Kingdom of God, people think (a lot of people do) then "I want to do the least amount but still make it." Now there are some that way.

Now, let's look at what Paul wrote here: He told them, 1 Corinthians 3:3: "For you are still carnal. For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you." Then he talks about Paul and Apollos and then he says what he did: "I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.... [So God was working in their lives] ...Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for *it is* God Who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each shall receive his own reward **according to his own labor**.... [Now, we're going to be judged according to our works. We're also going to be judged according to our heart.] ...For we are God's fellow workers; *and* you are God's husbandry, *even* God's building. As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*.... [Now, he's referring to your own individual life. How are you building on that foundation?] ...For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.... [So, we can say that starts with *calling, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, having your sins forgiven through Jesus Christ—that is the foundation*. That's the starting, that's the beginning.] ...Now if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble... [So, it shows many different comparable types of works. Many different comparable types of spirituality: Gold and silver and precious stone obviously the best; wood, hay and stubble obviously in degrees, the worst.] ...The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day of *trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is" (vs 6-13). In other words, that's likened unto life, the fiery trials of life—it's going to be tried.

"If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire" (vs 14-15). So there is the minimal salvation. If a person even builds it sloppily, of straw, little bit of wood, spit and bailing wire (if we could use the terminology today) and the fire comes and it's burned up and he's a weak individual and very difficult for him to do anything, but in his heart he still believes God. And if in his heart he's still striving for God's way, but there's just so many things against him that he can't get out and do any better—then God is not going to reject him. He's just not going to have the greater reward, that's all. It says, "he himself shall be saved."

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Now, how can this apply? I think we can see in many, many different cases. Let's go here to Luke 15, and here is a classical case in Luke; and this is the story of the prodigal son. Now, he didn't do very well, did he? The prodigal son. But he never rejected his father. He wanted to go on his own way. He wanted to be independent and all this, but he never rejected God. We know the whole story of it here: two sons (v 11). "And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me that portion of the property which falls to me.' And he divided to them *his* living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together *and* departed into a distant country. And there he wasted *all* his substance, living *in* debauchery. But after he had spent everything, there arose a severe famine throughout that country, and he began to be in need. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country... [rather than go home, he said, 'I'll just tough it out.' And there are many people who want to 'tough it out' themselves, see, and so we don't know each individual's heart. But here He gives us this parable so we can understand. So the citizen of that country] ...and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him.... [In other words, he was hungry, but he was told, 'Don't you dare touch anything that you're feeding the animals, and when you're done with that you come in here and we'll give you your slop' type of thing.] ...And **when he came to himself...**" (vs 12-17). Obviously then repentance—a renewed repentance: 'he came to himself.' He understood what he was doing. Now, I'm sure there are many people who have left the Church of God under varying and different circumstances that were very upset with people; very upset in particular with a couple of men that we know, you know, who set themselves as lord and overmasters, and people got angry and mad and bitter. And they just left. Now, we don't know their hearts, whether they totally rejected God or not. But look at what this boy did here. I mean, look what he did. I mean, if you had one of your own children do this, how readily would you receive him back? As readily as this? I dare say, probably not!

But you know the story: he came to himself, then: "...he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; And I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants''" (vs 18-19). Well, you know the rest of the story. And you know how that God rejoices when one who is lost, comes back. He said: "For this my son was dead, but is alive again; and he was lost, but is found..." (v 24). And so, there may be many

cases of that that we don't know about. So there may be many people who can fall into this category of the prodigal son. Maybe, if they're sick and destitute or if they're in circumstances when they know they're about to die or something like that, and they repent to God on the spot in a minute, then you could say that would be a "deathbed repentance" which could save them and bring them into the Kingdom of God. But, they would have the minimal, because the works weren't very good.

So, I don't know exactly how we can look at all of this but I know one thing, God is not like, nor does He take the posture that we have heard for so many years, that "if you leave this corporate organization here and go into the world that you have lost it." Let's look at another case—I Corinthians, the fifth chapter.

Just to answer a question here about being re-baptized again. That in Worldwide, a lot of people were re-baptized who had been Seventh Day Adventist or Church of God Seventh Day or Baptists. In every case, it's an individual situation. What I always did for those who were Church of God Seventh Day, I did not deal with in our area there were not many Seventh Day Adventists, but I would accept the baptism and laying on of hands from Church of God Seventh Day with this one question: I said that "you ought to know whether you have the Holy Spirit of God or not. Even though you were baptized, you may not have received the Holy Spirit. So, what you need to do is pray and fast and ask God to reveal to you that you know for sure that you have God's Holy Spirit, and if you do you don't need to be baptized again. If you don't we'll baptize you again." That's how I handled it. Which I think is the only way to handle it because you go to I John, the third chapter. Remember when Paul came to those in Ephesus and he said, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" And he said, "Well, we didn't know that there was such a thing as the Holy Spirit." We are to know that we have the Holy Spirit. God doesn't want us to be in doubt. If the Holy Spirit is the greatest thing that we can have in this life, do you think God would have us in doubt whether we have the Holy Spirit of God or not? I mean, absolutely not! So therefore it says here in I John 3:24: "And the one who keeps His commandments **is dwelling in Him...**"

Now, this comes right back to receiving the Holy Spirit, right? God gives His Holy Spirit to those that obey Him. This is so that we can know. God doesn't want us to be in doubt. How can we believe if we're in doubt? How can you believe in God if you don't believe that He's Creator? **You can't!** So you can't have any doubt. He doesn't want us to be in doubt. He doesn't want us to go around and say: "Oh,

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I wonder if I have the Holy Spirit?” Now there are times when a person may let the Holy Spirit not be stirred up in them—like Paul said, “Stir up the Holy Spirit that’s within you.” There are times when we may “grieve” the Holy Spirit, as it says in the Ephesians, the fourth chapter. There may be times when we go contrary to the things that the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us and we sin. And then we realize how awful and bad and wrong it was and we repent. All of those things are the actions of the Holy Spirit working with us. But, I John 3:24: “...And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He in him [the one keeping the commandments]; and by this **we know** that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us.” So we are to **know** that we have the Holy Spirit abiding in us. And we are to **know** that we are in Christ. That’s something **we know!** Now, I know that. And I know there are times that I have not been as I should be before God. And I’ve experienced all the things we’ve talked about: repenting, stirring up the Spirit, fasting and praying, getting back close to God.

Now, let’s go here to I Corinthians, the fifth chapter. How far will God let a person go, before He takes away the Holy Spirit and they’ve committed the unpardonable sin? Now, we just gave a quick summary of the seven churches. All right, here’s a case which is a pretty rotten case, I Corinthians 5:1: “It is commonly reported *that there is sexual immorality among you, and such immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—allowing one to have his own father’s wife. You are puffed up and did not grieve instead, so that he who did this deed might be taken out of your midst*” (vs 1-2).

- Now, you think about the person doing this.
- You think about the people involved in it.
- You think about what emotions that they had to go through to even commit this thing.
- And you think about the things that were on their heart and in their minds when they were going through this. Yet they would come and go to church every week.

So this is a grievous problem. I mean, a terrible problem. Verse 3: “For I indeed, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged *concerning* him who has so *shamelessly* committed this *evil deed* as if I were present: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, together with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ To deliver such a one to Satan for *the* destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (vs 3-5). Now, that person had to have slipped pretty badly. I mean, look, he was already committing fornication with his step-mother.

Now that’s going pretty grievously. And some of the people who have left Worldwide, I don’t know of any or many or even a few who have gone to that extreme. So to just cut them all off and say, “Hey, you’re all going into gehenna fire,” that’s not my judgment to make. We don’t know their heart and their mind. But this was a pretty disastrous case.

Now we come back to II Corinthians 2—now we have the situation where the whole church repented. The whole church repented because of the things they allowed by letting this continue on and putting up with it in the church and not helping the man come to repentance before. And we also have a situation where the man apparently repented and Paul told them to let him come back to church. Now let’s pick it up here, v 1, so we can follow his thought all the way through. “Now I am resolved within myself not to come to you again in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, who is it that makes me glad, if it is not the one who has been made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this same *thing* to you, lest when I come, I might have sorrow from *those* in whom I ought to rejoice; *for* I have confidence in all of you, that my joy is *the joy* of you all. For out of much distress and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears—not that you might be sorrowful, but that you might know the overflowing love which I have for you. But if anyone has caused sorrow, he has not grieved me, but you all, *at least* in part (in order that I may not overcharge *him*). To such a one this punishment, which *was inflicted* by the majority *of you*.... [The whole church got together and said, ‘Ok, buster, you’re out.’] ...So that on the contrary, you should rather forgive and encourage *him*, lest such a one be swallowed up with overwhelming sorrow” (vs 1-7).

Quite a contrary thing isn’t it, that they let him back in the church. No, they wouldn’t do that in Worldwide. Boy, once you’re kicked out, that’s it. (comment from audience) No, they didn’t see that, so if he comes back and says, ‘I’m sorry,’ they only applied it to the two top ones, hundreds of times over. Not to the rest! I say that not in jest but in fact.

“So that on the contrary, you should rather forgive and encourage *him*, lest such a one be swallowed up with overwhelming sorrow. For this reason, I exhort you to confirm *your* love toward him. Now for this *cause* I wrote *to you*, that I might know by testing you whether you are obedient in everything. But to whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; and if I also have forgiven anything, to whomever I have forgiven *it*, for your sakes *I forgave it* in the person of Christ; So that we may not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes” (vs 7-11). All right, so then he shows that that one should be brought back into the Church. Now, what else does it

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show us, in the instructions that have been given? It does not tell us to re-baptized him, right? **Though they sin grievously**, it doesn't tell us to re-baptized, does it? *No*. But obviously, this person has a lot of work to do. A whole lot of rebuilding of the mind and the spirit and the attitude and the heart and things like this that comes to yielding to God. So again, how far will God let a person go before He cuts them off? That's an individual judgment that God Himself has to make.

(comments from the audience) Once you have repented of your sins to be baptized, to receive the Holy Spirit, then you don't have to go out and be baptized every time you sin. That's absolutely correct. What is that we have to do? *Repent!* (I John 1) Very clear here. Let's go to I John, the first chapter, then we'll go to Romans 14.

I John 1:7: "However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (vs 7-9). So, once we've been baptized, we still sin. How do we get rid of those sins? "Oh well, get up every morning and be baptized." *No!* We REPENT! We have access to God. Now then, what if a person ends up being a prodigal son? And goes out and commits fornication, like this guy did in I Corinthians 5—and then somehow comes to his senses? He's repentant. He's burned up all of his good works. I mean, they're gone! "Wood, hay and stubble" that is gone! "But he himself shall be saved even so as by fire." Now he may go out and have his life so consumed to "the destruction of the flesh" as Paul said there (1 Cor. 5) but in the final analysis, if there's that repentance, they still may be saved. Not "shall be"—"may be." It said that his spirit "may be" saved. Not "shall be"—"**may be.**" Because that depends on their heart and mind and attitude.

Now Romans 14—so this is why we're not to judge other people who are Christians. We need to judge situations and circumstances. Let's pick it up here in Romans 14:7: "For no one among us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we should live unto the Lord; and if we die, we should die unto the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. *It is* for this very purpose *that* Christ both died and rose and is living again, so that He might be Lord over both *the* dead and *the* living. Now then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ....

[An individual thing. God has to make that judgment.] ...Because it is written, 'For *as* I live,' says *the* Lord, 'every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then, each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore, we should no longer judge one another, but judge this instead: Do not put an occasion of stumbling or a cause of offense before your brother" (vs 7-13). So we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of God—God is going to judge it.

(comment from audience) Ok, the question is this: Where does it show that if we are baptized then our children are also given a measure of protection or whatever it may be? I Corinthians 7:13: "And *if* a woman has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to dwell with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife... ['sanctified' means *to be made Holy*—not, obviously, for salvation, but for God's Holy protection and blessing.] ...and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband; otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy" (vs 13-14). In other words, they have God's blessing; they have God's protection; so forth. Obviously, until they reach the age where they have to be making their own choices and decisions, too. But sure they do. I mean, I can, like with my own children. I've told them, I said, "A lot of the things that you have which are part of you—your body, your mind, the way that you think, the blessings of God—all those things have come, first of all, because your mom and I have been loving and faithful to each other and nobody else, so therefore that blessing is automatically passed on within your very being. You have that as part of you. Now don't stand up and say 'I'm big and strong and tough and wonderful and the greatest thing that's ever come to earth,' because you're not. You just have a blessing from God." For my daughter, for her not to say, "Boy, I'm the greatest and most beautiful thing that's every arrived on the face of the earth," and go out and squander your life and ruin it by doing all sorts of things you ought not do, because all you're doing is squandering the blessing that came from God in the first place. So, I've told them: "What you need to think on doing is how you can take the blessings of God in your life—both physical and spiritual, though you're not baptized at this point—and when you have your own family and children, if you are following God, how you can multiply that and pass that on to your children." Because God says the "blessings will come to those that love Him unto a thousand generations." So it is true. You know, that will be passed on.

But, this thing is as you also mention, that if you go ahead and strive to just have good works, just for a reward. I may bring a sermon—thanks for the sermon topic—bring a sermon about a "reward." You

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know, can you just work for a reward and demand it of God? *No, you can't! No you can't!* Because if you do, your works to be seen of men, what did Jesus say, "You have your reward already," that is, men have seen it, "Oh that's a nice work, that's good, you've done a good work." Ok, how does that relate to a greater reward or stars in your crown, or whatever it may be. It relates this way. That's why we are told whatever we do we do from the heart and don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. That means, obviously from the point of view that you're going to do it so that you're going to get something better for yourself. In other words, if you do things, you're doing it for God and doing it for other people, not so that you can selfishly get a greater reward. Let God give the reward. Let God do the determination.

(Comment from the audience) Absolutely, it's got to be from the heart! Without any forethought and premeditation: "Well, I'm going to make sure that I drag my sick little body out of this bed and go to Sabbath services, so that I will get a greater reward because I have never missed a Sabbath in ten years." So God let's you go there and give half the church the flu, you know, ha! That's your reward! Or "Boy, I'm going to take care of the widows and I'm going to take care of the children, and boy, I'm going to make sure I do all this and do all that and be seen of the minister and open the door and carry his briefcase and, you know, all those things." All that is just so much vanity. The reward has been in carrying the briefcase. The reward has been "thank you for carrying it." If your motivation was to do it so you could get on the good side of the minister or on the good side of the minister's wife, or to be seen of others so you can crawl up the ladder of deaconship or eldership or apostleship, or whatever. That's why God has to judge the heart.

Just one other thing. To answer the question: Must you be baptized to be saved? "Saved," I mean *be resurrected*—that is salvation. You may not necessarily have to be baptized for God's Holy Spirit to come to you. But if it does come to you, then you need to repent of your sins and be baptized and have hands laid on so you can receive the Holy Spirit; or if you are truly a Cornelius, and you receive the Holy Spirit before you're baptized, you better be instantly baptized after that, otherwise there's no salvation. We'll go to Romans, the eighth chapter and we'll see that. Romans six, we'll go there first.

This tells us what baptism is all about. Now if God, in one person's circumstance, may happen to give the Holy Spirit before they're baptized, they better hurry and follow it with baptism just as quickly as they can. Romans 6:3: "Or are you ignorant that we,

as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?... [How can Jesus Christ's death for your sins be applied to you unless you are baptized? *It cannot.*] ...Therefore, we were buried **with** Him though the baptism **into** the death... [Because unless you tell God that you are willing to die—and that's what baptism is—'wages of sin is death'; and 'God, I know the wages of sin is death and I am willing to die, **right now!**'] ...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For **if** we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death... [see, 'if'—conditional] ...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... [that is, we don't live according to sin] ...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; Because the one who has died *to sin*... [in the operation of baptism is what we are talking about] ...has been justified from sin. Now **if** we died together with Christ... [That's why baptism is important] ...we believe that we shall also live with Him, Knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 3-11).

Now let's go to Romans 8:9: "However, you are not *in the flesh*... [that is accounted by God—because we're still in the flesh. I am still here in the flesh. But before God, as long as I have the Spirit of God, and as long as I am yielding to God, I am not counted by God as in the flesh.] ...you are not *in the flesh*... [and that has reference to not just being a fleshly body, that means you're not living according to the dictates of the carnal mind of flesh—that's what that means.] ...but *in the Spirit*, if *the Spirit* of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the Spirit* of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin... [and because of baptism (Rom. 6)] ...however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you... [That is obviously when? *At the resurrection* (1 Cor. 15)—that's when that takes place.] ...So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the flesh*; Because if you are living according to *the flesh*, you shall die; but if by *the Spirit* you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live" (vs 9-13). And that obviously then has reference to the resurrection, reference to salvation.

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So it is true, unless you are baptized, you are not going to see salvation that is the resurrection. Because every instance where we find in the Bible, and it was just moments before they received baptism that they got the Holy Spirit. He's standing there preaching to them, telling them all about Christ. He's probably wondering in his mind, "What am I going to do here?" So God already made up His mind. Zappo! give them the Holy Spirit, the decision is made. It's not something he took upon himself, but it's something that God told him what he should do. So that makes it entirely different.

Now, what about just people roaming around in the world that believe in God. Well, it says, "even the demons believe in God." There are people who believe in God but God hasn't called them, and there's a vast difference between being called and believing that God is Creator or whatever you may want to believe that God is. There's a vast difference in it. There are people who believe that there's a Creator God, but they're not willing to believe to obey Him. Obviously, they're not in any condition of salvation—let's put it that way—a condition that is different than salvation. A condition that is you're living in the flesh with God's Spirit in you on the way to being saved, but you haven't yet attained unto salvation.

It's been a long time since I talked to anyone about the very basic, basic things. Boy, I, whew! You know, God has allowed us to grow in grace and knowledge and we get on these things and we have our sermons going—I say, ok remember this, and I tell you to remember a whole chapter in the Bible, and you remember it—"oh yeah, I remember it." Now from that we go to this, you see. But you can't do that with people who are just starting. You can't do it. And this has been really, really good. Appreciate your bringing that up.

(Comment from audience) Oh yeah, God will do that. I would assume this. After the 144,000 are finished, they're going to have one grand baptizing party, just like they did on the day of Pentecost. And, the 144,000 may be sealed on the day of Pentecost. So therefore, you'll have that.

(Comment from audience) That's right. Oh sure, sure. That's a supernatural intervention. So you get down to the ultimate question: Can God do anything He wants to? *Yes, God can do **anything** He wants to.* But, the only time He's going to go around the things that He's clearly shown ought to be done, is when He needs to do something that we would not be inclined to do ourselves and He has to show us. So that's what He did there in Acts, the tenth chapter.

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 5-18-07

Scripture References:

- 1) Acts 10:47-48
- 2) John 14:15-17
- 3) Acts 2:38
- 4) Acts 5:32
- 5) Acts 11:2-3
- 6) Acts 10:1-48
- 7) Acts 19:1-6, 8
- 8) Acts 8:5-19
- 9) 2 Timothy 1:5-7
- 10) 1 Corinthians 3:3, 6-15
- 11) Luke 15:11-19, 24
- 12) 1 John 3:24
- 13) 1 Corinthians 5:1-5
- 14) 2 Corinthians 2:1-11
- 15) 1 John 1:7-9

- 16) Romans 14:7-13
- 17) 1 Corinthians 7:13-14
- 18) Romans 6:3-11
- 19) Romans 8:9-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 6:44
- Revelation 2 & 3
- Ephesians 4
- 1 Corinthians 15

Book: *The Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried, Hyman E. Goldin

Into Whose Name Should We Be Baptized?

Fred R. Coulter – April 17, 1998

Today in Florida there is a movement among God's people, many of whom were in the Worldwide Church of God for years and years and years to where they are requiring everyone to be re-baptized in the name of Yahweh. And they are requiring all males to be circumcised. That is kind of painful thought. (laughter) And there are also people in the past who have believed that you should only be baptized in the name of Jesus. And that what you read in Matthew 28, at the end—let's turn there please—is really a trinitarian formula. Let's find out if that does conflict with some other Scriptures, which we will read concerning baptism. You can go to Mark 1 and then turn back—that will get you there real quick! Now let's pick it up here in v 18—if I make a wrong reference, raise your hand. I have the cowbell, you don't. "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [now this 'power' is '*exousia*' in the Greek—meaning *all authority*.] ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them **into** the name **of** the Father... [now I want you to notice carefully:] ...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." (vs 18-20).

Now, many people will turn here and say, "Go therefore into all nations" and that's our commission. We must reach out to the world." That is part of it. You have to read all of it: "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..." So that shows an ongoing thing of developing the Church and the congregation and developing the faith of the brethren. And right now the brethren need to be strengthened, so we're doing this part of this commission. But what I want to focus in on is "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"—and does that conflict with these following verses:

Let's go to Acts, the second chapter. Now, in every study paper I have on it—and I have several, because several have sent things to me concerning it, and they always quote Eusebius, who leaves out "in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit." Now Eusebius, I would have to say, is the only one who quotes it that way. And then what you have, you have the same thing that Carl discovered when he was trying to find Galatinus. Remember what Carl wrote on debunking [what] the sacred-namers miss, that everyone quoted Galatinus, and so it was a quoting in a circle. Everyone was quoting that so you get this reference or this commentary and it all comes back to Eusebius. Now Eusebius, in many cases, can give us some insights into the things that

were happening. But please remember that Eusebius was also of those Christians who were the first Sunday-keepers. And Eusebius is counted as one of the first fathers of the Catholic Church. So we're not going to debunk what he has said, but beyond that there is virtually no proof that section of Matthew 28 was an "add-on" at a later date. Now we know in I John 5:7, we have the add-on verse there and that is evidenced by many, many, many texts from many, many, many sources rather than just one from Eusebius.

So let's read it here, Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.' "

Let's go to another one here: Acts 4:10: "Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole. This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we **must** be saved" (vs 10-12). And the force of the Greek there is: *it's obligatory to be saved*. No other name.

All right, let's look at another one. Let's come to Acts 19:1 ^[corrected]—and here's where we can learn a couple of things here in addition to it. Let's just go back up to, oh, let's start at verse one, that way we get the whole flow. "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?'.... [Now, the key thing in baptism is receiving the Holy Spirit!] ...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.'.... [Now, John's baptism is about as close to the real thing as you could get, right? *Yes.*] ...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" (vs 1-5).

So here's the principle of re-baptism. If you had to be re-baptized because of John's baptism,

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surely you have to be re-baptized because of Baptist baptism or Catholic baptism or Lutheran baptism, correct? Because the object is this: if you have been baptized and you haven't received the Holy Spirit, then your baptism was not valid. And there are occasions that we have with even people within the Church of God, who not knowing or not being instructed or for whatever reason were baptized and didn't receive the Holy Spirit, God is the One Who withheld it because He knew the circumstances involved.

At a later date, because God is still with the person and for the person, the individual might come to the conclusion and deep conviction that he or she might need to be baptized again. And in some cases we do that. But what I always do is this: I tell the individual, "Fast and pray about. Ask God to reveal to you whether the Holy Spirit is in you or with you, because God does not want you to be in doubt." And He'll reveal that to you. And if you need to be re-baptized, then fine, we'll do that—because the object is to receive the Holy Spirit of God. So there we have the basis for it.

Let's go to Philippians, the second chapter now and let's understand about the name of Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus... [that's the whole goal of why we're here, brethren.] ...Who, although He existed in the form of God... [the Greek there being '*huparcho*' which means *existing as or in a state of being as God*.] ...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, But emptied Himself, *and* was made in the likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant ... [and that means the exact same likeness as men. As I've mentioned before, when Jesus was born He had to have the umbilical cord tied. He had to be swaddled. He had to be diapered, cleaned, suckled and everything like that.] ...And being found in the manner of man... [and that is everything that human beings go through in the physical process of living.] ...He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God... [Who is the Father then.] ...has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name which *is* above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to the glory of God the Father" (vs 5-11).

Now then, let's ask a question: Does Jesus have a name greater than the Father? *No*. Jesus said, John 14:28 ^[transcriber correction]: "...because my Father is greater than I."

Now, let's come to Matthew 11:25 and let's see why Jesus came. And as we're turning there we'll

understand that Jesus came to reveal the Father. "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight to *do* this. All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*'" (vs 25-27). Now, what we have to understand, brethren, is that the New Testament, as we have it today, was a progressive revelation that Christ gave to His apostles. And we also have to realize that in putting that together, that—let's go to Ephesians, the third chapter.

We have quite a startling statement that was made by the Apostle Paul—and that statement is that just before his death—or at least while he was in prison here which was maximum five years before his death, minimum just before his death. Notice what he says—let's begin in Ephesians 3:1: "For this cause I, Paul, *am* the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles, If indeed you have heard of the ministry of the grace of God that was given to me for you; How He made known to me by revelation the mystery (even as I wrote briefly before, So that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ), Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed... [that is, at this time, while he was in prison he had the profound revelation that our purpose and goal was to become as God is. That was not understood at the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel. Remember, Jesus told His disciples on the Passover night: 'I have many things to say to you but you are not able to bear them now.'] ...as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles..." (vs 1-6). Now, wasn't that a Divine revelation that God gave to Peter through the experience of Cornelius? That the Gentiles would receive the Holy Spirit, not being required to be circumcised? *Yes!* So that was a revelation.

What we need to also understand is that the New Testament was canonized by Paul, Peter and John. God did not leave it to the philosophers of the Catholic Church to canonize the New Testament. That's like asking a thief to watch my money while I go away! You think God would entrust His Word to them? *No! No!*

Now, there is a book out that is called: *The Original Bible Restored* by Ernest Martin, which is quite a good book and I may give a sermon on that—I did years and years and years ago—about the canonization of the New Testament. And there's ample reason to believe that the book of Matthew was the first

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one written. However, who ever said that it was written in Hebrew—which I think Eusebius did (Carl mentioned that to me) is not true. Nor was it written in Aramaic. You need to understand this: the leaders of Judaism so hated Christ that they could not be trusted to preserve the Word of God of the New Testament in Hebrew. So therefore, God called those who spoke Greek. All the area around Galilee was Greek-speaking. Tiberius had one of the greatest Greek centers of teaching in the whole area of Galilee and they spoke Greek as the native language there. That's why all of the disciples outside of Judas were called from that area. God intended it to be written in Greek; because Greek, at that time, was more akin to what the modern languages would be. So that we would have a living language in which the New Testament was preserved—separated from the enemies of God being Judaism. If you want to know what the Jews would have done with it just read what the "Jesus Seminar" is doing to the New Testament and you will understand what I'm talking about.

So the revelation was given, but I think it's very, very clear—very, very clear—that Matthew was the first one written. Matthew was also a Levite. Now, let's follow this a long a little more carefully here, and let's understand something, that in canonizing the New Testament the Apostle John—let's go to John, the fourth chapter, please. The Apostle John wrote things far differently than the other three Gospels. Now, why do you suppose that was? *Because the first three Gospels—who are called the Synoptic Gospels—and they represent three witnesses.* That's why you have those three Gospels very similar. Then you have the fourth Gospel being the Gospel of John then, which then brings *another witness from an entirely different perspective.* And also, in the Gospel of John we have things revealed to us that are not even contained in Matthew, Mark and Luke. We also have this: John, the oldest living apostle, was the only one who truly wrote about the love of God—in the Gospel of John and in the Epistles of John. And the reason being is that ***the love of God is something which you come to understand*** after a great deal of other experience.

Now here in John, the fourth chapter, we find what God wants, and we will be dealing in the Gospel of John here as we go along—we'll cover a good part of it here. John 4:23: "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth... [Now that's what God wants. That's how we worship Him. And it's anyplace on earth. You don't have to go to Jerusalem. You don't have to go to Samaria. You don't have to go to Mecca. You don't have to go to the Ganges or any of those things.] ...for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner. God is

Spirit, and those who worship Him **must**... [and 'must' means: *are duty bound.* Or it's *obligatory.*] ...worship in spirit and in truth" (vs 23-24).

Now, we don't find that written anywhere in Matthew, Mark or Luke, do we? *No we don't.* So we find in the New Testament a progressive revelation. And John is the one who finishes it off with the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John and the book of Revelation. Now it could very well be in finalizing and canonizing the Bible, that that section of Matthew 28 was added in. But, it had to be added in by John, and maybe Andrew was there with him, and some of the other apostles. But, should we throw it out because it appears to be a trinitarian formula? Well, let's examine some more things here in the book of John. Let's just do a little survey here in the book of John.

Let's come to John, the first chapter—so we're going to survey several things here that are important for us to understand. And I would have to say this: that the Gospel of John reveals the Father more than any other book in the Bible. And we'll see that as we go along. John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father)... [Now, the Father—if you get out your handy-dandy *Strongs Concordance*, or you plug in your computer, and you key into Father, key into the Gospel of John, and you will see that John uses the Father more than any of the other Gospel writers, bar none. Now by time you add up all of those that Paul wrote, Paul also brought out a lot concerning the Father.] (Now notice): ...full of grace and truth.... [And in that fullness He'll never run out.] ...John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed... [and that is saying out loud, speaking loudly] ...saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, "He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me" '.... [That's what it means: *He was*] ...And of His fullness... [so there is a fullness of Christ—but which comes from the Father because He's the glory of the Father.] ...And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses, *but* the grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*" (vs 14-18). And that was at the time that John was writing that the Father had Christ in His bosom, as it were.

Let's go to John 3:31—this is some more of the witness of John, just before he was arrested. "He Who comes from above is above all. The one who is of the earth is earthy, and speaks of the earth. He Who comes from heaven is above all; And what He has seen and heard, this *is what* He testifies; but no one receives His testimony. The one who has re-

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ceived His testimony... [He's talking of Christ revealing the things that the Father was teaching him to teach.] ...The one who has received His testimony has set his seal that God is true... [So if you receive whatever Christ says, you're receiving the testimony, or you're testifying that God is true—**'set His seal.'** Now that means *putting a stamp of authenticity upon it*, as it were.] ...For He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God... [Now we're going to see that's exactly what Jesus said. And this is also a test for anyone who is a teacher. Do they speak the words of God? That has to be the test. Or, as we talked about earlier, do they teach the will of God or their will? You can phrase it either way you want.] ...and God gives not the Spirit by measure *unto Him*... [now, he's talking of the Son] ...The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. The one who believes in the Son has everlasting life; but the one who does not obey the Son shall not see life, for the wrath of God remains on him" (vs 31-36).

Now, let's come over here to John 6, and I think we will begin to see why the name of the Father is involved. Now, let me ask you a question:

- Is the Father involved in your calling?
- Is the Father involved in leading you to repentance?
- We will see the Father is also involved in your baptism.

Now we'll see that—let's begin right here in v 27: "Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed. Therefore, they said to Him, 'What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent' " (vs 27-29). Now the "he" being the Father has sent "whom" Christ. That is the Work. That is greater than anything else. Because if you truly believe with the heart, because the Scriptures say that "as a man thinks in his heart so he is." And it's far more important to believe with the very depth of your being than it is to do some work out here. To believe in Christ is a greater work. So that's what he's saying.

Then they wanted a sign: they said, "We want manna." And Jesus said, "I'm not going to give it to you." He said, "I am the bread which comes down from heaven." Then we have here in v 35: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; the one who comes... [Now notice the 'eth' (*KJV*) meaning a present tense participle in the Greek; meaning that it is *ongoing*. You are constantly *coming* to Christ.] ...to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'" And the truth of the matter is this: is that God put in every human being a longing of the missing

ingredient in their life, being the Holy Spirit. ***But God has to call to satisfy that longing.*** People try to fill it with physical things, or travel, or other people, or hobbies, or pursuits—and they just strive after—you could put in there the whole book of Ecclesiastes, list all the human endeavor cut off from God, seeking to fill the void. But once God the Father has called you and has led you to Christ, then you will never hunger and you will never thirst **IF** you continue coming to Christ ***because He gives the fullness of God the Father.*** And we partake of that fullness and of His fullness we have all received, and ***grace upon grace.*** In other words, Christ is never going to run out of grace. Christ is never going to run out of fullness. So therefore, we can be filled. We can be satisfied spiritually. And that empty void that is there in every human being then is filled with the Spirit of God.

Let's come down here to v 44 and we can begin to understand this: "No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.... [So God the Father Himself makes the first decision in calling. So He's involved, isn't He? *Yes, He is.*] ...and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes to Me" (vs 44-45). So, the Father has to start it. So He's involved in it.

Let's go to v 57—and this is the summary of the Passover and the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread, this one verse. Even though some things get kind of technical and some things get kind of complicated from time-to-time, it all boils down to some simple things, really. And here's how you can boil the whole thing down, right here, v 57: "As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so also the one who eats Me shall live by Me"

Now, let's see how Christ did. Let's come back to chapter five here for just a minute—and let's come to verse nineteen and we will see that Christ was dependent upon the Father. John 5:19: "Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself... [Now, that's quite a statement, isn't it? But, it really means this: the Son is doing nothing '*ek outos*'—now that means *out from within Himself of His own physical being He did nothing of Himself, or out from Himself.*] ...but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner. For the Father loves the Son... [Now notice, it's an ongoing relationship—present tense participle: '*loveth*']. ...and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be filled with wonder. For even as the

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Father raises the dead... [Now I want you to see the emphasis there that Christ is putting on the Father.] ...and [quickens] gives life in the same way also, the Son gives life to whom He will” (vs 19-21). Now there are two “quickenings” that happen to you. One you’ve already experienced: you were dead in sins and were made alive in Christ—that’s the first quickening. The second quickening will happen at the resurrection when you are changed from flesh to spirit. And ‘quickened’ in the *King James* means: *made alive*.

“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son So that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father Who sent Him. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who hears My word, and believes Him Who sent Me... [Now then you’re believing on the Father. In the first instances we saw that you believe on Christ—chapter 6:29. Now you believe on the Father—so the Father is involved, no question about it!] ...has everlasting life and does not come into judgment; for he has passed from death into life.... [and then He talks about the resurrection. Let’s come down here to v 26:] ...For even as the Father has life in Himself, so also has He given to the Son to have life in Himself; And has also given Him authority to execute judgment because He is *the* Son of man” (vs 22-24, 26-27). And then He talks more about the resurrection.

And then He comes over here and talks about the Pharisees. Now let’s read about that. Let’s come over here to v 36. Nope! Let’s come down here to v 30 first, I want to repeat this again: “I have no power to do anything of Myself... [Now, He’s talking spiritually. Physically, anyone can walk or talk and if you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you have a mind, you can think—you do that of yourself. But Who gave it to you? *God did!* So truly, in that sense, even physically you can do nothing of yourself but what God has given you, correct? But spiritually speaking, can you do anything spiritually speaking separated from God the Father and Jesus Christ? *No!* Why would you want to?] ...but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father, Who sent Me” (v 30). So there we go, right back to the theme that I started out with last night. Whose will do you want? The will of God? Or your will?

Now let’s come down to v 36: “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works that the Father gave Me to complete, the *very* works that I am doing, themselves bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time. And you do not

have His word dwelling in you... [Now that’s really kind of a real, stinging indictment, isn’t it? *Yes, it is.* Now, what is the ultimate that God wants with us in this physical life? *That His Word is living in us.* The word ‘abiding’ means *living*. That it’s written on your heart and inscribed in your mind.] ...for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think that you have eternal life... [Because they had a religion trying to define how they would receive eternal life according to their works. And to this day they do not understand ‘faith’ and ‘belief.’] ...and they are the ones that testify of Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men; But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.... [So that’s quite a statement that He gave to them, wasn’t it?] (Then He said): ...I have come in My Father’s name...” (vs 36-43). Now here we have the name of the Father, don’t we? And Jesus came in His name. In other words, everything that Jesus did was subordinated to the Father, in the name of the Father, correct? *We’d have to say that is true.*

Let’s go on. Let’s come to John 10:22. We know that Christ is the “door.” We know that we are part of the “sheepfold.” We hear the voice of Christ. He is the “good Shepherd” and all of that. But notice what He says here: “Now it was winter, and the feast of dedication was taking place at Jerusalem.”

Now, let’ me just pause here. Someone called and asked me—or I forget, wrote and asked me: How do we know this is Hanukkah? What we call Hanukkah today? And there are people who will turn here and say, “See, Jesus kept Hanukkah. So therefore it’s okay to keep Hanukkah.” Let me tell you something: Hanukkah is as pagan as Christmas. No question about it. And supposedly when the Maccabees re-dedicated the temple they only had enough oil for the lamp to burn one day, but it burned for seven days, correct? That is the story that they tell. However, why do they have *nine* candles *instead of seven*? You take a close look at the Hanukkah menorah and they have nine candles—three and three and three, and the middle one is raised higher. The middle one stands for the ‘queen of heaven’ but they don’t tell you that—because it’s a mystery within a mystery, within a mystery. So this man said, knowing that about Hanukkah: “Could this be the dedication of the feast as written in Ezra 6?”—because that was in the month, Adar, which is still in winter. So there’s no way we can prove one way or the other that this could not be the true dedication of the temple written about in Ezra. It could be have some reference to Hanukkah, but it could also to the other one because it’s still in winter.

So let’s go on: “And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then the Jews encircled

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Him and said to Him, ‘How long are You going to hold us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I have told you, but you do not believe. The works that I am doing in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; and no one shall take them out of My hand” (vs 23-28). Now, who’s hand are you in? The Son’s hand or the Father’s hand? *Both!* “Then the Jews again picked up stones so that they might stone Him” (v 31) and so forth.

Let’s come to John 12:28 now for just a minute. Notice how John is revealing the name of the Father. You don’t have that in any of the other Gospels. “ ‘Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, ‘I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.’ ” Now this took place on the tenth of Nisan. This is when Christ was selected as the Lamb of God. So He says, “glorify your name.”

All right let’s come to John 14—just a few pages over. Now, if we didn’t have John 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17, we would not have the words of the New Covenant for the Passover, would we? *NO!* Did God reveal to John things called to his remembrance that the other’s didn’t record? *Yes, He did—and in particularly concerning the Father.*

(go to the next track)

John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life... [And it is true, there is no other name under heaven whereby you are, you must be saved—that is true. No question about it. But notice:] ...no one comes to the Father except through Me.... [So both of Them are involved. No question about that. Let’s come over here to—no, let’s continue on, because He talks about the Father quite a bit.] ...If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. But from this time forward, you know Him and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and that will be sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long a time, and you have not known Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; why then do you say, “Show us the Father”? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Himself, Who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father.... [Notice the

emphasis on the Father all the way through. And I think we will see why this has a bearing then on baptism, but it does not take away from baptizing in the name of Jesus Christ.] ...And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.... [That is if it’s according to the will of God. No question about that.] ...If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments” (vs 6-15).

Now notice: Now the Holy Spirit is involved in a way that is not taught anywhere else in the Scriptures—just here in the Gospel of John. And unfortunately, this section of John, having to do with the Holy Spirit—and if you do not have the study paper and the tape showing the correct translation of this; and in some cases, it is almost a blatant mistranslation where they have “he” and “whom” when it should be “it” and “which” with no question at all. So if you don’t have that, write in for it and the eight tapes that go along with it, and that will help clear it up. But I’m going to read it the way that it should be. Because the Spirit is always ‘*tau pneuma*’—‘*tau*’ is neuter *the*. ‘*Pneuma*’ is *spirit*—‘*tau pneuma hagian*’—*the Spirit Holy*. And that’s the way it is in almost all cases.

Now, v 16: “ ‘And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter... [Remember, this ties right in with what Peter said, ‘Repent and be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ Now John is giving us more understanding about the Holy Spirit.] ...that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you.... [That’s what the Greek means: *within*.] ...I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world shall see Me no longer; but you shall see Me. Because I live, you shall live also.... [Now, here are some very profound verses—we need to understand this very carefully:] ...In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you. The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him’.... [Now Christ has revealed Himself to you and to all of those who have the Holy Spirit. How did He do it?] ... Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’.... [Here’s the answer, v 23:] ...Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... [Again, I want to ask you the question that you write it down and you ask yourself: ‘What is the least commandment that I do not follow?’ Because there are some who consider

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some commandments ‘least.’ Now let that be your own project.] ...keep My word’... [and it’s His Word is what’s going to judge us at the end, correct? ‘The words which I have spoken unto you, they shall judge you.’ Now notice, continuing on]: ...and My Father will love him...[so the Father is involved, isn’t He?] ... and **We** will come to him and make **Our** abode with him ...” (vs 16-23).

Now, that’s a profound statement, because when you receive the Holy Spirit it comes from the Father. ‘Whom the Father will send in My name.’ But also there’s a component of the Father being the begetter to be the son of God or the daughter of God, which seed remains in you (I John 3:9) and the seed is *sperma*. That comes from the Father. There is also the Spirit of Christ, part of the same Spirit called “the Spirit of Christ” which is in you that gives the mind of Christ. That’s why He says: “...and **We will come to him and make Our abode with him**.... [Now the reason that the world cannot have this revealed to them is because of this]: ...The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me” (vs 23-24) So that’s quite profound, isn’t it? Having the Holy Spirit in those two aspects.

Now, let’s go to Romans, the eighth chapter—hold your place here in John 14, we’ll be back. Now here in Romans 8:9: “However, you are not in *the flesh*, but in *the Spirit*, if *the Spirit* of God is indeed dwelling within you... [Now I want you to notice ‘Spirit of God’ *dwelling in you*.] ...But if anyone does not have *the Spirit* of Christ... [So there we have it again.: Two aspects of the Holy Spirit: *of the Father and of the Son*, correct? There it’s defined, right there. Now if you have not the Spirit of Christ] ...he does not belong to Him. But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the dead* is dwelling within you... [So there we have it again, the two aspects of the Holy Spirit. **We** will ‘come unto Him and **We** will make Our abode with Him.’ So when we get to baptism there has got to be a recognition of the Father, too. We’ll see that.] ...He Who raised Christ from *the dead* will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you.... [Again, referring to the Father.] ...So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the flesh*; Because if you are living according to *the flesh*, you shall die; but if by *the Spirit* you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by *the Spirit* of God, these are *the sons of God*” (vs 9-14).

Now back to John 14. So we find a progressive revelation here, don’t we? Revealing more of the

Father, don’t we? *Yes*. Now, back here to v 26: “But *when the Comforter comes, even the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name*... [So the Father is the One Who gives the Holy Spirit and has the aspect of the Father and the Son making the abode together within the individual.] (Notice): ...that one shall teach you all things, and **shall bring to your remembrance everything that I have told you.**”

Now, I cannot go back and verify what Matthew wrote or didn’t write. The Greek text that I have has in there Matthew 19, “in the name **of** the Father and **of** the Son, and **of** the Holy Spirit.” Now if it were added later—which is a possibility, but I can’t verify that it was; and I can’t verify that it wasn’t—but if it was, then it had to be John who had recalled to his memory everything that Jesus said. So if it were added on, then John would be the one who wrote it, because he wrote more of the Father and understood more about the aspect of the Holy Spirit and the Father and the name of the Father than any of the other apostles.

Let’s continue on, we’ll see this—let’s come to John 15:9: “As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love.” So there again we have *the Father*. Let’s come down here to v 26—again having to do with the Holy Spirit: “But when the Comforter has come, which I will send to you from the Father... [Now we read back here in John 14:26, ‘which the Father would send in My name.’ Now it says over here: ‘which I will send to you from the Father.’ So it is a joint operation of receiving the Holy Spirit of God. Have to be!] ...*even the Spirit of the truth, which proceeds from the Father, that one shall bear witness of Me.*”

Now, let’s come over here to John 16:23: “And in that day you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you. Until this day, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.... [v 26]: ...In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you, For the Father Himself loves you... [present tense participle. So God loves you continuously.] ...because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God” (vs 23-24, 26-27). So again, we see the Father directly involved.

Now let’s come to John 17—and here’s the prayer that Jesus prayed and we’ll just pick up a couple of verses that are key, important verses and why we should be baptized into the name of the Father. And then I will tell you exactly how it should be done, because you don’t play off one verse against the other. You put them together. Now, let’s pick it up

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here in John 17:11: “And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that they may be one, even as *We are one*. When I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You have given Me, and not one of them has perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled” (vs 11-12). So the name of the Father is involved.

Now let’s look at a couple of other things to add to this. Let’s come over here to Ephesians, the first chapter. Again, it talks about the Spirit, and here it is the earnest that we have now. Again, notice how Paul emphasizes the Father all the way through. Let’s pick it up here in Ephesians 1:11: “*Yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will... [God the Father Who is the One Who originally called us.] ...That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... [Which comes from the Father and Christ together as a joint project. One is the begetting to sonship; the other is Christ in you and the mind of Christ.] (Now notice v 14): ...Which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory” (vs 11-14).

- And so, that is the earnest,
- the seal—we are sealed with the Spirit of God.
- God the Father is involved
- Jesus Christ is involved
- And this is involved with baptism, is it not? *No question about it, we’ll see that.*

Ephesians 2:18: “For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father.” Gives us direct access to the Father.

Now let’s go to I Thessalonians 1:1—this one here really struck me in going through and studying this out. I Thessalonians is reputed to be the very first epistle that the Apostle Paul wrote. And notice what he writes here: “Paul and Silvanus [or that is ‘Silas’] and Timotheus [which is Timothy], to the church of *the* Thessalonians *which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*...” Both together again.

Let’s see if we can add a little bit more to it and then we will go back and look at Matthew 28. Let’s go to Revelation 3 first. And what I want to emphasize is that we are kept in the Father’s name. The Father sends the Holy Spirit. He is dwelling in us. Christ is dwelling in us. The Holy Spirit is dwelling

in us. And *all three of them are involved in the operation of baptism*. Now notice what Christ says here, Revelation 3:12: “The one who overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out any more; and **I will write upon him the name of My God**...” [Now, this is Jesus speaking to the Church. So we will have written upon us the name of the Father. Because we take the Father’s name, *because He is the Father!* Just like your children take your name. But you give your children also another name, too, don’t you? *Yes*. So this is the same operation He’s talking about here.]...**and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God** the new Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and *I will write upon him* My new name.” So we’re going to have three names.

- The name of the Father
- The name of the Son
- And New Jerusalem

Correct? *That’s what it does say.*

Now, let’s go back to Matthew 28 and see if we can understand this without having to do a trinitarian formula. But I will have to confess, brethren, I have no clue as to how they baptize, say the last ten years in Worldwide or some of the other churches, I don’t have a clue. So it may be that they did use a trinitarian formula, which would be incorrect. This does not bring a trinitarian formula. Let’s read it: “... baptizing them **into** the name of the Father...” [Now why? *Because we’re going to bear His name.* We are kept in His name. We receive the Holy Spirit from God the Father as a begetting. Now notice, it does not say in the next phrase: “and in the name of the Son” does it? *No, it says:*] ...and **of the Son**... (v 19) Why is that? *Because Christ died for our sins, didn’t He?*

Now hold your place here and go to Romans, the sixth chapter. The operation of baptism does involve Jesus Christ in a very profound way. And it involves us in a very profound way. It also involves the Father because He gives the Holy Spirit and we are kept in His name. But here in Romans, the sixth chapter, it tells us what baptism is. And baptism, when we come to understand covenantal law, is a covenantal pledge of your death.

Just as Christ died for your sins, let’s read it here—Romans 6:3—talking about baptism. And this is why it is in the name of the Father and **of** the Son, because of this right here: “Or are you ignorant that we, 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; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined to-

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gether in the likeness of His death” (vs 3-5). Now, the Greek here means: *co-joined into His death*. Actually, you become **covenantally knitted** into the death of Christ, because His death was a **covenant death**. And a covenant death is very profound. So we are telling God, through baptism, that ***we are co-joined into the death of Jesus Christ***. That if we do not fulfill our part, God has already done His—so it’s not a question of what God will or will not do, it’s a question of our faithfulness—we likewise will die! So that’s why baptism is a very profound and deep thing. It is not an external show of an inward faith. You are knit together and die the death of Christ in the covenantal death. That’s why it is in the name of the Father ***and of the Son***.

Now let’s go back to Matthew 28:19 and read it again here: “...**and of the Holy Spirit**...”—because the whole purpose is what? *To receive the Holy Spirit*. If you don’t receive the Holy Spirit, are you kept in the name of the Father? *No way*.

Now, here’s how I have always baptized, which I think is correct. We do it this way. We put both of the Scriptures together. Just hold your place here and go to Acts, the second chapter, again. Here’s how I think the Scriptures want us to do this: Acts 2—and they were baptized in the name of Jesus. Here’s how a baptism should be done: Always counsel the person first if they understand the meaning of baptism. And you have to know it. And I think it’s very important that everyone understand that it is a covenantal death—so we need to emphasize that even more. That’s why it’s not for children. Children do

not have a mature enough mind to pledge their life unto death to give themselves to God, do they? *No*.

So I ask: “What is your name?” They tell me their name.

Then I say: “(whatever their name is) because you have repented of your sins, which are the transgressions of God’s Holy and righteous and perfect law, and because you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord and Master and High Priest in heaven above right now, I baptize you—not into any sect or denomination of this world; nor do I baptize you into the name of any man. I baptize you in the name of the Father because you will bear His name for all eternity, and of the Son because through the crucifixion and the covenantal death that you are taking, He makes it possible for you then to receive the Holy Spirit which then is of the Holy Spirit.”

And I do all of these things because you have been called of God the Father and will be in the Kingdom of God and I do this all in the name and the authority of Jesus Christ, Amen.

So we do baptize in the name of Jesus Christ. But the Father is primary and included. Then of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, so we put it all together.

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 5-28-07

Scripture References:

- 1) Matthew 28:18-20
- 2) Acts 2:38
- 3) Acts 4:10-12
- 4) Acts 19:1-5
- 5) Philippians 2:5-11
- 6) John 14:28
- 7) Matthew 11:25-27
- 8) Ephesians 3:1-6
- 9) John 4:23-24
- 10) John 1:14-18
- 11) John 3:31-36
- 12) John 6:27-29, 35, 44-45, 57
- 13) John 5:19-24, 26-27, 30, 36-43
- 14) John 10:22-28, 31
- 15) John 12:28
- 16) John 14:6-24
- 17) Romans 8:9-14
- 18) John 14:26

- 19) John 15:9, 26
- 20) John 16:23-24, 26-27
- 21) John 17:11-12
- 22) Ephesians 1:11-14
- 23) Ephesians 2:18
- 24) 1 Thessalonians 1:1
- 25) Revelation 3:12
- 26) Matthew 28:19
- 27) Romans 6:3-5

Referenced, not quoted:

- John 5:7
- Ezra 6
- 1 John 3:9

Also referenced: *The Original Bible Restored* by
Ernest L Martin

