

# Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part XVI.

## Questions and Answers!

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 16 May 2010

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, thank you, Gary. For the past several weeks, we have been dealing with the issues that surround the differences that believers have when it comes to doctrinal issues.

Why do Christians differ doctrinally when all read the same Bible? And how did we arrive at diverse belief systems? Why are beliefs so important anyway?

Well, just by way of introduction, let me remind you that beliefs or convictions or positions held form attitudes, norms, and standards that are internal in nature.

And then attitudes and our norms and standards become external via our actions and activities because we tend to live outwardly what we are thinking inwardly.

All deeds and acts are preceded by a thought. And as one thinketh in his heart, so is he. So belief or our thinking become critically important.

[ 1 : 20 ] It is based on our belief. Our beliefs are based on the information that we assimilate, the norms and standards that we already have in place as to how we evaluate it.

It all goes back to teaching and training from early childhood and so on. And we all know how important that is to instill the right kind of information in young minds and hearts because this is what they are going to be nurtured with.

This is what they are going to grow up believing and understanding and acting on that basis. So belief becomes very, very critical. The scriptures present a case for belief and its importance from Genesis to Revelation.

And we have talked about the basis for believing anything about anything is because we see it as truth.

It comports with reality. It corresponds to what is real and what is true. For all too many, it is beliefs are based on the conclusions of other people whom we respect and admire.

[ 2 : 38 ] And we pointed out to you the fallacy of that. Now there is a natural tendency to do that. And I'm not suggesting that that is all bad. Because we ought to give serious thought and consideration to the positions that people hold if they are people whom we admire and respect.

But that does not mean that because you admire and respect someone, you can buy wholesale whatever it is they are teaching. That is a great fallacy.

All they are entitled to is your sincere consideration. Probably the worst compliment that anybody could pay me as your pastor is, well, if that's what Marv believes, that's good enough for me.

I would find that terribly upsetting. I would hope that you would be able to say something like, well, if that's what Marv believes, that's something that I'd want to give some real serious thought to.

But that doesn't mean you believe it too. It means that you want to weigh it and evaluate it. And you have always, always, always got to come to the scriptures and see if it squares with the scriptures.

[ 3 : 54 ] Be a Berean and search the scriptures to see whether or not those things are so. I wish I could tell you. I wish I could assure you. Everything I say, you can take it to the bank.

You just believe it. But that would be fatal for you. It would be foolish. You dare not do that. You cannot put that kind of authority in any human being.

You just can't. You shouldn't. You should not trust anyone like that. Because we are all fallible creatures. We all have our flaws. We all have our blind spots.

How many times have I told you? We are all wrong about different things. And when we get to heaven, we'll all get straightened out. We just don't have all the answers here.

And those who think they do probably have fewer answers than anybody. So the scriptures have to remain our bastion, our fortress, the ultimate source of appeal.

[ 4 : 59 ] It's got to be the scriptures. That's the only thing that is really reliable. Forever your word is settled in heaven. And when we link into the beliefs of others and buy wholesale their positions, and it's always the same thing.

It starts with people who are well-meaning. Sincerity is not involved here. I'm sure that virtually all of these people who hold these varying beliefs are very sincere in them. We are not impugning their integrity or their sincerity or their good intentions.

But none of those things guarantee truth. None of them do. We just must constantly appeal to the only real source of truth. In the Bible, there are no Presbyterians.

There are no Methodists. There are no Baptists. There are no Episcopalians. There are no Church of God as such as a denomination.

They're just, they don't exist. But people down through the years, beginning hundreds of years ago, well, beginning probably 18, 1900 years ago, within 100 years after the ascension of our Lord, people began interpreting passages of Scripture and reaching conclusions, and had the kind of forceful personality, convincing way of teaching, authoritative expressions that garnered a following.

[ 6 : 33 ] And the followings grew. And the next thing you know, they become a movement, and then eventually they become a larger movement, or a denominational group, if you will.

And they line up behind the teachings of certain individuals. There are certain things that Lutherans have in common, and certain things that Methodists have in common, and certain things that Baptists have in common, and so on.

And yet, these are very diverse from each other. And each is convinced that the others are wrong, and that they are right. And that's typical of all of these groups.

It's typical of this group. Don't we believe that our doctrinal positions are right? Well, if you don't, why are you holding them? Why are you here?

Of course we believe they're right. But does that guarantee that they are? No! I wish I could say it did. I wish I could say whatever we believe has got to be right.

[ 7 : 32 ] No questions about it. Just can't say that. All I can say is, what we believe and what we teach, we would appreciate you giving serious consideration to.

Weighing it, evaluating it, and check it with the Scriptures. And if you find it not to be aligned with Scripture, we'd really appreciate it if you would bring it to our attention.

Because we want to be biblical. Nothing is true because I say it. Nothing is true because anybody says it.

Unless that person is speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. In which case, it is written. Other than that, you just take it with a grain of salt.

Take it under advisement. But you do not buy it wholesale. Now, having said that, I have to say this too. That there is certainly nothing wrong with someone having convictions, positions, being able to articulate them, and being convincing and persuasive in doing so.

[ 8 : 43 ] Because this is the way people absorb information and truth. And it just means that you've got to have your feelers out. You've got to have your guard up, no matter who the speaker is.

You've got to assess and criticize and evaluate and weigh. Just don't take it because you appreciate or admire the source.

Of course, no one who is seeking to teach the Word of God is going to teach it in a way that would intentionally lead anyone astray.

We all teach in accordance with our understanding of the truth. But again, I emphasize that is no guarantee that we have arrived at truth and that we teach truth. So, you are all supposed to be critics.

You're all supposed to be evaluators. I've often said, you eat the fish and throw away the bones. Marv is capable of preaching some bones. I know that because I'm a human being.

[ 9 : 44 ] And I just don't have all the answers. What I tell you is what I think is true. What I believe to be true. But haven't I changed my position on a number of things over the last 35 years?

Indeed, I have. I've got some sermons on file in the office in there that I would like to mysteriously come up missing.

Because I don't hold some of those things anymore. But, you know, that's what you do when you search the Scriptures. You grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

And there are issues in which I've been on both sides over the years. Sometimes three or four sides. So, we are to influence one another to godliness.

Yet, all of our singular and ultimate authority must be the Scriptures. But, whose interpretation thereof? Many are enamored with the Reformers.

[ 10 : 51 ] And I don't want you to think that I am putting these men down. They were godly men. They were sincere men. They were men who loved the Lord. And many of them paid a terrible, terrible price.

For what they taught. And what they preached. Many of them were burned at the stake. Can you imagine that? Many of them were condemned as heretics.

And were ostracized. Many of them suffered all kinds of persecution. For their beliefs. John Wycliffe.

Was condemned by the church. And burned at the stake. And his dying prayer was, Oh God, open the eyes of the King of England.

And within just a couple of decades, guess what came on the scene? The King James Version of the Bible. Can you imagine people being persecuted and put to death for smuggling Bibles into England?

[ 12 : 06 ] So these were great men of God who paid, in some cases, the ultimate price for what they believed and what they taught.

And yet, they disagreed with each other about a lot of issues. About a lot of doctrinal issues. So when you appeal to the reformers, well, the reformers, the reformers, the reformers, as many people do.

What makes them the authority? They often disagreed with the doctrinal positions that other reformers held. So we've got to come back to the one single source, and that is the scriptures.

So then, the question becomes, well then, whose interpretation of the Bible do we buy? Whose interpretation do we go by? Calvin? The Roman Catholic?

The Presbyterian? The Methodists? The Baptists? Which ones? And the answer is, none of them. No, my position is, no mere human being is competent or capable of interpreting the Word of God.

[ 13 : 21 ] Period. Does that include me? Absolutely. Absolutely. Well then, how do we get an interpretation?

We appeal to the scriptures to interpret itself. And you allow scripture to interpret scripture. You allow this passage to shed light on this passage.

And you put together the whole mind of scripture. The totality of the scripture testimony has to be all taken into consideration. And that means some of the greatest illumination you are going to get on the book of Revelation is, guess from where?

The book of Genesis. What? That's far removed from Revelation. Oh, but it's very much part of the picture. Because the Bible is a self-interpreting book if we will allow it to do so.

And the Bible very seldom speaks its whole mind in any place in scripture. It is scattered all throughout the Revelation from Genesis to Revelation.

[ 14 : 32 ] This is why the Bible requires study not just reading. If all the Bible required is reading then it would be just like reading a novel where you've got the whole picture and everything in it and you know the butler did it.

But the Bible isn't like that. It is a book that has to be studied not merely read as a novel. So you are always comparing scripture with scripture.

The Bible interprets itself when we get out of the way and allow it to do so. So often we have a position we take a position a doctrinal stance and then we come to the scriptures and we look for verses to support it.

That's fatal. And we ought never to do that. What we need to do is come to the scriptures with a blank slate and allow the teaching of scripture to formulate our doctrine rather than bring our doctrine to the scripture and look for passages that support it.

That's a dishonest way of studying the Bible. So having said all of that I do have a question here that was submitted in writing and I need to treat that first and then we'll open it for Q&A; from the audience.

[ 15 : 55 ] We were talking about baptism and what precipitated this was the study we were doing on baptism and we went back well let me just give you as brief a background as I can.

we talked about water baptism and about how that John the baptizer came on the scene and began this practice of water baptism with his message being repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand and those who repented were all Jews of course and they were baptized and we asked the question well why did John do that?

Why did he baptize anybody? What's the purpose of this water? So we went all the way back into the Old Testament and I'm not going to go there now but it is a message that is available on CD if anyone wants it from a couple of weeks ago we went all the way back to the Old Testament and established the origins of baptisms and we discovered that it was really washings it was a washing that was performed for and by the priest and it constituted ceremonial cleansing and we gave you several references in Exodus and Leviticus and about the priest bathing etc etc and the passage tied in with Exodus 19 where God said that he was going to make the nation of Israel a nation of priests and this was why John's ministry was so electrifying because when John came on the scene and began baptizing he was baptizing everybody that came to him not just priests but lay people if you will in fulfillment of that prophecy all the way back in Exodus where God said he was going to make his nation

Israel a nation of priests so John is baptizing everyone previous to that time the only ones who were baptized were the priests and they were Levites they were of the tribe of Levi but now John is baptizing people from all of these tribes and the idea is preparation for this coming messianic kingdom that has been promised in the Old Testament and John is preparing the nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests priests to all of the other nations a light to the Gentiles and he is baptizing everyone it was an electrifying thing and Israel was on the edge of their seat because they saw John's ministry and John's preaching as indicating that the kingdom is about to be established the kingdom of God the kingdom of heaven is coming to earth and the prayer thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven is going to be answered at long last in the person of this king how long how long had Israel waited for the

Messiah 4,000 years from the time he was first promised in Genesis in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15 the promise of a redeemer a Messiah was given and Israel was the nation the seed of Abraham was the nation whom God selected to be the vehicle through which the Messiah was to come and John the Baptist came on the scene and says guess what folks he's here the kingdom of heaven is right around the corner get yourselves ready because this is it and they came out in streams to be baptized of John in a spiritual preparation for the anticipation of the Messiah coming on the scene and shortly thereafter John introduced him as behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and this question was submitted while this question does not pertain to baptism it does go to Exodus 19.6 the promise in 19.6 is that

[ 20 : 18 ] Jews will become a kingdom of priests that promise is repeated again in Revelation 16 my question is when do you think this will happen during the millennial reign or in the eternal kingdom afterwards well my understanding which is far from infallible is that it will not be during the millennial reign well I won't no I can't say that because they will be functioning in a priestly capacity during the millennial reign but I would ask you to turn please to Matthew chapter 24 because I think that it's going to happen before that before the millennial reign and I would equate this with there being a kingdom of priests being partially fulfilled at least during the tribulation period and that is spelled out in Matthew 24 and 25 what is commonly referred to as the

Olivet Discourse and beginning with verse 3 Christ was sitting on the Mount of Olives the disciples came to him privately saying tell us when will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age and Jesus goes on to give some descriptions of what's going to be happening then and I want you to come down if you will for time's sake to verse and he's talking about this being a great tribulation and he says in verse 21 for then there will be a great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now nor ever shall and unless those days had been cut short no life should have been saved but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short and well I don't want to read all of this but well let's just jump in at verse 13 when he says the one who endures to the end and the end of what he's talking about the end of this tribulation period of this global holocaust that's going to take place the one who endures to the end he shall be saved this is a physical salvation in other words he shall be a survivor he isn't talking about hanging on to your salvation until the end and you will be saved spiritually he isn't talking about spiritual salvation at all he's talking about surviving this time of tribulation and then in verse 14 and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations and then the end shall come now if you were to go to and

I won't go there for time sake but if you were to go to Revelation chapter 7 and Revelation 14 there you will discover that God selects 12,000 Jews from each of the 12 tribes of Israel constituting a total of 144,000 and assigns to them a worldwide missionary enterprise the really striking thing about these individuals is first of all they are all Jews the tribe from which they originate is identified and each of them is to receive a seal of God in their forehead that will make them virtually untouchable they will apparently not be subject to the kind of persecution that most of the world is going to be undergoing these 144,000 are going to be all

Jews ministering to and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to Gentiles and to other Jews they are virtually going to become 144,000 priests of God and in a priestly capacity they are going to represent man to God they are going to be the light to the Gentiles and there will be enormous numbers of people come to faith during this tribulation period it is hard to imagine because at the same time there is going to be very intense persecution but the evangelization is going to be on a greater scale than anything the world has ever seen and people are going to be martyred for their faith right and left in Revelation 6

John talks about seeing the souls of those that have been martyred or persecuted for faith in Christ under the altar and they are crying out to God how long O Lord holy and just will it be before you avenge those who have been slain and he says that they are to wait a little while longer until the rest of their brethren who should be killed will join them and who are they they are these tribulation saints who are going to be martyred for their faith the only thing that is going to enable these 144 thousand to preach this gospel with impunity is because they will they have the seal of God in their forehead and that will preserve them from the persecution that others are going to be receiving and that I believe will be the primary fulfillment of this and in verse 31 of chapter 25 we have more descriptions when the son of man comes in his glory this is the second coming not to be confused with the rapture of the church and all the angels with him he will then sit on his glorious throne all the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate them one from another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats he will put the sheep on his right the goats on his left then the king will say to those on his right come you who are blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from you gave me drink

[ 27 : 03 ] I was a stranger you invited me in naked and you clothed me I was sick and you visited me I was in prison you came to me then the righteous will answer him saying Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you drink when did we see you a stranger and invite you in or naked and clothed when did we see you sick they are puzzled they are asking we don't remember doing this we don't remember caring for you and then the king will answer in verse 40 truly I say to you to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine who are these I think these brothers of his are the hundred forty four thousand who will be going around the globe proclaiming this gospel and some of them will be imprisoned some of them will be hindered some of them will be threatened and intimidated none of them will lose their lives however because of the seal that is placed upon them truly

I say to you to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine even to the least of them you did it to me then he will say to those on his left depart from me accursed ones into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels I was hungry you gave me nothing to eat I was thirsty you gave me nothing to drink and who are these these are those who did the opposite in verse 45 and this is going to be a very very different time and a very strategic time best answer I can give you right now other comments or questions that anyone has about baptism or interpretation or denominations or whatever feel free yes Ron I used to be a Baptist until I saw the grace movement and I always was trying to figure out how baptism was ordained by the church they always say baptism is an ordinance of the church now where are they getting that baptism is an ordinance of the church

I can see the Lord's supper where that comes from but I don't see where baptism is an ordinance of the church well all it takes for baptism to be considered an ordinance of the church is for well connected well respected well educated baptist to say it is and to convince others of it and they start accepting it as gospel and they simply buy into it and this is the way a lot of doctrinal positions come about unfortunately that that that that that is but there is nothing in scripture at all anywhere that says baptism water baptism is an ordinance of the church and churches take different positions on this I know of Baptist churches that there are Baptist churches that will that will not accept one who has been water baptized in a Baptist church by the traditional method of being placed completely under the water once backwards all the way under and then brought up even though you were baptized as

I was in a Baptist church there are other Baptist churches that will not accept the water baptism of another church you have to be water baptized into their church now not all Baptist churches are like that but many are and some if you have been water baptized in any Baptist church that's good enough for them and they'll accept you into membership and there are Baptist churches that will not accept brethren baptism which is immersion of the complete body three times forward father son holy spirit that's called trine immersion and most of the brethren churches grace brethren plymouth brethren I don't know about Plymouth brethren grace brethren practice trine immersion and these are the good folks over at Winota Lake Indiana and these are wonderful godly people and I do not take anything away from them at all we just respectfully disagree with them but

I see them as brothers in the Lord and they love the Lord just as much as I do and they are just as sincere and they want to be pleasing to the Lord and they really think they're right and so do I so we just go arm in arm because we agree on the basic thing and the basic thing is Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures that's the basis that gives us cohesion that's the basis that puts us in fellowship with other believers and it doesn't matter it doesn't matter if they are Roman Catholic or Protestant or whatever if their faith and their trust is in Jesus Christ as their personal savior what church they go to or what name it has or no church is not the deciding factor it being in union with Jesus Christ that makes the difference that's what really counts everything else is peripheral compared to that other comments or questions

[ 32 : 45 ] Carolyn there's a microphone there don't they have to believe that it's Jesus Christ and him alone because some of those denominations that you mentioned believe in Jesus Christ death burial and resurrection for their sins but they also say there are other things that you must do in order to get to heaven so it's Christ plus something else bare stuff so I really want you to understand this is is our salvation of an institutional or organizational or corporate nature or is it individual and personal

God but but but but by grace through faith through just simple belief trust reliance upon commitment to Jesus Christ as opposed to sacramentarianism which says that grace we are saved by grace that's true but how does grace get to you sacramentarians say you receive grace by receiving the Eucharist the cup and the bread you receive Christ by mouth when the elements are consecrated that becomes the blood of Christ and the body of Christ and when you eat the elements you are receiving Christ by mouth we say no we are receiving Christ by faith it is an act of the will it is by grace through faith and it is not through any sacraments it is not through confirmation it is not through water baptism it is not through the Eucharist or partaking of the elements it is by grace through faith and that leaves you with nothing to do but something to believe and once you have believed there is a great deal you can do and should do but you do it because you have believed not in order to receive salvation as a result of doing it yes do you think it is wrong to be baptized in water do you think water immersion is a wrong thing to do

I think that water immersion is a confusing thing to do because it sends the signal and some some actually believe that that water baptism is the seal of your salvation you are saved by grace through faith but then when you are water baptized that becomes the seal of your salvation and there are denominations that believe that that your salvation is not complete until you are water baptized and we are all over the map on this thing someone said I think it was Mr.

Stam said it doesn't matter what position you take regarding water baptism whatever position you take you are in a minority and I think that's probably true some connected with salvation and this is called baptismal regeneration where the mystical spiritual powers of the consecrated water makes you into a Christian by having that water applied well we just simply reject that idea and we believe that water baptism is a Jewish practice starts all the way back in the book of Exodus and is exclusively there for the priests and it signified ceremonial purification and preparation to serve the Lord in the tabernacle and in the temple worship and it was logically carried over into the New Testament and John the Baptist with his virtually electrifying ministry was the promulgator of this there being a nation of priests and all of these people came out to be baptized they were spiritually preparing themselves for the arrival of the

Messiah and then when Paul when Paul was converted he was a Jew and the most logical thing in the world for him to do was what all the other Jews were doing when they were converted just like on the day of Pentecost and the day of Pentecost is commonly referred to as the beginning of the church and this is water baptism and 3,000 were saved and they entered the church through water baptism but the scriptures do not say that that is a denominational inference that is imposed upon the scriptures and all it says is that they were water baptized and with what with what baptism with John's baptism is the only baptism they knew so you've got water baptism administered by John the Baptist all the way through the gospels and by Christ or by the disciples of Christ all the way through the gospels and then you come up to Acts chapter 2 where there is a clear continuity between the closing of the four gospels and the opening of the book of Acts with just a matter of days in between and all of a sudden in

[ 39 : 11 ] Acts 2 this water baptism oh this is Christian baptism wait a minute where do you get that well everybody knows that this is Christian baptism what do you mean everybody knows well it's just that's the birthday of the church everybody knows that well we just don't believe that bird will fly or that that dog will hunt it's just not there it they baptized in Acts chapter 2 with the same baptism with which they were familiar the only baptism that they knew which was John's baptism logical thing this was the same baptism that they had rejected earlier before John was put to death the chief priests and the scribes rejected the counsel of God against themselves not being baptized of John they rejected John's message and they rejected John's baptism but on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached that message and the spirit of God descended and the people were communicating in languages that they had never learned it was phenomenal and now

Peter is saying these people are saying what Peter said is right we've crucified the Messiah we've crucified the Messiah we can't undo it what can we do now where do we go from here and Peter said you can reverse yourself you can do now what you refused to do earlier you can be baptized in the name of this one whom you rejected earlier and if your repentance is genuine you won't have any problem with that you'll be glad to do it 3,000 did 3,000 did incredible tremendous and what was it baptism of John we just read into that this is Christian baptism listen there wasn't a Christian among them none of them were Christians nobody was a Christian then the name hadn't even been invented no one was called a Christian then they were followers of the way that's all you can say followers of the way it wasn't a



Christian baptism at all it was John's baptism and they were all Jews they were getting in line with a program that they had rejected earlier and that's what made it so dramatic it was they did a 180 and about face and it was incredible yes further on Paul said that he baptized a few people in a household I don't remember their name and that was Paul and also don't you think it paints a beautiful picture of one's salvation and it may not be necessary for salvation but being baptized does paint a nice picture and don't you think that has something to do also with the person's emotional state feeling that they did something that was symbolic of their salvation not necessarily for it

I think it depends on the way the individual is wired I think some people are put together in such a way that when they undergo the baptismal waters and they come forth they feel wonderful they feel clean they feel forgiven they feel euphoric that's that's the way they're put together emotionally that's the way they're wired and there are multitudes of people who can testify to the fact when I was water baptized I didn't feel anything I just felt wet I just didn't feel anything you know it didn't do anything for me that's the difference in people and neither feeling validates the practice in the back there Terry I'm aware of churches locally where they profess that you're saved by faith by grace of God yet their churches do practice baptism and it's similar to what the gentleman was talking about you know they feel good about that

I believe that as they practice this water baptism in after they've purportedly become Christians that they're sending a really bad message to everyone else and they're linking it so that water baptism really is necessary I mean that's my impression of that whole situation I'm sure that is true and all I just want to emphasize this water baptism cannot and does not regenerate an individual and it was never intended to do that that which regenerates or makes an individual new internally is an act of the will whereby one places one's faith in Jesus Christ it is not by works of righteousness which we have done but by the washing of regeneration it's the washing of regeneration not the washing of water baptism the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy

[ 44 : 39 ] Spirit Titus 3 5 that's what makes us a new person on the inside that's what gives us new life that's what makes us a child of God that's what makes us a Christian water baptism was never intended to do that it is a gross mistake on the part of people who think there is some mystical magical spiritual element in this water especially if it has been blessed by someone who is wearing a collar then it makes it holy water and when that person has that holy water applied to them something wonderful happens and they become a new person it just isn't so and there's nothing scriptural about it yes we take communion we eat the bread and drink the wine and that is symbolic of the last supper and Christ said do that in remembrance of me that is something that we do symbolically Catholics take that as transubstantiation where they think they literally eat the body and drink the blood of Christ but that is anyway communion is symbolic so and it represents the body and blood of Christ so also isn't water baptism a nice symbolism of what you've done spiritually that is precisely the way many people regard it that's the way that's the way that's the way I was taught to regard it it is symbolic of a death burial and resurrection coming forth out of the water it sets forth a picture like that others feel our

Presbyterian friends who sprinkle feel that it is akin to the sprinkling of the blood with the hyssop branch and that's why they sprinkle and Lutherans pour and different ones do it different ways but it is regarded by many as symbolic the the water the physical and the water is part and parcel of the old covenant and it has been upgraded if you will or replaced by that which is not physical what do I mean what I mean is that classic verse in first Corinthians 12 13 where Paul said for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jew Gentile bond or free male or female and have all been made to drink of one spirit that is spirit baptism there isn't a drop of water in it that is the baptism that regenerates it is the baptism of

Romans 6 of being placed in union know you not as many of you have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into his death there's no water in fact most of my Baptist friends don't even believe there's water in that verse it is a spirit baptism and it is the same way with circumcision you see what we have real problems with is we just can't tear ourselves loose of physical visible symbols and we do have one that is legitimate in my estimation and that is the communion table and the Lord said do this until I come and do it in remembrance of me you do not become a Christian by partaking of these elements drinking the cup and eating the bread that doesn't make you a Christian and that is not receiving Christ that is a symbol or a reminder of the price that Jesus Christ paid for our sins and when it comes to other physical things we really just don't have any and

I don't think we have any with the water and I don't think we have any with the circumcision either circumcision belongs to the old covenant but when you read in Colossians chapter 2 and by the way in the Old Testament who was circumcised males eighth day now I understand I know that females can be circumcised too it's just a different procedure but there are females circumcised and yet when you come into Colossians 2 the apostle Paul talks about being spiritually circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands what is that that's spiritual there's no materiality involved nothing physical involved it is a spiritual thing and that we believe is the essence of baptism it is a spiritual thing it's not a physical water thing and

I know I know how many people disagree with that they've got a right to be wrong I wouldn't deny them that I'm speaking facetiously but I you know what I mean they think that I'm just as wrong as I think they are wrong and like I said when we get to heaven we're all going to get straightened out our time is gone and I want to thank you for your kind participation and by the way I want to remind you that two weeks from today Eric and Carol Anderson will be with us Eric sustained serious heart attack in February and he is back on the same rigorous schedule that they were on before and I don't know about that boy but anyway they're going to be here two weeks from today and I've asked Eric if he would like to take the pulpit and he said he would be honored so he will be speaking two weeks from today and we'll look forward to his ministry with us if we may stand please and

[ 50 : 50 ] I want to remind the elders could you meet in my office in just a moment and we'll have a brief meeting father we're so grateful for the word that has provided us despite our shortcomings and often demonstrated inability to teach it correctly and to teach it as it deserves to be taught we look to you for the wisdom and guidance that will want to allow your word to interpret itself we know how faulty we tend to be when we come with our opinions and our viewpoints and try to force them into scripture certainly the scriptures that you have provided deserve far better than that and we want to handle the word of God in an honest straightforward way allowing you and your message to come forth not ours thank you for the privilege of meeting together and discussing these things in

Christ's name Amen