

Baptized in the Sea

Israel's Baptism and Ours

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 03-Apr-02; Tape #551A

Do you remember your baptism? Mine was eighteen years ago, come May 12th. It took place in the locker room of a school gym in which the Hammond, Indiana church (It was called Chicago SE at the time.) held services at the time. For baptisms, that particular church area owned a long narrow galvanized steel tub that reminded me of a horse trough—which is probably what it was. It was just long enough for a person to lie down in and get completely submerged. My dad did the baptizing, and a fair number of people crammed that little locker room to make sure that it happened.

You probably remember your experience, even though you may not remember the date. I sometimes wonder why people don't remember the date. They remember their birthday, so why don't they remember their baptism day? For some reason, it may have just gotten away. But everybody's had a different experience for their baptism. Some were done in large bathtubs, some in troughs, some in pools, some in hot tubs, some in rivers or ponds or lakes or oceans. One of the Regnier girls was baptized in the pounding surf out there in San City, California. That must have been interesting. They had to make sure the wave was coming in at just the right time to get her fully under.

Some have been baptized alone, some in small groups. Some have been baptized "in mass," I guess you could say—in early days, when they would have the Feast at Zeigler Springs or some of the Feast sites where there were only one maybe for the whole church. People didn't have a chance to get baptized [at other times, throughout the year] because there weren't so many ministers out there. They would hold large baptisms in the hotel or resort's pool. Everybody would be there, and they would watch—which is kind of like what we do at our Feast (although we don't have the numbers that were probably done at that time).

No matter what the situation, it was probably a fairly memorable experience. Let's say it was mid-December and you were getting baptized in a lake or something, and you remember just how cold the water was. But there's usually something that helps you to remember it. Three of the most memorable baptisms, though, are recorded for us in the pages of the Bible. Probably the most memorable is found in Matthew 3—the baptism of Jesus Christ Himself.

Matthew 3:13-14 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

This didn't seem right, that the Messiah was here, and He wanted to be baptized. John didn't feel like he was the one that ought to do it, which shows you the humility of the man. "I need to be baptized by You."

Matthew 3:15-17 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him [meaning that John allowed Jesus to be baptized.] When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

If you had been there witnessing this baptism, you would have remembered it! Seeing this exchange between John and Jesus, and then having it happen, and seeing the heavens opened up. I get the impression almost like it was somewhat an overcast day. And suddenly the clouds parted, and the light from the sun just shone down on the scene. Then, the Spirit of God coming in the form of a dove visibly upon Him so that people could see it. And then hearing a voice suddenly boom out of the clouds it seems—out of heaven. That would send chills down your spine. But it was a sign to show this was the One on whom God was putting the burden of the work of preaching the gospel and of all things eventually. This was just the first salvo in that great work.

The second would be the great number of baptisms on Pentecost. This is probably the second most memorable set of baptisms, here in Acts 2. They had just heard Peter tell everyone that Jesus, whom they had just crucified, was the Son of God. He was Lord and Christ.

Acts 2:37-41 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

That number is mind boggling! If you divide that up among the twelve apostles, that's still a lot of baptisms to do. And I was thinking "Could we handle 3,000 new members in one day?" This is an amazing thing to think about—to expand our numbers by a factor of 9 or 10. That's a lot a people! And then, a little later on, we find on that there were 5,000 on another day. That's growth! That's more than 30% .

Let's go to I Corinthians 10 and see the third most memorable baptism. Probably, you didn't think of this one; but to me it rates right up there. In this one, not just three thousand people were baptized but probably close to two million.

I Corinthians 10:1-2 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

This was the baptism of all of Israel that came out of Egypt (in the cloud and in the sea) on that one day. And guess which day it was—the last day of Unleavened Bread. The day that we are keeping, celebrating, observing today. When I thought of that, I thought that it might be a good idea to go through [the topic of] BAPTISM because, on this day, a great baptism took place. It was a *baptism into Moses*; but there must be links between the last day of Unleavened Bread and baptism, because it is so clearly pointed out right here that their going through the Red Sea was a type of baptism.

So, I thought that this would be an excellent time—the last day of Unleavened Bread—to review and renew the commitment we made when we were baptized into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (as it says there in Matthew 28:19). We weren't baptized into Moses, obviously—but into Christ. So we will go through baptism a little bit today. That is, the basic elements of baptism (just as a review); and then we will go on to this particular scripture [I Corinthians 10:1-2] towards the end [of the sermon] and find out just what was going on in this particular baptism.

Most of us know that the word *baptize* in English is just a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*. It's the exact same word. It comes directly from the Greek into the English. If you've ever looked this up, or read the booklet ALL ABOUT WATER BAPTISM, it's very clear that this word means to immerse, or plunge into, or put in, or submerge. It comes from the root *bapto*, which means to dip—like you take a ladle and dip it into whatever it was that you were serving. (Or a pitcher that you would plunge into the water to fill it up.) That's what it means—to dip.

According to Thayer's Lexicon, baptism is "an immersion in water, performed as a sign of the removal of sin, and administered to those who, impelled by a desire for salvation, sought admission to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom." That's a pretty basic definition. It doesn't say everything about baptism. But he does let us know that it is an immersion, from his understanding of the Greek word. So I think that it's very clear that all the other ways of baptizing are simply false. There's really no question about the form of baptism that is scripturally required. It's full immersion, because the word itself means immersion. You just can't get around it!

I thought it was pretty funny the way Mr. Armstrong, in the booklet ALL ABOUT WATER BAPTISM, put it. He said it's like saying "*What form of skiing do you want to do—Scuba diving, hockey, or skiing?*" Obviously, only skiing is skiing. So there's only one form of baptism. That's what it means. *Baptize* means *immerse*, and there's no other way. You can't sprinkle-immersed. It just doesn't work! So there's only immersion.

But there are a few little details that are put down by the biblical writers to show that this is, indeed, the way that it should be done. If you'll go back to Matthew 3:16, we'll just quickly go

through three little proofs of this. This one is the baptism of Jesus, and this one should probably clinch it.

Matthew 3:16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water...

It's really funny. Here they are standing in millions of gallons of water. I'm talking about movies, like JESUS OF NAZARETH; and they are showing the baptism of Jesus. There is just so much water there. Yet you see John the Baptist sprinkling just a few drops of water on His head. It's ludicrous to think about. Here's all this water, and they just put a few drops on His head. But it says here that He came up from the water. If you come "from" something, then you had to have been *in* it. So, obviously, He was *fully immersed*.

Let's go on to John 3:23. This was the time when John the Baptist was baptizing many people.

John 3:23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was MUCH WATER there.

Now, if he was just going to sprinkle, he could tell one of his disciples to bring a pitcher of water. But, no, he went to this specific place because there was a great deal of water there. They could fully immerse people under the water! So he chose that particular place.

Let's go on to Acts 8 and see one final one. This is the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip.

Acts 8:36-38 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Or, if we want to just Anglicize that, "*both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he immersed him.*" That makes it very clear. ("He" being Philip. "Him" being the eunuch.) So it was a large enough body of water so that both of them could get down into the water and the eunuch could be immersed. So I think that is very clear.

While we are here in Acts 8, let's go up to verses 5 and 12. These verses will answer the question "*Who* should be baptized?" Basically, trying to prove that baptism of children is NOT "kosher" (for lack of a better term).

Acts 8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.

He's gone to the Samaritans.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

It doesn't say "men, women, and children." It says men and women. This means *adults*. You don't call kids "men and women." There's no record in the Bible, at all, of children being baptized. Once you understand what baptism is all about, it's very obvious that it's a mature adult that should take this step. It's not something that children could understand—and certainly not a baby, who has no idea of what's going on!

That just seems awfully ridiculous to me. You take this baby and baptize (or, christen) him into the church; and the baby is pooping its pants, or something. It has no idea of the solemnity of what they are getting into. Whether they are crying, or whatever—it's plain ridiculous to think that a baby would have any understanding of what is going on.

A young child (let's say up to even about twelve, thirteen, or fourteen years of age) probably really doesn't understand the seriousness of the commitment either. It would be a rare person who would be ready at about sixteen. And most ministers counsel that a person should be at least in their later high school years before they become baptized. There's a certain amount of maturity and understanding, and proof of life, that goes into being baptized. We'll see that in a few minutes.

Acts 2:38-39 Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Now, children don't have a very acute realization of sin. They are still learning the difference between right and wrong, and they really haven't made the leap into a real understanding of what sin is yet. They do not have the capacity, in many cases, to make positive changes in their lives. That is what repentance is. They don't understand the gravity of what Jesus Christ did, and how He is their Savior.

At the end of verse 39, it says that *God calls* us. This [baptism] is a step we take after God calls us. So it's not something we do as a matter of course—as the Jews do with a Bar Mitzvah (which is done at a certain year, and it's just simply a "rite of passage" that they go through when they approach a certain age). But here we see that baptism happens after a particular—a very individual, a very personal—calling.

And so a person who is going to be baptized must feel (I'm using the emotional term specifically here.) a need to deepen and to commit to a relationship with God as well as believe the gospel, and the doctrines, and the truth. There has to be this feeling that one is being *drawn* towards God, as well as having the mental acuity, the maturity, and the perception to be able to

understand the doctrines and what has been done for one by Jesus Christ, and what this opens up for one in the future. That is, what the potential is and all the things that must be done to overcome and to grow.

These are things that, obviously, an immature child could not fathom fully. So it's best that one be a young adult by the time one is baptized. We go through Luke 14 and show all those things about making sure that you understand that you can finish the course. You don't want to build your tower and find out that you don't have enough bricks to finish it, because you'll be the laughing stock of everyone. And, as we'll see in a little while, it's worse than that—than just being a laughing stock.

Let's go back to Luke 3 and look at John's ministry for a little bit, because John's ministry was based in baptism. (We're talking about John the Baptist, obviously.)

Luke 3:1-3 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the regions of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Luke 3:7-8 Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."

As I mentioned, John's whole ministry was based in this baptism—*baptism of repentance*—with repentance from sin being the thing that he stressed in his preaching. But he was also very careful to stress that, though his baptism sought the remission of sins, it only began a change in one's life that resulted in the bearing of fruit. He didn't want people to get the impression that baptism was anything like, let's say, the Catholic confession—where one could go, after one does a sin, and have it expiated by the priests; and then go out and sin again and come right back in and confess it again. And go back out and in, and out and in, and out and in.

Baptism is a one-time deal. What it does is that it makes a point of transition. Or maybe it would be better to say "a break off point" and "a beginning point" between an old life of sin and a new changed life of bearing fruit and walking with God. So, it's not some rite of cleansing that can be done again and again. It's a one-time rite that was supposed to last an entire lifetime. It only needs to be done once. It marks *the end of the old life* and *the start of a new one*—of change, and growth, and betterment. So he [John the Baptist] told his followers here that they must bear fruits worthy of repentance. Let's see what he means here.

Luke 3:9-14 "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?" He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you." Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

We can derive two points from this section. The first one is right there in verse 9. He very clearly, with no loopholes, says that *this decision is for keeps*. The *time of judgment* begins with one's baptism. "The ax is laid to the root of the trees." So, every tree (that is, every person) which does NOT bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. That's what I meant a little bit earlier, when I said that it's worse than just being laughed at—for not finishing your course. It's a very serious judgment that is occurring on one's entire life. And it's life or death—eternal life or eternal death—that is being judged here and begun with baptism. So either one bears fruit and becomes a child of God, or one does NOT and is cut down and thrown into the fire. So this is something that we do that has ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.

The second thing that we can see from this section is *what the changes are* that he says that we are to do. If you notice what the changes are that he says one is to do, they are basically the same as what Jesus Christ said in Matthew 22: 37-40. It's the two great commandments: '*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*' ... *And the second is like unto it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

That's, basically, what he [John the Baptist] says. You give to those who don't have. You render only what is necessary. Don't intimidate or accuse falsely. And the one that is not quite blatantly mentioned, but is there in the back, is obviously to follow the laws of God. So those are the two things. When you obey God's laws, you are showing *love to Him*—which is the first and great commandment. Then, when you do good to others, you are showing *love to your neighbor*.

So his message was very much the same as what Jesus preached. We just don't have it as fully as we do Jesus'. He didn't preach the Kingdom of God. He preached a baptism of repentance. But the component parts of the two great commandments were there. And that is what he was trying to get his disciples to follow.

Luke 3:16 John [the Baptist] answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

This was the one major difference between Christian baptism and John's baptism. In the book of Acts, there's a situation that goes on, where this comes up. The factor is that John's baptism

did NOT include the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was just a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. It did NOT have the Holy Spirit connected to it.

Obviously, John the Baptist knew about the Holy Spirit—because he said, *"One's going to be coming, who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."* He understood it, from the Old Testament. There are several scriptures there that show that God will send His Holy Spirit to His people. So John the Baptist must have known—because that's the only way you can explain this scripture—that it was the Son of man, the Messiah, who was going to be responsible for giving this Holy Spirit to the people.

And so because Christ's death, burial, resurrection and ascension had not occurred—the Holy Spirit was not [yet] available to be given after baptism. So John could not give it. It was not in his power. It had not even happened yet. It wasn't even given to Jesus' disciples during His life. They had to wait, just like everybody else, for Pentecost in 31 A.D. when the Holy Spirit was finally given and opened up to the people.

So, that is the one big difference between Jesus' baptism, which we preach now in the church (the Christian baptism), and John's. Once Christ ascended to the Father, then the Holy Spirit could come upon a believer. In Acts 8, we'll look at the example where the Samaritans had been baptized. They were just baptized in the water—because Philip had done it. He was not a minister. He could not lay hands on them. So he came back to Jerusalem and told the apostles.

Acts 8:14-17 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them [meaning, to the Samaritans], who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet It had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they [Peter and John] laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

So we see how it works here. One is baptized. Then hands are laid upon the person. And then the Holy Spirit can come upon a believer. This shows, very clearly, the way the process works. So let's go to the primary New Testament doctrinal passage on baptism in Romans 6. I'm not going to go into this in any great depth. I just want to point out several points in here. I think it's very clear. We don't need to really belabor the point.

Romans 6:1-14 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him,

that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died 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 had dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

I just want to bring out several points. I don't have them numbered; but I just want to go through these fairly quickly, I hope. Just the main points that we just went through here. The first one is that *we are baptized into Christ Jesus*. That is, that we are baptized into Him—His Body, which is the church. And we become part of Him. We see in I Corinthians 12 how close the analogy is. That we become members of His Body, and He is the head of the church. So we are baptized into Christ Jesus. I should also say that, with the Holy Spirit, He and His Father then come and live in us. It's a joining together of us and Christ. We participate, fellowship. We have communion with the Father and the Son by baptism.

The second point is that *baptism is a death*. Our old man dies, it says. When we go down into the water, our former life—with its sins—is over. It's dead. Paul here, in verse 6, says that it's a crucifixion. That's the kind of death it is. We are crucified with Him. That just shows the participation, the fellowship, that we have with Christ. In our baptism, we are crucified with Him. We partake of that crucifixion. Just as one dies and one's sins are then paid for, baptism is a type of that. But Christ pays for those sins, and we are able to be raised in newness of life.

The third point that I picked out of here is that, not only is baptism a death, but *the waters of baptism are a grave*. When you go under, you are totally swallowed up by the waters—just as when one is buried, you are totally swallowed up by the earth. So, when one is baptized, not only is the death symbolized but also the burial. One is totally in the water.

The fourth point, then, is that *coming up from the water is a type of resurrection*. Now we have death, burial, and resurrection. They are all in the one act of being baptized. We are resurrected, then, to live again; but this time better than we did before we were baptized. That's why I said it's more of a clear-cut demarcation of an old time (in which we lived according to this world) and the new life that we have before us (in which we live according to the Spirit).

The fifth thing that I pulled out is that *baptism is a sign of redemption*. Several of these overlap somewhat; but it says that Christ paid for us and freed us from the sin itself, that we lived before. So baptism is a sign of redemption because Jesus was crucified to pay the penalties for our sins and to free us from sin's grip on us. Just as Israel came out of Egypt finally at its

baptism, so do we then come out of the world (or, we should) through our baptism. That should be the final time that we are ever in the world—when we start to go down [into the waters of baptism]. Then, when we are brought up, we have been pulled out of the world.

The sixth one is that *baptism foreshadows to us the hope of our ultimate resurrection—to eternal life, just like Christ*. Just as it shows a resurrection to a new life (a new physical life), it also foreshadows that we will (at the end of our physical life, and death) be raised to eternal life. That's what it says there in verse 5. If we've been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection. And He was not resurrected to physical life. He was resurrected to spirit, eternal life. So our coming up out of the waters of baptism shows us both a physical resurrection and a spiritual resurrection.

Number seven: *Baptism is our commitment to live sinlessly and righteously* in service to God and our fellow man. Towards the end of that section, he talks about not letting sin reign in our mortal bodies. And then yielding ourselves as members, as instruments, of righteousness—in service to God and to fellow man. So baptism is one way that we show (not only ourselves, but everyone else) that we've committed to an entirely new way of life—a way of *righteousness* and a way of *service*. That is, a commitment to keeping those two great commandments: (1) Love to God. (2) Love to neighbor. Or, love towards fellow man.

The final one, the eighth one, is that *baptism is a sign that we are under grace*. That's what it says in verse 14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." It shows, as an outward sign, that we have been pardoned by God and have received (or, will receive) the gifts we need to grow and attain to the Kingdom of God. That is, all those things that might come under the very general heading of grace. Not just our unmerited pardon, but all the gracious *gifts of God* that He gives that allows us—and enables us—to attain to the resurrection from the dead and the Kingdom of God.

Those were the eight things that I pulled out. I'm sure there are many others that we could get out of there. But these are the eight that I thought were the most important. And it's amazing to me that there's so much in it. Baptism is not a very elaborate ceremony. It's just a matter of getting down into the water; confessing (if you want to put it that way) that one has repented and that one accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Savior; and then one is put down into the water and brought back up. Even though it is just a very simple ritual, it has meaning that is very deep; and it means so much. And that's why it is a required sacrament, if you want to use that term. Usually we think of that in terms of the Catholic Church. But it is a *required ordinance* that we go through in order to come into the church, because there is so much there.

So, from this list, we can understand why Paul considers it one of the fundamental doctrines of the church. It is so very necessary, because it lays the groundwork for everything that we do; and it teaches us so much. Let's go now to Hebrews 6 and just see that listing of the fundamental doctrines. I want you to see here that what Paul does is that he basically puts the steps in order. That is, what has to happen and what happens. And baptism is kind of the swing doctrine, if you will. It's the one that comes in the middle. But he kind of messes things up here by putting "going on to perfection" first. It really comes afterwards in the way things go.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection.

What he meant was: "*We've already gotten the basics. Now let's put them to use, put them to practice.*" Then he goes and he lists those six fundamental doctrines that they were laying aside for now—because they already understood them. Not that they were doing away with them; but they just weren't going to talk about them any more, because that was stuff they already knew.

Hebrews 6:1-2 Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

That, basically, gives you the order of the fundamental things that occur right at the beginning of one's conversion. The first thing is that we hear the truth. He doesn't mention that one here, but there's the calling of God; and we begin to study the truth. And upon learning the truth, we come to understand that there's a need for repentance—that is, we need to change. So, we try to change from the dead lifestyle that we've been living. That's basically all that means. It means that the things that we had been doing before our calling were not getting us anywhere. They were leading just to death. And so, once we learn the truth, we learn that we need to change from those dead-end ways of doing things and go a way that's going to lead to life.

Second, we come to have a faith towards God. We begin to see that those changes of life are really producing good fruit. That builds our faith in God that we've begun to have by learning the truth. But we begin to focus our faith squarely on God, at this point. That, of course, leads one to be baptized. Right after being baptized, one has hands laid on him; and one receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, which just opens up the understanding—as well as opening up our motivation to do things. Also, it bequeaths us (if you want to use that term) or gives us the gifts that we need to make the changes more fully and for a longer period of time. That is, more enduringly.

Then, the resurrection of the death—remember that we come up in newness of life. Because we've repented, we've been baptized, we have faith in God, and we have had hands laid upon us—now we have the hope of the resurrection, don't we? We've been "saved" initially—justified—and our whole life and potential is now open to us. We now have the mind of God, by the Holy Spirit; and we can understand the road that is going out in front of us. As we follow that road, it is going to lead and finally it will go through the resurrection of the dead (and not some other route).

And then the sixth one here is that, once all this happens, we come under eternal judgment. What we do, from that point on, is either going to make or break eternal life for us. From that point on, the judgment that God gives is *final!* Meaning, once one's life ends. After that point, of course, the rest of our life is dedicated to going on to perfection—to becoming complete, and whole, and God-like.

I just wanted you to see how baptism is kind of the pivotal doctrine in this whole thing. There are a few things that we can learn before we are baptized. But, when we are baptized, things really open up to us. That is why it is such a wonderful thing when it happens.

We have reached the end of the review of baptism. Now we are going to go back to Exodus 14 and see the event that Paul was speaking about in I Corinthians 10—as a type of baptism in the Old Testament. [This is] on this last day of Unleavened Bread, about 3500 years ago.

Exodus 14:5-8 Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people [of Israel] had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness.

They didn't have any idea of what was happening behind them, in the capitol city.

Exodus 14:9-12 So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon. And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? [I can almost hear Edward G. Robinson saying this in The Ten Commandments movie, every time I read this.] Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

Now, Moses' reaction is much different.

Exodus 14:13-14 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

I always think this is kind of funny too—because, even though it was a very faithful thing that Moses said (and it stopped the complaining, and the worry, and the fear, in a human way), it

wasn't what God wanted him to do. Listen to what God says, in verse 15.

Exodus 14:15 And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. [Don't stand there!]"

Moses had just said, "Stand still." But God says, "Don't stand still. Move!"

Exodus 14:16-19 "But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.

Now, this is interesting. "The pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them." It could be two ways. (1) The pillar could have picked up and moved, and went from front to back. (2) The other way would be that the pillar of cloud—or the pillar of fire—stretched over them. Like a big rainbow, it was still anchored in the front; but it went all the way over them and covered them. I don't know which of these is true. The reading here seems to mean that the cloud picked up and moved behind them. But it could also mean that it just stretched itself and encompassed them totally. So, in a way, it hid them all around—not just in the back. (That's kind of interesting. So just stick it in the back of your mind for when we go through I Corinthians 10.)

We see in verse 20 that at least part of the cloud came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel.

Exodus 14:20-22 Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come by the other all that night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

This is interesting too if you think of this as it being *stretched over*. The waters of the Red Sea were on their left hand and their right hand. So they were walking between water piled up, who knows how many feet high? But IF this cloud went from before them all the way behind them, THEN they were also covered front, top, and rear with the cloud. So, in a way, it would be a

type of total immersion in water—with liquid water on the sides, but gaseous water over the top, in front, and behind them. That's why I mentioned that other way in which the pillar of cloud could have gone. That seems almost to be Paul's understanding (when we get to I Corinthians 10).

Exodus 14:23-24 And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.

That would mean that God was in the midst of Israel, and He looked out through the cloud and the pillar of fire. It's just kind of interesting to think of that, because remember that it says elsewhere that God walks through the midst of the camp. So He was with them in the camp; and He looked out, then, at the Egyptians behind the Israelites.

Exodus 14:25 He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty...

I'd say! You try to drive a chariot without wheels. It becomes a sled, about that time.

Exodus 14:25-31 And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.

Maybe the most significant thing that is in that entire chapter (at least to this sermon) is in the very last sentence, especially the last part. "The people feared the LORD, and believe the LORD and His servant Moses." This is interesting. Once Israel experienced their deliverance from the Egyptians, they saw their enemy totally destroyed. They saw them wash up on the seashore there. They saw this tremendous miracle that God had worked for them. Then, they were ready

to fear and believe. [That is] to give the proper respect and reverence to God, and to believe God and Moses. It wasn't just God. It was Moses too. God was there, but Moses was the one they were following. They saw Moses.

The people, at this point, committed themselves to Moses' leadership. Of course, it didn't stay that way all through the wilderness. They were willing to kill him a few times. In fact, just a couple pages further and they did that. I think it's at the end of chapter 15. Moses says, "*God, what am I supposed to do? These people are about ready to kill me!*" That was because he wasn't providing them with water, which is interesting in the overall sense of this. Even though they were baptized, they walked into a desert—meaning that the waters of the Holy Spirit, as it's used in the New Testament, were not given to them except by *a miracle from God*.

And it's interesting that one of the first places that they came to, the water was bitter; and God had to purify it. Those are just some interesting, typical types there—of God's providence for one thing. The fact that there was no life for them after baptism unless God supplied their needs. We'll see this later on, in I Corinthians 10. What we see is that, once they came through the Red Sea, the people were rejoicing. We didn't go into chapter 15, but they sang that song there about God overthrowing the chariots of Egypt and Pharaoh. And they were ready then to commit themselves to this trek, to Moses, and to making it to the Promised Land. And I think that's what Paul picks up here in I Corinthians 10.

I Corinthians 10:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

We are going to put the Israelites' baptism in a New Testament context here. Paul is using their example to teach the Corinthians something. So we can't just pull it totally out of its context here. The problem in Corinth was that the people were so "wise in their own estimation" that they thought they could participate in the things that were going on in worldly Corinth and still be under God's grace. They would still be covered by the cloud, you might say. That they could participate in all the fun, as they saw it, that was going on there in Corinth; and still come back to church and be right before God. Paul then uses this example from the Israelites experience as an argument ~~at~~ *against* this way of thinking.

Now notice the repetition of all. It's mentioned five times in these first four verses. "*All* our fathers were under the cloud, *all* passed through the sea, *all* were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, *all* ate the same spiritual food, and *all* drank the same spiritual drink." Every Israelite was covered by this baptism into Moses. There was not one Israelite that was left out. All of them, by this one act, were seen to have committed to Moses particularly and to God.

Remember this is *a baptism into Moses*, in verse 2. It's NOT "into God." It's a baptism "into Moses"—Moses' leadership, the things that Moses told them to do, the places Moses told them to go. They were NOT necessarily baptized into God, or into Christ. That hadn't been opened

yet. That was the New Testament dispensation, you might say. That was the new covenant, and this was the old covenant. So they were baptized into Moses.

This same *all* tells us who received God's guidance, protection, deliverance, and miraculous providence. Everybody! Nobody was left out. And each of these acts of God—all the miracles, everything that happened—came through Christ. He was symbolized by the Rock out of which the water flowed. He's the Source, therefore, of all the blessings that Israel received.

And the Corinthians are supposed to understand that this same Rock is the One who supplies all *our* needs as well. He is still the same Source, and He's not physical. As it says here, He's spiritual. That word may be, more literally, *supernatural*. But I think what Paul is trying to do here is to try to elevate their direction. They were looking at a lot of physical activities, and fun, and whatever it is that they were doing out there in the world of Corinth. Paul was telling them, "*Look, our life is spiritual. We receive spiritual food and spiritual drink. It's spiritual baptism. Everything is towards the spirit and not towards the flesh.*" What we found in the history of Israel is that their entire way of looking at everything is fleshly. But we are far different—under this new covenant.

We have to understand how were they baptized in the cloud and in the sea? *The sea* is the easy one. I've already partly gone through this, partly, going through Exodus 14. Going down into the sea (even though they were never touched by the water) and coming out alive on the other side, is very similar to what happens in our baptism. That's very clear. It accomplished the same thing. They went down into the waters and came out. So that was a kind of baptism.

The cloud, though, is a little more interesting. I didn't give you these verses earlier; but Numbers 10:34 and 14:14 say that the cloud was above them and stood above them as they went out, or broke their camp. So the rabbis, when they wrote down their commentaries on these things, said that the cloud not only led them, but it covered them like a canopy. So, not only did they get guidance from the pillar of cloud (or the pillar of fire); but it also protected them from the rays of the sun and the heat of the desert. So you could get the idea that, yes, there was a pillar of cloud; but then it arched back and went over the entire camp and kept them from getting burned, too awfully hot.

There are even some commentators that said that the cloud actually enveloped the whole camp and raised the humidity, so that the people were comfortable. It wasn't too dry. It wasn't too wet. It wasn't too hot. It wasn't too cold. That God provided them the perfect covering from the heat of the sun out in the desert. I don't know how true that is, but it's an interesting thing to think upon, in terms of this baptism especially.

So, being under the cloud—and maybe even partially engulfed or covered by it—was like being immersed in it. It was just in a gaseous form, rather than in a liquid form [of water] like we are (in a pond, or a pool, or whatever it happens to be). Thus, by following Moses through the sea—and later across the wilderness—all Israel committed themselves to follow Moses and God, as I said before. And this foreshadows their agreement in Exodus 19:8 and 24:3, where they said, "*All the words which the LORD has said we will do.*" This was just a physical way of meaning the same thing. They decided, "*Moses is our leader. We'll follow him.*" At least they thought that way until Mt. Sinai. Then they wanted to have Aaron make a golden calf, but that's another

thing altogether.

So, in a way, by this baptism they committed themselves to the old covenant. And once they agreed, they were bound to fulfill their part in the covenant—which was to obey God's law and to follow His lead. But, in I Corinthians 10: 5, we'll see that most of them failed.

I Corinthians 10:5-10 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain [murmur], as some of them also complained [murmured], and were destroyed by the destroyer.

We know that when Israel went through the wilderness, and finally made it to the Promised Land, all of those original people who came out of Egypt were dead—who had been over twenty—except for those of the families of Joshua and Caleb. So it was only a very few, a handful, that made it. Even Miriam, and Aaron, and Moses himself were gone by that point. So most of them God did NOT feel kindly towards, because of their rebellion. Even though they were baptized, even though they received the spiritual food and drink, even though they received the various deliverances of God—some didn't make it to the Promised Land. Most didn't make it to the Promised Land! And it was because of these particular sins that they got themselves caught in. Caught in? They went in with gusto, in many cases.

Wouldn't you know that (This is the thought of most commentators.) these five things that Paul mentions are the five things that the Corinthians in the church were getting themselves into. These five areas were (1) lust, (2) idolatry, (3) sexual immorality, (4) tempting Christ, and (5) complaining. And he said, "*Do you want to follow Israel's example? If you do, go ahead and do exactly what they did; and you will get exactly the same fate. You will die before you reach the Promised Land. You will give up your salvation.*"

As Paul said in Romans 6, we are no longer under sin. We are under grace. But IF we continue in sin, we then come under the law again. We come under *sin*. And the law—that is, the penalty—will be enacted! So he's warning the Corinthians very sternly here. "*Don't do what they did!*" Though they were baptized, and though they received all these gifts from God—they failed. And we can fail, just like them.

I Corinthians 10:11-12 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

So here are *the lessons* that we are supposed to get from this. The first one is that these examples are put in the Bible for us to learn from. In this case, we are to avoid the behavior of the Israelites and thus avoid their fate. We too can *die* without reaching the Kingdom of God; and I'm talking *spiritually* and not physically. That should make us think twice before indulging ourselves in the practices of the world that we have committed to come out of.

The second one is in verse 12. This touches on the so-called "wisdom" that the Corinthians exhibited so frequently. If anyone of us thinks that he "has it made"—that he's wise enough, and spiritual enough, for God to just snatch him right into the Kingdom—he had better reevaluate things. He's cruising for a fall. "*Cruising for a bruising*," as we used to say. God is NOT going to let that attitude stand for very long—not without some sort of trial, some sort of punishment. God doesn't like that complacency. He's going to give us something. And He tells us in verse 13 that He is *faithful* in doing such things.

I Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

He'll give you a trial commensurate with your strength (something that you could overcome); but it's going to be something that is hard enough, and difficult enough, to snap us out of our complacency—out of our feeling of "having it made." That's what a lot of the Israelites ended up doing. They began to feel like (because they were with Israel, they were Israelites) they didn't have to do anything.

Jeremiah 7 is a good example of that—where they felt that, because they had the temple in Jerusalem, God wouldn't do anything. What did He do? He sent the Babylonians in to destroy that temple, and take away the people. So God doesn't leave us in these feelings of *superiority*, or *complacency*—or *complacent superiority*—for very long. What we saw there in Micah [6:8], in the last sermon, is that He wants us to walk humbly with Him.

Colossians 2:8-13 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Colossians 2:18-19 Let no one cheat [defraud] you of your reward,

taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Now, the situation was a little bit different in Colossae. They were dealing not with the extravagant licentiousness of Corinth; but, on the other hand, they were dealing with asceticism basically in Colossae. (Touch not, taste not, handle not, etc.) But the principle is the same. Now that we have been baptized, now that our sins have been forgiven, now that we've been raised to a new life—Paul says, "*Don't let anything, or anyone, cheat you of the wonderful reward and potential that you will have as eternal spirit beings in God's Kingdom.*"

You made that commitment. You are in it—for life! Eternal judgment has begun. Don't let anybody knock you off the road. If I may link this with the last sermon, don't let anyone make you stumble in your walk—or make you go down a different road that does not lead to the Kingdom of God. Baptism is *our commitment* to follow that path to its completion.

With a link here to the Days of Unleavened Bread—now that sin has been put away, don't let it back in! As Paul says there in verse 19, hold fast to the Head so that you can grow up into Christ as God's children.