

Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part XV. Water Baptism - Not needed for Salvation today! A good history of Water Baptism.

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- [0 : 0 0] Would you open the scriptures, please, to the book of Acts, chapter 22. Acts, chapter 22.
- We continue to pursue the issues that we have begun several weeks ago, actually several months ago, I guess, as to Christians differing doctrinally in many ways.
- But no difference seems as pronounced as the differences that exist regarding the issue of baptism. Christians differ as to the meaning of baptism.
- Some see it as salvific or obligatory. That means you have to be baptized in water in order to go to heaven.
- There are large groups that are quite convinced of this. We refer to that as baptismal regeneration. The idea is that one is regenerated spiritually or made a Christian via the waters of baptism.
- [1 : 2 1] Now, we do not believe that, but there are significant numbers of people who do. We do not question their sincerity, their integrity, their honesty, or their good intentions.
- But we do disagree with their conclusions. And the reason we do is because we feel that in order to reach a conclusion like that, whereby water baptism saves you, you have to disregard several portions of scripture that do not seem to support that at all.
- And we need to recognize that the Bible is provided us by God as a comprehensive whole. The scriptures do not in any one place reveal the whole mind of God on any particular issue.
- You have to take the totality of the scripture testimony into consideration. You have to see what the Bible teaches as a whole, not just in some parts.
- Because if you limit it to some parts, you can prove almost anything. You can even build a case for the sacrifice of animals and the shedding of animal blood for expiation and the covering of sins.
- [2 : 4 1] Because it is there. It is in the scriptures. But when you take the rest of the Bible into consideration, you see how that has become passé. So, this is very, very important to note these distinctions.
- Secondly, some Christians take the position that water baptism is an act of obedience that a Christian should perform, but your salvation is not tied to it.
- However, your obedience is tied to it. And very frequently, they appeal to the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ and say things like, As a believer, you should follow the Lord in believer's baptism.
- Because Christ was baptized, we should be baptized. But the logic does break down because Christ did a lot of things that we aren't called upon to do, nor can we do them.

Christ was baptized for entirely different reasons than others who were baptized by John. Because they were baptized by John with a baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins.

[3 : 50] And that's very significant, and we'll be looking at that. But that isn't why Christ was baptized. He did not qualify as a sinner. He did not belong to that group.

He was the pure and spotless Lamb of God without spot and blemish. So, his baptism was certainly different. And then, there are those who see the subject of water baptism like we see it.

And that is, it is a Jewish practice signifying an outward cleansing that indicated a moral or spiritual preparation for service before God.

Now, let me repeat that. Because I think this is the position of Scripture regarding water baptism. And I realize that we are in a minority, but we're accustomed to that.

We're probably in a minority about a lot of things. But we see the water baptism as a Jewish practice signifying outward cleansing that indicated a moral or spiritual preparation for service before God.

[5 : 03] And I want you to look at this reference in Acts chapter 22, where the apostle Paul is giving his testimony. And perhaps we should start with verse 12.

Now, this is, be reminded that Paul's conversion actually took place back in Acts chapter 9. This is not the conversion here.

This is Paul giving an account of his conversion. He is telling what happened to him on the Damascus road several years earlier.

So, you've got to keep in mind that Acts 22 is a retelling of the story. The actual event took place in chapter 9. And beginning with verse 12, the apostle said, And a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the law, of course that would be the law of Moses as a Jew, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing near said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight.

Now, bear in mind that Paul is telling about the event that took place shortly after his conversion experience, when he was blinded by the light, led by the hand into the town of Damascus.

[6 : 44] And while he was there, God revealed himself to this man Ananias and said, I want you to go to the street called Straight and find a man by the name of Saul of Tarsus, and here is what I want you to do.

So, this, he is simply retelling the story. And then, in verse 15, he tells Paul, You will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

And now, it is as if he is saying, And now, Saul, why do you delay? Or, what are you waiting for? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

Well, baptism, washing away sins by baptism, certainly seems to be what he is saying.

We see an automatic connection between water and washing and cleansing. And this leads many to believe that there is some kind of mystical, spiritual element in that water that is able to wash away one's sins.

[8 : 06] The water is referred to as holy water, or water with a special spiritual property that is able to dispose of one's sins when you are washed by that water.

And I can easily see how people would gather a conclusion like that based on what we read here. Wash away your sins. Arise, be baptized.

Wash away your sins. And I don't think there is any question but what this is physical water. This is H₂O. This is nothing else but that.

Now, the question is from what did this practice originate? How did this get started?

What is the basis for Ananias, who is a Jew, saying to another Jew, this is what you need to do in order to have your sins washed away.

[9 : 09] And you call upon the name of the Lord. Let us let us see how this originated by just tracing backwards, if we may, and we'll end up in the Old Testament.

I want you to see how the subject of water baptism was not only administered throughout the Bible, but where it originated and what the original intent and purpose of it was.

And in order to do that, let's look, if we may, at Acts chapter 16 and let's just follow the clues and we'll see what's taking place and perhaps we'll be able to reach some concrete conclusions.

I've already reached them in my own mind. Whether you do in yours remains to be seen. Acts chapter 16 and let's begin reading with verse 11.

Therefore, putting out to sea from Troas, now this is Dr. Luke writing and he is writing on behalf of himself and of Paul the Apostle, who is engaged in a missionary journey.

[10 : 28] We ran a straight course to Samothrace and on the day following to Neapolis and from there to Philippi, which is the leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony, and we were staying in this city for some days.

And on the Sabbath day, which of course is of peculiar significance to the Jew, Paul says, we went outside the gate to a riverside.

Now, why are they going to a riverside? And the answer is water. These are Jews. They are going to be engaging in a Jewish worship service and one of the requirements for a Jewish worship service is a mikvah.

A mikvah. We would call it a baptistry. A pool. A source of water. It could be a river. It could be a lake. It could be something man-made and water provided.

But there has to be water there. If you are going to engage in Jewish worship, there needs to be a facility for ceremonial purification and cleansing.

[11 : 38] So they went to the riverside where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

The reason they spoke to the women was because there weren't any men who were Jews. The reason there weren't any men was because we just read in this portion that Philippi was a Roman colony.

And a Roman colony meant that it was an extension of Rome itself. Philippi enjoyed a special status with the Roman government and they bestowed upon them the title of a colony.

And that meant that they had special favors and privileges that Rome would dish out to those who were their favorites. Philippi was one of those favorites. it was a most favored city if you will.

Well, Rome, shortly before this time, Rome had issued a decree requiring all Jews to leave Rome.

[12 : 49] If you were a male Jew living in Rome at this time, you were ordered out of the city. they kicked them out.

Just threw them out. Now, what kind of consequence would that have for a Roman colony? Same thing.

If you are a Roman colony, you do what Rome does. Rome banished all of the Jews. Philippi is a Roman colony. Guess what they did? They banished all of the Jews.

That is, all of the male Jews. So, who's left? Females who did not leave with their Jewish husbands or for whatever reason stayed because the women who were Jews were not considered a threat to the Roman government like the males were.

So, we've got a group of women and possibly some younger males. We do not know for sure, but they are mainly a group of women and one of them is named Lydia and she has a profitable business going.

- [13 : 54] She is a maker and a seller of purple dye, which was a highly prized commodity at that time. And we are told in verse 13 that we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled and a certain woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, that is, she was a devout Jewess, was listening and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

All that means is Paul gave them the message about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the implications of it, and she embraced the message.

She believed what Paul said, and as a result, we read in verse 15, and when she and her household had been baptized, I think we can readily assume that it was with water, probably from the river there, she urged us, saying, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay, and she prevailed upon us.

Now, from the Acts 22 thing, we go back to Acts 16, and we can see that we've got water baptism very much in play here, and it is playing a prominent role.

If you look at verse 31, Acts chapter 16, and verse 31, we've got the Philippian jailer incident, and in verse 30, after the earthquake, and he had feared that the prisoners had escaped, in verse 30, he brought them out and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved?

- [15 : 45] And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in the house, and he took them that very hour of the night, that is, the jailer did, and washed their wounds, that's the wounds of Paul and Silas from having beaten them before they put them in jail, washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized.

He and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

And as a result of that, what did they do? They were baptized. How were they baptized? They were baptized with water. H2O.

And this, of course, presents an ironclad case in the minds of some people, they believed and were baptized. That's the pattern, that's the way it was then, that's the way it's supposed to be today. Nothing has changed.

And on the surface, they certainly do seem to have a very cogent argument. So, where does this come from? Well, let's go back yet a little further, if we may.

- [17 : 01] Let's go back to Acts chapter 2. And we are going to go back in the scriptures and just trace this issue of water baptism and see if we can get to the point of origin.

Where did it all begin? How did it morph into what it is today? And what was the significance of it when it began? Acts chapter 2 and verse 36.

The apostle Peter has been delivering this tremendous message on the day of Pentecost. He has a completely Jewish constituency before them because they are gathered here for a Jewish feast, a very important Jewish feast.

It is the Feast of Pentecost. And there are thousands of Jews gathered together to celebrate this great feast. And Peter delivers his famous Pentecostal message.

And then we read in verse 36 his conclusion to what he has said about Jesus the Messiah. And his conclusion is in verse 36.

- [18 : 08] Therefore, let all the house of Israel, that's another way of saying let every Jew, let all the houses of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brethren, what shall we do?

They had believed what Peter said about Jesus the Messiah. We are told that they were pierced to the heart. That means the truth of the fact that they had rejected their Messiah and crucified him, put him to death on a Roman cross.

You murdered the very one that God promised to send to you and when he finally came, you put him to death. And it hit them, it struck them like a thunderbolt.

What these people were saying, all the pieces of the puzzle came together. He's right, it all fits. That's exactly what we did.

[19 : 27] But now, where do we go from here? what can we do now? What is done is done. We can't undo it. Now what do we do?

And Peter, as much as says, you're right, you can't undo it. You can't go back and relive the scene again and make a different choice. But I'll tell you what you can do. You can reverse yourself.

You can admit that what you did was wrong. you blew it. You really blew it.

Are you big enough to admit that? To change your mind? What is the basis for changing one's mind?

It is always the same thing. Information. Peter had just given them information. Data. He brought them up to speed as to who Jesus Christ really was.

[20 : 30] They took in the information and processed it. They ran it through the grid of their mind. And the conclusion was undeniable, unshakable, unmistakable.

He's right. This man has given us information that causes us to completely reverse ourselves. And I want to tell you this is the most difficult thing that a human being has ever called upon to do.

Then and now, to have the ability to step up to the plate and say, the problem is me.

I have been wrong. It's my fault. I take responsibility. No one to blame but myself.

This is on me. Cannot tell you how difficult that is for the human ego to do. it is a tough, tough thing.

[21 : 41] This is what I call the hard part of the gospel. It is acknowledging that you have a need and you can't meet it. Oh, that deals such a blow to our ego.

It makes us feel so small and incapable. And the truth is we are.

We just don't like to recognize it. When we are willing to say, you know what, this is all on me. I am completely at fault.

This is my wrong doing. I can't blame it on anyone else. And I can't deny it. I'm guilty.

I'm the guy. Now remember, years ago, when Chuck Colson was preparing his defense for the Watergate fiasco, and his lawyer, who was a real sharpie, typical New York Jewish lawyer with a lot of savvy and a lot of connections and a lot of smarts, he sat down with Chuck Colson as they began to prepare their defense, and he says, now, of course, we're going to enter a not guilty plea, and Colson said, wait just a moment, he said, I don't plan to enter a not guilty plea, and Mr.

[23 : 07] Shapiro looked at him and said, what do you mean you're not going to enter a not guilty plea? He said, I plan to plead guilty. What?

Plead guilty? You can't do that. Why in the world would you plead guilty? guilty. And Colson said, because I am. And his lawyer comes back and says, well, what's that got to do with anything?

You don't plead guilty because you're guilty. You plead not guilty, automatically, not guilty, guilty of no wrongdoing. No, I'm guilty.

The charges are accurate. I'm guilty. And I plan to plead guilty. And his lawyer was just so flustered, he didn't know what to do.

He never had a client like that before. This is so refreshing to just have somebody step up to the plate and say, you know what? I did it. I did it. My bad. I was wrong.

[24 : 15] Here I am. Beat me, kill me, chop me up in little pieces, do whatever. It's my fault. That is so rare. And when he did plead guilty, everybody was figuring out, trying to figure out, and the media, of course, had a field day with this.

The media says, what is Coulson's real motive here? He's got to have something behind this. He's not pleading guilty because he's guilty. There's got to be something more.

Some shrewd, we know this guy, the White House hatchet man. He's got to have something up his sleeve. No, he had nothing up his sleeve. He was just honest enough and man enough to step up to the plate and say, I am guilty as charged.

So that's what these people are doing. They are saying they're guilty. What can we do about it? And Peter says you repent, you change your mind, you do a 180, because you were wrong in the direction you were facing.

Now you do a 180 and you face the other direction and let each of you be baptized, I take it that is with water, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

[25 : 34] Well now, where did that come from? Why is he telling them that? What's the point in this? What's the basis for this? Why is he saying you need to be water baptized in connection with the forgiveness of your sins?

What's the basis of this? Let's go back to Mark's Gospel, chapter 1. We keep going back. We haven't gone back nearly as far as we're going to go.

Mark's Gospel, chapter 1. And you'll find similar things recorded in Matthew and in Luke. But we're going to take these in Mark.

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make his path straight.

Now, this Gospel opens up with this passage being quoted from the Gospel or from the Prophet Isaiah. And Isaiah was written probably 700 years before Christ came and before Mark was written.

[26 : 53] Who is this one of whom Isaiah is speaking? I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way? Who is this one? He is in verse 4.

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness. He's the one of whom Isaiah was speaking seven centuries earlier, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

And all the country of Judea was going out to him. Who does this mean? This is a Jewish population of people who lived in Judea.

Who lived in Judea? Jews! Oh, of course, there were smattering of Gentiles, but the basic population was Jewish. All the country of Judea was going out to him, that is out to John, and all the people of Jerusalem, and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River confessing their sins.

And everything we read in connection with John's baptism is so striking because nobody, none of the Jews, in any of these venues where John is baptizing or where Jesus and his disciples will be baptizing, there is no record of any of the Jews or any of the people who came out to hear them and see them ever asking the question, what are you doing?

[28 : 30] What are you doing with this water? water? Why are you requiring these people to be washed with water?

What's going on? What's the purpose of this? What's the significance of this? There is no record that anybody ever asked that question. Yet it seems to be such a startling thing that John is doing, such a complete change in what was then business as usual.

This is something brand new on the scene. Nobody had ever done this before like this, who came preaching about one who was to come and requiring people who believed his message to be baptized in water.

Nobody had ever done this before. This is a whole new thing. So one would think that there would be some questions asked. What are you doing with that water?

What's the significance of it? But it's never asked. And I can conclude only one thing. The argument from silence says no one asked any questions about what John was doing because they knew what he was doing.

[29 : 57] They were familiar with the practice. They had seen it many times before, but never had it been administered in connection with proclaiming the arrival of the promised one on the scene.

That's what was different, radically different. There had been baptisms before, as we will see. But this is for, and hear me well now because this is very significant.

This baptism is for the population. We are not told that women were included. We are not told that they were excluded.

But we do know that Lydia was water baptized by Paul the apostle in Acts chapter 16. So there is no reason to distinguish males from females here.

In John's baptism, the likelihood is they were male and female. The scriptures do not say that. I am surmising that was probably the case.

[31 : 01] We are not told that all of the men from Judea and Jerusalem came. We are just told that people, population, I take it, it would be male and female. So, in order for them not to ask any questions about it, or wonder about it, there has to be some explanation.

And I think the explanation is they already knew. They understood what he was doing. That he was baptizing. And yet, that which is really different is that he is doing it in conjunction with the arrival of the Messiah on the scene and he is doing it apparently for all comers.

great droves came out. We do not know how many. The scriptures never do define the meaning of multitude. We just know it is a whole lot of people.

We don't know if it is hundreds or thousands. We aren't given any specific numbers. But there are a lot of people and they are coming from all around and the word of mouth is just electric.

It goes out everywhere and people come to this man. Some of them came for miles because not just because he was baptizing but because he was baptizing all who came to him and he was doing it in connection with the arrival, the anticipation of the Messiah on the scene.

[32 : 35] That was what was electric. Now, in order to get a handle on this and in order to support what I said earlier about this being a Jewish practice, baptism being a Jewish practice signifying outward cleansing, indicating a moral spiritual preparation for service before God, we've got to go back.

Where did John get this water baptism thing? And why was he doing this? We've got to go back further and let us do so coming to 2nd Chronicles chapter 4.

2nd Chronicles chapter 4. Let's begin reading with verse 1.

Now we are approximately 1,000 years before the birth of Christ. This is during the reign of Solomon and his dedicating the temple.

So bear in mind that Christ will not come on the scene for 1,000 years after what we are reading here in 2nd Chronicles. Then he made a bronze altar, 20 cubits in length and 20 cubits in width and 10 cubits in height.

[34 : 01] He also made the cast metal sea, 10 cubits from brim to brim, circular in form, and its height was 5 cubits and its circumference 30 cubits.

Now figures like oxen were under it and all around it, 10 cubits, entirely encircling the sea. The sea, by the way, S-E-A, the sea was a large receptacle.

Think of it, if you will, as a gigantic bathtub. The oxen were in two rows cast in one piece. It stood on twelve oxen, three facing the north, three facing west, three facing south, three facing east.

The sea was set on top of them, and all their hind quarters turned inwards. And it was a hand-bred thick, and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom.

It could hold 3,000 baths. It's a pretty good size. He also made ten basins in which to wash.

[35 : 14] Now, that doesn't ring a bell, unless you use another word. He also made ten basins in which to baptize.

Oh, wait a minute. Is that what it means? Is that what baptism means? To wash, or to cleanse.

He made ten basins in which to wash, and he set five on the right side, and five on the left, to rinse things for the burnt offering, but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

May I go so far as to say it was for the priests to bathe in? There were times when they will wash their hands and their feet.

There are other times when they will wash their whole body. baptism. And that is called baptism. And it will be done repeated times for the same individuals.

[36 : 28] There will be many baptisms performed by the same individual. It isn't a baptism once. It will be several times. But the thing that you need to note here is, and this is really important, these are all priests.

Not common people. Not your ordinary average run-of-the-mill Jew. No, no. These are all priests. But who are the subjects of baptism when John begins to baptize?

Everybody. body. They are all Jews. But they are lay people. They aren't priests. They are just ordinary, everyday, Jewish lay people.

Probably men and women. But this that we have here in 2 Chronicles is just for the priests. Now we need to move back a little further.

Let's go back to Leviticus chapter 17. Leviticus chapter 17 and verse 15.

[37 : 56] And when any person eats an animal which dies or is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and remain unclean until evening, then he will become clean.

But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt. This is a peculiar thing prescribed only for Israel.

You will not find these kind of directions ever being given to Egyptians or Sumerians or Arabians or Philistines or anyone.

This is peculiar for Israel alone. That is very, very significant. And here, this doesn't have to do simply with priests.

It has to do with anyone. Any person eats an animal which dies or is torn by beasts and so on. He becomes ceremonially unclean. That means he is not able to go into the presence of the Lord, cannot go to the tabernacle, cannot offer sacrifice, cannot participate in any of the rituals because he is unclean.

[39 : 16] He has to go through this cleansing process. This is a ritual. It is a ceremonial rite. It is prescribed exclusively for those in a covenant relationship with Jehovah.

It does not apply to anybody else. No Gentiles involved. Gentiles wouldn't even understand it or know what's going on because they have not the law of Moses. But these people were steeped in this and this is very, very significant.

Now let's look also at chapter 14, Leviticus chapter 14 and verses 8.

I'm just being very selective and I'm only giving you a small percentage of the chapters and the verses that involve this particular issue because we can't take all of them or just too many. Verse 8, chapter 14 of Leviticus.

The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. And this has to do with the law of the leper.

[40 : 20] That's established in verse 2 of this chapter. Wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days.

And it will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair and he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair.

Boy, this guy is going to be more bald than I am. He doesn't even have any eyebrows. Then shall he wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and be clean.

This is nothing more than a plain old fashioned scrubbing with soap and water. But, in addition to the practical implications of the cleansing of the body, there are spiritual significances connected with it.

in presenting oneself as a clean vessel before the Lord. And there is yet a couple of others, and then we'll make some conclusions. I want you to come back, please, to Exodus chapter 40, back just a few pages.

[41 : 35] We are talking about water baptism and where it came from, no matter how it's practiced, whether you're talking about pouring, immersion, trying immersion three times backwards, one time forward, pouring, sprinkling, or as the Orthodox do when they baptize babies, they take the baby by the heel, and dip the baby head first down into a vat of water, holding it by the heel.

And, however you choose to administer baptism, the point is, this is where it originated. This is the beginning of it. This is why anybody baptizes in any way.

It all starts back here. It is an Old Testament reality, and it was under Judaism. And we are in Exodus chapter 40, and let's begin reading, if we may, well, for time's sake, let's just jump in with verse five.

You shall set up the gold altar of incense before the ark. He's arranging all of the items of furniture in connection with the tabernacle, telling them where everything is supposed to go and why. And set up the veil for the doorway to the tabernacle.

Verse six, you shall set the altar of burnt offering in front of the doorway of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. You shall set the laver, the laver was a receptacle that was filled with water.

[43 : 03] Our word lavatory comes from this. To lave means to wash or to bathe. You shall set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it and you shall set up the court all around and hang up the veil for the gateway of the court.

Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it and shall consecrate it in all of its furnishings and it shall be holy. And you shall anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils and consecrate the altar and the altar shall be most holy.

And this is all strictly, strictly Jewish. There is nothing Gentile about this at all. This is all for God's people in covenant relationship with him.

These are all the seed of Abraham. This is the children of Israel. And verse 11, you shall anoint the laver and its stand and consecrate it and then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water.

water. But suppose they're not dirty. That's beside the point. You wash them with water because the rite of purification and the ceremony requires that.

[44 : 28] It doesn't make any difference if he just took a bath before he left the house. You still do this. This is part of the ritual. It is part of the rite. It is established for Israel exclusively.

Who was Aaron? Aaron was the brother of Moses. He was the first high priest. His sons are going to be high priests after him.

After Aaron's demise, his sons will come into the office of the high priesthood. Now they are to be washed with water. But notice, it is Aaron and his sons.

Aren't washing all the Jews this way? Aaron and his sons. And you shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him and consecrate him that he may minister as a priest to me.

And you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. And you shall anoint them even as you have anointed their father that they may minister as priests to me.

[45 : 33] And their anointing shall qualify them for a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations. Did any of the other Jews receive this kind of anointing or this kind of baptism?

No! No! This was limited to the priesthood. It was to prepare them ceremonially for service before Jehovah. It involved a ritual cleansing, a bathing, so that they would be ministering in the things of the Lord as a clean vessel.

Now, unfortunately, this did not guarantee what went on on the inside of these people. But the outward purification and ceremonial cleansing was supposed to be a picture of an inner attitude.

Doesn't mean it always paired up, but theoretically that was the way it was to be. They were to appear clean before the Lord, inside and outside.

we must take a couple of others, and they are in chapter 30, same book, Exodus chapter 30. Exodus 30, and let's begin with verse 17.

[46 : 52] And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, You shall also make a laver of bronze with its base of bronze for washing.

You shall put it between the tent of the meeting of the altar, and you shall put water in it. And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it.

When they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water that they may not die. This is serious stuff.

Or when they approach the altar to minister by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the Lord, so they shall wash their hands and their feet that they may not die.

In other words, God says, if they don't, the option is, I'll kill them. They'll die. They'll just drop over dead if they do not follow this prescribed treatment.

[48 : 04] And we have nothing like this imposed upon us today. In fact, Gentiles had nothing like this imposed upon them. This was exclusively for the children of Israel in this setting.

it has to be kept here. You pull it out of here and try to make it applicable elsewhere, it just doesn't fit. It cannot fit because it was intended for these.

So there was a washing of the whole body and a washing of the garments, and then once that was done, as the ceremony continued, it wasn't necessary that they bathe completely again, but they did have to wash their hands and their feet, because they wore sandals, and their feet were constantly exposed to the earth, which of course was not concrete and was not brick, but was soil, and then their hands of course from handling things, so they had to do that repeatedly.

And then, one more reference, Exodus 29, and verse, well, let's just look at verse 4.

Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water. You shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the tunic, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, breastpiece, and gird him with skillfully woven band of the ephod, to set the turban upon his head, and all of this is specifically for the priesthood.

[49 : 44] All of these rituals here are prescribed for the children of Israel alone. And, in Exodus chapter 19, we have a very enlightening passage.

third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. When they set out from Ephodim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai, camped in the wilderness, there Israel camped in front of the mountain.

Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel. In other words, this is privileged information, this is only for these people, say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel, you yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself.

Now then, if you will indeed obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests. This is key. It's often a passage that's just overlooked, glossed over, but this is key.

[51 : 17] You shall be a kingdom of priests to me. Who are the only ones being washed, or being baptized, or being cleansed for service to Jehovah?

Just the priesthood. only the priests, no one else, Aaron and his sons, and the priests, no one else, no one else was qualified, no one else need undergo this, but if you were a priest in the Aaronic priesthood, this was a must.

And here he says, you shall be a kingdom of priests to me. question, when did Israel ever become a kingdom of priests to God?

They never have. They never have. There is no time in history when it can be said of the nation of Israel that they ever functioned as a kingdom of priests.

What is a priest anyway? What is a priest supposed to do? What was the job description of a priest? It was the opposite of a prophet. A prophet represented God and spoke to man.

[52 : 45] A priest represents man and speaks to God. God says he's going to make Israel to be a nation of priests.

It has never happened. Did they ever come close? Yes. When? There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

John came baptizing, preaching a gospel of repentance and remission of sins. John's message was so electric because that appeared to be the fulfillment of Exodus 19.

Oh, now God is going to make a nation of priests of Israel. John is baptizing everybody.

all Jews are coming, not just priests. All Jews are coming because they are going to fulfill that role of becoming a nation of priests.

[53 : 58] And John is baptizing all of them in preparation and getting ready for the Messiah. That's what this is all about.

That's why these people were so excited. That's the significance of what John is doing. This is the get ready message. The Messiah is right around the corner and it is going to be a very short period of time until John is going to exclaim behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

And here comes Jesus of Nazareth to be baptized of John. That's the significance of all of this. That's the origin of baptism.

That's what is behind it. And in connection with John's baptism the nation of Israel and this is why I say this was an exclusively Jewish thing.

But we find Gentiles being baptized. That's part of the transition difficulty that we face in the book of Acts because the time had come when the program for the kingdom is being set aside or phased out and a new thing completely unheard of and unthought of called the church which is the body of Christ is being phased in and it has a different baptism to be sure.

[55 : 25] important it is not only just as important it might even be considered more important because with the body of Christ arriving on the scene God is shifting gears if you will and entering a whole new mode of operation because the old order with Israel and its ritual and all of the services connected with it are being set aside that is now defunct there is an entirely new thing going on now with the body of Christ on the scene and the baptism is different also how so for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jew or Gentile bond or free male or female and we are all together in one union in

Christ that baptism is without water it completely removes itself from the ritualistic requirement of the cleansing and the washing and this is what the writer of Hebrews is talking about when he says let us go on laying aside or leaving behind the ordinances the baptisms plural the washings that's what he's talking about all of these Jewish things that were so much an integral part of their worship are all laid aside there is a whole new order now but we humanity is so prone to bring elements of the old order into the new remember what I said about baggage we bring the baggage in part of the baggage that we bring in is the water baptism and some still even associate water baptism with the actual removal of sins and with the regeneration of the spirit

I have an interesting thing here I want to share with you in concluding just when you think you've heard everything regarding water baptism there is something else that is really strange that surfaces and this is remarkable this is content from the third century AD and this is from Philip Schaff's history of the Christian church the anti nicene Christianity and he's generally considered throughout the world as one of the more astute scholars regarding church history and this is a multi volume set this is just one volume but listen to this from John 3 5 wherein Jesus was talking with Nicodemus about being born of water and of the spirit and Mark 16 16 where Mark said except you believe and be baptized you shall in no wise be saved he says from those two passages Tertullian who was one of the church fathers argued the necessity of baptism to salvation well

I can understand that 3rd century easily understand Clement of Alexandria supposed with the Roman Heras and others that even the saints of the Old Testament were baptized in Hades or the apostles where does the scripture say that well that's that passage in Hezekiah I think well but exception was made in favor of the bloody baptism of martyrdom as compensating the one of baptism with water in other words if you shed your blood as a martyr for Christ even though you weren't baptized that will count as it so it's a good substitute this would lead to the evangelical principle that not the omission but only the contempt of the sacrament is damning the effect of baptism however was thought to extend only to sins committed before receiving it now where did they get that from the language repent and be baptized for the remission of sins what sins your past sins what about future sins too bad about those hence the frequent listen to this the frequent postponement of the sacrament which

Tertullian very earnestly recommends though he ensures though he censures it when accompanied with moral levity and presumption that's good many like Constantine the Great put it off to the bed of sickness and of death they preferred the risk of dying unbaptized to that of forfeiting forever the baptismal grace deathbed baptisms were then what deathbed repentances are now so the idea is because baptism only takes away the sins you've committed up to this present time don't get baptized until you're ready to die you're too old to cut the mustard anymore you won't be nasty or ornery or get yourself into trouble you'll be you'll just be too old and infirm to do anything wicked that's the time to get baptized then all your sins are behind you and you don't have to you're not going to be able to you won't be frisky enough to sin in the future where do these ideas come listen it all begins in the mind of an individual and they become convinced of it and they propagate it to others and they convince others and the next thing you know you have a following and the following grows into a movement and the movement becomes a denomination it all works that way it always has and it still does so

[61 : 19] I wish I had time for Q&A; but as is often the case I took your time as well so what I'm going to do I'm going to give you two weeks for questions to germinate in your mind and you may feel free to write out any questions you have and put them in the offering box and I will do my best to answer them or we will open with Q&A; not next week but two weeks from today since you've had some time to think about it and I want you to come up with any objections or confirmations or questions or ideas or whatever you may have and we'll be glad to entertain them next week remember Brooke Seekins will be with us for Mother's Day I know you will appreciate that so much may we stand please Father we realize that we've covered a lot of material and some of this may be just absolutely overwhelming to people who are not familiar with it but we pray that they may be able to glean from it things of value and of benefit and be able to understand that it is by grace through faith that we are saved and not as a result of the application of any water in any form no matter how well intended it is the washing of regeneration by the

Holy Spirit that makes us a new creature in Christ and it is all on the basis of your sovereign grace thank you for all that you build into scripture and thank you for the distinctions that are clearly set forth when we take the whole of the record into consideration we bless you for it in Christ's name Amen Amen Thank you.