***The Doctrine of Baptism
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Please open your Bibles once more to Romans 6:3-4. The title of this section is "Death through Baptism."

The apostle Paul has made a very definitive declaration to the effect that when people reject the concept of salvation as entirely a gift provision from God, they are ignorant of Bible doctrine. Paul makes no bones about calling a person who rejects the fact that God saves apart from any human doing or any human effort – ignorant of Bible doctrine. God saves entirely on the basis of a gift provision that He Himself alone has entirely provided. Anybody who rejects that idea, Paul says, "You're ignorant of Bible doctrine."

Church members today suffer from a monumental amount of ignorance of Bible doctrine. This is due basically to the neglect and to the ignorance of God's provision for learning divine viewpoint – that system which we have called the grace system of perception, through which we learn Bible doctrine, on which we went into details in the last session. Pastors and church members alike are responsible for this neglect, and the result is great loss of happiness to them now, on the temporal side, and monumental and eternal losses to them in rewards in heaven. God has very graciously provided all the elements necessary for storing doctrine in your living human spirit as a believer, and from this reservoir of divine viewpoint, you receive guidance for the facets of your soul: for your mind; for your emotions; and, for your will.

Now what the apostle Paul is dealing with in this chapter is the fact that the suggestion has been made that the old sin nature should be given sovereign reign in a Christian's life so that grace may super-abound, because the apostle Paul has indeed said that where the old sin nature abounded and its expression of evil, God's grace moved in, and its super-abounded. It more than covered what evil was produced by the sin nature.

So, the resisters of salvation by grace say, "Well, in that case, just let your old sin nature control your life. Let it have dominance superiority. Then you'll enjoy so much more the grace of God."

Paul says that that concept is illogical. That's what he means in verse 2 when he says, "God forbid." That's an idiomatic expression for "absolutely not – that is a false conclusion you've reached." The suggestion is doctrinally illogical – that the old sin nature can rule as sovereign authority in your life. This is for this reason – that at salvation, the believer (you) died to the old sin nature, and God the Holy Spirit moved in and replaced the old sin nature as the sovereign ruling authority in your life. And once that exchange has been made, it is permanent. God the Holy Spirit will not tolerate an infringement upon His authority.

Now, the sin nature is not dead. It says that you, as a believer, have died to its authority, but it is still there with its enticements, and you and I as Christians indeed can agree to do something that the old sin nature is appealing to us to do. In that case, we are insulting the authority – the ruler of our lives, God the Holy Spirit. Then the Bible says, "He is grieved." The Bible says that we are not walking by means of the Spirit. The Bible says that we are quenching the Holy Spirit. Those are various descriptions to portray to us the fact that we are out of fellowship with God the Father, and that our communication line is broken.

So, Paul says, "When you say that a Christian should enjoy God's grace all the more by just letting the old sin nature reign as sovereign authority in his life, you're doctrinally ignorant, or you would make a statement like that. It is not possible for the old sin nature to have dominant ruling authority in your life again. That has been given to God the Holy Spirit, and He will never relinquish it.

Now it is possible for you to so resist the authority of God the Holy Spirit, that He will bring judgment upon you, including perhaps the taking of your life. This is just as any sovereign ruler, on any throne, over any kingdom, who finds rebellion against his authority persistently directed toward him, will deal with that rebellion in judgment.

So, yielding to the enticements of the old sin nature is a rebellious challenge to the indwelling Holy Spirit, which he will not tolerate. And anyone who understands doctrine, therefore, would not suggest such an illogical idea as letting the old sin nature have absolute sovereign reign. It can't be done in the life of a believer. That is one thing you will never be able to get away with.

So, if you've been playing high, wide, and handsome with the old sin nature, if you are a Christian, you're playing a very dangerous game. It's going to cost you great eternal rewards. It's costing you monumental unhappiness now. And in time, God will bring the pressure of discipline to a maximum degree in your life. You cannot ignore the authority of the Spirit of God in your life.

So, that's where we are when we come to verse 3. Paul says, "Or are you ignorant? Don't you know?" And the next word is "that." The word "that" looks like this in Greek: "hoti." This word introduces the specific point of doctrinal ignorance. When we see this word, we know that it's now an indicator. It's going to tell us what it is that Paul says these people are specifically ignorant of to have made the suggestion that you can turn the old sin nature loose in your life.

But are you ignorant of this fact: "As many of us as." This is one word in Greek: "hosos." We would translate this as "all of us who," and what this is referring to is every Christian. This is a phrase referring here to every believer, because every believer has experienced something.

**Baptized**

What is the experience? "Were baptized." The word "baptized" is "baptizo." And now we come to a word that has been a source of great conflict over the ages among people and among Christians: "You who were 'baptizo.'" This is in the aorist tense, which in the Greek language means that an action is looked at as a whole (as a point). It refers specifically here to the point of salvation when, by an act of baptism, you were joined to Jesus Christ. The only reason you will ever go to heaven is because you are no longer in Adam (as we have already learned that status in the book of Romans, and its consequences), but you are now in Christ. It is baptism that places you out of Adam and into Christ. It is passive voice because you don't do it. This is something that is done to you. You simply passively receive this action of being placed into Christ, and all the benefits of His death upon the cross. You don't do that yourself. It is indicative mood, and that indicates simply a statement of fact.

**Christ Jesus**

Every one of us who are believers were baptized "into," and that is the preposition "eis," which here indicates entrance into something, and that entrance is "Christ Jesus." Sometimes the Bible uses the phrase "Christ Jesus." Sometimes it uses the phrase "Jesus Christ." As you read these in various places, a certain basic concept begins to evolve as to the significance of the two. They're not just the same. Paul says, "Christ Jesus" because that combination of the name of the Son of God is used with a certain purpose of emphasizing certain things. Sometimes he says, "Jesus Christ because he wants to emphasize something else.

In the case of Christ Jesus, the word order stresses the Son of God as the exalted one who emptied himself for us. It actually stresses His preexistence. In Philippians 2:5, you have an example of that where He is presented in that particular capacity of the exalted One who has emptied Himself for us. Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind that is spoken of in the context is that mind of humility, where He, who was the second Person of the Trinity, was willing to set aside His powers of deity, and to assume the humanity through which He could go to the cross in behalf of our sins.

Whenever the term "Christ Jesus" is used, it stresses the concept of grace. But when we come to the term "Jesus Christ" (that order of the names of the son of God), we are stressing the factor about Him as one who is despised and rejected, but who was later glorified. This is used basically in connection with stressing His resurrection. Consequently, it stresses His glory. In Philippians 2:11, just a few verses down from the one we just read, we have it used in that way: "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." There, the combination "Jesus Christ" stresses glory.

So, when you have the name "Christ Jesus," you're stressing the grace of God. When you have the combination "Jesus Christ," it's stressing the glory of God. In the case of Romans 6:3, which we are studying, Paul very naturally uses the combination "Christ Jesus," because what he is stressing in this passage is the grace of God relative to salvation.

So, he says, "Or is it possible you are ignorant of this fact: that as many of us Christians who were baptized into (made entrance into) Jesus Christ, the Son of God in His grace, were baptized." This is the same word we had before – "baptizo" again, and the same grammatical form – aorist passive indicative, the point of time that you were saved. You were baptized into Christ. You did not baptize yourself. It's indicative – a statement of fact. "Into", stressing again, union or identification: "You were baptized into." You were identified with what? His (Christ Jesus') death: "thanatos." This refers, of course, to His spiritual and His physical death on the cross.

Remember that He died in two ways. He paid for the sins of the world by dying spiritually from high noon to 3 o'clock in the afternoon while He was shouting, "My God, My God (addressing first the Father, then the Holy Spirit), why have You forsaken Me?" That was because God the Father and God the Holy Spirit had turned from Him as he bore the evil of the world– our sins and our human good. Then when it was over, He changed His address from My God to: "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit," now addressing the Father as one who was back in fellowship with Him. Spiritual death passed, and then He provided the final factor of the atonement of His physical death. So, when it uses the word death here, it is using it in terms of that combination of his deaths (spiritual and physical) for the sins of the world.

**Baptism**

Now, that brings us to the meaning of the word "baptism." In order to try to get some understanding of this very confusing and very conflicting area of theology, let's start off, first of all, by recognizing the fact that the word "baptized" is not a word native to the English language. So, it has no meaning as such. The word "baptized" is actually a Greek word that simply has been carried right over into the English language. Now, what it means you're not going to get from the word "baptize" itself. So, whatever you think the word baptize means, just take an eraser and rub it out of your mind right now. The only meaning that this word has is its Greek meaning. It has no English meaning, and there's a lot of English meaning attached to it which it does not bear.

This word actually was a point of such conflict that the translators, when they got to it, simply decided, "Oh, forget it. We're not going to get into the fight. We're not even going to translate it. We're simply going to take it and transliterate it. We're going to take the Greek letters, and we're going to convert them into English letters. So, you have the verb, for example, "baptizo," and you can see how, letter-for-letter, it has been transliterated down into English, and instead of the "O" at the end, as in the Greek, they added an "E" for the English pronunciation, and you get the word "baptized." That is plain Greek in English form. "Baptize" is Greek in English form.

You have the same thing for the noun "baptisma" – letter-for-letter, with the final "A" dropped. But you have "baptism" in English. Baptism is a pure Greek word in English letters. So, that's what we start with.

What is the meaning? Well, when we go to the Greek, we find that the word "baptize" has a basic meaning, which is "to identify." And if you catch hold of that, you'll be on your way to being able to understand what "baptize" means. "Baptize" means "to identify;" that is, one thing is so identified with another that the nature or character of the former is changed.

Here is thing A, and here is thing B. Thing B has a character as B. But B is identified with A in such a way that the result is A-B, a totally different character than that which it originally was. B is identified with A in such a way that B is no longer as it once was. Its character, or position, or quality, has been changed in some way so that it now is A-B. It is a different thing. One thing is so identified with another that the nature or the character of the former is changed, as it is associated (as it is identified) with the latter.

The word may symbolize a real change that has already taken place. It may symbolize a real change that really has taken place. Or it may simply symbolize something which is going to take place. From classical usage, and from the usage of the language of the Greek New Testament as it was used on the streets of the New Testament world, which we call the "Koine" (or the common Greek) language, the basic concept of "baptize" is to immerse – identification as the result of immersing.

In other words, you have B being immersed into A so that the result is something totally different: A-B, a combination. The idea of "baptize" here is being immersed – the former being immersed into a secondary thing so that the former is completely changed.

**Water**

The English reader, as you know, always tends to think about the word baptized as a ritual which is performed by water. I am constantly amazed at how regularly people are astounded when I tell them what I'm about to tell you. The English reader, whenever he hears the word "baptize," always thinks of something associated with water, and he always thinks about something that churches do to people who want to become members of that particular church.

Now, the truth of the matter is (and don't hold your hats if you haven't already understood this) that there are actually seven baptisms in Scripture. There are seven baptisms. I've seen people, when I told that to them, have their eyeballs swing in opposite directions. It's such a traumatic shock. I mean, that is hard to do. Try weaving your eyeballs in the opposite direction. I've seen people who could do that at will. I wish I could. It makes a big impression. But if you tell people there are seven baptisms, . . . they just can't conceive of such a thing.

**The Bible Doctrine of Baptism**

So, let's get this straight – what the Bible really teaches about baptism. The first point is that there are two kinds of baptisms.

**Real Baptisms ("Dry" Baptisms)**

There is a real baptisms, which is an actual identification. B is actually identified with A in some way, and these are dry baptisms. Real baptisms are dry baptisms. What do we mean by that? We mean that there is no water involved. There's no water involved in these baptisms at all. They're entirely dry. And I'm going to put them all together first, and then we'll come back and talk about them a little more detail. But first of all, let's get them all before you. Let's look up a few Scriptures so that you see that these are actually baptisms in Scripture.

1. **The Baptism of Moses**

Number one is a baptism called the baptism of Moses. You have this in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2: "Moreover brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant." And there goes the apostle Paul, hurting people's feelings again by telling them that they are ignorant of doctrine: "That all our fathers were under the cloud." That is the "Shekinah" glory cloud that was present at the Red Sea when the Exodus generation of Jews came to the shore of that sea, and were going to cross: "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea (the Red Sea). And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

These Jews of the Exodus generation, who were on hand to cross through the Red Sea under the miracle of the parting of the waters of the Red Sea, are said here to have been baptized with Moses and with the cloud. They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea – that they were identified with Moses. "Baptized unto Moses" means that they were identified with Moses. Identified in what respect? Identified with the glory cloud (the "Shekinah" glory – the glory of God which was present there among them). While passing through the miracle of the Red Sea, they were identified with Moses in the experience of walking dry shod through that sea, and escaping the approaching attacking forces of Pharaoh.

Now, you can't, by the wildest stretch of your imagination, connect this baptism with what churches do when they take members into their membership. You obviously see that here is a baptism (a baptism of Moses) that has nothing to do whatsoever with what you and I generally think about as baptism in connection with church activity. So, at least we have this baptism. It's a different baptism. And in this case, it's a dry baptism. It has nothing to do with water whatsoever. That's the second traumatic effect you'll have to overcome in your thinking – that you can have baptism without water.

1. **The Baptism of the Cross**

Next we have a baptism called the Baptism of the Cross. We have several places where that's referred to. Let's look in the gospel of Matthew 20:22: "But Jesus answered and said, 'You don't know what you ask. Are you able to drink to the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' And they said unto Him, 'We are able.'"

Jesus Christ is about to go to the cross. He is not talking about water baptism here. He is talking about some kind of a baptism which is about to come upon him, and He's asking a question of these disciples, James and John, who are looking for a special place of authority in His kingdom. He's asking them, "Are you able to bear this baptism that I'm about to experience?" And because they were ignorant men of what was coming, they foolishly said, "Yes, we could." They indeed could not. We'll see more about that later.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21, you also have this: "For He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." This explains the nature of the baptism of the cross.

We have one more that we can look at in 1 Peter 2:24: "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed." Here, Jesus Christ is identified with our sins, and He is identified with those sins in His work on the cross. He was made sin for us.

So, the baptism of the cross (the baptism that Jesus was describing here in Matthew) is the baptism of having the sins of the world engulf Him – the evil of the world. Its sins and its human good were placed upon Him so that He was symbolically immersed in the sins of the world, and thus He was baptized by the sins of the world. He was identified.

The word "baptism," when you think of it as identification, causes this expression to make a lot of sense – the baptism of the cross. He was identified with the cross, which was the sins of the world.

Obviously, here again, you see that there is no water. This is a dry baptism. But it's a real baptism; that is, in the case of the baptism of Moses, the people actually were in the presence of the "Shekinah" of glory; they actually were walking through the Red Sea; and they actually were identified with those things. Here, in the case of the baptism of the cross, Jesus Christ actually was under the sins of the world. He actually did die spiritually. That was a true and actual and real baptism. That's what we mean by that. It was not just symbolically imposed upon Him. He really had the sewage of human evil poured out upon Him.

1. **The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

A third real baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And there are many verses relative to this. The key one would be 1 Corinthians 12:13. And, of course, this is a baptism that is very important to you and me. That is why the charismatic movement has so distorted and confused this particular baptism so that Satan has had a field day among them: "For by one Spirit (by one God the Holy Spirit) were we (Christians – all of us) baptized into one body, the body of Christ (the church), whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond are free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." And that last phrase, "have all been made to drink into one Spirit," means that we are all indwelt by one Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us that the body of Christ is the church. And in 1 Corinthians 12:12, we are told that the body of Christ is one. It has many individual members. These members are all members of one body, and this body is Christ. This is the body of Christ. Then verse 13 tells you how you get into that body. You get into that body as the result of a baptism called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That is what unites you to the death; to the burial; and, to the resurrection of Christ, which is what is involved in paying for your Adamic guilt – the guilt inherited from Adam, and for your personal evil: your sins; and, your human good. It is being placed into Christ that is the key factor of salvation.

Isn't it hideous, and isn't it horrendous that all over this land there are charismatic, Pentecostal groups gathering, and preachers are asking people if they'd like to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? How many times I've sat in those meetings, and watched these pathetic people raise their hand, or stand up, and he pronounces his hocus-pocus, mumbo-jumbo upon them, so that he tells them, "Now you have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and now you will have a very, very wonderful spiritual life.

Well, the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes automatically. You do not experience it. It is not experiential. You do not feel it. You have no evidences of it. It is a baptism that comes automatically at the point of salvation, because if you do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you're not going to heaven. The baptism of the Holy Spirit means that you've been joined to Christ. And if you not joined to Christ, the benefits of His death upon the cross are meaningless. They're not applied to you. You have to be in Christ, and out of Adam, in order to benefit by what He provided.

So, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that great instrument of transfer from the place of death in Adam to the place of life in Christ. This is described in Acts 1:5, Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12, and Ephesians 4:5. We won't go into all those verses. You can run them down on your own. But all of those have reference to this great baptism of the Holy Spirit. Once more, notice that there is no water associated with them. This is the third one. Maybe by now you have been able to adjust your mind to have baptism without water. That's very traumatic for some people, but there is no water involved in these baptisms.

Now, it doesn't take much thinking to see that the baptism of Moses is certainly different from the baptism of the cross. And that the baptism of the Cross (of Christ bearing our sins) is certainly different from the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which puts a believer into union with Jesus Christ, and thus provides him with salvation and eternal life. These three baptisms are obviously different. So, there are at least three baptisms in the Scripture so far.

1. **The Baptism of Fire**

Now I'm going to add you a fourth one of the dry kind, and that's the baptism of fire. The baptism of fire we have described in Matthew 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." And that word "unto repentance" there means "because you have repented." That is a Greek preposition which cannot be interpreted in itself. You have to interpret it on the basis of what other Scriptures indicate to us about the role of water baptism. This is *because* you have repented: "But He who comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit (and we've already looked at the baptism of the Holy Spirit) and with fire." Then he goes on to describe in verse 12 the exercise of that fire in judgment.

This baptism of fire has to do with the bringing of judgment of Jesus Christ upon unbelievers at the end of the tribulation era. Let's look at Matthew 25:31, where we read, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." And then verse 33: "And He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." This is a description of judgment upon the tribulation world. At the end of the tribulation, those who are sheep among the gentiles, are going to be taken alive in their mortal bodies into the millennial kingdom. Those who are unbelievers among the gentiles are described as goats, and they will be put to death. They will receive the baptism of fire, which is the judgment into the lake of fire – into what we commonly referred to as hell.

Let's look at 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. This is a little more clarification on the baptism of fire: "And to you who are troubled, rest with us. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire." Again, the baptism of fire is: "taking vengeance on them that don't know God, and that don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." This again refers to the Second Coming of Christ – not the rapture, but the Second Coming, when He comes to this earth at the end of the tribulation to judge the tribulation world.

So, this is what is generally, in our thinking, connected with the famous battle of Armageddon – the end of the line. These people here are identified with judgment on the tribulation rebels against God. So, the baptism of fire is a judgment of punishment – the judgment of the condemnation to the lake of fire.

So, we have, again, a very dry baptism, particularly the one about the baptism of fire. That's a very dry one. The baptism of Moses; the baptism of the cross; the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and, the baptism of fire are all dry, and all of them are actual identification. In the case of the baptism of fire, that is actually what the people are going to be identified with. They're going to be identified with the fires of hell and with the torments and the punishment directly from that fire.

**Ritual Baptisms (Water Baptisms)**

Now let's tie this up by turning to a second category. Your first category of the seven baptisms fell into real baptisms, actual identifications, all of them dry. There were four of them. Now we come to a second category. These are ritual baptisms and these are representative identifications, not actual identifications. And these are all wet. There are three wet baptisms:

1. **The Baptism of John**

First of all, there is the baptism of John. In Matthew 3:6, we read about John's baptism: "And were baptized by him in the Jordan confessing their sins." This is speaking about the Jewish people who came to John for baptism. Verse 11a says, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance" (the first part of verse 11).

Now, the water here was symbolic of something. These are *representative* identifications. These are *symbolic* identifications. The water is used in each case, and the water represents something in each case. So, when we look at the baptism of John we have to say, "What did the water represent in the case of John's baptism?"

Well, if you study John's message, you'll remember that John said, "Behold, the kingdom of God is at hand" (the kingdom of heaven is at hand). This was John's message that he preached – that the King was here. The Messianic promises of a kingdom where the Jews are ruling the world as the leading nation of the world is about ready to be fulfilled. And finally, our Messiah Savior is here. And the basis upon which He will come to His authority, and lead us into the position that God, through the prophets of old, has promised to us is national repentance, which begins on an individual basis.

Everywhere there were Jews that said, "Praise God." In our day we've seen the promises to Abraham fulfilled (in the Abrahamic Covenant) – the promises which were expanded later in the Palestinian Covenant relative to the land; the Davidic Covenant relative to a throne and a ruling authority; and, in the New Covenant relative to the Holy Spirit descending upon the people of Israel. They said, "It's fulfilled in our day, and we are ready to receive it," and they indicated that by going to John and receiving John's water baptism.

What were they saying? Were they saying that they had been united to Christ? Obviously not. That wasn't the issue. What they were saying, with the baptism of John, was that they were ready to be identified with the Messiah Savior and His earthly kingdom. In other words, the millennium was ready to be inaugurated. It was only waiting upon the acceptance of the Jewish people of the King which God had provided, on that first Christmas day, and who now had grown to manhood, and had begun His ministry. Here he is, ready to inaugurate the millennial kingdom. And they were ready to identify themselves with the King, Jesus Christ, whom John pointed out, and with the kingdom that He was offering.

Now you can see that it is really inane and really doctrinally ignorant to talk about our baptism being the same thing that John the Baptist practiced. The only similarity is that John used water and had people walk down into the river so he could baptize them. But the meaning of that water was totally different. It had nothing to do with Christian baptism, even though it's wet.

1. **The Baptism of Jesus**

A sixth baptism is the baptism of Jesus. This baptism is described in Matthew 3:13-17: "Then came Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John to be baptized by him. But John forbad him saying, "'I have need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?' And Jesus, answering, said unto him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he (John) consented to baptize Jesus." And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened onto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him, and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.'"

What did the water symbolize in the case of the baptism of Jesus? Well, the water, in this case, represented the Father's will for Jesus Christ, which was His mission of providing salvation for the world, and establishing the Messianic Kingdom upon the earth. And Jesus said to John, "It is an act of fulfilling all righteousness that I should take at your hand this baptism, with this water representing My Father's mission for Me as Savior of the world, and fulfiller of the Messianic promises to the Jewish people." Then John said, "Aha, now that I understand. That kind of a baptism I can indeed perform upon you." So, John took the Lord, and he baptized Him in identification with His mission to the cross, and to the nation of Israel and its kingdom.

Now, isn't it really ignorant to talk to people about following the Lord in baptism? How often have you heard people saying, "Now, you should have water baptism, and follow Jesus in baptism?" The only way you can follow Jesus Christ in baptism is the mode of the fact that he used water, and was immersed. But you certainly cannot follow Him in the meaning of that water in His case. It was a unique baptism. It was the only one of its kind, specifically to Him.

1. **The Baptism of Believers**

So, we've ended up with six baptisms. There's one more. That's the baptism of the church age – of believers. And finally, you breathe a sigh of relief, and say, "Now this one I understand," because this is the thing that people normally right away jump to in they're thinking. This is the only kind of baptism they think of. And this is only the third of three wet baptisms – three which are symbolic (representative) identifications. Here you have the baptism of the church age.

Matthew 28:19 says, "Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and, of the Holy Spirit." Here is the commandment – very clear and very definitive, that we, as the representatives (the ambassadors) of Jesus Christ, as we go through the world explaining the gospel to people, winning them to the Lord, that they should identify themselves symbolically. They should portray their actual identification to Jesus Christ in a symbolic way with water baptism. In other words, water here represents the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And when a person is immersed in water, he is portraying symbolically that he has been placed into Christ. The water represents Jesus Christ: you go into the water; you have been joined to Christ; and, you come up out of the water. That's representative of a new lifestyle.

**Retroactive Positional Truth**

For this reason, we say that water baptism represents two things about the Christian. It represents retroactive, positional truth; that is, for the Christian, water baptism represents the cross. Here is the Christian entering eternal fellowship. Here's temporal fellowship (the walk in time). When a person trusts Christ as Savior, he comes into that inner circle of fellowship. That is retroactive positional truth – your position in Christ. That's what this is. This is the position in Christ. And from the point of your salvation, when you receive the work of Christ upon the cross, your water baptism is portraying the fact that you have been identified with His death for your sins. That's retroactive positional truth. You weren't actually on the cross, but in God's eyes, that was the situation. You died with Him; you were buried with Him; and, you rose again with Him.

**Current Positional Truth**

But there is also current position of truth, and that has to do with your daily walk as a believer; that is, that you are currently joined to Christ. You have been currently united to Him. You're in His body, and you are therefore now under the controlling power and directing power of God the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a very significant visual aid. It tells a great deal. And we'll look at this a little more detail later. Right now, I'm just trying to get the package before you all at one time, and help you to see that there are seven baptisms.

This water baptism that you and I experience (of the church age) is, of course, a picture of the dry baptism of God the Holy Spirit – that we have been baptized into the body of Christ, and that we ourselves have actually been joined with Him.

So, the picture that we have before us is not one simple baptism, but that we actually have seven different baptisms: four dry; and, three wet. The four dry ones are actual identifications. The three wet ones are symbolic identification. The water means something in every case. And you can see that the baptism of John could have nothing whatever to do with Christians, because it could not portray our being joined to Christ. The body of Christ (the church) had not even then been formed yet. The baptism of Jesus had to be totally different from the baptism of John. That's what bothered John at first. Jesus was not a sinner. He was not coming as a demonstration of His repentance of sin, and turning to the Messiah Savior. But the water, in the case of Jesus, represented His identification with His mission. And, of course, you can see that the baptism of the church is something, again, totally different. It has no relationship to either the baptism of John or to the baptism of Jesus Christ, even though those two also used water.

So, the picture we have here is retroactive positional truth – the cross. . . Then you have current positional truth, which is the outer circle of eternal fellowship and the inner circle of temporal fellowship. This is what is true of you now. This is your actual position. This is the place that you are – in the inner circle, where all known sin is confessed, and God's maximum blessing is upon you.

Now, with that background, we must stop at this point, but I'll let you go back to the book of Romans, and on the basis of these seven baptisms, go back to what Paul is saying in verse 3-4, and you have to decide which of these seven baptisms he's talking about: "Don't you know (is it possible that you're ignorant of the fact) that as many of us (we who are Christians) were identified with Jesus Christ (were identified, or were introduced) into His death" – the benefits of what He did on the cross?

Then verse 4 goes on and explains that a little more: "Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that is, Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. Even so, we also should walk in newness of life." Retroactive positional truth and current positional truth are being spoken of there.

So, baptism indeed does bring about a relationship of eternal life. But what kind of baptism? Most people who read this say that it is baptism number seven – the water baptism of the church age. I'm not going to tell you which one it is. I'm going to let you think about it yourself, but maybe you'll have a clue as to which one it is, as you think about it a little bit, and try to figure it out.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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