

# BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

by Dennis Kiszonas

## Introduction

A few years back, a family in our area of New Jersey started coming to our church. After a while, someone came from their old church to visit them and asked them, "Where are you going to church now?" This family told them where they were going, and the people from their old church responded with surprise, "You don't want to be going to that church. They don't believe in baptism!"

I want to start out by saying one thing very clearly: I want to affirm this, and I want to make it absolutely crystal clear that I believe in baptism.

As I went through what God says in His Word on the subject of baptism, I got excited. This is the sort of topic that gets you thrilled. There is one thing that you need to remember, though, if you're going to enjoy the study of baptism. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10,

"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all of our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (vv. 1-2).

Paul goes back to the Old Testament book of Exodus, and he says, "Brothers and Sisters, I want you to know this. I don't want you to be ignorant about this - how that all our fathers, in the cloud and in the sea, were baptized into Moses." These people were baptized. If you go back to Exodus 14 and 15, you will find five times in those chapters where God tells us that, when those people crossed the sea with Moses - when they were baptized into Moses - they crossed that sea on dry ground.

The principle I want to bring out here when we begin this study, is that, according to the Bible, you can be baptized without getting wet. These were all baptized into Moses. They were identified with Moses when they crossed that sea on dry ground, and they did not get wet at all.

There are so many people who, immediately when they see the word "baptism," attach to it the idea of water baptism. But if you study the word of God, you'll find out that most of the time when the word "baptism" is used, it is

not talking about water baptism in any sense. If you don't automatically connect baptism and water, you will be on your way to an understanding and a blessing - you will even get thrilled and excited about what the Bible teaches about baptism.

## **My Experience with Baptism**

Having said that, I need to tell you that I didn't always feel excited about teaching or talking about baptism. My first few years in the ministry, when I was the pastor of a church in Chicago, I didn't talk about baptism. I didn't baptize anybody. I didn't understand it. I didn't know why we did it. Our church theoretically believed in it, but I had problems.

"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned'" (Mark 16:15-16).

I knew Romans 4:5 - "But to him who does not work, but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." Faith without works saves a person, according to this verse. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." A person is saved by grace through faith - without works, without sacraments, without ordinances, without rituals, without religion. Then I came to Mark 16 and I read in verse 16, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." That bothered me. Why did the Lord say "and is baptized"? Isn't it enough to be saved by faith alone? So I had a problem with baptism.

I read books, and they tried to explain it away - some books told me to just tear the page out of my Bible - and I didn't talk about it. I thought I'd just wait until I understood it before I began to teach on the subject.

So I went on in my Bible to Acts 2. What a wonderful chapter. In the church where I was pastoring and in the school from which I graduated, we said that the church began in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. And so of course you would be thrilled to get to teach that passage where it all began! What an important chapter! ... But I never preached on Acts chapter 2. I would get down to verse 38, and Peter said something which embarrassed me. In verse 37, the people in the crowd are pricked in their heart and convicted of their sin

of crucifying the Messiah, and they say to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then in verse 38, Peter answers:

"Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

I would get to that passage and it would embarrass me because, if I were there on the Day of Pentecost and the crowd said to me, "What shall we do?" I wouldn't have said, "Repent and be baptized." I would have said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved," just like Paul did in Acts 16:31. But every time I would read this and every time I thought it was time to preach on Acts 2 - "where the church began" - I would get to this verse and I would say, "No. Can't preach on this one either."

I got to Acts 22, thinking I could start in the middle of the book . . . but I only got as far as verse 16. Ananias here is speaking to Saul and he says,

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

What? I thought he was saved on the road to Damascus. . . . and since when does baptism wash away your sins? Here was another verse on baptism that didn't compute in my system. I didn't understand it, and I decided we wouldn't preach on the book of Acts.

So I went over to 1 Peter and chapter 3. (Surely there was something in my Bible that I could preach!) In verse 21, Peter says,

"There is also an antitype [figure] which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

What? Baptism now saves you? I didn't preach that! I didn't believe that! The Bible says, "By grace you have been saved through faith" - not of works, not of religion, not of baptism; it's faith in the Lord alone! I read the commentaries. They did their exegetical gymnastics, twisting and turning the Scriptures, trying to show that Peter doesn't really mean what he's saying. Again I said, "Is there anything in the Bible I can preach?"

I went through Ephesians. I got to Ephesians chapter four and read:

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (vv. 3-5).

I read in this passage that, according to what Paul teaches, baptism is supposed to be something that has united us - something that brings Christians together, something that makes us one body - and we are to protect that unity. Yet, as I looked around Christendom, I saw that baptism was not something that brought us together, but was something that fractured the body of Christ into hundreds of different denominations.

I remember in my last year of seminary I went to see my professor. "Doctor," I said, "Here I am finishing three years in this seminary and I'm going to be leaving here soon to go out and pastor a church somewhere, but I don't know into which church I should go. I don't know where I fit in. I'm a Catholic kid that got saved, and the Lord called me into the ministry, but with the 400 different denominations (or something like that), I don't know where to go!" And the old professor sat there and smiled at me, and asked me just one question: "What do you believe about baptism?"

He's absolutely right. Baptism is the one thing that has divided Christendom into hundreds of denominations.

"Who do you baptize?" Do you baptize adults, children, or babies? Do you baptize believers only? Each one of those has divided itself into a group of denominations.

"How do you baptize?" Do you sprinkle the water? Do you pour the water? Do you dunk them one time, or do you dunk them three times in the water? Again, according to what your answer is, you sort yourself out as to which church you join.

"What does baptism mean - what does it do?" Does it save you? Some people believe that - a very large part of Christendom believes that they are saved because they were sprinkled with water. Does it wash away original sin? Is it the sign and seal of a covenant? Or is it a testimony after you've been saved by faith? Whatever you believe as to those things will sort you out further still into what group you belong to.

And then you could ask: "Are you seeking another baptism - the baptism of the Spirit?" Then your answer would open up a whole new variety of denominations which you could consider.

Whatever you believe about baptism, you are in the minority. There is no majority viewpoint on the doctrine of baptism. This doctrine that Paul said was supposed to bring us together has in fact divided us into hundreds of denominations with contradicting and conflicting doctrines. There was a time - and I'm sure if we didn't have such a good government, it would be today - when Christians murdered Christians because they didn't believe the same thing about baptism!

As I was going through Ephesians, I'll never forget the Sunday I got to this verse. I asked myself, "What does Paul mean by one baptism? Which one?" If you read the books, you'll find that everybody is trying to turn two into one - or three into one. . .

I read one day how someone had asked one of the old Brethren preachers, "What do you say about baptism?" His answer - "I don't say anything about baptism." I believe we would be a lot better off if there were more preachers like him today than preachers who gloss over and twist the very Word of God to make it fit their denominational traditions - the traditions of men. These men take the Word of God and don't think twice about changing the words and changing the meaning and then saying, "It doesn't mean what it says - it's wrong." But thank God there is an answer to the confusion.

Baptism was not meant by God to be a divisive, fracturing type of doctrine. The answer to the many questions the doctrine of baptism has raised can only be found by "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" and studying the Bible the way God gave us the Bible - dispensationally. . . . and that is what I would like to do in the following pages.

## **Biblical Baptism**

Let's start in Matthew chapter 3 where we see the ministry of John the Baptizer - the Baptist.

"In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'."

Here in the opening pages of the New Testament, we read about John the Baptist preaching the kingdom. It's interesting to turn over and read about John's ministry in John chapter 1, how that the leaders of Israel came out to observe and to question him about his ministry. They came and asked, "Why are you doing this out here in the wilderness? Who sent you? By what authority are you baptizing?" It is interesting that they never came out to him

and asked, "What are you doing?" or "Why are you dunking (or sprinkling, or pouring water over) these people in this river?" They didn't have to ask him what he was doing because they knew. They had seen it many times before. Baptism itself was not a new thing. It was an old thing.

It goes all the way back in the Old Testament to the book of Leviticus. In chapter 8, we see the ordination of a priest for the nation of Israel.

"And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 'Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing oil, a bull as the sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread, and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.' So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. And the congregation was gathered together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And Moses said to the congregation, 'This is what the Lord commanded to be done'" (vv. 1-5).

Now begins the ordination ceremony of Aaron and his sons to become priests in the nation of Israel.

"Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water" (v. 6).

The first step in becoming a priest in the nation of Israel was that the priest was to be washed with water at the door of the tabernacle. So Moses washed them. But there's another thing shown here as the ceremony continues in verse 10:

"Also Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to consecrate them. And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him" (vv. 10-12).

First, Aaron is washed with water. Second, Moses pours a beaker of oil on him. Then we drop down further in the passage to verse 14, and the sacrifices begin.

"And he brought the bull for the sin offering. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering, and Moses killed it."

Then verse 22:

"And he brought the second ram, the ram of consecration. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram and Moses killed it. Also he took some of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot."

So we see Aaron with his hair wet, with oil dripping down his head and neck and on his clothes, and now with blood on his ear, blood on his thumb, and blood on his toe. Not only that, but we find in verse 30 that,

". . . Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, his sons, and the garments of his sons with him."

Moses takes the mixture of blood and oil and splatters these men. We see them dressed in a fine and beautiful outfit, but how do they look? They have blood on their face, blood on their hands, and their clothing is stained with blood. Then in chapter 9 the priests, having been ordained, begin their ministry.

Now flash ahead 1,500 years to the Jordan River and these types that we see become reality. Here came the greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist, and he was saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What kind of a kingdom will it be? In Exodus 19:6, God says that Israel would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. John comes and announces the imminent coming of the kingdom. The Israelites needed to assume their rightful part in that kingdom of priests. The first thing they needed to do was to be ordained. How were priests to be ordained? Back to Leviticus . . . they needed to be washed with water, anointed with oil, and sprinkled with blood.

And so these people lined up by the river, ready to be baptized with water. The ordination had begun. They had seen this many times in the temple. They had seen priest after priest being washed (baptized), anointed, and sprinkled as they were ordained for the ministry. They knew what it was about and so they came as a multitude down to the Jordan.

But wait! Someone else came.

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness'" (Matthew 3:13-15).

What righteousness did Christ need to fulfill? The righteousness of the law, as commanded by God, in Leviticus chapter 8. The Lord Jesus Christ is to be the High Priest of Israel and needs to be ordained. He comes to the river and John says, "No. I'm not going to do this." The Lord says, "Yes you are, for we are going to fulfill all righteousness. The law says that I must be washed with water in order to become a priest." Immediately afterwards, in verses 16 and 17:

"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And suddenly a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'."

The Lord Jesus Christ was first washed in the water like Aaron. But unlike Aaron who had oil poured upon him to anoint him to his ministry as a priest, the Lord Jesus Christ was anointed with no one less than the Holy Spirit by God Himself. Peter understood this, for he says:

"That word you know which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. . . ." (Acts 10:37, 38).

God Himself came into the ordination and anointed His Son - not with oil, but the real thing which oil only symbolized as a type. There were many people in the history of Israel who had been anointed - the priests, the kings, and the prophets - but this man was the anointed One. Peter says about Him, "God has made Him to be both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). ("Christ" is from the Greek word *Christos*, meaning "the anointed Messiah")

How do you become a priest? First, you are washed - baptized - in the water. Then, you are anointed with the oil. Finally, daubed in blood from your ear to your foot. Christ had been washed with water in the Jordan. Then he was anointed with the Holy Spirit Himself. But there was one more baptism.

"I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled. But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished" (Luke 12:49, 50).

When we see in the Old Testament Moses daubing the blood on the ear, the hand, and the foot of Aaron, then sprinkling him, splattering that blood on the priests, we know now that it was pointing ahead to Jesus Christ, the High Priest. The Anointed High Priest of Israel, after being baptized with water in



the Jordan, and being anointed with the Holy Spirit by God, was then baptized with blood - splattered from head to foot - as the whip broke open His skin, as the thorns pierced His brow, and as the nails tore his hands and feet. He was baptized in His own blood that He might complete His ordination and offer Himself as a sacrifice.

We looked at Aaron's ordination and at the Lord's ordination, but now we return to the people of Israel. They were to become a kingdom of priests, and they needed to be ordained to enter into Messiah's priesthood. John the Baptist began this ceremony to prepare the people, but he said,

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11).

John was, in effect, saying, "I can only take you this far, through one part of the ordination. But the One who comes after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." We turn to the book of Acts and we see the realization of this on the Day of Pentecost.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

What was happening? Peter explains it in verses 16:

"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh'."

God is baptizing here with the pouring out of His Spirit, the pouring out of the anointing oil on these who desire to enter the kingdom of priests. As we continue in verses 32 and 33, Peter says,

"This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."

There is one last part to the ordination. In his first epistle, Peter reveals the final stage of the priestly initiation.

"You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

Peter calls these people "a holy priesthood." How did they get ordained? They were washed in the water, they were anointed with the Spirit by the Messiah, then, looking in the beginning of the book, we see that they were,

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1:2).

They had been fully ordained - washed in the water, anointed with the Spirit, and sprinkled not with the blood of a goat or ram, but with the blood of Jesus Christ.

All of these baptisms that we have seen so far, as beautiful as they are, were all part of a prophesied program of God. They were all part of a message which promised entrance into a kingdom here on the earth. This was God's plan for the nation of Israel. These were Jewish baptisms. We know from reading on in the Bible, through the book of Acts, there came a time when God set aside the nation of Israel and postponed their kingdom.

He had sent them John the Baptist. The Lord Jesus Christ had come to the nation. The Holy Spirit had come and filled the disciples. Israel's response: murder, murder, murder. They stood by as John the Baptist was beheaded. They handed over the Lord Jesus Christ to crucifixion. They themselves picked up the stones and stoned Stephen, a man who was filled with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 7 and 8, the nation of Israel was cast away and that earthly kingdom was put "on hold."

Then a wonderful thing happened. From heaven's glory, the Lord Jesus Christ reached down in unfathomable grace and mercy to a man traveling down a road with vengeance and bitterness in his heart - a man named Saul - who was on his way to persecute the saints of God. He was a man who was called "the chief of sinners," and the leader of Israel's rebellion against the Lord. The Lord reached down and stopped that man in his tracks, saving him by His grace. This man's name was changed from "Saul" to "Paul" and God made him an apostle.

He was called as an apostle not to the nation of Israel, but rather to the Gentiles. An apostle not of an earthly kingdom, but of the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ. An apostle not of a prophesied program, but of a secret - a mystery - hidden in God from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 3:9).

Part of that revelation called "the mystery," which the Lord Jesus Christ revealed to Paul, was a baptism. It was not a baptism of water, not a baptism of oil, nor a baptism of blood. It was a baptism that was unknown before the apostle Paul. You can search the Scriptures from Genesis up to Paul's writings and you will not find even a hint of it.

The first mention of this new baptism is in the book of Romans and chapter 6.

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (v. 3)

In 1 Corinthians 12:12 and 13, Paul writes,

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

He writes about a baptism that is only part of "the mystery" which is found only in his letters - a unique baptism for us who are living in the dispensation of the grace of God. Here is a baptism that is not at all related with entering into an earthly kingdom, but a baptism that brings you into the Body of Christ. It is not a baptism of the priesthood - not a washing in water, not an anointing with oil, not a sprinkling of blood. It is not even a baptism of Messiah pouring out His Spirit on His people. It is a baptism that is an operation of the Holy Spirit Himself, taking a believer, the moment he puts his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, fusing him into the body and person of the Lord Jesus Christ so that he becomes one with Him (1 Corinthians 12:12). Paul was able to look at the church in Corinth and see Christ, not many individual members. They were one with Him. They were Christ!

I don't think there can be any doubt that the "one baptism" of which Paul writes in Ephesians 4:5 is the same baptism which he wrote about in Romans 6 and 1 Corinthians 12. It is the fact that one Spirit baptized us into one body. This is the one baptism for this dispensation of the grace of God in which we are living.

Someone will inevitably say, "Hey, wait a minute! Didn't Paul baptize some people with water? And if he baptized some with water and the Holy Spirit baptized them, that's two baptisms, right?" Let's check it out.

We need to realize that in the early ministry of the Apostle Paul in the book of Acts, he not only baptized people, but he circumcised them too (Acts 16:3). After all that Paul had written in Galatians about not practicing circumcision, he takes one of the Galatians, Timothy, and circumcises him. Continue reading in the same book and you see how Paul cut his hair to keep a Jewish vow. You observe Paul going into the temple to offer a Jewish sacrifice. You hear Paul speaking in tongues. You watch Paul baptizing people with a Jewish baptism. The question is, "Should we follow him?" or "Is that an example for us?"

Take a look at what he says in 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

"I thank God that I baptized none of you . . ." (v. 14a)

A good Baptist, isn't he? But then he remembers a few:

". . . except Crispus and Gaius. . . . I also baptized the household of Stephanus. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect" (vv. 14, 16-17).

Among the many things that could be said, I want to make one point: When Paul preached his gospel (the gospel of the grace of God), from the beginning of his ministry to the end of his ministry, he did not have to preach water baptism along with it. When Peter preached his gospel (the gospel of the kingdom), he had to preach water baptism. Everywhere Peter preached he preached water baptism. Christ had sent him to preach water baptism and the kingdom (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18). Paul says, "I was not sent to baptize." It was never an intrinsic part of his gospel. In fact, as we read the letters of Paul, we find nowhere that he beseeches, or commands, or exhorts, or recommends, or says anything to the effect that members of the body of Christ ought to be baptized in water.

Why then did he baptize? He writes:

"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know just as I also am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The Greek word for "dimly" (KJV: "darkly") is *enigma*, which means "a puzzle." At this point in his ministry, during the book of Acts, as Paul looked at his own

ministry he could say, "I don't know it all yet." We could ask, "Paul, why did you cut your hair, why did you keep that vow, why did you offer that sacrifice, why did you speak in tongues, why did you baptize those people with that Jewish baptism?" There are several reasons, but I believe there are times when Paul would say, "It is kind of an enigma, isn't it? Even I, at that time, didn't know the whole thing yet."

But there came a day when the Lord Jesus Christ completed that revelation of the mystery to the apostle Paul in prison at Rome. At that time he moved into the full light of that revelation that Christ gave to him. We read about it in the prison epistles - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon - and in the pastoral epistles. Paul says, now having the full knowledge of the mystery, "There is one baptism" - one Spirit baptizing us into one body (Ephesians 4:5). And in Colossians 2:15, he tells us that, when we are in that one body, baptized into Christ, we are "Complete in Him."

### The Effects of the "One Baptism"

I would like to conclude by reflecting upon the effects this has in our lives - being baptised by one baptism into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Being baptised into His Body, we are made close to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writes, in 1 Corinthians 6:17, "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." When we were baptised into Christ's body (1 Corinthians 12:13), we became one body with the Lord. Now we see in this verse that we became one spirit with the Lord.

"For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. . .  
"(Galatians 3:27).

We are Christ's. We are members of Him. I may forget something that belongs to me, but I will not put down my hand anywhere and forget it. I may misplace a book that is in my library, but I won't lose track of my foot. My hand and my foot are my members - they are me. Paul says that we have put on Christ. We are baptised into His body and have become one with Him.

"For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. . . . This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:30, 32).

Twenty-five years ago I was graduating from 8th grade at St. Mary Star-of-the-Sea School on the south side of Chicago. At the end of that year, the Sister

said, "I want you each to take a piece of paper and write down what you want to do with your life." Some kids said, "I want to be a teacher," or "I want to be a mechanic," or "I want to play for the Chicago White Sox." But I wrote down on that piece of paper, "I want to live on a mountain and really get close to God."

By His grace, I made it! Bone of His bones, flesh of His flesh, one body and one spirit with the Lord. What more could God say? You cannot be any closer than that. You can't feel it, see it, or touch it, but you know it because Christ said it: He is in me and I am in Him.

Being baptised into His Body, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

Note the order: First, you heard the gospel. Second, you believed - you trusted the Lord as your Saviour. And Paul says that at that moment, God's Holy Spirit moved in with that baptism. It was not only the baptism, but also a sealing in Him. We are not part of the vine and the branches, where the branches can be cut off if they're not fruitful and be thrown into the fire. We are members of His body and sealed in Him, safe and secure.

Being baptised into His Body, we are seated with Christ in heaven - now!

"Even when we were dead in trespasses, [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:5, 6).

We may be walking about on this earth, but we are members of Christ's body, and our head is in heaven. Because I am one with Him, I am already seated with Him in heavenly places. Ephesians chapter 1 and verse three tells me that, because I am seated with Christ in heavenly places, God, my Father, has blessed me "with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ."

Being baptised into His Body, we are joined to each other with a spiritual bond.

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The same Holy Spirit that came to live in me is the same Holy Spirit that came to live in you. I don't understand how the same person can be in me, in you, and in each member of Christ's body, but this tells me that this one baptism by one Spirit into one body has pulled us all together - not only individually into the Lord Jesus Christ, but also with one another. When you see that unity, you begin to look at fellow Christians in a different light. You begin to treasure each one. God the Spirit is dwelling in each one to make us one body by this one spiritual baptism.

By this one baptism, I am placed into Christ and Christ into me. I become one with Him as a member of His body.

By this one baptism, I'm not only in Christ, but I'm sealed in Him forever.

By this one baptism, I have been seated in the heavenlies and have been blessed with all spiritual blessings.

By this one baptism, I've become one with Him and one with each member of Christ's Body forever.

I believe in baptism - this greatest baptism in all the Bible, baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

## **A Final Word . . .**

Maybe you've been baptised with water or had some kind of "religious" experience, but you can receive this real baptism. The Lord Jesus died on the cross to bear my sins and your sins, to pay for them once for all time. Whoever you are, no matter where you've come from, no matter what you've ever done, if you have never trusted in Him, He's waiting for you and He's inviting you now to trust in Him as your Savior. Stop trying to save yourself. Stop depending on a church, a sacrament, some ritual prayers, or a religion. God will save you tonight if you will simply put your faith in, and rely on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. At that very moment, God the Holy Spirit will baptize you and will place you into the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. You could never be closer to God than that. If you want to be saved right now, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and God will save you.