

Scriptural Baptism's Five Requirements

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In your Bible Acts chapter number two, I am going to talk to you for just a little while about scriptural baptism. There is a lot and sundry ideas concerning baptism.

Years ago up at the [?] up in Fort Worth these two little boys kept riding our buses. They rode our buses every, every Sunday and both of them were saved. And so they were going to come and be baptized. And so the two little boys were discussing the doctrine of baptism. And the older brother, which is about a year, maybe two years older than the younger brother was explaining to the younger brother what baptism was all about.

And so as the older boy begins to explain to the younger brother he said, "Now, you will walk up into the baptistry area and brother Wolfenbarger will take you by the hand and lead you very, very gently and very safely down the stairs making sure you don't fall and drown while you walk into the pool. And you get into the baptistry and you stand real still as though you were just about dead and whenever brother Wolfenbarger grabs you by the nose, you take a deep breath because he is going to hold you under three minutes. And if you are still alive when he gets you out of the water, then you are saved."

Do you believe that boy got baptized anyhow?

You say, "Well, now, preacher, that is absolutely a ridiculous story."

That actually happened and that boy tried to explain to his young brother. But, you know, I know a lot of Baptist folk, probably members of our church, could not explain to you any more on a scriptural basis what baptism is than I have just explained to you.

Now after you have been saved, after you have been justified, your very next step of obedience to God, your very next step of faith is that of following the Lord in believer's baptism.

Now take your Bible if you would, please. The book of Acts chapter number two and we will read for you one verse toward the end of the chapter. But now we would like to explain to you a little bit something about Acts chapter number two.

As you know, if you read very much in your Bibles, you will know that Acts chapter number two is dealing with the feast of Pentecost. And the Bible said, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.”¹

And so we have here a group of Jews, a group of orthodox Jews coming together to celebrate one of the Jewish festivals and one of the Jewish traditions called Pentecost.

Now they have come from all over the known world in that day. If you read Acts chapter number two you will find 16 different language speaking peoples have gathered there at Pentecost. And the Bible said when that day had come...

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.”² And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Is that not so?

Now that is not the beginning of the Church, that is the empowering of the Church. Now the Church already had an officer. The Church already had a commission and the Church already had members long before Pentecost.

So the Church did not start in Acts chapter number two. It started in John one and Luke six according to 1 Corinthians 12. And so the Church is on the way now. And so they have all gathered together in an upper room and they were all sitting there and began to pray, 120 folks. And suddenly as they prayed the Holy Spirit of God fell on them and anointed that crowd and out here in front of them are 16 different nations, 16 language speaking peoples. And what is so phenomenal about the day of Pentecost is not that people spoke in other tongues, but that other folks heard them speak in their own language.

So here Peter stands up and begins to preach and he preaches in his native language and here are 16 different language speaking peoples out here come to celebrate Pentecost and, boy, what an opportunity to preach the gospel, what an opportunity to get those orthodox Jews in on that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. He has come. He has died. He was buried. He rose again and is seated at the right hand of God to make intercession for us.

And so Peter just stood up and preached to that crowd.

Now we have got a problem. We have got 16 different language speaking peoples and one language being spoken. So God miraculously, with the power of the Holy Spirit enabled the other disciples to take what Peter says in Aramaic and Hebrew and translate it into these other different languages so that everybody heard the gospel in their own language.

You say, “Boy, that is miraculous.”

¹ Acts 2:1.

² Acts 2:2.

No. That is just God. And God enabled that to happen and there is 3000 folk got saved in that one preaching meeting.

Now let's see what happened immediately after they had been saved.

Acts 2:41. The Bible says, now look at what it says.

“Then they that gladly received his word were [what?] baptized.”³

But why don't you just write down this word βαπτίζω (bap-tid'-zo) B A P T I Z O, βαπτίζω (bap-tid'-zo). Look in any Greek dictionary, lexicon, any of them you want and you will find that that word's definition is dive, plunge, dip or immerse.

We must follow the definition of the word.

Now, listen to me. At the time of this writing there is only one crowd practicing baptism. There are not 10 crowds. There are not two crowds. There's not three congregations. There is only one congregation at this time. And they are practicing a God given ordinance that has God's qualifications and God's restrictions of that ordinance.

You see, these could not go down the road and say, “How do you baptize?” These could not go down the road and say, “Well, is it more convenient to do it like you are you doing it than like we are doing it?” Convenience was not the matter. It was obedience to the revealed will of God and the matter in which he wanted us to do it.

So let's you and I take our Bible, if you would, please, and maybe we will answer some questions. Have you been baptized? How many of you all have been baptized? Let your hand down.

Now, you tell yourself why. Why have you been baptized?

You say, “Well, a preacher told me to.”

Would you please give me 500? Now I am not suggesting. I am commanding you. Give me 500.

Well, how come you won't give me 500 if what I say is so binding in your life? You mean to tell me you have been baptized and you can't write on a piece of paper in one paragraph why you have been baptized? If you can't tell me why you was, somebody might be able to talk you out of it as to why you were.

And you say, “Well, preacher, you ought to be talking about something else tonight like the election.”

³ Acts 2:41.

I only know of one and we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

“Well, preacher, you are embarrassing me.”

No, I am trying to open your eyes to the fact that any subject that is mentioned 96 times, at least 95 plus times in the Word of God, it must be of utmost importance to God that we address it, we digest it, we understand it and then we fulfill it.

So if you have been baptized why have you been baptized? Because it is very important, because some folks get baptized to be saved. But if they get baptized to be saved, they are not saved at all. Muddy water on their head never did anything except just make you muddy.

Some folks are baptized to attribute favor from the holy church.

You say, “Well, that certainly wasn’t why I was baptized.”

Well, you don’t know why you were baptized.

Or somebody said, “Well, preacher, what... where were you baptized?”

You see, I was reading the other day where Reverend Ike baptized 1000, no 10,000 folks in New York City at one time with a fire hose. Buddy, that is what you call mass production. I also read recently where that Pat Boone baptized in a swimming pool in his back yard.

Now the question is, if you are baptized, why were you baptized, where were you baptized and how were you baptized?

You see, some folk baptize with sprinkling. I am not making fun of that, but somehow or another I just don’t find that in the Bible.

I was reading recently about a Baptist preacher that was preaching in a Methodist Church and he got all wound up, got all hot and there was a glass of water on the pulpit and he reached up and drank it and the guy said, “My word, he just drank our baptistry dry.”

Why? Where? And how?

You say, “Well, preacher, that don’t make any difference.”

If you know your Bible it does. You have got to know why. You have got to know where and please you have got to know how you were baptized.

Some folk just pour a lot of water in a rag and then the wipe you and you are baptized. Is that convenient? Hopefully the rag is clean.

Please let me remind you of something now. If you notice coming by that sign when you drove by, it says “Baptist.” And I would be the biggest kind of jerk and the biggest kind of deceiver and the biggest kind of liar if I did not preach what I believe as a Baptist inside these walls it cost us two million dollars to build. [?]

So now I just wan to share with you something about your baptism tonight.

Take your Bible if you would, please, and I want to show you something about Baptism and you need to look in your Bible tonight because you need to find this and follow along.

Notice, first of all, in the Bible that baptism is commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ, not suggested, not if you feel like it, not if it is convenient, not when it fits in to your schedule, Jesus Christ said, “We are to be baptized.”

Matthew chapter 28:18-20. And most of you can quote it, but you need to see it tonight. Jesus Christ commanded us to be baptized.

Matthew chapter 28:18-20. The Bibles says—be careful, now, I want to show you.

And you say, “Well, preacher, how many was in the Church when this commission was given?”

Notice verse number 16.

It had a sole membership of 11.

You say, “Where is Judas?”

Oh, he is hanging around out back somewhere.

You get the drift? No, Judas ain’t in this bunch because he ain’t saved. He is not saved. I don’t care if he had been baptized so many times the tadpoles are familiar with his social security number. If he ain’t saved, he ain’t baptized. And if he is not baptized he is not a member of the Church.

And so there is 11 members when Jesus gave this commission. Please now notice he did not give it to the individual. He gave it to the congregation that he had put together and baptized and prepared by John the Baptist.

Now notice what he says to them.

He says,

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [or all authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”⁴

How many of you folk believe that?

He looked at that little old bitty church, the only church in existence, the only saved individuals on the face of the earth at that time, the only ones that had been baptized by John the Baptist, the only ones that was being prepared for the Lord Jesus Christ. And he looked at those guys before he ascended back into heaven after he had raised from the dead and he looked at those guys and he said, look, “All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me by God the Father. Now I am going to give it to you. I am going to give you the authority to preach, give you the authority to baptize and authority to preach the gospel.” And he said, “I am going to give it to you. I want you to do this with it. I want you to go into all the world and teach all nations.”

You know who has the authority to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ? The Church, not Paul and Jan, Jerry and James. God gave the authority to preach and to baptize and to teach to the only church in existence in that day.

Now we must find that church because there wasn't but one in that day. And Jesus said, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against my church.” He didn't say everybody else's church. He said his church. Now notice that.

The very first thing that I am to do as a believer is to follow the Lord in believer's baptism. I got saved about 40 years ago. I was sitting in my living room when brother Williams got to show me how to be saved.

He said, “Now, Gene, what you need to do next is be baptized.”

I said, “Is it in the book?”

He said, “It is in the book.”

“Show me it in the book.”

He showed me in the book. Sunday morning I climbed in the water and got baptized. Didn't need to argue about it. Didn't understand it.

Do you know what is funny, what is so comical to me? Is we will have all these kids saved on our buses and we will send our workers into the homes and we will [?] mommy and daddy and we just pretend like brother Carpenter is one of our parents of our bus kids, right?

⁴ Matthew 28:18.

Brother Carpenter, sir, I want you to just know and we want to inform you as of last Sunday Leroy your son got saved in our children's church and I just come to talk to you about Baptism.

The next thing you are going to say is, "Well, he is not old enough to understand baptism."

Isn't that what you are going to say?

You know what I am going to say?

"Well, why don't you tell me how much you know about it?"

Well, now, Mr. Carpenter, if you don't need to know more about it than that, who is going to teach him about it? How about me since I know about it?"

You say, "You are fishing to get run off."

No. I am going to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. I am going to make this guy think he suggested that I baptize his kid and teach him all about it.

By the way, how much do you know about it? I mean how big a paper could you write concerning baptism? All I know is the first thing that you ought to do, the first thing you are commanded to do is to be baptized after you are saved. Jesus commanded it. The apostle Paul practiced it and he preached it.

That is great. The great apostle Paul in Acts chapter nine, the first thing Paul did after he came to Christ was be baptized and follow the Lord in believer's baptism. It must be pretty important if the great apostle, the author of 14 books in the New Testament was so obedient that he did that. And then in Romans chapter number six—take your Bible if you would, please, and we will see what I am talking about—he preached it, Romans chapter six, please.

Romans six verse five. Paul practiced baptism.

The first thing he did after he met Christ on the road to Damascus was follow the Lord in believer's baptism. He preached it all through his ministry.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death."⁵

Is that what it says? Romans six verse five.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death."⁶

⁵ Romans 6:4.

⁶ Ibid.

Do you think I can get enough water in this to bury you in? Can I bury you in a glass of water?

See, baptism is not only commanded, it is a picture of the inward faith. And your trust in that faith of the gospel of Christ. It is a faith. It is a power and show of an inward faith.

Notice what it says.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism,”⁷ now notice, look at this now. Paul is preaching. “...that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”⁸

Now what did I do when I got in that watery grave? When I got in that baptistry I got in there because I had already been saved. Is that not so?

If water saves, then we could go out here and get all these folks and pull them in that baptistry, kicking and screaming and cussing and raising Cain and the minute we put them under they surrender all to Christ. There is no saving merit in the water of baptism. It was practiced by Paul, commanded by Jesus and was preached by Paul to be a picture of the death and the burial and the resurrection of Christ. And when we are baptized, we are professing that we are confessing that we have faith in the gospel, the death, the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So it is commanded by Jesus. It is practiced and preached by Paul and explained by Peter in 1 Peter chapter three verse 21.

What is baptism?

Now let's you and I read 1 Peter chapter three and verse 21.

Do you have it now? We will read it together. Now, first of all, baptism is commanded by our Lord. Secondly, it was preached and practiced by Paul and is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. And it is explained by the apostle Peter in verse 21.

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.”⁹ Now notice this, “(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but...”¹⁰ What is it? Read the rest of it. What is it? “The answer of a good conscience toward God.”¹¹

Do you know why it is an answer to a clear conscience? Because God commanded every one of us, the minute we are saved, the next thing we are to do is to be baptized. And as

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ 1 Peter 3:21.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

long as you are disobedient to God in the matter of baptism, you will have no clear conscience toward God because you are remaining disobedient to God. And every time you bow your head to pray, somebody inside will remind you, "What are you doing praying to me when you are disobedient in the matter of baptism?"

"Well, you don't understand, Lord. I am ashamed to walk down there."

"Then I am ashamed to answer your prayer. You be ashamed of me," Jesus said, "I will be ashamed of you."

[?]

Hey, have you ever noticed little boys and girls that get saved early in their life and then their momma and daddy will not allow them to be baptized. They keep coming back and coming back and coming back wanting to be saved again and want to be saved again and want to be saved again and want to be saved. Do you know what is wrong? Conscience is bothering them. And until they follow the Lord in believer's baptism they will not have a clear conscience towards God.

Even today as recent as today we have dealt with a mother and a young lady who has been in our church for years through our Sunday school and on through this thing and today she called from out of state wanting to know when was she saved and when was she baptized. She remembers when she was saved, but she don't ever remember being baptized. At the age of eight or nine she came forward in one of our Sunday school classes and was saved. But yet as a grown woman, still her conscience is bothering her as to the fact, "I don't know if I am baptized or not. I need to follow the Lord in believer's baptism."

The Holy Spirit will not let you sleep and your conscience will not let you have peace until you are obedient in the matter of baptism.

"Well, preacher, that ain't important."

Sure it is important. It is necessary to please the Father. Number one, it is commanded of our Lord.

Number two, it is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is your outward manifestation of an inward faith. It is kind of like a soldier and his uniform. You get in that baptistry. You are putting on your Christian uniform, man. You are saying to the world, "I am in God's army. I am saved." You are not ashamed of it.

Thirdly, Peter said it was an answer to your clear conscience towards God.

Matthew chapter three, now we referred a little bit to this verse. But I want you to see this. If God commanded it, it must be kind of important. Is that not so? If God commanded it, it must be of utmost importance. If the great apostle Paul who was a

theologian in his own right not only practiced it as he came out of Judaism, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, he was a doctor, a doctor of the law, if you please. And he knew the Word of God right front and backwards. And the minute he was saved he submitted himself to baptism. And not only that, did he practice it, but he preached it throughout his whole tenure as an evangelist and a missionary, as a theologian.

Peter, one of the great, great pillars of the first church. He said it was an answer to a good conscience toward God.

Now look at what Matthew said, verse 16 of Matthew chapter three.

You say, "Preacher, I have been saved, but I haven't thought [?] in baptism. I just don't think it is important."

No, it is important. It is important. Tonight when you pray you listen. You listen to the Holy Spirit of God and you will find out it is important. You read your Bible tonight, you will find out it is important. I know it is.

Verse 16.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son...¹²

Baptism is necessary to pleasing our heavenly Father.

I am of the persuasion and of the conviction that if I were disobedient in this matter of baptism and had preached and had scores of folks saved throughout my ministry and when I walk through heaven's pearly gates down the streets of gold and up to the throne of God where Jesus Christ sits from whence comes thunders and lightning, crowed with the most beautiful rainbow this universe has ever seen, should I walk up there with souls that have been saved by the scores behind me, I am of the conviction that if I am not baptized, the first thing that comes to my Lord's lips is, "Gene, why wasn't you baptized?"

No accolades, no rewards until I will answer for being directly, intentionally, belligerently disobedient to my Lord's command to be baptized.

You say, "Preacher, you have to be baptized to be saved?"

No, no. But you have to be baptized to be obedient, scripturally baptized.

Acts chapter number two. I don't know if you know this or not, but millions absolutely millions of Baptists have died for the doctrine and their belief in baptism. Actually they

¹² Matthew 3:16-17.

have been tied to wild beasts. They have been tied to the stake. They have been burnt. They have been tortured. In fact, many years ago we were known as Anabaptists. That means rebaptizer. And any time someone got saved and followed the Lord in believer's baptism the Roman Church was very critical of that because they had already baptized those folks as infants. But we do not believe that sprinkling constitutes New Testament baptism. We do not apologize for that.

And here is the thing you must always remember. All of those churches that came out of the Catholic Church, that came out in the Reformation period, every single one of them came out to try to purify the doctrine, but they always brought something out with them that was in error and most of them came out of the Catholic Church brought with them baptismal regeneration and infant baptism. And there is no secret that the Catholics believe in infant baptism. There is not one instance, not one illustration, not one suggestion in all the Bible of infant baptism.

You might ask why do they believe that? Because of tradition. They say that Cornelius and his house and Lydia, when Lydia got saved the Bible says she and her household were baptized. And they conclude from that that Lydia and Cornelius had infants in the house. But I know that is not true in Lydia's case because she married an Irish man who was impotent and could not have children.

You say, "How do you know that?"

I supposed it, just like they did.

And you cannot build a doctrine on supposition. You cannot build a belief on supposing something. You look at me like that I am crazy, but that is where they get their doctrine. Infant baptism is, they suppose, that Lydia had infants in her home when they baptized those in the family. And so just because somebody calls it baptism does not make it baptism.

I want to teach you something tonight, why you and I believe that scriptural baptism is essential.

Now Acts chapter two verse 41. Now notice Acts 2:41 the Bible said, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."¹³

Now I want you to look at three divisions of that verse. Number one, they that gladly received his word, right there, saved. They were saved before they were baptized. They that gladly received his word. That is what you did when you got saved. Is that right? Forty years ago in my living room in Farmer's Branch, Texas when they told me the gospel of Jesus Christ, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and that I was a sinner in dire need of being saved, that night in my living room I bowed in my couch and, boy, did I gladly receive the Word of God into my heart and I was gloriously saved.

¹³ Acts 2:41.

Notice, they that gladly received his word were what? Now you can't get that turned around. If you were not saved when you were baptized, then you were not baptized. You cannot be baptized then be saved. You can't turn that around. You understand that.

So there is a significant order here.

“Then they that gladly received his word were...”¹⁴ What? Somebody tell me. And when they were baptized, what happened? Look at the rest of the verse. And were added to the number. What is the number? The number are the 120 members of the only church in existence of that day that is meeting in the upper room praying for the fullness of the Holy Spirit of God and when the Spirit of God fell and empowered that infant church with 120 members, Peter stood up, preached to all those folks at Pentecost and all of them that gladly received his word were saved and then they were baptized, added to the church of that time.

Now please let me help you a little bit. It has nothing to do with this. When you are saved you become a member of God's family.

John 1:12.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”¹⁵

When you get saved, you become a member of God's family, but not a member of God's Church, not a member of God's body. You become a member of God's family, but not a member of the body of the Christ, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. You become a member of the Church when you are baptized, added to the number 3000 souls.

You see that verse. You have read it 1000 times, didn't see all that. You have read it 100 times. You are saved and become a child of God.

Can anybody say amen?

You don't have to be baptized to go to heaven. You do not have to be baptized to be a member of God's family. You do not have to be baptized, but you do have to be baptized to be obedient to God and you have to be baptized to be a member of the Church that Jesus started.

Now you can be a member of these other churches if you would like because you don't have to do too much. But if you are going to be a member of God's Church you have got to do it a scriptural manner in which he prescribes in the Word of God.

There is three basic motives to be baptized: number one, the motive of obedience; number two, the motive of love; the motive of joy.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ John 1:12.

It is necessary to be baptized because you and I have never... listen to me. You have never met a mature, fruitful Christian who has not been baptized.

Now just think about it. You have met those flip flop, in and out, up and down, ain't never going to be constant and faithful to God. You have met those kind of folks who haven't been baptized. But it is of a necessity that you and I follow the Lord's command to be baptized to be obedient and only obedient Christians has the power of God, the blessings of God and the maturity of God to produce fruit for God.

Now you can be a Christian and dress right and not be baptized. But you cannot be a Christian and be obedient to your Savior and not be baptized because he commands us to be baptized immediately after we get saved and we cannot be obedient... let me ask you this.

If you had a child who was disobedient, would you bless him? Would you bless a child who is in direct rebellion against your direct command? Would you do that? You would be hurting your child to do that.

Now that is a good motive to be baptized, to be obedient to your Savior.

Secondly, there is the motive of love. The Bible said, "If ye love me [do what?], keep my commandments."¹⁶

And the very first commandment is that you follow the Lord in believer's baptism.

Third is the motivation for joy. You remember the Ethiopian eunuch who was sitting in the chariot reading the book of Isaiah. And God summons this evangelist, Stephen, if you please. And sending him down to the Arabian desert and there would be a lonely Ethiopian eunuch down there reading the book of Isaiah and he walked up to him. Do you remember? Philip walked up to him and do you remember what he said? He looked at that Ethiopian eunuch and he said, "Say, do you understand what you are reading?"

And do you remember his reply? He said, "How can I except some man guide me?"

And so he showed him how to be saved and they got back in the chariot and they was going down the road and the eunuch sees some water. He asked the evangelist. He said, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?"¹⁷

Do you remember what he said? He said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."¹⁸

¹⁶ John 14:15.

¹⁷ Acts 8:36.

¹⁸ Acts 8:37.

You don't get baptized to believe. You believe to get baptized. You don't get baptized to be saved. You are saved and then you are baptized.

And when that Ethiopian eunuch said, "I believe with all my heart..." "Whoa," he said. And he got out and the Bible said they both went down into the water.

And after he was baptized the Bible said he came up out of the water rejoicing.

Hey, when you follow the Lord in believer's baptism you are obedient and that brings joy to your heart because you are doing what God said.

Now, let's you and I take a look. First of all, some folk believe it only takes four things to constitute New Testament baptism. But I am a Baptist and so I think it takes five.

Now if you read many books, most books will say there is only four essentials for New Testament baptism. You need to jot them down because somebody is going to ask you one of these days why were you baptized. And I want you to be able to look him straight in the eye and say, "Wham, this is the reason."

Then you look at him and say, "Now, why were you baptized?"

First of all, tonight, for it to be New Testament, scriptural baptism, now I want you to take your Bible and I want you to see that. You must have scriptural authority. Just anybody running down the street with a Bible in their hand does not have the authority to baptize.

Take your Bible if you would, please, to Matthew 28. Now I will show you what I am talking about. Matthew chapter 28 and, please now, follow along because this is very important, because most of my belief system and most of my doctrinal stand revolves around this doctrine of baptism. You cannot join this church if you have got immersion from any other denomination. And it gets down to authority.

For instance, the Pentecost, they immerse. The Church of Christ immerse. Free Will Baptists immerse.

Now a lot of churches will accept their baptism. I will not. And it is the matter of authority. Somebody on this earth has the authority from God to baptize. Some institution on this earth has the authority to baptize.

Now look in your Bible. Matthew 28. I will show you that. And it is very simple. Verse 18.

Now the context is every member of the New Testament church—and there is only one at this time—is seated in front of Jesus after his resurrection, after the crucifixion, after he is risen from the dead, these are his departing words to the Church that he has formulated out of material baptized by John the Baptist. And every one of them is there now.

Now notice what he says.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”¹⁹

Now please, if you would, look at that word “power.” In the New Testament two words in the Greek translated in your Bible for power. Got it?

Number one, ἐξουσία (ex-oo-see'-ah). It means delegated authority. In other words, if I have the authority to have keys around here, I can say to brother Billy, “Brother Billy, I have keys in my pocket and I am going to give you this key. Now that gives you the authority to open any door in this place.”

That is a delegated authority.

There is a word used in the Bible for power, δυνάμις (doo'-nam-is). And that is the word we get our English adjective, dynamite, our English noun dynamite, δυνάμις (doo'-nam-is).

Now over in Romans chapter one verse 16 where Paul is explaining the gospel he says, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”²⁰

The word used there is δυνάμις (doo'-nam-is). Paul is saying to the Church at Rome, “The gospel is the dynamite of God and it will blow hell out of you and heaven right in you.”

He did not use the word “delegated authority.” But now he is speaking to the Church here and he says, “All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me. I am giving it to you, Church, not individuals.” The whole Church is gathered. They have an officers. Judas is the treasurer. They have had meetings. They have the Great Commission. The Church is in place. It is not large, 11 members. Judas is still out back hanging around some place. Eleven members and Jesus said now to these 11 members of the first church, “All delegated authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Now I am going back to heaven and I am going to give you, Church, that authority. And that authority is, number one, to go into all nations and make disciples. Teach all nations. Secondly, the authority to baptize. And, thirdly, the authority to teach what I have commanded you. And, Church, if you will do that I will be with you always even to the end of the age.”

Now I really have a problem with Reverend Ike with a water hose baptizing 1000 folks up yonder in New York. I think he just got a bunch of folk wet myself. Do you know

¹⁹ Matthew 28:18.

²⁰ Romans 1:16.

why? Because that bird has not got the authority because that authority rests in the Church, not in the individual.

Now, Jim baptizes here, is that not so? Jim and I are the only two that baptize here. But if you look back in the church minutes you will see at a given time Jim was brought before the church and it was voted in this church that Jim has the authority to baptize. His ordination, his license or his college degree does not give him the authority to baptize. It rests within the local New Testament church and we voted Jim the authority to baptize.

So the authority does not rest in me.

You say, "Well, preacher, what about when you started the church?"

That is a good question, isn't it?

"When you started the church what did you do?"

I'll tell you what I did. I went to Oakfield Baptist Church down in Granbury that was pastored by one of my bus kids and I asked brother Garland to give me the authority to baptize into his church because this church didn't exist. And brother Garland voted me the authority to baptize and until we organized into a Baptist church every member that was baptized was not baptized into Joshua Baptist Church, but was baptized into Oak Trail Baptist Church. And that church gave me the authority to start this church and to baptize folk because the authority rests not in me, but in the local body, the New Testament church.

Now when we decided to organize into a church we met as a church mission. We opened the business meeting. We made the motion that we organize into a church and at that time when we voted to organize into a church we wrote for the letters of all the people that had been baptized in the Oak Trail from here and they sent us letters on all the folks that we had baptized. You are sitting in a scriptural church. This one wasn't started out of a fist fight. It wasn't started out of a disagreement. It was started because of prayer and we started it out of a mother church who had the authority to do that and it was started right because we have the authority that Jesus put in the Church to baptize.

So now which bunch does that authority rest in since there is 10,000 different churches who believes 10,000 different things?

Don't you think that is a good question? Some of you folk wouldn't like [?]. You mean to tell me that I am so narrow to believe that I am in one of them churches just like Jesus started? You got that right. You go back to the New Testament. You go back to the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and bring all of those doctrines out of them four books. That is when Jesus was on the earth and that is when he started the Church. You bring all that right up here to the 21st century and slap a name on it, it won't be Church of Christ, because Jesus and that bunch believed justification by faith.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves.”²¹

Baptism didn't save you. It left that bunch out.

Jesus did not sprinkle. So that leaves the sprinklers out. Jesus did not speak in tongues and did not believe in falling from grace. So that left that bunch out. We have kind of thinned it down a little, ain't we?

You don't have to apologize for being right. And you don't have to be arrogant about it. You don't have to be proud about it. But I just thank God that maybe God has led us here and we are just going to have to keep the truth whether we like it or not and we are just going to have to use the authority to baptize in a godly fashion.

Now some of you folks right here were saved in a different denomination and came and joined our church. And I will bet you if you did that you were confronted with your baptism.

Now there won't be anybody else do that in town. They will just let you come right on in. But I am not going to lie to you about it. For it to be New Testament scriptural baptism you have got to be baptized with the authority given by God.

Secondly, now this is the one I add and nobody else adds it, but I thought I just picked it in there just because I believe it. A scriptural administrator. It is not scriptural baptism if the Church that has the scriptural authority has not voted scriptural authority to the administrator.

Now if Jim is sick and I am sick one day and you come in here and say, “Well, I want to be baptized,” and Brian Archer is on staff. You say, “I want Brian Archer to baptize me.”

No, you want Brian Archer to get you wet, because Brian Archer does not have the authority voted to him, does not mean he cannot and does not have the requirements and is not worthy. That is not it at all. It is just that he does not have the authority. So the administrator would not be right.

Thirdly, scriptural method or mode. Now lets you and I take a look in our Bibles and I don't have to go to the Greek. I can tell you what the Greek word of βαπτίζω (bap-tid'-zo) means. It means to dive, dip, plunge or immerse.

Now if you are going to be baptized in anything it means you have got to be submerged, dipped, plunged or [?]. If you are going to be baptized in spaghetti juice, you have got to be baptized enough to immerse you because that is what the word means. The word baptize does not mean sprinkle. I don't care how convenient it is. It does not mean that. It means to dive, dip, plunge, immerse, βαπτίζω (bap-tid'-zo).

²¹ Ephesians 2:8.

But now we won't even go into that. Let's just take the New Testament. Matthew three. It takes a scriptural method or scriptural mode.

Matthew 3:16.

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went...”²² What? You can't do that out of a thimble. You can't do that out of a glass full.

Acts eight, please, Acts eight, just a minute, Acts chapter number eight. You have got to have the right mode. And that is immersion. You have got to have the right mode.

Now Acts eight, please now, look at this. And let me just help you a little bit.

At verse 36 if you have it, Acts eight. We will give you just a minute because it is very important for it to be scriptural baptism. There has got to be a scriptural method in how to do it or scriptural mode.

Now look at verse number 36.

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into...²³

What? Now how much water do you think that was?

Now, if you were to just take the New Testament, just the New Testament, didn't know one thing about Greek, couldn't spell lexicon and had never seen a Greek interlinear New Testament, if you just take the New Testament, what method would you adapt in baptism? I would want to be baptized like Jesus was baptized, because you will not find anywhere in the New Testament or the Old Testament any other method or mode of baptism other than going down into the water and up out of the water and fulfilling the Greek word for baptize.

So for it to be scriptural baptism, listen, number one. You have got to have the right authority. Number two, the right administrator. Number three, the right method.

Now let me ask you this. If you fulfill two of those and fail on one, does that make you 75 percent baptized? I am just asking.

You can say I am almost scripturally baptized. Of course, you could do that if you never went to the baptistry.

²² Matthew 3:16.

²³ Acts 8:36-39.

Now is anybody mad? We shouldn't be. Now, fourthly are we ready? You have got three three. Fourthly, it takes a scriptural motive.

We are being baptized because we are saved. We are not being baptized to be saved. And if you get in that baptistry with the wrong motive in mind, guess who sees your motive? And the Bible said to obey is better than to sacrifice.

When I got in the baptistry I was not lost and on my way to hell kicking and screaming and cussing and raising Cain and the minute they stuck me under the water I come up, praise God, look at me. I am a new creature.

I was a new creature before I went into the baptistry. And I was baptized to be obedient to my Savior's command.

Now you got four of them, right? Now what if you have been fulfilled three of those? Does that make you three-quarters baptized? No. You are still not scripturally baptized.

Now the last one is real deep. It takes a saved person, a scriptural candidate. I can baptize you so long that the tadpoles could get familiar with your social security number. But if you are not saved, you are not baptized. And many folks when they were younger were baptized and afterwards they come to understand the gospel and they were really saved and they still counted on that baptism before they were saved as baptism.

No, what you did, you fulfilled four of those qualifications. So I guess, then, if you wasn't saved when you were baptized, you are one of them 80 percent baptized persons tonight, because you wasn't saved.

When I was 13 or so I sat about three rows back in a country church in... You think I preach wild. You ought to have been in the churches where I were raised. I mean these guys would stand up, preach an hour and a half, throw their coat a mile and a half and eat a chicken and a half and, buddy, they would preach and fire would fly out their nose this far. They preached on hell. You knew they were preaching on hell. They preached on heaven. You could almost touch the streets of gold. And they would turn red in the face and then winsome.

And I was sitting on the front row and they was preaching on hell. I got scared, son, and I said, "Let me out of here. I need what they got." And I wanted to be saved that morning. And I walked down the aisle and two elderly ladies or men sat me down on the front row and said, "God bless you, Gene. I am glad you came today. Put his name on that line. We will baptize him Sunday. We will sure do that."

I set down there. I was ignorant about the gospel, ignorant about me being a hell born sinner. When I set down on that front pew I was as lost as I was when I left the second pew. I knew nothing about faith. I knew nothing about repentance. I knew nothing about

Adam. I knew nothing about Eve. All I knew was I was going to hell and I wanted to fix it. But nobody showed me how to do it.

They wrote my name on a little old pad and the following Sunday after the Sunday morning service we went down to the creek about seven miles from the church and they broke the ice and I waded into that creek, tiptoed some. I am the second guy that has walked on the water.

You know how cold water is when it has got ice on top? Do you know why it has got ice on top? Because it is just as cold down at the bottom. And I pranced my lovely little 13 year old self into that creek that morning and I was shivering.

Somebody said, "If you had been saved, it wouldn't have been cold."

You are an idiot.

If you had been Michael the archangel it would have been cold. And they tramped my little lovely figure down into that water and, buddy, that was the longest formula for baptism.

"Now we are going to baptize Gene in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Thank you for his daddy, his grandmomma, everybody in the world and, dear God, if he don't freeze to death before I stick him out of this water he will be saved when he comes up."

And down I went. And up I rose, froze to death.

There is only one thing, now, that was wrong with that deal. I had the scriptural authority. Because that was a Baptist Church, a scriptural administrator, the preacher, the one that almost froze me. I had scriptural motive. I was doing that because I thought I had been saved. And I certainly had the scriptural method because there wasn't nary a thing on me that didn't have chill bones. Everything was wet. So I guess your preacher was 80 percent baptized.

No, sir. I wasn't baptized at all for God didn't fulfill five New Testament basic ingredients of being baptized. But I was 26 years of age a soul winning, independent, fundamental, God loving, hell shunning, heaven going Baptist walked into my house and reached in his pocket right here when you can buy a New Testament fit in there and took it out and asked me, "If you died today, Gene, would you go to heaven?"

And I said, "Lord, no, I am lost as I can be."

And he showed me how to be saved at 26 years of age. I fell on my knees in my front room and invited Jesus Christ into my heart and I genuinely repented of all of my lousy, no good, sorry life that I had lived up to that day. And I turned from that and turned to

my Savior in faith and he saved me. And the next thing brother William said, “Now you need to be baptized.”

I said, “Oh, we done got that covered.”

Did I have it covered? Do you know what I needed to do? The following Sunday in a high dollar wool shirt—don’t ever do that in a wool shirt. They shrink, especially a high dollar wool shirt. Have you ever heard the name Pendleton? And I come out of the water and I was baptized, but it done cost me a wool shirt. The devil got the shirt, lost all that money, but at least I fulfilled all five of them when I was 26.

Now my heavenly Father, when I walk in heaven’s gates he will say, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”

But if you haven't been baptized, you will never hear those words because you are in direct disobedience to the first commandment of our Lord to be baptized.