

"YOUR BAPTISM -- ITS MEANING AND MESSAGE"

Bering Drive Church of Christ - Fall 1993
Edward Fudge, Teacher

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The work that set us right with God
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THE GOOD NEWS TO WHICH BAPTISM RESPONDS
The work that set us right with God

I. THE GOSPEL IS NOT "GOOD DO'S" (MORALISMS) OR "GOOD VIEWS" (DOCTRINAL SYSTEMS), BUT "GOOD NEWS" (EVANGEL). NOT HISTORY, COMMANDS, EXHORTATIONS OR PROPHECY, BUT AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

Isa. 43:10-13 God declares, saves and proclaims.
2 Tim. 1:9 God foretold, saved and called us.

II. THE GOOD NEWS IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GOD HAS FORGIVEN US AND MADE US HIS FRIENDS, AND THAT HE WILL FINALLY RESTORE ALL THAT HAS GONE WRONG IN HIS UNIVERSE.

Eph. 1:13 It is the "good news" of our salvation!
Eph. 1:10; Rom. 8 God will sum up and redeem "all things."

III. THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF TALKING ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE. THE REALITY IS GREATER THAN ANY ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE IT.

- A. Glimpses from Jesus' human encounters.
- B. Metaphors from business and commerce.
- C. Analogy of the covenant with its stipulations, blessings and curses (more later).

IV. GOD DID ALL THIS IN JESUS OF NAZARETH.

A. Jesus says "Yes" to all God's promises so we may say "Amen."

2 Cor. 1:20; Acts 3:18ff

B. The core of the good news is that Jesus personally took our place and acted in our stead. He became our representative, our substitute, our proxy before God in all he did and in all that was done to him.

13. This is the meaning of his priesthood (Exod. 28; Lev. 16; Heb. 8-10).

14. Jesus was thus "born of a woman" (man), "born under the Law" (Israel), to rescue Israel and humankind and set them right with God (Gal. 4:4).

a. He is the righteous remnant, true Israel (John 15:1; Matt. 1-5).

b. He is the Second Adam, true humanity (Lk. 3; Phil. 2).

- c. Adam and Israel had covenant with God (Lev. 26; Deut. 28). Jesus accomplished what neither Adam or Israel did: he kept the covenant stipulations and earned the covenant blessings, then took on himself the covenant curses in place of his people (Isa. 53:4-5; Gal. 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:21).
 - d. This involved Jesus' perfect doing (active obedience) and in his perfect dying (passing obedience).
 - (1) His perfect "doing" (Heb. 10; Rom. 5).
 - (2) His perfect "dying" (Heb. 9; Isa. 53).
15. Jesus himself has become the "covenant" (basis of relationship) between God and sinners, not external stipulations, blessings and curses (Isa. 42:6; 49:8).
16. Jesus himself is our wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption. We can glory only in him.
- 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Jer. 23:5-6 and 33:15-16;
Jer. 30:21-24; Phil. 3:3-11

V. THE WORK THAT ACCOMPLISHED SALVATION IS DONE.

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| 2 Cor. 5:19 | God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. |
| Col. 1:19-22 | God has reconciled us to himself. |
| John 6:37-40 | Jesus came to do God's will and save his own. |
| John 17:4; 19:30 | Jesus did what he came to do. |
| Isa. 53:11 | God saw the result of Jesus' work and was satisfied. |
| Rom. 4:25 | He was put to death because of our transgressions and was raised again because of our justification. |
- A. We cannot alter it, improve on it, add to it, diminish from it or make it more complete or sure than it already is.
 - B. This saving work was done outside of us, but for us -- before we ever heard about it. Nothing we think, do or feel is any part of the work which accomplished our salvation.
 - C. Because this saving work of Christ occurred outside of us and our experience, we must trust entirely in it and not in ourselves. We either accept it, rely on it and

respond to it -- or we disbelieve it and ignore it at our peril.

VI. THE GOSPEL IS NOT "GOOD DO'S" (MORALISMS) OR "GOOD VIEWS" (DOCTRINAL SYSTEMS), BUT "GOOD NEWS" (EVANGEL). NOT HISTORY, COMMANDS, EXHORTATIONS OR PROPHECY, BUT AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

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VIII. THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF TALKING ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE. THE REALITY IS GREATER THAN ANY ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE IT.

A. Glimpses from Jesus' human encounters.

Father of the wayward son (Lk. 15:11ff).
Woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11).
Zaccheus (Lk. 19:1-10).
"Come to me all who labor" (Matt. 11:28-30).
Thief on cross (Lk. 23:39-43).

B. Metaphors from business and commerce.

Prison: was guilty	now pardoned
Court: was accused	now acquitted
Baths: was dirty	now cleansed
Street: was forsaken	now adopted
Home: was estranged	now reconciled
Inn: was hungry/thirsty	now filled
Bank: was impoverished	now enriched

C. Analogy of the covenant with its stipulations, blessings and curses (more later).

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2 Cor. 1:20
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B. The core of the good news is that Jesus personally took our place and acted in our stead. He became our representative, our substitute, our proxy before God in all he did and in all that was done to him.

1. This is the meaning of his priesthood.

Exod. 28
Lev. 16
Heb. 8-10

2. Jesus was thus "born of a woman" (man), "born under the Law" (Israel), to rescue Israel and humankind and set them right with God (Gal. 4:4).

a. He is the righteous remnant, true Israel.

John 15:1 (contrast Isa. 5:1-7).
Matt. 1-5 - retracing Israel's footsteps.

b. He is the Second Adam, true humanity.

Lk. 3 - baptism and genealogy.
Phil.2 - retracing Adam's footsteps.

c. Adam and Israel had covenant with God (Lev. 26; Deut. 28). Jesus accomplished what neither Adam or Israel did: he kept the covenant stipulations and earned the covenant blessings, then took on himself the covenant curses in place of his people (Isa. 53:4-5; Gal. 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:21).

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Jer. 23:5-6 and 33:15-16
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JESUS' BAPTISM AND OURS

The Savior and the sinners

XI. The accounts of Jesus' baptism.

1. Matthew 3:13-17 (Jesus is the Righteous Remnant of Israel who does the Father's will).

"In this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15; see Isaiah 64:5).

2. Mark 1:9-11 (Jesus is God's Son).

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk. 1:1).

3. Luke 3:21-22 (Jesus is the Second Adam who redeems humankind).

"When all the people were being baptized, Jesus also was baptized" (Lk. 3:21).

XII. The signs at Jesus' baptism.

1. The heavens open (Matt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10; Lk. 3:21).

God comes down from heaven to redeem his people (Isaiah 64:1; context 63:15-19).

Mark 1:10 (*schizo* = "torn"; see Mk. 15:38)

2. The Spirit of God descends (Matt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10; Lk. 3:22).

- a. Jesus is the King/Servant Messiah (Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1).

- b. Jesus is the Suffering Servant of God (Isaiah 42:1; Isa. 61:1) who will die for the sins of the People (Isa.53).

- c. Jesus is God's Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29-34).
3. The heavenly voice says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).
 - a. Jesus is the beloved Servant of God (Isa. 42:1).
 - b. Jesus is the King-Son of God (Psalm 2:7).

XIII. The consequences of Jesus' baptism.

1. Jesus commits to do all God's saving will (Matthew).
2. Jesus takes on the specific role of sin-bearing Lamb of God (John), identifying with those he came to save (Luke).
3. Jesus begins a journey of obedience which will culminate in another "baptism" -- of blood, in his voluntary death for sin and in the place of sinners (Lk. 12:49-50; Mk. 10:38; see I John 5:6).

BAPTISM IN THE GREAT COMMISSION
"Meet me at the water"

XIV. Matthew 28:18-20.

As risen Messiah of the end-time with universal sovereignty granted by God himself, Jesus sends out the 12 to bring all nations into discipleship to him.

- A. The inclusive scope: all authority;
all the nations;
all I commanded;
all the days.

 - B. "All authority given" (see Daniel 7:13-14).

 - C. The commission: "going, make disciples" = bring the people into submissive relationship with Jesus the risen Messiah.
4. Two participles elaborate on disciple-making.
- a. Baptizing.
 - (1) "Into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit".
 - (a) No example of Trinitarian formula in Acts; unexpected in this "Jewish" Gospel.
 - (b) Might reflect Matthean practice (Antioch?) or perhaps simply theological reflection.
 - (2) Importance of expression "into the name of".
 - (a) Greek background (*eis to onoma*) = appropriation, dedication.

Papyri: of payments "to the account of"

- (b) Hebrew background (*leShem*) = "with respect to"
 - i) Matthew 10:41; Matthew 18:20
 - ii) Rabbinic (Strack-Billerbeck) examples:
 - a) Heathen slaves in Hebrew house baptized *leShem of slavery; of freedom*
 - b) Offering slaughtered *leShem of six things* (offering, offerer, God, altar fires, sweet savor, good pleasure)
 - c) Israelites can circumcize Samaritans but not vice-versa, because Samaritans do so *leShem of Mt. Gerazim*.

b. Teaching (all that Jesus has taught).

- D. Jesus promises his personal presence each day on this mission: "I am with you all the days, even to the consummation of the age."

XV. Mark 16:15-18.

The risen Jesus charges the unbelieving 12 to tell the world the message they have been so slow to accept, with the assurance that believing messengers will have his powerful presence and believing hearers will receive salvation.

- 1. Note the apostles' own slowness/lack of faith in context. Can they find the faith to tell anyone else what they scarcely believe?
- 2. Jesus sends them out to preach the gospel in all the world and to baptize believers.
 - a. Hearers have two options: to believe or not to believe.
 - (1) Those who believe and are baptized will be saved.

- (2) Those who disbelieve will be condemned.

 - b. Our primary task is to preach the gospel (God's saving work in Jesus), not to baptize (1 Cor. 1:17).
 - c. However, when Jesus is preached and received, baptism is expected to follow (Acts 8).
 - d. This is how believers express their faith: by being baptized.
3. Jesus promises his own powerful presence: the "signs following those who believe" (will the apostles fit this description?) attest to that.

XVI. Luke 24:46-47.

Jesus who was slain and is risen has thus fulfilled the ancient Scriptures; the 12 are to proclaim repentance for forgiveness in his name to Jews and the Gentile nations alike.

- A. Context: verses 25-27, 44-45.
- B. Suffering and risen Messiah fulfills Moses, prophets and Psalms.
- C. God will forgive those who truly repent, for the sake of Jesus and on the basis of what he has accomplished.
 - 1. Luke 3:3 - John preached a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins.
 - 2. Acts 2:38 - Peter commanded repentance and baptism for forgiveness of sins.
 - 3. Acts 3:19 - Peter announced repentance and wiping away of sins, as the prophets said.
 - 4. Acts 10:43 - Peter declared that all the prophets attest that whoever believes on Jesus receives forgiveness of sins.
 - 5. For Luke, faith/baptism so obviously accompany repentance as to make their mention unnecessary.

IV. Summary quotation.

"Finally we should observe that the authority of Christian Baptism is of the weightiest order. It rests on the command of the Risen Lord after His achieving redemption and receiving authority over the entire cosmos; it is integrated with the commission to preach the good news to the world, and it is enforced by his own example at the beginning of His messianic ministry. Such a charge is too imperious to be ignored or modified. It behoves us to adhere to it and conform to it as God gives grace." G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Paternoster/Eerdmans 1962, 1983), p. 92.

XVII. The Apostles carried out Jesus' commission: preaching the gospel to all their world, baptizing those who believed, then teaching them all that Jesus said. Jesus fulfilled his promise to be with them in power as they accomplished this task.

Acts 2
Acts 8
Acts 10
Acts 16
Acts 18
Acts 22

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- Acts 2 - Pentecost pilgrims
- Acts 8 - Samaritans, Ethiopian
- Acts 10 - Cornelius' household
- Acts 16 - Lydia, Philippian warden
- Acts 18 - Corinthians
- Acts 22 - Saul of Tarsus

LIFE FROM ABOVE
Washing God's newborn child

III. How we understand and interpret Scripture depends on our perspective/framework. Remember: the reality is larger than any window's view of it.

- A. *Sacerdotal* ("right" words + "correct" motions = desired result) vs. *evangelical* (God meets words and deeds done in faith).
- B. *Sacramental* (God acts in the ordinance) vs. *symbolic* (the ordinance only points to God's action).
- C. *Reformed/Calvinist* (Christ's atonement accomplished salvation for all who will finally be saved = the elect) vs. *Arminian/Wesleyan* (Christ's atonement made salvation possible for all people but did not accomplish salvation for any).

IV. The OT anticipated a time of national regeneration involving water and God's Spirit, aimed at the people's obedience and God's glory (Ezek. 36:22-28).

V. Jesus spoke of (personal; collectively national) regeneration involving water and God's Spirit, related to the coming Kingdom (John 3:1-7).

- A. Unless one is born again/from above, one cannot see God's kingdom (3).
 - 1. Born = people do not need a fresh start but a new origin.
 - 2. Again/from above = this comes not by human effort but by divine act (vv. 4, 6; John 1:11-13; see Rom. 9:16).
- B. Unless one is born of water and Spirit, one cannot enter God's kingdom (v. 5).
 - 1. This phrase might refer to two contrasting births (vv. 4, 6).
 - 2. This phrase might well refer to baptism (John 1:31-33; 3:22-26,34; 4:1).
 - 3. National identity is not a substitute, even for the "chosen" nation (v. 7).

VI. Paul spoke of regeneration involving water and God's Spirit, aimed at the people's obedience and God's glory, related to the coming Kingdom (Titus 3:3-8).

- A. Our former condition (v. 3; see Eph. 2:1-3).
- B. What changed that status: God's grace and mercy, not our works (vv. 4, 5, 7; see Eph. 2:4, 5, 8-9).
- C. God demonstrated his grace in Christ's saving work (v. 4; Titus 2:11; see Eph. 2:5-6).
- D. We are saved "through" (think of a path we walk from one place to another) the outer ceremonial washing and/even inner spiritual renewal (vv. 5-6).
 - 1. Washing of regeneration
 - a. Washing (see Eph. 5:25-26 with "spoken word").
 - b. Regeneration (*palingenesia*; see Matt. 19:28).
 - 2. "And" / or "even" (further explaining)
 - 3. Renewal of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Renewal (*anakainosis*; see Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16; 5:17; Col. 3:10; Barnabas 6:11 -- God made us new by the forgiveness of sins [in baptism]).
 - b. Holy Spirit (see Eph. 1:13; Ezek. 36:22f; John 3:3f).
- E. As a result, we are to live obedient, holy lives (v. 8; Titus 2:11-12; see Eph. 2:10).
- F. We await the final consummation of God's kingdom at Christ's return (v. 7; Titus 2:13; see Eph. 2:7; 1:14), when all things will result in praise and glory to God (see Eph. 1:10-14; Ezek. 36:22-23).

VII. Our present baptism looks back and relates to Christ's saving work in the past and looks forward and relates to the new creation and God's future coming kingdom.

EVIDENCE OF REPENTANCE
Making a U-Turn back toward God

Dwain Evans taught this for me. No outline yet.

Talk about repentance/faith in John, Jesus, Paul.

Talk about repentance as condition of forgiveness/rem. sins/life/Spirit.

Talk about repentance and baptism.

Talk about repentance and ongoing life.

COMING UNDER THE NAME OF JESUS
Surrendering to a new master

VIII. Baptism in Jesus' name means surrendering to Jesus based on who he is: the prophesied messianic Lord whose resurrection presages divine salvation from sin and the arrival of the Last Days (Acts 2:14-38).

1. The occasion: first gospel proclamation/conversion of Jews.
2. The proclamation: Jesus (14-36).
3. The response: conviction (37).
4. The apostolic reply (38-39).
 - a. Repent (plural) and be baptized (singular) for forgiveness of sins (plural) and receive the Holy Spirit (plural).
 - b. "In the name of Jesus Christ" (*epi* = based upon who Jesus is and what he has done).

IX. Baptism in Jesus' name means coming into relation to Jesus as the powerful Lord who conquers Satan and brings God's messianic Kingdom (Acts 8:12-16).

1. The occasion: first gospel proclamation/conversion of Samaritans.
2. The powerful proclamation: Jesus (5-7, 12).
3. The conversion response: faith and baptism (12, 16). "In the name of the Lord Jesus" (*eis* = into relationship with).
4. The aftermath: Holy Spirit later given through apostolic hands (14-16).

X. Baptism in Jesus' name means obeying the one by whom God forgives believers and will judge the world (Acts 10:34-48).

1. The occasion: first gospel proclamation/conversion of Gentiles (Acts 10:34-48).

2. The proclamation: Jesus (34-43).
3. God gives the Spirit to faith (44-47).
4. Peter commands water baptism in the name of Jesus (*en* = by the authority of).

XI. Baptism in Jesus' name means committing to live as a representative of Jesus thereafter (Acts 9:14-18; 22:16).

XII. Baptism in Jesus' name is not a mere formula, but means entrusting oneself to Jesus who gives the Spirit (Acts 19:1-7).

XIII. Baptism in Jesus' name means invoking his name in prayer while being baptized (Acts 22:16).

XIV. Baptism in Jesus' name means yielding allegiance to Jesus who was crucified, and who permits no lesser sectarian loyalties (1 Cor. 1:10-17).

MAKING A FRESH START
A conscience washed clean

XV. Imagery of forgiveness as "washing".

- A. Objectively (in God's sight).
 - 1. The blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5).
 - 2. The Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5).
 - 3. The word of God/Christ (John 15:3 - *logos*; Eph. 5:25-26 - *rhema*).

- B. Subjectively (for "clean" conscience): baptismal water (Heb. 11:22; Acts 22:16; see also 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - 1. The outer is meaningless without inner.
 - 2. The inner calls for form in meaningful personal experience.

XVI. Old Testament background of forgiveness ("release").

- A. Scapegoat "released" into desert (Lev. 16:26).
- B. Jubilee "release" of land and debts (Lev. 25; see also Deut. 15:1-3,9).
- C. Messiah anointed with God's Spirit to proclaim "release" to captives (Isa. 61:1).

XVII. New Testament concepts relating to forgiveness ("release" of sins).

- A. Christ's blood (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).
- B. Repentance toward God (Lk. 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 26:28).
- C. Faith in the Lord Jesus (Acts 10:43; 13:38-39).
- D. Baptism (Lk. 3:3; Acts 2:38).

SPRINKLING, POURING AND DIPPING
The inside and outside of the matter

XVIII. The outward act: dipping in water and bringing out (immersion/emersion; variety).

E. We believe the most biblical physical act of baptism to be immersion in water.

1. The primary meaning of the word *baptizo/bapto* suggests this.

Bapto

Ex. 12:22
Lev. 14:6, 16, 51
Josh. 3:15
Ruth 2:14

Baptizo

2 Kings 5:14
Isa. 21:4

2. Narratives of biblical baptisms suggest this.

John 3:23
Acts 8:38-39

F. The significance of this outward physical act.

a. Burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12).

b. New creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gen. 1:1-2).

c. Deliverance as in the Flood (1 Pet. 3:20-22) and Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:1-2).

G. We acknowledge that not all Christians have maintained this practice, which is now being recovered in many places as the primitive rite.

1. Early changes (Didache 7:1-4).

2. Reformers (including Anabaptists).

3. Modern resurgence.

XIX. The inward act: sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

A. Old Testament backgrounds.

1. Sprinkling of water for purification (Lev. 14:1-9; Num. 19).

2. Sprinkling of blood for atonement (Lev. 16:14-19).

B. The prophets described the messianic era as a time when God would sprinkle Israel and the nations alike.

Ezek. 36:25-27 Isa. 52:15

C. New Testament writers see this fulfilled in spiritual cleansing/atonement by Christ's blood.

Heb. 10:22 Heb. 12:24
Heb. 9:13-14 1 Peter 1:3

XX. The inward act: pouring out of God's Holy Spirit.

A. Old Testament background: prophets, priests and kings were dedicated by pouring oil over their heads (anointing; christening). This symbolized God's lavish outpouring of his empowerment and blessing on the person being consecrated.

Ex. 29:7; Lev. 8:12
Psa. 133:1-2

B. The prophets described the messianic era as a time when God would pour out his Spirit on all his people, empowering and consecrating them all for his service.

Isa. 32:15
Isa. 44:3
Joel 2:28-29

C. New Testament writers see this fulfilled in the giving of the Spirit to the believer.

Acts 2:33 (Luke)
2 Cor. 1:21-22 (Paul)
1 John 2:20, 27 (John)

XXI. Baptism involves immersion (outwardly) and also sprinkling (inwardly) and pouring (inwardly) -- each full of meaning for the person looking in faith to Christ.

GOD'S GIFT OF HIMSELF
divine power for new life

XXII. The Holy Spirit creates spiritual life (Titus 3:3-7; Ezek. 36:22-27; John 3:3-6).

XXIII. Jesus "baptizes" believers in God's Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:1-8).

A. Jewish believers (Acts 2).

Those who repent and are baptized in Jesus' name (and also those God will "call" later) are promised "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (2:38-39; see also 5:32).

B. Gentile believers (Acts 10-11).

Those who received the Spirit are commanded to be baptized in water in Jesus' name (10:48).

C. Every Christian (1 Cor. 12:13; compare 1 Cor. 10:1-4).

D. This occurs in connection with faith/baptism in water.

1. At baptism (Acts 2:38).
2. Before baptism (Acts 10).
3. After baptism (Acts 8).

XXIV. The Spirit empowers for witness and service (Acts 1:8; Mark 13:11; 1 Cor. 12:4-11).

XXV. The Spirit signifies the intimate presence of God and Jesus (John 14:16-21; John 16:16; John 7:37-39; compare Isaiah 32:14-18; 43:25--44:5).

- A. For holy living.
- B. For guidance.
- C. For ministry.

SAVED FROM THE UNBELIEVING WORLD
Stepping across the dividing line

XXVI. The larger context: Peter encourages Christians who suffer for their faith.

- D. They are "different" from unbelievers around them. The unbelieving world therefore mistreats, slanders and persecutes believers.

1 Peter 1:1
2:11-12, 15
3:13-14
4:3-4, 12
5:9

- E. Unbelievers also judged Jesus and mistreated him, but Jesus bore it patiently and entrusted himself to God who is faithful. God raised Jesus out of death and exalted him in glory. This is the gospel story.

1:20-21
2:4, 7
2:21-24
3:18-19, 22

- F. Truly believing this gospel enables Christians to stand alone against an unbelieving world and to suffer with assurance (good conscience). They are not evil-doers, as the world accuses, but are imitating Christ's suffering, trusting God for final vindication and glory.

2:12, 19-21
3:14-16
4:4-6
4:12-19
5:6-7, 9-10

- G. The enemy is not other people but Satan and his forces, and Jesus has won the victory over Satan and all evil spirits.

1:3
3:18-20, 22

XXVII. Faithful people have always been out of step with the world and have had to trust God to vindicate their trust in him (3:18-20).

- A. Noah's believing family was slandered by an unbelieving world (Gen. 6:5-9).
- B. But God reversed the world's mocking judgment and had the final word by means of the Flood (Gen. 7:21-23; 8:1). The Flood water "saved" those believers from their wicked world and judged the unbelievers who mocked Noah. (Not saved "from water" but "through water". After the Flood, there was no confusing the two groups of people, or their true status as determined by God.)

XXVIII. The water of baptism is to suffering believers much as the Flood was to Noah's family (3:21-22).

- A. The water of baptism "saves" believers "now" (undergoing trials) from the stigma and sting of unjust judgment and cruel treatment.
 - 1. This is not about removing impurity, but about living confidently (in good conscience) under persecution.
 - 2. "Salvation" in the midst of persecution comes by remembering that God will have the final word about all parties involved. He has demonstrated this by raising Jesus from the dead in glory, and exalting him over all his foes (3:22).
- B. The water of baptism also "saves" believers from union/identification with the unbelieving, mocking world which await God's judgment. Peter had made a similar point years before on Pentecost.
 - 1. That audience had helped kill Jesus (Acts 2:22-24), but God had raised and glorified him (2:32-36).
 - 2. This announcement convicted their hearts (2:37).
 - 3. Peter commanded repentance and baptism in Jesus' name (2:38-39). He urged them: "save yourselves from this perverse generation!" (2:40).
 - 4. Those who believed were baptized and 3,000 left the ranks of unbelievers to stand publicly with God's people (2:41).

XXIX. To be baptized is to take a stand with those who trust God's faithfulness as seen in Jesus' resurrection. The person baptized pledges to imitate Jesus' obedience even

under persecution. For all these reasons, baptism "saves" believers when they are called to suffer for God's sake.

UNION WITH JESUS CHRIST
Life (now) beyond the grave

XXX. Being baptized into union with Jesus means we live in newness of life, free from Satan's effective power (Rom. 6:1-4).

- A. Satan's power stops at the grave (6:7).
- B. Jesus died and rose to live beyond the grave, out of Satan's reach (6:9-10).
- C. We died and rose with Jesus, as evidenced by our baptism, and can now ignore and defy Satan when he tempts (6:3-6).
- D. We should reckon this to be the case and continually present our bodies for obedience to God (6:11-14).

XXXI. Being baptized into union with Jesus means we live by faith although we never perfectly keep God's law (Galatians 3:26-28).

- A. Abraham was declared righteous by trusting God, and God promised to bless people of all nations the same way (3:6-9).
 - 1. No one ever becomes righteous by obeying God's law because no one obeys all of it perfectly all the time (3:10-14).
 - 2. God's promise to bless all nations was a one-sided covenant which depended only on God; the Law involved a two-party covenant which depended on the people living up to God's requirements (3:15-21).
 - 3. Although the Law cannot save anyone, it prepares people to hear the Gospel and put their trust in Christ (3:22-25).
- B. We are God's children by faith, baptized into union with Christ and heirs of God's promise to Abraham (3:26-28).

XXXII. Being baptized into union with Jesus means we live complete in Jesus without fearing any hostile powers of the universe (Colossians 2:10-15).

- A. Jesus fully embodies all that God is and means to us (2:3, 9).

- B. He has conquered all hostile powers and rules over all powers (2:10, 15).
- C. We are complete in Jesus, baptized into union with him, trusting God's power who raised him from the dead (2:12-14).

ONE BODY IN CHRIST
All in the family

XXXIII. Background in earlier lessons: we are one because of a new nature and new relationships.

- D. We have a new basis for relating to God.
 - 1. The core of the gospel is that Jesus became our personal representative and substitute in all his doing and dying, so that God views us now in Christ and not in ourselves apart from him (Isa. 42:6; 49:8; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Phil. 3:3-11).
 - 2. Jesus publicly accepted this representative role as Lamb of God at his baptism, symbolically taking up the sins of the people to carry them to the cross (Lk. 12:49-50; Mk. 10:38; see I John 5:6).
 - 3. As risen Messiah of the end-time with universal sovereignty granted by God himself, Jesus commissioned the Twelve to bring all nations into discipleship to him (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-18; Lk. 24:45-47).
- E. We have a new nature.
 - 1. God regenerates us by his Spirit, enabling us to obey God to his glory, in view of his coming Kingdom (Ezek. 36:22-28; John 3:1-7; Titus 3:3-8).
 - 2. God washes and cleans us, both objectively (in God's sight -- Rev. 1:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5; John 15:3; Eph. 5:25-26) and subjectively (in our own conscience -- Heb. 11:22; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - 3. Jesus himself baptizes us in God's Spirit and the Holy Spirit lives within us as God's personal, powerful presence, enabling holy living and Christian

service (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:1-8; Acts 2:38; Titus 3:3-7; Isaiah 32:14-18; 43:25-44:5; Ezek. 36:22-27; John 7:37-39; 14:16-21; 16:16; 1 Cor. 12:4-11).

F. We have new relationships.

1. To Jesus. To be baptized in/into Jesus "name" means surrendering to Jesus based upon who Jesus is and what he has done (*epi*; Acts 2:38), coming into relation to him as the powerful Lord who conquers Satan and brings God's messianic Kingdom (*eis*; Acts 8:12-16), and obeying him by whom God forgives believers and will judge the world (*en*; Acts 10:34-48).
2. To the unbelieving world. To be baptized is to take a stand with those who trust God's faithfulness as seen in Jesus' resurrection. The person baptized pledges to imitate Jesus' obedience even under persecution. For all these reasons, baptism "saves" believers when they are called to suffer for God's sake (1 Pet. 3:18-22).
3. To sin, law, and evil forces. To be baptized into union with Jesus means: we live in newness of life, free from Satan's effective power (Rom. 6:1-4); we live by faith, although we never perfectly keep God's law (Galatians 3:26-28); we live complete in Jesus without fearing any hostile powers of the universe (Col. 2:10-15).

XXXIV. Baptism binds believers together in one body in a unity we should acknowledge and diligently maintain.

A. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17.

Only Jesus was crucified for us, we were baptized in his name, and he is not divided. Therefore we should all maintain a common (noncompetitive) allegiance, shouting a common slogan under a common banner.

B. Galatians 3:26-29.

Jesus is Abraham's descendant through whom God is blessing the entire world and we have divine blessing only by identification with Jesus. Therefore we should recognize the oneness of all who are baptized into Christ even as God does.

C. Ephesians 4:4-6.

There is but one body, animated by one Spirit. Those in it share one hope and calling. They all relate to one Lord by one faith expressed by one baptism. We are to diligently preserve this unity in bonds of peace.