

We are continuing in the sermon series entitled *Ordinations & Baptism* with this being *Part 5*. Before we begin I want to attempt to explain, one last time, as clearly and succinctly as possible about the term prophet as it's used in both the Old and New Testament. As we read in scripture last Sabbath, Christ said, 'that the law and the prophets were until John' – speaking of John the Baptist. In the terminology used in the Old Testament, those who were sent as any kind of messenger of God were prophets. There's a different time change here of something that's taking place with the beginning of the Church. That's why the law and the prophets, it says, were until John, and so that's why John's terminology is indeed, in the Old Testament, that of a prophet. Understand there are distinctions though even in the Old Testament of prophets, even as there are in the New Testament (which there haven't been very many). There is a difference in these jobs even in the New Testament. In the use of the term prophet in the Old Testament John was a prophet but not used like Moses, David, Daniel and others. John's primary message was for right then and there concerning Jesus Christ. It was right there on the spot – and the short ministry that took place there and the baptisms that took place. It was really, incredibly awesome as we're going to continue on with the sermon series today. But again, it was concerning Jesus Christ, the importance of baptism and the beginning of the message of the Kingdom of God that began to be preached by John and that's why it talks about him being as great as he was in the sense of the timing, in the sense of his responsibility, in the sense of the job: because it was about the Messiah who was there now. It wasn't just a matter of prophets prophesying of His coming. He was now there. He was alive! And this is what made him the magnitude and that's why those things were said by Christ with such a power and importance that it was.

So again, he was inspired in his message that was for the time right then and there and not as much of a focus for future prophetic events that would later be fulfilled as so many of the prophets were in the Old Testament.

So the law and the prophets were until John and John was an Old Testament prophet as a messenger of God, inspired by God with that message. Want to make that perfectly clear. After John, the ministry of Jesus Christ began and then the Church was established with a new kind of organization from God, and that's the primary difference – to understand a new phase of an organization began. It was one of elders, pastors, evangelists, prophets and apostles and that wasn't so before that. It was a totally different world for 4,000 years before that and how God worked and led people.

As I pointed out concerning Mr. Armstrong, who was a great messenger of God, his job was that of an apostle and not of a prophet. Hopefully that will more succinctly take care of everything so that everyone understands the distinction I tried to make and hopefully helped people to make and especially in the Old Testament as well.

Last Sabbath we ended in the book of John as we were going through some of the chronology covering God's introduction of baptism. This is, to me, awesomely exciting and not everyone may catch the same excitement I do because of what we have seen and understood through time, especially in my time in the Church and what I know even existed well before concerning the process of baptism and the laying on of hands. John baptized with a baptism unto repentance. And there have been a lot of questions about this over time within the Church; what that means. And it's not that hard; it's the same thing

we're doing today. It's the same thing we do when we baptize someone. It's a baptism unto repentance and that's the importance of this whole process as its being revealed starting with John.

John baptised with a baptism unto repentance. Then at the beginning of Christ's ministry we looked at the first miracle Jesus Christ performed which was that of turning water into wine and even some of the symbolism/significance of some of that was that the containers used for this miracle were containers used to hold water for the ceremony used by the Jews of the washing of the hands and that ritual event, a ritual of cleansing. It's like in time if people aren't careful, and it happens in the Protestant world and it kind of came into the Church as well that people get into this rut sometimes of thinking that there are certain ways of approaching God. It's like the prayer at a meal. It's fine to pray at a meal, but the great danger of praying at a meal... if you do it all the time, it becomes a routine...that the same words are spoken and it just becomes a ritual. It has no great meaning. It's a better thing when people are in a group together or there's a special meeting of people together and to do something on a special occasion like that, but to do it three times a day like that just at the meal... it loses its meaning because there are a lot of people in the world and in the world of traditional Christianity – that's when they pray – 3 times a day at the meal, if they do... if they're even what you'd call, zealous when it comes to prayer. And yet Jesus Christ said, go in your closet alone. Prayer is a very personal thing when it has to do with your getting into various things in your life. Anyways, to me it's an awesome thing what He was starting to teach at the very beginning that followed up with John, because this was immediately afterwards. It is an incredible thing here about a greater cleansing that must take place in people's lives. It's not just a matter of what you do in washing of the hands and washing of the arms and this ritualistic thing that somehow makes you clean before God, because it doesn't. And so He's introducing something in His ministry, at the very beginning of His ministry, that was already starting in John that has great meaning about how to be cleansed indeed, powerfully so before God.

This process of ritualistic cleaning didn't clean anyone, it didn't cleanse anyone, it didn't purify anyone and so Jesus Christ was going to *change* that which did not purify to that which *does* bring about true change in people's lives. Let's go back to **John 3** and pick up where we left off because the introduction of baptism, first of water and then of God's spirit, *does* purify and change life. It's an awesome thing. We're picking up where we left off last Sabbath; at this particular stage the ministry of Jesus Christ is just beginning and that of John the Baptist is about to end. So here in **John 3:22** – it says, and **After these things Jesus and His disciples went into the land of Judaea; and there He stayed with them, and baptized.** That's the first thing they began to do in a very powerful way after what we read last week, the beginning miracle here and so forth, and so this is the next thing that's introduced by the apostle John. The disciples baptized for Christ but again, there's no laying on of hands yet for the holy spirit because it had not yet been given. So there's a distinction being made here. They continued to baptize like John the Baptist baptized; a little bit of a change now had taken place, a little bit more had been added and that was the authority to do so through Jesus Christ now in the sense of looking to Him as the Messiah, as their Passover, as the Messiah primarily and all that the Messiah would fulfill. And they didn't even understand all that He was to fulfill yet. They didn't understand that the big thing that was going to be fulfilled as a part of the Messiah was that He was coming as our Passover to die for the sins of all mankind; to be a perfect sacrifice, the Passover Lamb.

Verse 23 - And John, speaking of the Baptist, also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. So at this stage very early in Christ's ministry now both John the Baptist (and before John was taken prisoner) and Jesus Christ's disciples were baptizing. Jesus Christ Himself wasn't, but they were doing so for Him as disciples and with a greater authority now that was being passed onto the disciples. **For John was not yet cast into prison.**

Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying/purification. This is all awesomely incredible here what was materializing and the message that's being given here because it's a question on what you must go through in order to truly be purified, which has to do with washing by water – that's the beginning of the process. That's what's coming up here and what's being discussed. And because it all had to do with what John was doing and what Jesus Christ was doing concerning baptism.

So going on in **verse 26 - And they came to John, and said unto him, Teacher, He that was with you beyond Jordan, of whom you bear witness, behold, the same baptizes, and all, you know, all men go unto Him.** So it talks about different ones; it talks about these masses of people. That's what they were saying, "they're going to Christ now; they're going to His disciples now. Here is what you were doing and all these people you were baptizing..." they're working with John and had been continuing on, now they're saying, "Look what's being done there!" Notice: **John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness that I said; I am not the Messiah, but that I am sent before Him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears Him, rejoice greatly because of the bridegroom's voice:** he was inspired in what he said here, moved by God's spirit in what he had to say here because he's in essence telling them, "I am His friend!" See? "I am not the bridegroom here." And so he's saying here, when he talks about hearing the bridegroom's voice, it says, **stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.** Because he's heard that voice and he's saying something great has been fulfilled here. **He must increase, but I must decrease.** He understood; God gave him understanding to a point, because he didn't have all understanding, but to a point letting him know that he had a job to do, but now that Jesus Christ had come that his job, his responsibility, what he was doing was going to decrease and Christ now going to take precedence, is becoming far more important in that ministry and what was taking place in His ministry because he saw Him as the Son of God, the Messiah. He knew who He was; at least he had that conviction, even though later on he sent message to Christ because of his being in prison and those threats that were over him to lose his head. That he said, "Are you the One, or should I look to another?" ...and so Christ had to send a message back to him. You know, when you get into a pickle, a predicament, oftentimes in life we begin to question – that's when doubts begin to come in. Am I...?

That's why I oftentimes think of the apostle Paul and I think if anyone ever in God's Church had an occasion to say, "I wonder if I'm doing the right thing. Am I really pleasing God? Maybe I'm not doing what I should be doing..." It would have been Paul, but Paul never did that. Because if you're stoned several times and drug out dead; on that one occasion they thought he was dead, drug him outside the city... snake bitten like he was...shipwrecked like he was...bobbing up and down in the Mediterranean like he was... you'd think... knowing human nature we'd begin to say, "...maybe PKG isn't the Church..." "Maybe..." whatever, because when we go through hardships and trials that's what we do as human beings. We begin to doubt ourselves, we begin to ask questions and then certain things have to happen in our lives to bring us back on track and that's what happens. That's why I tell people constantly – *Go back to the 50 Truths – 53 now...! Go back to those!* How can you see? How can you understand? How can those things be in your mind save God gave them to you? It's by the power of God's spirit. You see it; others don't. It should be so clear to us. Or maybe some of the prophetic things is where we begin to doubt, but we go back to the most basic of those things and there is no other answer.

So again, we have that. John didn't have the same thing. They had the Old Testament at that point in time. They didn't have any New Testament scriptures. They didn't have the same kind of faith that they live by like we do in the Church today. We're dramatically different than what it was back then. It's

incredible how we're able to live and so that's why God manifested many more things for them to see and do and in Christ's ministry many more things were manifested as evidence and miracles that took place and healings that took place and casting out of demons that took place for a purpose. Later on in time those things happened individually within the Church as God worked with people and those things continue on and they'll continue on in the Millennium. Sometimes people ask about healing. It isn't something promised to all mankind in the Millennium, but it will be as with the Church – that people can go before God, beseech God and seek God's help and intervention in their life and when they receive it, you know that's a great blessing and if a person doesn't – that's a great blessing; if you understand what I'm saying. There are things sometimes in life we carry with us that God lets us carry because it's a part of our moulding and fashioning, as I mentioned last Sabbath. As I mentioned last Sabbath when I talked about various things that God had preordained, even about John and certain things that were to be done in a certain way and things we go through in life to get us where we are; and God does the moulding and fashioning in our lives – each and every one of us.

Now something I don't want people to misunderstand is when I talked about going all the way back to the time before God brought *anything* into existence; before *anything* in the spirit realm was ever created, before *anything* was ever created – God had a plan and the pinnacle of that plan was indeed the pinnacle of that plan – Jesus Christ. He is the pinnacle of the plan of God, of His plan, because it has to do with His Family. God purposed to have a family and Jesus Christ is at the very beginning and the cornerstone of that entire plan. *Everything else ever created is BASED on that, and BUILT upon that!* That's where it begins. That's why Christ was before John, before John the Baptist. There's no necessity of having someone come along at some point in human history and saying, "He is here. He is come." ...and to baptize people unto repentance to prepare for the Messiah unless the Messiah's already there in the plan. So, everything else that was planned was done later. Those things were preordained.

God didn't determine that sometime later on after the flood, or just before the flood, or sometime shortly after Adam and Eve. *God does not work that way! EVERYTHING God does is fully organized, fully purposed in His mind, and before time began in the sense of what could be called time in scripture – from eternity that we don't understand, before anything was ever created in the angelic realm, before anything was ever created in the spirit realm because before the angelic realm there was a spirit realm that God created and brought the angelic realm into of things they could see – spiritually. I don't understand that. We can't because we don't see that which is spirit. God has to manifest something physically to it. That's why it says no man has ever seen God. You can't see God! He is spirit! And so people sometimes get all bothered by certain things when they talk about seeing the back of God when Moses said... you know it says he saw the back. He didn't see God! God manifested something to him that was physical because you can't see spirit!* And so all through the scriptures there are physical things of manifestations of things that God let people see, but it wasn't God. You can't make something compacted that is everything of God that's physical.

Anyway... to make it clearer then, about those things that are preordained, I mentioned the 144,000 and you go beyond that into the millions and the billions in God's Family. We don't understand all that, but God does and there are human beings that have been born through time that are going to be placed into various places within that Family and the primary structure of that, the beginning of that is the Kingdom of God that's coming when Jesus Christ returns. 144,000 made, brought into the God Family to join with Jesus Christ in a great work that's going to take place throughout the Millennium and the Great White Throne. But I don't want people to think that individuals, because this is a Protestant teaching that's out there, that *you* as an individual were preordained before time. You were not. Time and chance, various things happen in people's lives – but where God has worked through time, various ones

have been called at a particular time – there are things that God has done and even intervened in certain families. But anyway, to make a long story short – there are those things then that God has called different ones to *fulfill* – see? ...through time, in this world, of people that are out there, within family lines in some cases, in some cases not. God knows what He's doing – we don't. We just yield ourselves to the process. God blesses us in learning about what He's doing and how He's doing it. He gives us portions of that through time and we receive... and then we act upon it. There's no such thing as predestination of individuals.

John said, **He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all:** Jesus Christ came from above. It's amazing how people can think though. If you have a concept in your mind that Jesus Christ eternally existed you can begin to think in your mind, "Well, this is what it's talking about..." No, it's not! He came from above because His Father's from above, His Father's eternally existed. He came *out of, out from* His Father because He was His Father! Fully that portion of His life that made Him was not from a physical human being father, but from God the Father, and He gave to Mary that which was in the womb to begin to grow. He was His Father on a physical plane and a spiritual plane. **He who comes from above is above all: he who is of the earth is earthly,** of the earth, physical in every way, **and speaks of the earth:** we can't help it; it's the way we are, we're of the earth. We're physical, that's as far as we can go. Paul explains those terms in how there is that which we can speak of that's a mystery in the world; but because of God's spirit it's not a mystery to us.

And what He has seen and heard that He testifies; that is what He is witness of, **and no man receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set to His seal that God is true.** When we begin to be drawn and called and we see, we believe that witness, the testimony of things that are given to us – when we're able to believe it, it's because God's given us the ability to believe and see and we then attest to it, witness of it that it's true. That's how God works and our minds open up, our calling becomes a testimony of those things.

Verse 34 - For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God: so whether it be John, or in this case referring to Jesus Christ, speaks the words that come from God. If someone is from God, sent from God, has that testimony, that whatever it is they are to teach and preach that God has given to them, it says, **speaks the words of God: for God does not give the spirit,** speaking specifically now of Jesus Christ, but no matter who it applies to as far as someone sent from God will speak the words of God. If they don't then they're not of God and God's going to deal with that, which He has. And so he's speaking very specifically then of Christ and he says, **for God does not give the spirit by measure unto Him.** Speaking of Christ. He does to us. He does to His ministry. He does to every one of us in the Church – but not to Jesus Christ. And I don't fully understand that. There are things I see and understand that each one of us are going to see and receive that to the degree of where we are in our lives.

Verse 35 - The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. So it's quite an awesome thing that He's saying here to his disciples, those who are talking to him. It's an incredible thing that He is being inspired by God's spirit to say to them and teach to them at this point that was written up then literally by John, the apostle John.

Verse 36 - He who believes on the Son it's *in* the Son, it's in what He says. It's not just believe, like the Protestant world does – that someone came and died and believe on Him and believe those stories, it's so much more than that. It's to believe what He said, and to live, to seek to live by those things that He said and **He who believes in the Son has everlasting life:** see, there are things that you cannot have in your life unless God calls you and gives you the ability through His spirit to see, and if you see them,

then you *have* a measure of everlasting life in you, you have a portion then of God's spirit within you or otherwise you couldn't see it. That's what is being said here in essence. No human being has the ability, the capacity to see certain things, to believe certain things. I don't care what it is: the Holy Days of God, the Sabbath of God, the plan of God, what the Holy Days teach – no person can see any of that and retain it save by the spirit of God. You have to have God's spirit and that's what it's talking about here. That's what it means, **has everlasting life**: does it mean that as soon as you begin that you have immortality? No! But it means you have access to everlasting life and if you continue to yield yourself to the process you *will have* because that's what God has offered: everlasting life, continuing life into eternity, not from the past, just future. There's only one who's had it in eternity. **He who believes on the Son has everlasting life and he who believes not the Son shall not see life**; if you don't believe, you're not going to see it, not just for the future, but you're not going to see the plan of God, you're not going to see that life. We see things about the life of God, the life of Jesus Christ, the plan of God that come alive when you hear sermons, when you read certain things, when you read your Bible. Because of God's spirit there are things that just come alive for you that don't for the rest of the world because they don't see the truth, they can't... those things aren't put together for them, but we're able to.

It says, **but the wrath of God abides on him**. What does that mean? It goes back to the job of John, it goes back to the ministry of Jesus Christ, it goes back to baptism. That's what it's talking about. The wrath of God is a term that's used; the wrath of God is the matter of the death penalty because of sin; the wrath of God has to do with an eventual judgement that if you're not able to be forgiven of sin, or you don't repent and are forgiven of sin that what awaits everyone then is the wrath of God which is eternal death, judgement that lasts for eternity. That's what it's talking about and so until someone is brought to repentance, that's what they have over their head. That's why every person has to come to a point of baptism, burying the old self and starting the process of being able to be forgiven of sin through Jesus Christ. And so this is what it's saying; **but the wrath of God abides on him** if we're not forgiven of sin, not able to see life, if we don't receive of that life.

So the story continues on in the next chapter, notice **John 4 - When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John**, you know that had to upset them, that made them upset with John in the first place. They sent different ones out there to quiz John, 'By what authority are you baptizing people?' It's a picture here of something... "You know, we have the cleansing, we have purification, we go through washings, we go through this ceremony and here you're putting them totally under the water. 'By what authority do you do this cleansing, this purifying, John?'" That's what they were doing, that was their attitude and spirit and John let them know and it's an incredible thing here because something far greater is being shown now; not just a ritualistic ceremony of purification, but one that is true, one that is meaningful, one that God is now introducing to the world as a part of the gospel of the Kingdom of God because that gospel began to be preached by John the Baptist. So, **when therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus Himself did not baptize any, but His disciples did it,)** can you imagine why it had to be this way? People at some point in the future bragging that they were baptized by Jesus Christ Himself and that somehow that particular baptism was therefore more important than if someone besides Christ was to do it. Paul had problems with this in dealing with some of the Gentiles; you say you're baptized by Apollos and I was baptized by Paul and I was baptized by Peter. It's like it gives people the big head and pride and the very thing that we're to be conquering and overcoming is the very thing that can sometimes happen in people's lives. Well, so and so baptized me and, well, I... I didn't get baptized by them... and that thing of human nature that sometimes comes out. Can you imagine someone being resurrected later – "Jesus Christ baptized me...He baptized me..." Whooooo... well, whoop tee do for you, you know? And it becomes a thing of pride, and that's why

something like this couldn't take place. That's why Jesus Christ wouldn't, didn't do this, but His disciples did. It's because of human nature. So it says **but His disciples did it. Verse 3 – He left Judaea then and departed again into Galilee.** It was after this then that John was taken and put into prison and after they departed some of these things took place because all the massive baptisms that Jesus Christ and His disciples were doing very quickly on... this was... we're talking about a fast work! A quick work that was taking place and it's quite incredible what John the Baptist did in a short time and then the ministry of Jesus Christ at the very beginning and then He left and went to Galilee – left this area of this region because His time wasn't yet; because the Pharisees were stirred up and He had to leave. He left and went away for a time.

That's why I marvel sometimes about what God has given to us to do at the end-time and I'm learning and understanding more and more in a greater way why things are happening and why God has given things to happen in the way they are and why this must be a very quick work toward the end – okay? Because of people; because of the response of human beings and why certain protection still has to be given there as it says to two individuals because if people have the ability and power they would deal with it quickly and some are going to try. God makes it very clear, but the longer the period of time like this...anyway the more difficult it would be indeed for the Church. So, it's going to be something very big and very quick as things begin to take place and God's blessing us in getting organized for that.

Act 19 – we see that John baptized with a baptism of repentance and then when the ministry of Jesus Christ began, His disciples baptized more people than John. Incredible! More than John and his disciples did, so John had disciples there that helped him with the baptisms that were taking place there. And it says they baptized more than Jesus Christ's disciples. So again, with the baptisms of repentance from John, again the people were baptized as they were looking with conviction to, or for the Messiah. This was the message that they were being given from John – to look to the Messiah, the time is here, the time is at hand, He is here. And so, their minds were fully of one of seeking to be baptized for the remission of sins, they wanted to be forgiven of sin so that they could be cleansed and purified with the true purification, not something ritualistic, and they understood that repentance was a part of this as they looked to/for the Messiah. And then as John went along here and Jesus Christ came, then it was a matter even as they continued on – still looking to the Messiah, toward a Messiah, that He is here and they had evidence of that, they talked about that evidence that they had, but more now were being turned even to Christ's ministry and to His disciples, but it was still all a baptism to repentance.

Notice here **Acts 19:4 - Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him, believe Him, in other words, which should come after him, so, you need to believe the One that's following me, you need to believe in the Son of God, you need to believe the Messiah – He's here and you need to believe what He tells you! ...that is, on Christ Jesus.** And **When they heard this, it says, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** By that authority, that's what had been given. So again here, it was a beginning process. Again, they were not receiving the holy spirit but a process that leads to, indeed, remission of sins and in time, a relationship with God. Not all those people that were baptized were able to enter into the kind of relationship that we're blessed to have when God calls us into the Church. There were many of them who got old and died and they await a resurrection to a time when they can be begotten of God's spirit. Those things didn't happen to everyone at that time...under John's baptism, nor under the baptism of Christ. Okay? It was a process leading to a way and to a time...there were many of those who did come through all that though who did have hands laid upon them. This becomes awesomely significant as we go forward. So they were being introduced to the beginning process of salvation. Not everyone received it, not all these individuals then, by any measure, are going to be a part of the 144,000 – they *weren't*

called to that. That wasn't the purpose of this at that time taking place. It was a beginning of a process that God was introducing and showing that leads to being in the Family of God. And so many of those in essence postponed until a later time just like the vast majority of all those who've been a part of the Church of God through Philadelphia that lived on into Laodicea – they must wait till a time when they're going to be able to be awakened and continue their process. So, again, God is able to continue that process at whatever stage in life – okay? He has the power to give life again.

John baptized with a baptism of repentance saying unto the people that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is on Him who is Christ Jesus and when they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is talking about a process here of an authority that was given then for individuals following, of how they were to be baptized; and this is talking about authority that was given *in His name*. When it says, 'in the name of'... we'll get into this a little bit more later on, but a lot of this has to do with authority as well as the meaning and the importance of the name and what that does if you understand the entire process, which we do.

Let's back up here to **Acts 8** and notice something else here. People were being pointed toward Jesus Christ through John the Baptist's ministry and baptisms of repentance. Later on with Christ; the beginning of His ministry, the disciples continued the process of baptizing and then in the Church it continued on, but it was magnified then. The baptisms performed by the disciples of Jesus Christ were baptisms unto repentance. And just to drive the point home, neither the baptisms of John or those performed by the disciples of Christ involved the giving of the spirit – it wasn't given yet. **Acts 8:11** – this is speaking of a time with Simon Magus, if you remember the story here, part of the things of his life; the one that the Catholic church refers to as Peter, who became known as Peter later on, not the true Peter, not the apostle Peter, but that's the one they call Peter who started his religion and those who followed later on and became known as the Christian church in time. But anyway, this is talking about his introduction to and his coming up and being introduced to certain things and so it says here in **verse 11** to bring in part of the story; **And to him they had regard, because that of a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.** Again, speaking of Simon Magus. There were certain people who knew of him and of his kind of charisma.

Verse 12 - But when they believed Philip, so here's this group of people they're talking about, knowing Simon Magus who was there and now they are hearing Philip. It says, **But when they believed Philip preaching things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ,** Jesus the Messiah in other words, they knew what was being said here; **they were baptized, both men and women.** And this is a major thing taking place too – both men and women. Showing that *everyone* is able to come and have this process begin in their life and showing the importance of that which those whom God was calling into the Church and giving as greatest importance to one as to the other. That's why scriptures become important later on when it talks about 'Jew or Gentile, male or female, there is no difference', we're all brought into one. That's why this is spoken of in this manner.

Verse 13 - Then Simon himself also believed: Amazing, there are things he began to see. It says he believed! ...to a point. But there have been many people I've known through time... I have known people into the hundreds that we have visited through time going back in the Church, of people who've been called, people who've been brought along - their minds opened up but could not take the step that brought them on into the Church, and many who came on along into the Church. Just because a person begins a process doesn't mean they complete it, or are able to complete it – okay? That's why we always have to be watchful, alert, on guard spiritually to continue to fight the fight every stage of our life because it's a battle, it's a fight and you can't ever let down, you've got to keep fighting.

Verse 13 – Then Simon himself believed also and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Incredible what was taking place. He was seeing things and you know what happened? He envied. Because of his past, because of his trying to draw crowds to him with a practice he had of seducing people into his kind of religious ideas of things of the world at that time; and he saw something here that he began to envy and desire to have himself, to be able to accomplish himself. He began to want that more for self because of what it would do for self. Pride began to enter in in such a way that he began to lose what God gave him initially – his ability to see and believe certain things. And I've seen that happen to *so many* through time.

Verse 14 - Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Amazing what's taking place here. Notice the process... here they're baptized, notice what happens - **Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the holy spirit: (For as yet it had not yet fallen on any of them: as they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus only.)**... incredible what we're being told here. It's like a continuation of the baptism by the disciples that were taking place at a point in time here of the time of Christ, the baptism of repentance when His ministry was there. Here we're past that but here they, it says, were baptized only in the name of Christ. They hadn't had hands laid upon them yet. **Then they laid hands upon them, and they received the holy spirit.** Incredible story here; something that we haven't appreciated as deeply or as fully in what's being shown in a distinction of time and of circumstances and of what God wants us to grasp and comprehend...and He saved a lot of that just for this time now because of what we're getting ready to do, because what God has called us to do at this time, because of what's going to take place very soon now. To me that's an awesome aspect of the timing of all these events coming together like this. Coincidence? Chance? Time? God's spirit! The planning, the way it all fits together is... I find it immensely inspiring, I really do. When you live this and see it and see what God brings together... it is an awesome thing to experience and it should be for every one of us, it truly goes beyond words.

Individuals were baptized with the baptism of repentance in the name of Christ, in authority, into His name for the remission of sin, but that's not the entire story is it? Especially once the Church began in 31 A.D. There's more that's needed. You can't stop there, there's something else that's needed that goes beyond the baptisms of John and the baptisms of the disciples of Christ at the beginning. Those baptisms were strictly a baptism of repentance – only! ...in water. A purification, a cleansing, a commitment, a covenant people were making with God concerning a Messiah and their belief in what God was telling them and the message of John the Baptist, and then of Christ and His disciples. But there's more needed and that's the story behind all this.

So again, baptisms continued on into the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ and people received a baptism of repentance and now in the name of Jesus Christ, that is by the authority of Jesus Christ; in other words in His name which is by God's authority and in His name. So as we read, again, in **Acts 8:16 - (For as yet, speaking of the spirit, it had not yet fallen on them and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus only.) Then they laid hands upon them, and they received the holy spirit.**

Let's back up now to **Acts 2**. From the very beginning of the Church, beginning on the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., baptism itself began to take on a new meaning because the Church was being established and so we begin to read part of the story here. **Acts 2:36 - therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly,** so here again, Peter is inspired through the power of the holy spirit. Some things were being addressed on this Day of Pentecost, some miraculous things as God was beginning to show the

importance of that day, the importance of the beginning, the establishment of the Church of God, the beginning of the next phase of salvation – because there's more than just going under the water, beginning the process of purification for the remission of sins. There's much more to the story and that's what we're being shown here. So again here, Peter going on and saying, **therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.** This was a very powerful message talking to people, saying something to the people on a plane that they could understand. Now they understood it by God's help, by God's spirit, because that's the only way you can receive a message like this, otherwise you just take it physically. Now things were beginning to be understood on a spiritual plane in a far greater way. That's why it's such an awesome thing when you understand after this period of time in some of the speech and some of the ways some of the disciples talked, it talks about how now there were things they now understood that Jesus Christ had told them; things that they took physically...that *now* they were able to understand on a spiritual plane. Why? Because God was giving His holy spirit now, pouring out His spirit upon the Church, poured it out upon the disciples here beginning with the apostles first, and then it began to go out to others who were being drawn into the Church.

And so it says here, this message from Peter saying, **you are guilty of the death of Jesus Christ.** That's what he was telling them – **you crucified Christ.** You killed the Messiah! What a powerful message when you understand what that means spiritually because every person who ever comes to a point of baptism and receiving of God's spirit, drawn into the Church, has to come to understand their sins killed Jesus Christ. He is a personal saviour. He is our Passover individually for each and every one of us. We have to make the choice of acceptance of that – that He died for *my sins*. And that's what it's all about. So we're all guilty of His death, otherwise He wouldn't have had to die if it wasn't for our sins. And so every human being has died. That's what Paul talks about throughout the book of Romans, makes it very clear that we're all guilty; that it's because of our individual sins. We killed the Christ. We killed the Messiah. If we'd been standing there we'd have done the same thing – see? We'd have said, "Yes! Kill Him!" That's what God's making very clear – not just because of our sins, but we would have done the same thing if we'd been in that society, in that world at that time around those people, swayed by that power, we would have done the same things; but regardless, it's about a spiritual thing, about sin and sin killing Christ.

Verse 37 - Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, they understood what he was saying. It hurt because they saw something on a plane that they didn't understand before, **and they said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit.** So, in this particular case here, it's carrying the step further, truly is. There is that which is given in a very powerful way that shows the next phase of baptism and it is one here that God is making very clear, in a very powerful way at the very beginning through Peter and telling what all people must do if they come to understand that they are guilty of the death of Christ, that it's a message then that is very commonly stated in the world even, even by Traditional Christianity because at least they grasp that this is an important thing... that anyone must come to repentance and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and then the giving, or the receiving of the holy spirit. We understand that it has to be done in spirit and in truth because repentance means you've got to repent of that which is false – see?

Sometimes people come along and they have questions about: "I've been baptized by this church organization out here. I've been baptized by that organization out there and do I need to do that again?" And then the question is, "What did you repent of? Did you repent of not keeping the Sabbath?"

Did you repent of not keeping the Holy Days? Did you repent of not obeying the truth of God? Because if you didn't, you weren't baptized, it wasn't true." That in itself should teach something there, that if you're not able to repent of what is truly false in the world, which for the vast majority out here is false Traditional Christianity. If you're not able to see the need to repent of observing Sunday, of keeping Christmas and Easter; and obeying God and keeping the Sabbath, the Passover and the Holy Days...then you're not really repenting. So, if you can't really repent, you can't really be baptized into Jesus Christ, into the truth. Believe Him? You must believe on Him. It's believing Him and what He taught and what He taught continued to be revealed and given through the apostles because the New Testament was given *by* Jesus Christ, by *inspiration* from God, through Jesus Christ to the Church. That's how God has worked. He teaches, He gives doctrine through the apostles and prophets – that's what God made very clear and it comes from Jesus Christ – that's how God works. And so, that's a powerful thing to understand. And so again, all these things go back to a process of how God works in the Church, in people's lives and how a person is able to receive the holy spirit, because it has to be in the truth or you can't receive the spirit.

Verse 39 - For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. See, it tells a whole story there. I am dumbfounded sometimes, have been in times past, by individuals that come along and how people do not understand or lose understanding of a calling! That you have to be called by God the Father. *EVERY person* who has ever come into the Church – *every person* who is brought to a point in time where they're going to be brought into the Church – they have to be called by God the Father. All the millions that are getting ready to be drawn and called...people that are already being worked with out there – God's preparing them to be called into the Church. They're already being prepared for that. You were prepared, every one of you that's here that's new in the last two years; God had to prepare you to be called. He had a purpose in why you're being drawn and why you're being called. Then it's up to us to yield to that calling and to grab a hold of it with all of our being and fight for it once we see it, once we understand that. And so that's an ongoing process, but that process is already underway right now, has been for some time. God knows who it is, those of whom He's going to call – into the millions here. He's not just going to randomly start calling individuals out here. "So, I think I'll get that one... that one over there..." They're being worked with already – people – in their lives. Because to be called is an important thing with God, it is an awesome step of salvation –see? And so God chooses whom He will that He's going to call and draw into the Church and bring along.

And so we're getting ready for those kinds of things and God is preparing us for that job – before Jesus Christ comes. That is an awesome thing to understand; that He purposed from the beginning of time what was going to take place here at the end-time, at the end of 6,000 years; of *how* He was going to introduce, bring along, bring back the Kingdom of God in the form of, through Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords that was planned so long ago. That's why God is so excited about this time – of all time! To see this finally coming to fruition! You know, we can't even begin to grasp the magnitude of that. We go out here and we build something... I love construction; if I weren't doing this, I'd probably be in construction because I love building. I love buildings. I love seeing things being built. I love it from the intricacies of the very beginning of digging a hole to the concrete to the plumbing underneath it, everything that goes up in the structure – all except for electrical – I have a hard time with electrical things. I don't like to touch it. Let the experts do that! Anyway... the rest of it – I love construction. That's why I love architecture, I love seeing things in different countries and throughout time and what people have built, what the imagination of mankind that God has given the ability... the creative minds that God has given to us and we're able to share in various things. And that's an awesome thing then, to see what God is building and how God builds and to recognize our being a part of that. And when we

see those things how inspiring and how moving that is and nothing is done by chance and it's an awesome thing, a beautiful thing.

And so again here, going back to this, this promise... this goes back to a prophecy of Joel... it was a promise of the holy spirit. **Joel 2:28 – ...and it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens in those days will I pour out My spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire and pillars of smoke.** So it's talking about the end-time. Joel is about the things that happen at the end-time. It's talking about the horrifying things that are going to take place on this earth, when things begin to devour. Chapter one talks about the palmerworm and it shows that there's massive devastation, and then behind that come the locust, and then behind that comes the cankerworm and then the caterpillar; and so it shows phase after phase here of destruction – that's what it's talking about – to totally strip away what man has and then it goes through and talks about some of these things that take place – how horrifying certain things are going to be. It says there's never been a time like it, there never will be again.

Then it gets into chapter 2 here and it shows then the purpose and what it leads to. It's talking about the coming into the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the time it comes and a time God looks forward to in pouring out His spirit upon all flesh. That hasn't happened yet. The beginning process of that happened in a mighty way on Pentecost in 31 A.D. A portion of this prophecy began to be fulfilled, but not the fullness of it, just like the things about John and just like the things about the Elijah to come – the 'types' that existed before – not the complete fulfillment of it. So even as Peter is prophesying, giving certain things here of prophecy from the book of Joel, talking about certain things being fulfilled at that time, the things of destruction weren't being fulfilled, the other things being prophesied here weren't being fulfilled, but it was the beginning – showing the process that was going to take place when God begins to throw/pour out His spirit on all flesh. But now, when you follow the actual process of events and the destruction takes place, and when God *does* pour out His spirit upon *all flesh* – because as soon as Jesus Christ returns –*every one on this earth is going to be granted access to the truth* through understanding. It doesn't mean they're going to embrace it immediately, but it's going to be available to them. They're going to have the capacity by a calling from God, to now receive the truth.

Some people are going to have a tough time with this because of what they're coming out of; some are going to have to come to a point in time where they acknowledge that when Abraham had an occasion for his son, being told by God to offer him up, that it wasn't Ishmael. And that's going to be pretty tough for some, because when different ones take a pilgrimage to Mecca; this is what their belief is. They're going there as an honour to Abraham in belief of that it was Ishmael who was offered up before God and God provided a sacrifice in place of him. They've taken that story and changed it when it was Isaac. And that's a tough thing to receive...as much as it is for the Jewish people to receive that Jesus Christ who came to them – Jewish in every respect – was rejected by His own people! ...of the tribe of Judah! And they reject Him to this day; *the Jewish people reject the truths written over and over again throughout the Old Testament about a Messiah, about a Passover and what He was going to fulfill* – and they *full well reject Him* as being the Messiah! And their beliefs in Judaism have become so corrupt... so there are going to be Jews who have a very difficult time, in some respects, those who are farther to the right, those who wear the funny little hats when they walk to the synagogues and can only walk a certain distance. Like those in Detroit; because they had to build special passes over a freeway: when they put in a freeway around the north side of the city with 6 lanes of traffic, 3 in one way and 3 in the other way, and they worked with the city of being able to develop this park system where they could

plant trees on top of it so they could have this environment to walk from one side of the freeway to the other so they wouldn't have to go beyond a Sabbath day's journey.

People like that are going to have a very hard time when Jesus Christ does return – to get past some of their teachings because it's a matter of swallowing their pride and coming to admit all along He was the Messiah and we rejected Him. He is our *Passover lamb* and we rejected Him! Some of those... the farther to the right people are, the more extreme they are in their ideas and beliefs, the harder it is to swallow pride. Too bad! It's just like in the Church of God – those who were scattered...that's why so many aren't going to be able to come into the Promised Land. God isn't going to let them come in because they will not accept things that they should know! ...things that God said was going to come to pass: an apostasy...and *they full well reject it* – just as much as the Jews rejected the Passover lamb – they full well reject that an apostasy occurred! There are those organizations, like United and Living and others who believe that they must become *so large* in numbers, in time...that's why they're looking to 25 years and beyond in time now before Jesus Christ can return because they're not big enough yet and they have to become so large that then later on they could have this apostasy that's prophesied. How insanely and willingly blind can we be? And yet that's what happened in God's Church after the apostasy, and the sleeping that took place that people are in such a deep sleep that they will not accept what should be so obvious. *We experienced the prophesied apostasy of the Bible* and the entire Church – not one stone was left upon another. You know why? Pride. It's pride that gets in the way. Pride that a person can't say, "I am Laodicean to the core! I *know* what my battle is! I know who I am! I *know* that my tendency is to become lukewarm and kind of coast and not continue to *fight* for *this* way of life with all my being!" See? You have to get knocked in the teeth and your head battered up against a wall and be a little bloody before you think... "Oooo this hurts and.... I get it! I want to fight! I want to fight for this way! I know I have to fight for this way! I do not want to fall asleep again! I do not want this to happen to me!" So again, full well rejecting the Messiah.

So the more to the right a person is, with pride in their beliefs, they will not accept what should be obvious to them. You say that the Elijah to come has indeed come... and people don't like that. You say that two prophets, two end time witnesses are here and people don't like that – they won't even look into it. What a sad thing! Won't even consider – what if it's possible? What *IF* this is true? What *IF* what they're saying is absolutely down the line? But they can't – no more than the Jews could, or can, to say, Is it possible that He is of Judah and look at these things that are fulfilled over and over again and what He said... is it possible that indeed He was the Messiah? And they can't do it. So it's going to be very difficult for people in the millennium, at the beginning, although God's going to offer it, it's going to take some time. Just like it says, if those in Egypt don't want to come up and keep the Feast... you know what it says about them? I mentioned it at the Feast – they're going to have some suffering; they're going to find out what it's like not to have crops being able to be grown in their own area and what it's like to go without some food and *then* God says, if they won't repent – then the plague. They're going to die. There are going to be things happen to them that they're going to die. And is that going to happen to different people on the earth because they keep rejecting? ...because they just can't get past their past even though God makes it available? It's like in the world today; it's like in the Church... what happens when any individual, husband or a wife, is baptized? If just one is baptized the whole family, God says, is sanctified – set apart for holy use and purpose – meaning that the other person has the ability and capacity *IF* they will do so, to read into, to study, to ask God to help them to see, is this possibly true? ...that their minds can be opened to see the truth. But because sometimes of hostility, because of pride, because some things are sometimes so deeply imbedded in people's minds – they can't do it. And so we have many people through time who have fit in those categories who have a difficult time, but God has a way of humbling people and there are going to be people like that as we go

along here at the end who are going to have the opportunity of having their eyes opened in a greater way and they're going to realize that they've been kicking against the stones, if you will, and fighting an uphill battle that they shouldn't have been fighting against. And others won't. Why? Because of pride! Pride is a very powerful thing, it truly is.

What an awesome thing to think that here Jesus Christ is on this earth, 144,000 are on this earth and there are still people who are going to be battling pride?! And yet God has made available to them the ability, if they will humble themselves to look at it, to consider, that they have the ability with God's help...because you have to have God's help to receive the spiritual help to see what is true, to be brought to baptism and repentance and then to be impregnated with God... that's an awesome thing! And yet people are going to resist. So it's not going to be all a bed of roses when we first get there; there's going to be some work to do, and you know what? God's already got it all planned out because of the millions – the millions who are going to come into the Church before Jesus Christ returns...the millions who are going to be added to it right after that... and the power that's going to be there to be a light, to be an example in the world of change in government, in religion and so forth and for that influence to begin to go around the world in truth and in spirit. An awesome thing because it's going to spread throughout the whole world. Just like the waters it talks about of coming out of Jerusalem, God's spirit coming out from Jerusalem and eventually fills the whole world. It takes some time for that kind of productivity to take place.

This promise about receiving of the holy spirit came out of the book of Joel, what Peter is quoting here. He says, **For the promise**, speaking of God's spirit when God says, 'I'll pour out my spirit upon all flesh.' Sometimes we get letters from individuals who talk about... "I'm wondering if I'm not fitting into this one here about... where's it say that... "your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams...' I've had some dreams, I've had some visions." And I... Whoa! Stop right there! No you haven't, not from God. God isn't working that way right now; that isn't yet, and that isn't even what these verses mean – see? It has to do with things of the future; it has to do with things that are going to take place because of the Millennium; it has to do with an ability to understand things on a spiritual plane and indeed, if you want to talk about dreams, things that will happen in people's lives later on because of conversion, because of a new world and a new age. But again, the things it's talking about here in Joel – this is only a beginning here and what's happening right now at the end-time – *these* things haven't happened yet, as a whole... okay? ...let along the destruction; let alone the dreams and visions of the young and the old as it talks about here.

But going on...so he says in **Acts 2:39 – For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.** Come out of the world is what they're being told. **Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:** those who received this were baptized right then and there, whether some had even...most likely some of the people had already gone through initial baptism of repentance, it doesn't talk about it here, it doesn't say specifically how they did this – there might have been those who did have that as a part of their life, that didn't have to have a water baptism, but had to have the other baptism, and that's the point of all this...that when we read about baptism, so often what comes automatically into our mind, we think physically, we think just water. We think that's what baptism means. It means to be immersed under water. Yes, that is the first step, but if someone has already received the baptism unto repentance, there's another baptism they must receive that follows that – that's what started with the Church.

Here it says, **they that gladly received this, and the same day there were added unto them three thousand souls.** So being baptized, immersed in water is a baptism unto repentance and when the Church began baptism was magnified as an immersion. It was introduced and that was a baptism of the holy spirit, an immersion into the holy spirit. That is what is so significant about the beginning of the baptisms with John who himself made it clear that there was an even greater baptism to follow.

He spoke of Jesus Christ. **Mark 1:1 - The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare Your way before You.** Isn't it amazing? This is the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and it takes us back to talking about all that's written in the prophets and now the messenger, who is going to be sent first before Jesus Christ is brought, right then and there. **The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare you the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.** That's why I liked the way Mr. Armstrong explained that, making it very clear that this has greater spiritual significance; a voice crying in the wilderness, because a reality is that's the way it's been through time, a spiritual wilderness out here and only when God gives the ability to hear are people able to hear it.

Verse 4 - John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. So he showed that there is a necessity to be forgiven of sin, and that you must repent and begin that process – that's what he was telling them. This is the beginning of the message, the good news of the Kingdom of God, and of Jesus Christ. Then John goes on to say, notice what he says about Jesus Christ in **verse 8 - I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the holy spirit.** *That means to immerse with the holy spirit, with the holy spirit.* That's what's exciting! To see a greater understanding and a greater explanation of this process and to understand that there's a process that begins with water, and there's a process that follows it that all must receive which is of the holy spirit. *That's what happened on the Day of Pentecost that's so awesome. The holy spirit was poured out upon them* and the incredible things that took place on that day that God began to signify to show the importance of what was starting – finally, then and there. What the prophet Joel said would begin to come to pass until greater things of which Joel spoke of are fulfilled later on.

The immersion in water is a baptism of repentance and a covenant we are making with God concerning our desire to be forgiven of sin and from that time forward seeking to walk in the truth. We want to live what is right. It's not just a ritualistic cleansing. It has great meaning to it; repentance from all that is false and beginning to walk in the truth.

Romans 6:3 – Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ, in other words for the remission of sins, **were baptized unto His death?** What is being pictured is beautiful. It's saying here that the beginning of this process, what it pictures, the baptism unto repentance – this is what it leads to, this is the understanding that God is giving to us. When we were baptized, again, it was not baptized into the holy spirit, the beginning is water. So, we're baptized into water and this is what Paul is addressing right now. So we're baptized in water unto Jesus Christ; we're not immersed into the holy spirit until we have had hands laid upon us by the ministry of Jesus Christ, by His authority, in His name. **Know you not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ, were baptized unto His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death:** that's what it pictures when you go under the water; **that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.** So it pictures putting the old man to death under a watery grave and when we come back out it shows that we're to walk in a new way of life now, for the remission of sins. We seek to be forgiven of our sin; we want to put the past behind us; we are making a commitment and a covenant before God to walk in what is true – in the right ways; to obey Him. And that's the covenant;

that's what we're saying at baptism, whether it be the baptism of John, the baptism of Christ in His early ministry, and then later on with the Church. What was added with the Church though was the second phase of baptism that fulfilled the prophecy, in essence, that was given through (prophetic because it was shortly to come after Jesus Christ died) was that of receiving of the holy spirit. **There's one coming, speaking of Jesus Christ, who will baptise you/immerse you in the holy spirit.**

Verse 5 – for if we had been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. It does lead to the end in the sense that in time we're going to be literally in the likeness of His resurrection, in the sense that we're going to be spirit in time, but it doesn't start out that way. We start out in a physical body and we're to walk in newness of life and it goes on to say, **knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.** Now we're to serve God! We're not to serve selfishness, even though we still stumble, even though we still do those things – but we've made a choice and we seek to enter into the battle of fighting against self; against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life; and to yield ourselves to serve God, to obey God. And we cry out for that help. We continue to repent before God.

Verse 7 – and he that is dead is freed from sin. You're burying the old self, being made free from sin. **...now if we be dead with Christ,** in other words in Christ because it's a belief that He died for us, that He is our Passover and that's what we're acknowledging about our Messiah, about our Passover – that He died for our sins and we're seeking remission, forgiveness of our sins. It says, **we believe that we shall also live with Him.** I love these verses because it escapes the world. Only by the power of God's spirit can you understand what's being said here when it talks about; **if you be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him,** or in Him if you will, that's what the word means. It isn't something that's just future. That resurrection isn't something that's just future; yes, that's where it leads, but as soon as you come up out of the watery grave, as you are resurrected, that's what it pictures, you're to walk in newness of life now with God's spirit within you, in that respect, and He in you. You're dwelling in Christ. You are now, from that point on, once you have the next phase of baptism, once you have hands laid upon you through God's ministry, the impregnation of God's spirit being baptized, immersed in the spirit – then we're able to live. We have a life living within us now; we're able to live *in Him* and He in us. That's why Jesus Christ died – so we could be forgiven of sin so that God and Jesus Christ could dwell in us and we could dwell in them on a spiritual plane; it's totally immersed into the Church of God – the Body of Christ. It's a spiritual thing. It's an immersion. It's a baptism. It's exciting!

Verse 11 - Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That's what it's talking about. We're alive unto God; before we were dead, on a spiritual plane. There was nothing spirit about us, we had the death penalty over us, that's what it means of those things we've read before. Now we're alive; now we have life, true life, God's life, a portion of God's life literally dwelling within us. **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.**

Let's notice **I Corinthians 12**; taking it a step farther. All these things are a beautiful picture, things we've understood in large part but now are able to understand in a clearer, better way, in a more succinct way of the timing of the process of why God began with John as He did; that John the Baptist and then the ministry of Christ for that period of time and the baptisms that took place then – and then the baptisms that began to take place after the death of Christ on the Day of Pentecost. **I Corinthians 12:12 - For as the Body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one Body, being**

many, are one Body: so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized, word means immersed, into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit. It's a beautiful scripture, it really is, very powerful in what it's showing us, of what it's giving us. It shows that this is the immersion into God's spirit; this is a part of the process into one Body, into the Church of God, into the Body of Christ with the impregnation of God's spirit where He dwells in us and we in Him. Again, that's why Jesus Christ died, because without the forgiveness of sin, as being the first part of it, and Jesus Christ our Passover – God won't dwell in us. He won't dwell in sin! That's why it's so important to continually day by day repent of sin, to keep fighting that battle because when we don't, then we cut ourselves off from the flow of that spirit because *God will not dwell in sin!* That's what's so incredibly important about repentance and a continuation of that covenant promise we made at baptism. We continue to do it throughout our life, to repent, until our final change take place.

I love these verses! Awesome what it says here! **Romans 5:8** – it says, **But God commends**, in other words; He 'introduces'. The Greek means 'to exhibit'. **God commends/introduces/exhibits His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** God shows His kind of love to those who are enemies because everyone who sins is an enemy to God – okay? That's what it talks about in Romans 5. People don't consider themselves to be that way, but they are until they are brought to a point of repentance and ability to see these things and get rid of sin. So it says, **Christ died for us. Much more than, being now justified by His blood**, that's where it begins, forgiven of sin, justified, that's where the process starts, **we shall be saved from wrath**, in other words, death because of sin – that's what hangs over everyone, **through Him**. We're going to be saved from the death penalty through Him. **For if, as it says here, when we were enemies, (verse 10) we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son**, so reconciliation, atonement begins through baptism, forgiveness of sin so that God can dwell in us, so we can dwell in God, so that we can receive of His spirit, so that His spirit will dwell in us, so we can be immersed into the spirit. **...we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled; we shall be saved by His life**. It's one of my favourite scriptures in so many ways. It goes along with things in John 14 and things in the book of I John and so forth talking about how God dwells in us. We're saved by His life because He dwells in us. That's the process of salvation. You can't be saved just by the forgiveness of sin. You have to receive the impregnation of God's spirit in order to grow spiritually. We can only go so far by being drawn by God. And so this is a part of the story here and Traditional Christianity is not told this. They're told we're saved by his *death!* **No, you are not saved by His death!** That's a lie! It's a Protestant lie. I don't know if the Catholics teach it – they probably don't go that far... they do? They do, okay, some were Catholics, they told me yes they do. I should have known...all the Protestants came from that anyway. It says we shall be *saved by His life!* The process begins with the *first* baptism but that can't save you. Just being forgiven of sin isn't enough – you must receive the impregnation of God's spirit, you must be immersed in, by the authority of God, into the name of Jesus Christ, the name of the Father through the power of the holy spirit – immersed into God's spirit. That's what follows baptism by the laying on of hands *from* God's ministry. That's the importance of so many people being added now in ordination because *ALL* people that are being drawn right now, all of you here that are new, you can help with baptism as well by helping to organize, by literally getting in the water to help baptize people in the water, but people have to be *ordained* to have the authority in the name of Jesus Christ to lay hands upon people to be impregnated with God's spirit because that's what God shows *must be done* in His Church that leads back to the authority from God through Jesus Christ. It's a powerful and an awesome thing to understand and it's a beautiful thing to understand that we're going to have greater ability to baptize a lot of people. It's going to take organization, it's going to take a lot of work. A lot of people are going to be able to help out with this in a massive way...so a lot of you are going to be getting wet in helping to put a lot of people under the

water. Some are going to be able to go under the water just by being told to go down and be sure to come back up. I think of one individual that was ordained last week, when he was baptized; when I put him under the water, I didn't tell him that after he goes down to be sure to come back up because I'm not in the water with him, I'm on the side of the pool and I can't reach all the way down there and I had to start reaching down there – it's time to come back up! So now I tell people, "when I push you under the water, I'm not getting in the water with you, I'm on the side of the pool, I'm staying dry basically, be sure when you feel the water go over the top of your head, be sure to come back up."

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, we're reconciled; forgiveness of sin by the death of Christ – that's the beginning process, that's the beginning area, that baptism unto repentance, but we have to go beyond that, **much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life**. By the receiving of His life within us – that's what it means that He dwells in us; we're able to dwell in Him. That's why I love John 14 when it goes through and gives the story about Jesus Christ saying, talking about the importance of Him dwelling in the Father and the Father in Him and then He's saying the time is coming that I will dwell in you, the Father will dwell in you, and you in us. He's showing the next step. It's a beautiful picture.

So beginning with John and the continuing on in the ministry of Jesus Christ we have seen the importance that God has placed on the beginning message of baptism which is a beginning of a message concerning the *means* whereby people can begin to change their lives and focus on a relationship with God. It begins by acknowledging sin and again, the personal responsibility for sin. It began to teach that people needed *more* than a symbolic washing of arms and hands before approaching God. And the message with baptism began to teach a complete clarification – this is a beautiful picture, it really is – a cleansing of the entire body and mind in life. That's what it's picturing. And you know why the Pharisees became even more upset? Because what a beautiful picture – it can't escape you – how much more meaningful something... it could be like, "Well, by what authority do you do this?", it was jealousy, it was envy. Its like, "Why didn't we think of this first?" A cleansing of the whole body with the desire to be cleansed of sin and change life to a right living and so forth. That's what we began.

I want to read certain things here to make sure I state all this; but the complete process had not yet been fully revealed even in the time of Christ's ministry. Baptism was only the beginning of a process in addressing personal sin. The *how* concerning the way a person could actually begin to change had not been fully revealed yet, and the process began with the baptism of repentance through John's ministry, with the baptism that included the need to look to the Messiah who was to come and then the message continued with the baptism of repentance and the need to look to and believe in the Messiah – that He had come. And that message continued on in the Church – that baptism when we talk about water. When the Church began the baptism of repentance continued on and another baptism was introduced which is the baptism of God's spirit that John said would come from Jesus Christ.

Let's go over to **Matthew 28** – beautiful verses here. That is what Jesus Christ was speaking of when He gave this following charge to His disciples. We're going to back up here a little bit as we come up to one of these commands that He gave to the disciples. Beginning in **28:1 - In the end of the Sabbath**, and in the Greek language it literally is 'after the Sabbaths' (plural)... the word is plural – Sabbaths. Why? Because there was more than one; it wasn't just the weekly Sabbath that was involved here, it was the Sabbath of the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread. It was an annual Sabbath, so that's why it says 'after the Sabbaths' in the Greek language, **as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week**, it was the daylight portion in other words, the 1st day of the week had already begun the evening before because the 1st day actually began at sundown the day before, after the Sabbath is over, sundown, the first day

of the week began, but now it's the beginning of the *dawn*, in other words, the rising of the sun on that day. And so this is what it's addressing, **it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door that sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning**, you know, we can't even begin to imagine this. How do you describe someone's countenance like this? It's like lightning, it's bright, it lights up... here it's beginning to dawn, the horizon is starting to change because it's starting to change a little bit in light. The sun's not up yet, but it's beginning to and here is this being who is so bright, stands out even at that time of day as like lightning, **and his clothing as white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became like dead men.** Can you imagine? The keepers are taking care of the grounds and guarding, watching over things and so forth – here they are out there, that keep care of these things of the grounds and the like and they see this – they're petrified. That's another word you can use – they're petrified. How else do you describe something like this – shaking inside in their being and can't move, and maybe some other things that happened.

Verse 5 - And the angel answered and said unto...because that's happened to some people in times past – they're so scared in some certain things they see... **And the angel answered and said unto the women, Do not fear: for I know that you seek Jesus, who was impaled on a stake.** That's what the word means.

Verse 6 - He is not here: for He has risen, as He said. He was already gone! I *loathe* the story of Traditional Christianity when they try to say this is when He was resurrected! They don't get it! Because they don't begin to understand three days and three nights and the timing of Christ's death and he was just telling them He isn't here, but the stone is rolled back for a purpose – so they could look inside and see He's gone! You know, He's not here. So it didn't happen at this moment. He was resurrected at the very end of the Sabbath, the beginning of the first day of the week, right at that moment in time – the same time He was put in the grave. He was actually resurrected to life in the Sabbath day, the very end of it. **He is not here: for He has risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid. And then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead and behold He is going before you into Galilee; there shall you see Him as I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; mixed emotion at what they just experienced; and did run and bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples behold Jesus met them saying, All hail,** in other words, greetings, hello. Now how do you say this? Here in English... I don't know... it's a great greeting, it's an exciting occasion to say something to them, to meet them and to greet them along the way, and so it says here, **and they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.** They knew something so awesome had taken place because before this they didn't know. He was dead. They didn't know what to do. The disciples were going to go back...some were going to go back to fishing or whatever... Like I've thought about when the Church had an apostasy – I'm going to go build some houses or do something else... anyway...

Verse 10 – Then said Jesus unto them, do not be afraid; go tell My brethren that they are to go into Galilee, and there they shall see me.

Then jumping on down to **verse 16** notice - **Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them to go. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: notice... but some doubted.** Can you imagine? Some doubted. There is still some doubts in the mind and you remember where He had to appear and had to manifest Himself in a room there and Thomas, doubting Thomas, that's why he got the name doubting Thomas, and Jesus Christ said, "Put your hand in

my side.” Prove it to yourself. **...but some doubted.** How could this be? Can’t imagine the things that would go through one’s mind. **And Jesus came and spoke unto them saying, All power,** and He *meant* what He said because *everything...God gave Him Every Thing!* And when it’s all done, it says, then everything will be turned back to God, given, in the sense of authority and power. So He’s saying that everything, **All power has been given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go you therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit;** More perfectly, with understanding, translated into English...that’s why, just like the book ‘2008 – God’s Final Witness’, you can’t just translate things out of the Bible or things of that book, or whatever into another language; you can’t just translate word by word, as so often happens in Bible translations, because it doesn’t get the fullness or understanding...because there’s not the understanding that goes with it. It’s the intent of what God is saying. You have to know what is being spoken in order to know how to communicate it in another language. And so this is how it should be more perfectly given to the Church in every respect... talking about baptizing them...**baptizing them in the name and authority,** because they are both the same if we understand, it’s the name because it carries the authority and it is into their name because we’re talking about into one Body. What is that Body? The Body of Christ, the Church of God which is spiritual. So it’s into that, but it also carries with it the authority because it’s done through the ministry who must lay hands upon an individual, must touch them because God uses that then to show that authority that He has placed within the Church because there has to be authority in everything that God does. That’s why Jesus Christ said, **all authority has been given to me, see, all power.** That’s what He’s telling them, **in heaven and in earth.**

Baptizing them in the authority of the Father and of the Son in the power of the holy spirit, because that’s what it’s about, it’s about an *immersion into* that life, that power that’s taking place and so that’s the more perfect understanding and translation of what was given there. **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world/end of the age.** Incredible!

A commission has been given that’s about to be magnified many times over of something that’s exciting to God, that’s exciting to Jesus Christ, that finally in a far greater way is about to be fulfilled – things of prophecy that God has brought man to, brought the age to, the age of mankind to after 6,000 years – that we are so awesomely incredibly blessed to share in, to be a part of. Put yourself back in the time of John the Baptist; put yourself back there as one of those that had the opportunity, the blessing of seeing the things that were given by John and understanding some of that message; a need for a message to go out of being baptized because the Messiah – the time is at hand, the Kingdom of God is at hand. He is here! And then to be there when Jesus Christ came and to have this incredible thing take place where the spirit of God descended down and rested upon, in the form of a dove, up on top of Christ and remained there, and the voice that came out of heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” *What an awesome event! And what we’re experiencing is FAR MORE awesome than that, if we can grasp the magnitude of it. It goes WAY beyond that* because those things were a ‘type’ and a beginning of a fulfillment that God is now doing in a far greater way. We live in the most awesome times of all human history and we get to participate in this; not because we’re great, but because God is great and He has a great plan and we’re blessed to share in it. And there is nothing that can be more awesome – truly. I think of all times to live in...I’ve said this so many times because I mean it with all my being... I can’t think of a time in any phase of human history in 7,100 years that I would rather be in than this one right here. If I had the ability to choose before time began and God said choose –right now this would be it – Awesome!

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