

YOUR FIRST DAY IN HEAVEN

Message 11

INTRO: Well, we have only one message left to go after this one. In that message we want to consider the white robes given to believers who enter heaven. In the previous message we looked at the transition from the physical temple to the spiritual temple, which temple we are.

We saw the important role of John the Baptist in washing the High Priest, Jesus of Nazareth. It is amazing that God bypassed the High Priest of the temple, but He did, and I believe that was because the man who had the highest position in the religious circles of the Jews was a defiled man, as were most of the priests under him. He was not only defiled, but a short while later condemned Christ to death.

Well, Jesus was baptized and commissioned to service by John the Baptist. Then He was anointed by God Almighty Himself. The last piece of furniture to be made in the tabernacle was the first one He fulfilled. Then He became the light of the world, and the bread of life for the believer. He became our way of access to God. There we have the candlestick, the table of showbread and the altar of incense. Then He was crucified, and the veil in the temple was torn and access through Him had been made for us to the Father. And ever since then, He has sat on God's throne, which I think is the ark of the covenant, for here God dwelt in old time in the tabernacle. This was the first article made for the tabernacle.

Almost everything is now ready for the spiritual temple. Only one thing needs to happen yet so that a believer, when he is truly converted can be washed and then anointed by the Holy Spirit of God. For this we wait for the fulfillment of one more thing which requires some more time. That is the fulfillment of the fourth feast, and that is what we want to consider now as we see how the spiritual temple came into operation.

A.W. Tozer wrote a book called, "Man, The Dwelling Place Of God." That is our subject. This is the spiritual temple, and it has now lasted for some 2,000 years and is about to come to a close.

2. The operation of the spiritual temple

b) The time of the spiritual temple

-The beginning of the spiritual temple

We have looked at the transition to the spiritual temple in the life of Christ, and now want to move into the time of the spiritual temple. First we want to see how it began. We saw the fulfillment of most of what the tabernacle pictures. We saw Jesus Christ washed and anointed as our High priest. We saw Him as the fulfillment of the candlestick, the table of bread. And then finally He was crucified, the veil was torn and salvation was complete.

In that great sermon on the Mount Jesus said in 5:17-18:

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

What all had He fulfilled when He died? Well, all the religious ceremonial laws such as the sacrifices were fulfilled. He has fulfilled most of what the tabernacle pictured, which is a lot. He has fulfilled all the prophecies that pointed to His first coming and His suffering and death and resurrection. A huge part of the OT that pointed to the future has been fulfilled. The things in the tabernacle that point to Him have all been fulfilled.

Only one thing was not yet fulfilled. The High Priest has been washed and anointed. But what of washing and the anointing of the priests? We saw in the last message that this could not yet happen because the Spirit, that which the oil represents,

had not yet been given. Jesus said that unless He went away, the Spirit could not come.

For this fulfillment we need to consider the feasts of Israel. There were seven. When Christ died, the first three feasts were fulfilled. Passover was the time of the death of the lambs. That was fulfilled when Christ died. The feast of unleavened bread was fulfilled when He died as well. He became the bread of life. The feast of First-fruits was fulfilled when Christ was the first-fruits of the resurrection.

Now somebody tell me what is the next feast? It is Pentecost. Turn to Acts 1. We saw the beginning of this feast at Mount Sinai, when Moses was given the law and the pattern for the tabernacle. We find both the feast of Pentecost and its fulfillment in Acts chapter 2. Let's begin in chapter 1. You see, Pentecost came how many days after First-Fruits? Fifty days. It is the Gospel writer who the book of Luke who also wrote the book of Acts. Notice how he begins Acts 1:1:

1 ¶ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;

5 "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

You see, after Jesus' resurrection He was seen alive for 40 days. That was to give full proof to the resurrection. And now in verses 4-5 Jesus renewed the promise John gave some 2 years earlier that Christ would baptize them, not in water, but in the Holy Spirit. And now Jesus, forty days after His resurrection, and just ten days before He ascended to heaven tells them that they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from then.

So we go to Acts 2:

1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

We have come here to the fourth feast. And it is experiencing its fulfillment right here. We read on:

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Here we have the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on believers. You see, these first believers had been baptized in water, but they had not yet been anointed as the priests were when they had been washed. The reason was because the Holy Spirit could not be given until Christ had ascended.

-Why does every believer need to be baptized?

So, let me ask here, why does every believer need to be baptized? You see, all 120 believers gathered in that upper room experienced this baptism, both men and women. Turn to 1 Peter 2. That a great

change is underway is in every way apparent. So here is our question: if only the priests were washed in the OT, why do all believers need to be baptized? Let us read 1 Peter 2:4-9:

4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,

5 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.

6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"

8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Why do all believers need to be baptized? The answer is that every true believer becomes a priest in God's kingdom during the Church age. You see, in the OT only the priest went to the laver. And since the NT believer becomes a priest in this age, that is one reason why every believer needs to be baptized. When we become a true believer, we become

a priest in the kingdom of God, and we need to be commissioned to the ministry.

Revelation 1:6 says He has made us kings and priests to our God. Revelation 5:10 says the same. And so, let me ask you, how many times were the OT priests washed entirely? One time only. How many times should we be baptized? One time only. We are talking about the true baptism on the faith. When that has not happened on the basis of the true faith, neither are we truly baptized. Second point, how many times did the priests wash their hands and feet? All the time. How many times do we need the filling of the Spirit. Again and again.

True believers in the Church age are all priests. One of the key points made by the reformers 500 years ago was the priesthood of the believer. In the Catholic church, only certain people were priests. When we get saved we become priests and we have the duties of priests. And that is one reason why we get baptized. It is a commissioning to service for God.

-What is the believer commissioned to?

So we ask, what is the believer commissioned to at baptism? What is the NT priest's duty? Well, Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20 just before He ascended:

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Then in Acts 1:6-8 He said this:

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

And when Jesus had said those words, verse 9 says:

9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

-The beginning of this commissioning

We want to see how this commissioning began. What has happened so far? Well, Jesus had been crucified, and when He died, the veil in the temple was torn. Then He was resurrected and He instructed the disciples regarding their task, after which He ascended to heaven. Then in Acts 2, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. They had been instructed as to what their task on earth was. And now, those who were first baptized will baptize others and we want to see the beginning of this work.

John said Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. That was over 2 years ago. Then ten days before this, Jesus said they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from then, and here was the fulfillment of those promises. Here they are anointed by the Holy Spirit. They will now become the ones who will baptize other believers. The Church has now begun. It is the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ who does this baptizing, and the agency of baptism is not water, it is the Holy Spirit!

We go then to verse 37 of this chapter to see this work being passed on by those who are already

baptized with the Holy Spirit. Peter has preached that first great sermon. Look at verse 37:

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

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent..."

There is the altar of the spiritual temple. Repent. It is a missing doctrine in the Church today. You see, before true repentance can take place, the unbeliever has to be cut to the heart about his or her sin. So that is the altar. Now we read on to see that the laver is next:

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.

39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

So, where are we in the course of history? We are at the time the spiritual temple began to be in full operation. So we go on now to answer some difficult questions regarding baptism.

-Difficult questions

In Acts 2:38 we have come to one of the verses that might give the understanding that forgiveness of sins comes on the basis of baptism. It is verse 38 which says:

38 Then Peter said to them, "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.

Let me just insert here that I did a lot of extra research because I have a brother who is heavy into a teaching that I can only describe as teaching, or coming very close to teaching baptismal

regeneration. The teaching is that there is something in the waters of baptism. The water does something. It is not just a symbol. I can't quite understand the teaching, but this teaching views itself as kind of a new reformation.

-What washes away sin?

So, a very serious theological question is raised in such passages as Acts 2:38 that must be answered before we consider these difficult verses. Here is the question: What washes away sin? Is it the blood of Christ or is it water? Are the believer's sins washed away at the altar or at the laver? Or is it after being to both the altar and the laver?

Turn to the book of Revelation. The first evidence that forgiveness is not received at the laver is that in the OT, only the priests went to the laver, so the washing or forgiveness of sin cannot take place at the laver, or both the altar and the laver, otherwise all the non Levites could not have been forgiven. But all could come to the altar, both priest and lay person. So, forgiveness of sins must have to do with the blood, and cannot have to do with the water.

We go to Revelation 1. And in answer to our question, look at verses 4-5:

4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

We are washed from our sins in His blood. That is clear. Look now at Revelation 7:14. The writer speaks of a great white robed throng who got saved in the tribulation and the angel asked him who this

white robed throng is. By the way, these are the same white robes of Revelation 6. Verse 14 then:

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Now you know and I know you do not wash anything white in blood, in the literal sense. What then is the meaning of the water? I propose that water in the literal sense, the most used cleansing agent in the world, pictures visibly what happens to the soul spiritually when justification at the altar takes place through repentance from sin and faith in Christ. Baptism is a public, visible, confession of what has taken place personally and invisibly.

-Acts 2:38

Well, having established that it is not water, but the blood of Christ that forgives sins, listen now to Acts 2:38 once more:

38 Then Peter said to them, "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."

There are numerous explanations for this verse. Let me read my notes from a comment I made on Acts 2:38 many years ago: *In this verse we again have a very important preposition. It is the preposition 'for' in the phrase 'for the remission of sins'. This is the Greek preposition eis. The question is should eis be translated carrying the causal idea or the idea of purpose? Both uses are grammatically possible in Greek. In simpler words it may be translated, be baptized with the purpose of the remission of your sins, or be baptized because of the remission of your sins.*

Then I quoted from Brooks and Winberry book on Greek Grammar like this:

This twofold use of 'for' occurs in English as well. For example, in English we might say, "That man is wanted for robbery." Does the 'for' indicated purpose or is it causal. "That man is wanted for the purpose of doing robbery?" Or, "That man is wanted because of robbery?" Surely the latter is to be understood here and just as surely it is to be understood as causal in Acts 2:38.

-What then is the significance of the water?

What then is the importance of the water, or water baptism? Let me make this proposition to you. At the altar, forgiveness of sins takes place in the spiritual realm. You cannot see this. When forgiveness of sins takes place, it immediately brings about the new birth, and the new birth immediately brings about the anointing of the Holy Spirit, or the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I propose to you that at the laver, in a visible, physical way, all of what happened at the altar is shown by water. In salvation there are only two things the believer can do, and these he must do. These are repentance and faith. He cannot do the new birth, it is done to him. He cannot baptize Himself in the Holy Spirit, this is done to him. And in baptism, he submits himself to be baptized by someone else to acknowledge in a physical way what has happened to him or her in the spiritual.

When we repent of our sins, now we need to trust Christ yet for our salvation. And when we do that, we are born again. When we repent and then trust Christ, I believe the Word of God and the Spirit of God meet together in us and bring about the new birth. And the laver pictures the new birth. This is to be initial sanctification, and from here there is continual sanctification. The initial washing of baptism pictures the new birth which is brought about by repentance and confession of sin. It may also picture the anointing of the Holy

Spirit, which is received as soon as one is born again.

Let me show all of that now. We go to John 3. We begin in verse 1:

1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God. This is the new birth. Many different explanations for what the water means here have been given, including baptism. Here is my understanding. This verse could be translated, "Except a man be born of water and wind he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Let me just say that in the original, the article 'the' does not occur before the word translated Spirit. And if you look at verse 8, which says the wind blows where it wishes, the word wind is the very same word as here.

It is very clear, if that is the case that both water and wind are spiritually significant. It is

very easy to know what the word 'wind' symbolizes. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as wind, as we saw in Acts 2 already. The word *wind, spirit* and *breath* are all the same word in the Greek language. So if the word wind speaks of the Spirit, what other agent is needed to bring about the New Birth? Well, what does water symbolize?

Well, that too is not difficult in Scripture. Go to 1 Peter 1. We'll begin at verse 22:

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever...

What other agent is required besides the Holy Spirit to bring about the new birth? It is very clear here. It is the Word of God which lives and abides forever! Turn then to James 1. We go to verse 18:

18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.

The words, *brought us forth* have to do with birth. God brought us forth by the Word of Truth. Listen to John 1:12-13:

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Well, birth requires two, not just one agent. And the two agents required to bring about the new birth are the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Both must be active in a person to bring about the new birth. In our Catechism we have this question. It is question 7 on the subject of Regeneration and

Good Works. And it asks, "Who brings about regeneration in us?" And here is the answer, "God Himself brings about regeneration in us by his Word and Spirit, unto the obedience of Christ".

Furthermore, as the blood of Christ cleanses our soul, so water cleanses our bodies and clothing. Now you see, the priests in the tabernacle were washed once entirely. But from there on they always only washed their hands and their feet. I have not been able to work through all of this, but I have no doubt that when Jesus washed the disciples feet, it has to do with this second aspect of life, and I am not alone in that conclusion.

You see, as the altar has to do with justification, so the laver has to do with sanctification. I think all who have studied this to any depth will agree with that. Initial sanctification is the whole washing, just like the priests were washed completely only once. But continual sanctification happens over and over, just as the priests washed their hands and feet again and again. As a matter of fact, if they didn't wash regularly, Scripture says they would die. A believer who does not continually come to the Word of God for washing will die too.

I wanted to take you through John 13, when at the last supper Jesus washed the disciples feet. I have not mastered this passage but for the first time in my Christian life I see some hope to come to such an understanding. You may wish to read that today at your leisure and ponder it. Just listen to verse 10: *Jesus said to him (Peter), 'He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean...'* Doesn't that remind you of a passage we have read in the OT?

But we go on. Turn to John 15. We begin in verse 1:

1 *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.*

2 *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

3 *"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

Now notice the word clean in verse 3. The original word is *kathairos*. Now look at verse two and note the word 'prunes'.

2 *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

The Word prunes is *kathairo*. It is the verb of the same word translated *clean*. And how does He clean us up? By His Word! You see, at the altar, we have the living Word who died on our behalf. At the laver we have the written Word of God.

Now go to Ephesians 5. We will now come to our first mention of the laver in the NT. We begin in verse 25:

25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,*

26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

27 *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

How does the Lord cleanse His Church? By the washing of water, the water of the Word of God. There is the laver. And what is the word translated *washing* here? It is the *loutron*, the laver! No, it is not the water of baptism that cleanses, it is the Word of God. The baptismal water pictures the Word of God!

There is one other time that this word that speaks of the laver is used in the NT. Go to Titus 3. We begin in verse 4:

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

How did He save us? Here is the answer: *through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior...* Now notice it is the washing, *loutron*, of regeneration. Regeneration speaks of the new birth, and it is pictured by the laver. And the water here not only pictures the Word of God, but the Holy Spirit. We have seen earlier that the Holy Spirit is symbolized by water.

So when Mark says in 16:16, *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*, we might naturally understand from that, that baptism is part of salvation. But anyone who is truly justified at the altar by repentance and confession of sin, should most naturally be baptized on that faith. Water does not wash away sins, it pictures the washing away that has already happened.

Turn to Acts 10. In the book of Acts several accounts are given where people were baptized. The account that fits the normal Christian life is where the first Gentiles were saved. This was

Cornelius. Peter had just finished preaching Christ to this Roman centurion's household and we begin in verse 44:

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,

47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Here is what happened. They heard the Word. The hearing means more than just hearing the sound waves. They heard and believed the Word. And while Peter was still speaking, they were anointed with the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? They have come past the altar, that is they admitted to their sinfulness and believed what was preached. As soon as that happened, they were born again, and then they were anointed with the Holy Spirit. The tongues spoken here has to do with other things I don't want to take time for here.

And now note that after they heard and were anointed with the Holy Spirit Peter said:

47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

48 *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.*

So it was after the new birth and receiving the Holy Spirit that they were baptized with water. This is most crucial. That must always be the order. Baptism is a symbol of what has taken place. That is clear here.

So listen now to Acts 22:16 to which we raised a question in an earlier message. Paul is reciting what happened when he was converted: 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

I take such passages to simply mean that by baptism they are showing in obedience to the Word of God what has already taken place in the soul. We have already established that water does not wash away sins, but it does picture it. So closely are justification, regeneration, and initial sanctification bound together that they are not viewed separately. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. In the NT you did not see true believing without baptism.

Turn now to 1 Peter 3:21. Here is the last verse that we mentioned in an earlier message. It says:

21 There is also an antitype 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, for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And here, we would most naturally understand that the forgiveness of sins is dependent on baptism." But forgiveness does not come at the laver, it comes at the altar.

Now notice that it says there is an *antitype* that saves us. Note most carefully that it is not the type that saves us. Baptism is the type. Washing in

the blood is the antitype. Peter tells us clearly it is the antitype that saves us. Baptism is the type of, not the real thing. Anybody that knows anything about types knows that no type or shadow of the OT saves. A shadow is never the real thing. It is evidence of the real thing. That of which the type speaks, is that which saves. So baptism does not save. It pictures that which saves. It is a type of that which saves.

Then notice that he says, "Not the removal of the filth of the flesh." What does water do? It removes the filth of the flesh. As water removes the filth of the flesh, so the blood removes sin. It is that which it pictures that saves. And what does it picture? The washing of sins in the blood of Christ! What is the type? The washing with water. What does it picture? Washing in the blood, which brings about a good conscience toward God. And how does that come? Through the resurrection of Christ. If Christ had only died, He could not forgive. It would not be complete. But He did not just die. He died, was buried, and rose again.

Now let me add a word on the conscience. The washing of the water of the Word of God, cleanses, not sin but the conscience. It works. All you have to do to verify that is to try it out. For example, Let us say I have lied. My conscience is defiled. I will try to do everything but what the Word of God says. And what does it say? It tells me to confess my sin. Oh how we fight that. But try it. Confess it where it should be confessed and your conscience will shine forth like the noon-day. I cannot dwell on this here, but study the conscience in the book of Hebrews some day.

Listen to this one verse, Hebrews 10:22, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Study that and you will not be able to avoid the laver and the priestly washings.

So in this sense baptism can be said to be required to be saved. It is not the baptism, it is that which it pictures. Now take an OT priest. Let us say he turned 30 and said, "No, I'll forego washing at the laver and commissioning to service by anointing, and I don't care for the white clothing either." I will tell you one thing, he would not serve there, not ever.

So let me mention one more significance of baptism. That first initial washing which was done by the High Priest, was a commissioning to service for the OT priest. It was an induction into service. Every truly born again believer should be baptized to be commissioned to the Lord's service. It is the formality. It is like an inauguration. It is like an initiation. It is a public recognition.

So I must say to that, that all the prophecies in the OT, all the types, and all the shadows and all the symbols were not the real thing. Take a shadow for instance. A shadow is not the real thing. It simply points to the real thing. Nor is the shadow first. The real thing is first. So it is with water baptism. Do I then belittle water baptism? I do not! Do I believe it is part of salvation, in that if I have truly repented and believed and should die before I was baptized I would go to hell? I do not believe that! No, baptism points to that which is the real thing.

The water in the laver, did it cleanse from sin? It cleansed the filth of the flesh, which points to the blood cleansing the filth of the soul. Take OT circumcision, was it important to OT Christianity? Yes, of course. Was it the substance or the shadow? The shadow of course. It is always the danger to take the shadow for the real thing. And when you do that with baptism, you have the false teaching of

baptismal regeneration. That is exchanging the laver for the altar.

You see, the Catholic Church makes this error with baptism and with communion. For instance, in communion they say the bread and the wine becomes the actual body and blood of Christ. But that is ludicrous. But it is the same as saying the water cleanses from sin. Five hundred years ago, our forefathers stood against these teachings to the death. Of course it is not the actual body and blood of Christ, nor does it turn into that, nor does baptism wash away sins.

Take the blood of bulls and goats in the OT, that was the type. As soon as you make that count as the real thing, you are into heresy. Take the serpent on the pole that Moses raised up. When it became the real thing to the people, and not what it represented, it had become an idol. The book of Hebrews so very clearly tells us the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin. All it did was point to the real thing. It was the shadow, the blood of Christ was the real thing.

CONCL: Now as we close, I have not spoken of what the white clothes of the priest speak of for us as priests in the spiritual temple. Ephesians 4:24 instructs the believer like this: *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* I believe the white clothing of the Christian is a righteous life, a life which has its feet washed continually at the laver, lest he die, spiritually.

Just recently I heard of a young man trying to make his way in business in our town. If his account is correct, and from other things I have heard, it probably is, there is a lot of sin in our town just in business, never mind all the other aspects of life there are. And what do they say? Business is business. And what does that mean? It means you can run beside the lines in business if you are not caught at it, and on Sunday go to church, put on a nice face, and all is OK. I need not tell you where that thinking originated.

We have witnessed sin in the name of Christ in the Church by professing believers, such sin as I have not come across in all my years as a Christian. You see, we do not have to go outside of our town to find sin on the loose by baptized, professing believers, and surely this is not even the tip of the iceberg. Jesus said to the Jews of the NT, *unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven*. May I ask you, have you been baptized? Then there is one biblical command above others for you: Live like it! Righteous living, I am convinced, is what the white robes of the believer priest of the Church age are about.