

Hebrews 6 Series—Doctrine # 3: Baptisms

This evening we **are going further in our study on the foundational doctrines of the Church, as outlined in Hebrews 6.** The seventh doctrine, going on to perfection, is built on top of this foundation. We **will go to the third of the six foundational pillars, which is the doctrine of baptisms.**

The first thing you notice is that it's "baptisms"—plural. Sometimes we don't think of the fact that there is more than one baptism mentioned in the Scriptures. In fact, there are three baptisms mentioned in the Scriptures and we're going to look at each one of these three.

We will start out in Matthew 3 to get an overview of what is involved.

Matthew 3:1-6, "In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'" And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins."

Let's step back and look at where this practice of baptism came from. Where did John get the idea of baptizing? There are a couple of things to understand. To begin with, the word "baptize" or "baptism" comes from a Greek word. It's not a really hard Greek word to remember; the Greek word is "*baptizo*." Our English word "baptize" is just an alternate spelling. Our English word is directly derived from this Greek term "*baptizo*"—spelled "b-a-p-t-i-z-o." It's almost exactly like we spell "baptize"—just the ending letter is different. "Baptize" literally means "to immerse," "to fully wet," "to dip" or "to wash."

The first thing you find as you look at the word and what it means is that the practice of sprinkling or pouring that is common in many churches doesn't fit the Biblical definition of baptism because baptism, by the very definition of the word in the Greek language, means to immerse, to fully wet, to dip or to wash.

One of the things that we find is that John baptized in the Jordan River. If all John had to

do was sprinkle a little water, he didn't have to go all the way to the Jordan River to do that. I'll just call your attention to people going down into the Jordan.

Verse 16, "Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water;" It doesn't sound like He was being sprinkled or dry-cleaned. *The very expression means to plunge into or to immerse.*

The second thing is: Where did John get the idea for a ceremony such as this? There's an interesting background to it. In the Old Testament, particularly in Leviticus and other places, you read about various washings that are described. Why did someone have to perform these various washings that were given in the Old Testament? It was because they had become unclean. Generally, someone who had come in contact with something that was unclean would go outside the camp and wash themselves, wash their garments, stay outside the camp for a certain length of time and then come back in. *Washing was very directly connected with the symbolism of getting rid of uncleanness.*

When a Gentile converted to Judaism there were three things a Gentile male had to do to become a convert to Judaism—a full proselyte.

(1) He had to undergo circumcision. Now, all Jewish boys underwent circumcision when they were eight days old. But if a Gentile, however old he was, wanted to become a Jew, he had to undergo circumcision at that point because circumcision was the outward sign of the covenant God had made with Abraham. The Gentile males had to be circumcised.

(2) The second thing would also apply to Gentile women. They had to undergo what the Jews termed, "*mikvah*"—spelled "m-i-k-v-a-h." Orthodox Judaism still does that. The mikvah is a ritual bath, washing, immersion or a "*baptizo*" in the Greek. Jews did not undergo that. The Jews didn't put little Jewish babies in that ritual washing. But a Gentile coming in underwent that rite of ritual washing.

(3) They had to offer a sacrifice in the temple. Since there's no temple today, they don't offer sacrifices. In Orthodox Judaism, they simply make a promise or take the pledge to do so if a temple is restored in their lifetime.

This ritual bath is not practiced among the Jews, but there is a reason why they insist that a Gentile undergo this mikvah—this ritual bath or washing—when they embrace Judaism. The Jews did undergo this washing, but it was only for specific reasons. If they came in contact with something unclean or if they became

ceremonially defiled in some way at various times through their life, they would undergo this mikvah.

The Gentiles had to undergo this washing when they came to embrace Judaism. The concept was that they (the Jews) were the children of Abraham and the Kingdom was theirs by right of birth. They had a very physical concept of the Kingdom. They viewed the Gentiles as unclean and themselves as clean.

What John the Baptist said was unique. He said, 'You're unclean, too.' Were the Gentiles unclean? Yes, they were. That's right! But guess what? So were the Jews! Now, that hadn't dawned on them. John preached the baptism of repentance. He said, 'You have all sinned and your sins make you unclean.'

The reason why you had to undergo the ritual bath (the mikvah) was to come into the inner court of the temple—to approach the altar. No unclean thing could come into the presence of God. If you were ceremonially defiled in some way, you were excluded from the temple and from the presence of God until you had been cleansed.

God gave those rituals as a schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24, KJV) to teach a lesson. And, of course, the lesson is: What separates us from God? Our iniquities (sins) separate us from God (Isaiah 59:2). In order to have access to the presence of God, our sins must be washed away. John came preaching.

Matthew 3:2, he said, "...the kingdom...is at hand!" What did he mean? Did he mean that God was going to set up His literal government on earth in just a few days or a few weeks? Of course not! Almost 2000 years have passed and the literal Kingdom has not been established yet.

Daniel 2:44, we read of the time when, "...the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;" The image, symbolizing the great Babylonian worldly governments, is going to be smashed on its toes by a Stone cut out without hands (v. 34) and the God of heaven is going to set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

Luke 16:16 tells us, "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached," Up until the time of John, the law and the prophets (the Old Testament) was all there was. John the Baptist came as the messenger preparing the way before Jesus Christ who came as the messenger of the New Covenant. You couldn't know anything about the New Covenant until the messenger of

the New Covenant came to tell about it. There were prophecies about it in the Old Testament, but the New Covenant was not really being made.

Mark 1:14, "...Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel [good news] of the kingdom of God..." He came proclaiming that good news. He came announcing that good news of the coming Kingdom of God, the way we can respond to God and ultimately share in that Kingdom.

John the Baptist came preparing the way. He came proclaiming the necessity to repent and turn from sin. He said all have sinned and are in need of a Savior. He came proclaiming the necessity to repent and the need of all to undergo a washing away of sin.

Matthew 3:6-7, "and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, !..." They came to see what was going on. They came, undoubtedly, to observe. They didn't come acknowledging their need of a Savior. They came to pass judgment on what he was doing.

Verse 7, continuing, "...he said to them, 'Brood of vipers!'" 'You offsprings of the devil.' That's what that means because Satan is called that old dragon, the old serpent. He called them the children of serpents, the children of the devil.

Verse 7, continuing, "...Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Verse 8, "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance..." 'You'd better go and show by the evidence of your life that you are turning around.'

Verse 9, "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'" That was their claim. They claimed, 'We don't need your baptism; we don't need what you have.' He knew what they were thinking. He said, 'By the way, don't kid yourselves that being the children of Abraham is a guarantee of a place in the Kingdom of God.'

The promises that God made to Abraham were of a dual nature. There were physical promises and there were spiritual promises. In the past we have sometimes used the statement, "race and grace" because it's sort of catchy. There are physical promises—the physical birthright that God promised to Abraham and confirmed through Isaac and Jacob, on down through Jacob's son, Joseph, and then on down through Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. That is the physical aspects of the promises to Abraham.

I think we're all aware of that. Read the booklet, "What's Ahead for America and Britain?"

That is one aspect of the promises to Abraham, but there was another aspect to the promises to Abraham. That, of course, was the promise of grace or the spiritual aspect of the promises that were to culminate in the Messiah and in the fact that all humanity ultimately could become accounted as the spiritual seed of Abraham for the purpose of eternal inheritance.

There are two aspects. There are physical promises that relate to the here-and-now that have prophetic implications for the world as it exists and the events that are going to culminate in the Great Tribulation. There's also a spiritual aspect of the promises that culminates in the Messiah and in the fact that all humanity ultimately can share in the promises to Abraham from a spiritual standpoint regardless of ethnic origin.

Matthew 3:9-11, "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'" [Don't kid yourselves.] For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 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. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

What does that mean? ***There are three baptisms in Scripture.*** Here, we come to the second and third baptism. The first baptism was the ***baptism of water unto repentance.*** Two other baptisms are mentioned. John addresses all three. He mentions that he is offering a baptism of water unto repentance. But he said there's One coming that's going to offer an additional two baptisms—a baptism with the Holy Spirit and a baptism with fire. What are those? Do you want all three? You'd better stick with two out of three. I don't think most of us would want the third one.

When I read that, it always makes me think of A. A. Allen. He was an old radio preacher. Do any of you remember him? He came on the radio back in the 60s. When I'd listen to Mr. Herbert Armstrong, sometimes he would come on. He'd talk about wanting that baptism of fire. He just *thought* he wanted the baptism of fire. Christ is coming and He offers baptism with the Holy Spirit and baptism with fire.

Let's come on down and notice what it says about the ***baptism of fire.***

Verse 12, "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Notice the analogy that is being drawn. It talks about the fact that Christ will separate the wheat from the chaff. Some of you are very familiar with harvesting—like harvesting rice. Today, it's done in a mechanized way where there's a blower that separates the chaff from the grain.

They, of course, had to do it in a little more difficult way, but the principle was the same. They would beat the grain, which caused the grain to separate from the chaff, but it was all mixed up together. So, there was somebody there with a giant fan. These fans were blowing and making air on the threshing floor, which was generally up on a high place where there was a breeze. This grain and chaff would be tossed up and as the air was being generated, the chaff was light and would blow off. The grain was heavier and would settle back down. They would go through this process of winnowing—to separate the wheat from the chaff until eventually the chaff was all blown off. The wheat came back down, but the chaff would blow a little ways and settle back down. They were able to divide it to where the wheat was gathered up and kept. That was what they were keeping. The chaff was burned up; the chaff was burned up with unquenchable fire.

What is "unquenchable fire"? It's fire that's not put out. It doesn't say it's a fire that burns forever. It says it's unquenchable. It is fire that is not going to be quenched, in a physical sense. What happened to the fire that they burned the chaff with? How long did it burn? It wasn't quenched. Nobody called the fire department and tried to put it out. They wanted it to burn and burn and burn until it burned up all the chaff. When it burned up all the chaff, it went out because all the fuel was gone.

Hold your place here and let's turn back to Malachi. Let's pick it up in Malachi 3.

Malachi 3:18, "Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked [separating the wheat from the chaff], between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him."

Let's continue.

Malachi 4:1-3, "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the Lord of hosts, "that will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in

His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,' says the Lord of hosts."

This ties in with Matthew 3:12. Christ is going to separate the wheat from the chaff.

There are two baptisms that Christ will offer and all ultimately will experience either one or the other. We will all be baptized with the Holy Spirit or we will be baptized with fire. It all depends as to whether we are wheat or chaff. *The baptism of fire is to be immersed in fire.* What happens if you're immersed in fire? You burn up.

Matthew 3:13-15, "Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' 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."

John, of course, felt very awkward about this. He said, 'Well, wait a minute! I shouldn't be baptizing You. You ought to be baptizing me. If anybody is going to be baptized, it ought to be me. I feel uneasy about baptizing You. I don't feel like I ought to.' And Jesus said, 'No, I want you to go ahead and do it that I might fulfill all righteousness.' Christ was not baptized because He was unclean or because He was a sinner. *Christ was baptized to set an example for us.*

1 Peter 2:21, we're told, "...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps..." Jesus Christ set an example; we can follow what He did. When John understood that, he was certainly willing to go ahead and baptize Him. But I think you can certainly put yourself in John's place and realize why he felt ill at ease. He felt like that was sort of backwards. But when he understood that it was because Jesus was setting an example for everyone else, he went ahead and did it.

Matthew 3:16-17, we're told, "Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, 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.'"

Does this mean that the Holy Spirit of God is some sort of person? If it is, it looks like a bird! That isn't what this means at all. God performed an outward and visible miracle to demonstrate

something that had taken place. It was an outward symbol to demonstrate to those who were there something that could be theirs. The Holy Spirit is the power that flows out from God. It is the power by which God does and accomplishes the work that He does.

We read throughout the Scriptures of the way that God sends forth His Spirit or pours out His Spirit. We're going to go into a little more of that this evening because He talks about being baptized, but not only *baptized with the Spirit*.

The analogies that God uses for the Holy Spirit help us to understand what the Holy Spirit is. God compares the Holy Spirit to wind, air and breath. That's all sort of one thing. It's what we breathe. We breathe air and air can blow as wind. We can breathe it in. It's there surrounding us.

The Greek word for "spirit" is the same word that we would use to refer to "breath" or to "air." It is the word "*pneuma*"—spelled "p-n-e-u-m-a." It is the word from which we get our word "pneumonia" or like in a pneumatic pump. It's something that involves air. In the case of pneumonia, it has to do with the inability of our lungs to process air because there is fluid in them. It has to do with air and that's what the word means.

It was an analogy that was understood in the Greek language. It's interesting. The same term used for spirit in the Hebrew language (in the Old Testament) is a word that we also translate as breath, air or wind. It's "*ruach*" in Hebrew. The Greek term is exactly the same. The Spirit is compared to air.

How can we all be baptized with one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)? The same way we can all breathe one air. We're all in this room. We're all breathing the air. We're all breathing in the breath of life. We're all breathing the same air. In the same way, we can all be baptized into one Spirit.

The Bible uses analogies to help us understand God's Spirit. It uses the analogy of *air* or *wind*. Another analogy the Bible uses is *water*. Jesus talked about rivers of living water.

John 4:7, you remember the woman at the well? He asked her for a drink.

John 4:10, "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'"

Verse 11, she said, 'Well, where are You going to get that from?'

And, of course, if you go on through, He was talking about the Spirit. God's Spirit is compared

to air. It's compared to water and it's also compared to *oil*. We anoint with oil. That anointing oil is used as a symbol of God's Holy Spirit—olive oil in particular. We'll get into that next Bible study when we address the doctrine of the laying on of hands.

All of those have a quality of flowing—oil, water and even air flows. We can all get in the same water. We can all get in the same river. We all breathe the same air. These are used as analogies of God's Spirit. God's Spirit flows forth from God. It is something we can all partake of and it connects us all back to God.

There are many aspects. I don't want to get into all of the details of the Holy Spirit. That could be a different Bible study on a different subject. But it does tie in with this because we are addressing what we're told in terms of baptism—being baptized with the Spirit of God.

You can read parallel accounts in Mark, Luke and John.

Notice what John said.

John 1:23, "He [John the Baptist] said: 'I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said."

Verses 25-29, "And they asked him, saying, 'Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?' John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.' These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

Verses 29-34, John bore witness of the fact that Jesus was going to come to take away the sin of the world, that He would baptize with the Holy Spirit and that He was the Son of God.

Let's notice.

Matthew 28:18-20, "Then Jesus came and spoke to them [the disciples], saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in 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 to the end of the age.'" "Age" (Greek, "*aion*") means "the end of the age," not the end of the physical earth.

I want to call your attention to something. Protestants and Catholics who believe in a trinity commonly quote, "baptizing them in the name of

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It is the scripture they think sort of substantiates the trinity; but there's nothing in the Bible that substantiates the trinity.

Let me call your attention to something. In virtually every single one of Paul's epistles—Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians and all the way through—he uses a standard opening, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," over and over and over and over. You can go through his epistles, "Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." If Paul believed in a trinity, why didn't he include the Holy Spirit? Wasn't that something that should be included? Obviously, Paul knew something that the Catholics and Protestants don't know. He knew a lot of things they don't know!

It's not that God didn't clue in Peter, James, John, Paul and all the rest of them, and then waited 300 years and told the early church fathers of the Catholic Church. Since those are the guys that gave you Christmas, Easter and Sunday, I don't think I'd look to them to find out a whole lot about God.

But what does this mean in Matthew 28:19?

"Baptizing them [as it says here] in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The first thing I'd call your attention to is this little word "in"—i-n. In the Greek language, throughout the New Testament in nearly every place you see the word "in"—"i-n," it is translated from a Greek word "*en*"—spelled "e-n." (We're learning all kinds of Greek words tonight, and words that are not hard to remember.) What is "*en*" in Greek? –Well, "in." That's really easy to remember. They just spell it "e-n" and we spell it "i-n." It means exactly the same thing. "*En*" in Greek means exactly the same thing "in" in English means. But this word "in," here, isn't translated from "*en*." It's translated from a different word "*eis*"—spelled "e-i-s." It's a word that literally means "into" or "unto" or something of that sort. It can mean "towards." It's translated all those ways. "Into" or "unto" is the preferable rendering.

What is being described here? We're going to see, as we go through the book of Acts and other places, that we're baptized *in* ("i-n"; "e-n") the name (by the authority) of Jesus Christ. We're baptized *into* ("e-i-s") the name (or the authority). We're baptized *unto* ("e-i-s") the Father—God the Father.

Verse 19 describes a relationship. We enter a relationship with the Father. He becomes our Father. That's our relationship. We enter a

relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship is through His sacrifice. He is our elder brother (Hebrews 2:10-11). We're told He is the author (KJV, "captain") of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10). He is the firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29). He becomes our elder brother, the captain of our salvation who makes it possible for us to have God as our Father, and we enter into that relationship. We are baptized and placed into that relationship through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what unites and connects us to God.

Just hold your place there for a second.

Ephesians 1:12-14, we are told, "that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who [which] is the guarantee [KJV, "earnest"] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. That's what sets us apart and authenticates us as the genuine article.

1 Corinthians 12:13, it is by one Spirit that we are baptized into one body. We're going to see that a little more clearly. The Holy Spirit is what imparts to us the nature of God.

2 Peter 1:4, Peter says we become partakers of the divine nature.

Hold your place here—I'm going to have you holding your place all over the place!

1 Peter 1:3-5 say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Our salvation is something that is to be revealed. It will be revealed when Christ comes back.

Matthew 24:13 says, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." We're in the process right now. Christ made it possible. We're in the process of being saved, and it will be revealed when Christ returns.

1 Peter 1:3, it says, "...[God] who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." What is our living hope? We are baptized in the hope of the resurrection.

Actually, I wanted to go back to 2 Peter 1.

2 Peter 1:4, "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature," We can actually partake of the nature of God. We do that through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

Ephesians 1:13-14 says, "...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who [which] is the guarantee [KJV, "earnest"] of our inheritance...."

When you get ready to make a major purchase, you often put down earnest money, which is for what reason? It is to prove or guarantee that you're going to come back and finish the purchase. If you've ever sold a house and somebody says they're serious about buying it and wants you to take it off the market, they put up earnest money. God's Spirit is the 'earnest of our inheritance.' We haven't yet been transformed from mortal to immortal. What proof do we have that we will be? The Spirit of God dwelling in us is the earnest of our inheritance. It's what makes us partakers of the divine nature.

That's the problem with the analogy of adoption, which is fine in the sense that we are chosen and selected by God. The problem with that, and why it isn't the complete biblical analogy that's used, is the fact that an adoptive child who is chosen by his parents might share in the inheritance from his parents, but that child can never partake of the nature of its parents. If you were to adopt a child of another ethnic heritage, that child wouldn't undergo a transformation and suddenly shed his previous identity, in a physical sense, and become a partaker of your nature. He might share in your inheritance but not your nature.

But we literally partake of God's nature. God actually transforms us. The transformation starts on the inside, but it ultimately will be completed by a transformation on the outside when we are going to be transformed from mortal to immortal. We become a partaker of the divine nature by God's Holy Spirit. We're baptized into or unto the name of the Father. We're baptized unto a relationship with the Father. He becomes our Father. We're baptized unto a relationship with Jesus Christ. He's our Savior and our Elder Brother by whose sacrifice we have access to the Father. We enter into that relationship.

Let me finish in Matthew 28. I want to look at a couple of parallel scriptures that I think will help us connect "being baptized unto" and the relationship of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2, we're told, "...that all our fathers [speaking of the Israelites] were under the

cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into [KJV, “unto”] Moses in the cloud and in the sea...”

We’re baptized unto a relationship with God—a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ—made possible by the Holy Spirit of God. Here, the same word is used. They’re not baptized *in* Moses. They were baptized *unto* Moses. Moses was in the role of lawgiver; he was the mediator of the Old Covenant. Jesus Christ came as the mediator of the New Covenant.

How were they baptized? Maybe you never thought of that as a baptism, but Paul says, “all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” They were surrounded by water. It’s the only account that I know of in the Bible where somebody got baptized and didn’t get wet. But it met the criteria. They were surrounded by water. There was water on both sides. When they walked through the Red Sea, there was a big wall of water on each side and a cloud on top. A cloud is water vapor. They were surrounded by water, but they walked across dry shod. When we go down into the water, we all get wet. This was a little different. Paul drew the analogy and he said it was like a baptism. They were immersed. They were surrounded by water and they emerged out of it.

Let’s continue.

1 Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you [speaking of these sins]. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” We’re washed; we’re sanctified. To be “sanctified” means “to be made holy.” How are we made holy? We’re made holy by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. God places His presence in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. It proceeds out from God, and it’s what connects us—it’s what connects the spirit in man to God. God places His presence in us. He dwells in us. We’re washed; we’re sanctified. The outward washing of baptism symbolizes the spiritual washing of the Holy Spirit, which puts us in a relationship with God. *We are justified by the sacrifice of Christ and sanctified by the indwelling of the Spirit of God—this is what makes possible that relationship with God.*

1 Corinthians 12:13 says, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” The Spirit is compared to something that can be drunk. It’s compared to water. “By one Spirit we were all

baptized into one body.” The body of Christ is going to be complete at the resurrection. It includes all of the people of God. It includes many who have lived and died. It is the individuals in whom dwells the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9).

The body of Christ is a spiritual organism. We are all placed into the body of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, and that involves a relationship with God.

Let’s notice some things in the book of Acts about baptism. In Acts 2, Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:37-42, when they heard what Peter said, “...they were cut [KJV, “pricked”] 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 [We’ve already looked at repentance from dead works.], 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, ... Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

We find that God is the One who adds. We find that baptism was a part of what happened. They were to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and were to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We’re going to talk more about that part of it when we get into the laying on of hands next Bible study.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit involves God placing His Spirit in us. God, through His Spirit, makes us a part of the spiritual body of Christ. We enter into a relationship with God as a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which God offers to us.

In Acts 8, we have the story of the Ethiopian eunuch. He was reading these verses of Scripture.

Verses 30-31, Philip saw him and said, ‘Do you know what this is all about?’ And he said, ‘No.’

Acts 8:35-38, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture [which is Isaiah 53:7-8], preached Jesus to him. 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.”

Again, this is another scripture that shows there was more water than was needed for a little bit of sprinkling. They had to go down into this water. Let me call your attention to this because some take this out of context and say, ‘Well, what is necessary for salvation? All you have to do is believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ Is that all you have to do? Is that all there is to it?

We’ve already looked at repentance from dead works and faith toward God (the first two foundational doctrines) and have seen that more is involved.

Go back to Acts 8.

Acts 8:27-28, “...And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.”

Here was a man who knew the law of God. He didn’t have a question about which day the Christian Sabbath was. That wasn’t an issue. He knew where to worship. He had gone to Jerusalem to the temple. He had the Bible; he had the Old Testament. He was familiar with the law. Philip didn’t have to explain to him about clean and unclean meats. Philip didn’t have to explain to him about the Sabbath and Holy Days. He understood those things. He had been up to Jerusalem to observe those festivals. He had the Scriptures—the Old Testament; that was all of the Scriptures that existed at that time.

Sometimes people read this and say, ‘Well, if the Sabbath is necessary for us to keep today, why didn’t Philip explain it to him?’ He didn’t explain it because it wasn’t a question. Here was a man who had gone to Jerusalem to worship. He recognized those things. The issue that he needed to understand was that the Messiah promised in the Old Testament had come as Jesus Christ. Philip explained to him what he didn’t understand.

We emphasize (in our preaching) the answers to the questions people have or that they should have. Sometimes we have to educate them about the question because they don’t realize there’s a question. We have to educate them about the question and then educate them about the answer. When the preaching was to individuals who were familiar with the law, it

was not necessary to explain the law because that wasn’t the issue.

They lived in a society where they were observing the Sabbath. They were observing the Holy Days. They were familiar with the Old Testament. None of them were thinking the Old Testament was done away. What was emphasized to them was what they didn’t understand, and that was the fact that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the Messiah prophesied—that He had been crucified, resurrected and was going to return as King of kings and Lord of lords.

When we address the subject today, we have to emphasize some things that are not emphasized in quite the same way because there are different questions. The issue, at least among most in the western world, is not whether or not the Messiah has come. You have to tailor your preaching to what it is that people understand and don’t understand. You have to start where their understanding is. Most people in our society have at least some semblance of a Christian background. When I say “Christian,” I’m obviously talking about “professing Christian” doctrines.

The fact that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Messiah is something that is sort of taken for granted. What it means maybe isn’t understood, but for the average person in the United States and in our western world, that isn’t their question. So, we have to emphasize the things that they don’t understand. I think that’s important to have in mind as we read through here. We sometimes wonder, ‘Well, it seems like they emphasized “this” or “that.”’ They emphasized the questions that people didn’t understand.

There are other places we could go to in Acts. We’ll pick up some of that next time when we’re looking at the laying on of hands.

Let’s go on to Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:3-6, “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The unity that Paul addresses here is the unity of the Spirit. We endeavor to keep that because there is ultimately one body. All in whom the Spirit of God dwells will be a part of that one body of resurrected glorified believers at the return of Jesus Christ. It is by one spirit that we are all a partaker of that. That is the one hope of our calling. It is one Lord through whom we

have access to God. It is one faith—one body of belief. We have one baptism by which we are all partakers of that. We have one God and Father of all who is above all.

Let's understand a little more about the symbolism of the resurrection and its relationship to baptism because that's an important aspect. It helps us understand some of the outward symbols that we go through in terms of baptism. We are immersed in water and come up (or emerge) from that water into a newness of life.

Let's look at Romans 6.

Romans 6:3-5, "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."

When you are baptized, it's like you are being buried in a watery grave. In baptism you are being buried with Christ. You are being buried in a watery grave and you come up—you emerge forth out of that water—just as Jesus Christ emerged forth from the grave and stepped from the realm of mortal back into eternal.

We're told that we undergo something that outwardly symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and when we come out of that watery grave, we are to walk in newness of life. We are to live like a new creature because we are living our life in hope of the resurrection. We're living our life in hope of the Kingdom of God and of being a literal part of that Kingdom. We're going to see that as we go on a little further.

The old man dies.

Verse 11, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Verse 13, "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."

We haven't literally been resurrected, but we have symbolically. You went down in a watery grave, and if you hadn't been brought up out of it, you would have died. It would have been your grave if you had been left there. We have undergone an outward symbol to impress something upon us.

We'll begin to wrap it up here.

Colossians 2:12, "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."

Colossians 3:1-4, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind [KJV, "affection"] on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

We're going to appear with Him in glory. Jesus Christ is coming back with glory. That's an entire study. In fact, you might want to go through and do a study of what it means to be "in glory." That's an expression we read of. A lot of times we look over it and don't think about what it means, but it means an awful lot. There's a lot that's involved in being in glory. "We will appear with Him in glory."

It says we're raised with Christ. That doesn't mean there isn't a literal resurrection. It's saying that we're 'buried with Him in baptism and raised up through the faith of the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead.' We go through an outward symbol of what we believe and what we are anticipating and looking to. Just as we have been baptized with water (gone down, immersed, plunged into, surrounded with water), we come forth (emerge out of that water) into newness of life.

In the same way, we are immersed (fully plunged) into God's Spirit. In that sense, God's Spirit overwhelms us and it is ultimately through the Spirit that we will emerge into newness of life in the resurrection. There's a picture of going into water, emerging forth out of the water and living a new way of life because the Spirit is dwelling in us (the earnest of our salvation), and we are looking to the time when we will emerge into the realm of spirit, which we are demonstrating.

If we are raised with Christ, if we have symbolically undergone that in hope of the time when we literally will be raised with Christ, then we need to set our affection on the things that are important to Christ. If we want to be with Him in the Kingdom, then what's important to Him needs to be important to us. If we can't live in newness of life now—if what's important to Him is not important to us now—then we're saying that we really don't want to be with Him in the Kingdom. If we're setting our affection on things above, we're saying that we want to share with Him what's important to Him. We want to live

His way. We undergo being baptized in the hope of the resurrection, which is our hope as a Christian.

Colossians 3:1-2, we noticed, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, Set your mind [KJV, “affection”] on things above,”

Verses 9-10, “Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...” We undergo a renewal. It starts on the inside. We take on the inward image of the Creator. But that isn’t where it stops. Baptism pictures something.

Come back to 1 Corinthians 15 and we’ll wrap it up.

1 Corinthians 15:28-29, “Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?” Or, “for the hope of the dead” is the sense of it. You don’t baptize dead people.

Verse 26, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

All who were baptized and are now dead—where is their hope? We’re baptized in the hope of the resurrection.

Verse 35, “But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’” Boy, that really is a puzzle to some! ‘Well, I knew somebody who got blown up. How’s he going to come back?’ Maybe someone fell in the ocean and a fish ate him up. How’s he going to get resurrected? That’s a real puzzle.

People must have been asking Paul some silly questions like that because he was pretty aggravated.

Verse 36, he said, “Foolish one [KJV, “You fool”] [That was his choice of words; God inspired it and I’m reading it.], what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.”

Verses 37-38, “And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases,”

Verses 40-44, “There are also celestial [heavenly] bodies and terrestrial [earthly] bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection

of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

A lot of the worldly religions have a concept of a “soul” as sort of a disembodied spirit. Since they don’t think there’s any body to it, they don’t really see the purpose of a resurrection. They buried the body; the soul went off to heaven and they’re sort of rolling around in heaven all day long.

God says the dead are dead.

Ecclesiastes 9:5, “...but the dead know nothing, ...for the memory of them is forgotten.” But there’s a resurrection coming. In the resurrection there will be a body.

That’s what it says right here in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:38, “But God gives it a body as He pleases,”

There are earthly bodies and heavenly bodies and there are different levels of glory. He says, ‘Look in the heavens. You see the sun? You see how bright it is? Look at the moon. That’s shines, too. Look at the stars. They shine. The stars differ from one another in glory.’ Glory has to do with shining power.

You and I can’t look on the sun straight on. You can’t look up at the noonday sun. It’s so bright that it will hurt your eyes. You can’t look at it. If you can somehow force yourself to sit there and stare at it, it will put out your eyes. You will literally go blind. They always warn people about that when there’s an eclipse. They warn you not to look directly at it or it’ll put out your eyes.

God created the sun. If you think the sun is bright, how bright do you think God is? I don’t know, but He’s a whole lot brighter than the sun.

Think about it. You go into a dark room with a little dim flashlight or a little candle. That puts out a certain amount of light, and it may seem pretty bright if the room is pitch black. You think, ‘Well, I have a little light here.’ Then all of a sudden, somebody flips the lights on and there’s a great big beam of light all over the room. That light comes on, and you can’t even see the little bit of light that your little candle or your little flashlight is putting out. It’s still putting out light, but it is so little by comparison to the big flood light that floods the room.

Likewise, the sun seems awfully bright to us, but if God were standing next to the sun, the sun would be so dim by comparison that you wouldn’t even notice it. It’d be like a flashlight

in a flood-lit room. That's why it says back in Revelation 21:23 that you won't even need the sun and the moon in New Jerusalem because the glory of God will light the place.

There are different levels of glory. The sun, the moon and even the stars differ from one another.

Verses 42-43, it says, 'So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is raised in glory.' That doesn't mean we're going to shine as bright as God does. It doesn't even mean we're all going to shine with the same level of brightness. The stars differ from one another in glory.

Verses 42-44, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. ... It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." It's still a body, but it's a spiritual body. It's not a body that's composed of flesh that will decay and deteriorate. It's a body composed of spirit. It's still a body.

Verses 44-48, "...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust;" We're all flesh and blood like Adam. We're as they that are earthy. We've all been of the earth—earthy, physical, fleshly, mortal beings.

Verse 48, continuing, "...and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly."

Verses 49-50, "And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption." We are going to undergo a transformation.

We are baptized in the hope of the dead. We are baptized in water.

Matthew 3:11-12, John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water...but He who is coming... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ...and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." He's going to separate the wheat from the chaff and He'll burn up the chaff—that's the baptism of fire.

In the outward physical baptism of water that we undergo, we are baptized into His death. We are raised up to walk in newness of life, in anticipation of the fact that we ultimately will put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:51, "...we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed..."

Verses 53-54, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal will put on immortality.... 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

The doctrine of baptisms is a very fundamental doctrine that contains so much of the basic beliefs and what is involved in terms of Christianity. It is a part of the very foundation as Paul addressed it in Hebrews 6.

There's an awful lot. I've only touched on it. I've only sort of hit the high points. I hope that maybe it has enlarged our view of the doctrine of baptisms.

Next time we're going to look at the doctrine of laying on of hands. With that, we'll be concluded this evening. I look forward to seeing you next time.