

Topic

- I HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
 - A The Jewish roots help us understand this Sacrament
 - 1 They are important to open up our grasp of Baptism
 - a In the days after Easter, the first Christians continued to observe their Jewish faith
 - (1) **They went to the Temple**
 - (a) Acts 2:46*
 - [1] So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.
 - (2) They worshipped in synagogues until they were expelled from them around 100 CE/AD
 - b **To their Jewish worship, they added a celebration of the presence of Jesus and His Spirit**
 - (1) The reference to **"breaking bread"** in Acts 2:46 indicates this
 - (a) Acts 2:46*
 - [1] So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.
 - (2) Luke, at the Last Supper, pictures Jesus as instructing the Church to continue this meal "in His memory"
 - (a) Luke 22:19*
 - [1] And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
 - 2 Two Jewish rituals shed important light upon Christian Baptism, upon the understanding Jewish Christians would bring to the Sacrament
 - B [1] Circumcision
 - 1 This is the ritual by which an infant boy was initiated into the People of God
 - a By becoming part of the people of Israel, a person was entitled to the promises made to Abraham
 - b The young adult could be called a "Son of God"
 - c **Note that a young male became a child of God by becoming part of Israel, one with Israel**
 - (1) **He was grafted on as a descendant of Israel/Jacob**
 - (2) **Israel/Jacob was a descendant of Isaac**
 - (3) **Isaac was a descendant of Abraham**
 - (4) **It was to Abraham's posterity that God made His promises**
 - (a) Genesis 17:7*
 - [1] "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.
 - [2] 8* "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
 - [3] 9 And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.
 - 2 The ceremony was normally conferred upon infants
 - a It was conferred on the eighth day of their lives
 - (1) Genesis 17:12
 - (a) For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring.

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- (b) 13 Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.
- (c) 14 Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."
- (d) **Note: the quote**
 - [1] It does not say, "Will be cut off from his God, from me"
 - [2] It does say, "Will be cut off from his people"
 - [3] The focus is upon using circumcision to become part of the people
- (2) Leviticus 12:3
 - (a) On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised.
- (3) Luke 1:57
 - (a) Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.
 - (b) 59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. 60 But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John."
- b Adult converts, of course, received circumcision at the time they were accepted into Israel
- 3 This ceremony was for male initiation only
 - a **Males alone had legal status**
 - b They alone could be counted to obtain the minimum number of 10 adults needed for a synagogue
 - c Sadly, wives were viewed as chattel, as property of the husbands
 - (1) In the Decalogue they were included with a list of his property which was not to be coveted by others
 - (2) Exodus 20:17
 - (a) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."
- 4 At the time of its reception, the person's name was conferred officially
 - a Luke 1:57
 - (1) Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son....
 - (2) 59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. 60 But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John."
- 5 The ceremony was performed by another
 - a **The need for this was obvious with an infant**
 - b **Adults also did not (and almost could not) confer it upon themselves**
- C [2] The Ritual Cleansing with Water
 - 1 The Jewish Biblical Law had two different sets of rules, two sets of "commandments"
 - a These two sets of God-given guidelines are intermingled in the various books of laws
 - b And Christians have dismissed the set that deals with clean and unclean
 - (1) **But they have not drawn an obvious conclusion resulting from the dismissal of the clean/unclean rules**
 - (2) **All races, creeds, sexes are now clean and worthy of inclusion in our fellowship**
 - (3) Mark 7:14
 - (a) Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15 there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."

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- (b) 16 17 *When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile,*
 - (c) 19 *since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)*
- 2 Rules on "good and evil" and rules on "clean and unclean"
 - a [A] "Good and evil" deal with what we call "sin"
 - b [B] "Clean and unclean" have nothing to do with sin!!!!!!
 - (1) A person could obey a command from God and, by obeying, become unclean;
 - (a) Genesis 1:28*
 - [1] Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply;"
 - (b) **The Jews interpreted this as a command equal to the other commands of the Law**
 - [1] To marry
 - [2] To have children
 - [3] To have numerous children
 - (c) But all sexual intercourse rendered both people unclean
 - [1] Leviticus 15:18*
 - [a] When a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, both must bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.
 - [2] This included intercourse between a husband and wife
 - (2) And a person could deliberately disobey a command of God and remain clean
 - (a) Deliberately refuse to marry
 - (b) Deliberately, when married, refuse to have intercourse and bear children
 - c Therefore, it is wrong to identify "unclean" with "evil"
 - d "Unclean" meant isolated, quarantined
 - (1) It could refer to a person, an animal, a thing, a place
 - (2) Anything or anyone unclean contaminated everything with which they came into contact
 - (a) Leviticus 5:2*
 - [1] "Or if a person touches anything ceremonially unclean-- whether the carcasses of unclean wild animals or of unclean livestock or of unclean creatures that move along the ground-- even though he is unaware of it, he has become unclean and is guilty.
 - (b) Being **unclean** is a little like radioactivity contaminating an individual
 - (c) But the contamination of touching **unclean** objects did not decrease from contact through contact as it does with radioactive contamination
 - e All that was unclean was quarantined for the good of the community
 - (1) This isolation was a primitive method to prevent the spread of epidemics
 - (2) No social contact was allowed until it was cleansed
 - f Cleansing was always based upon washing with water
 - g **Almost all the rules deal with potential causes of mass illness**
 - (1) **Dead bodies**
 - (2) **Blood flow**
 - h The person needed to render himself clean before rejoining others
- 3 Pagan converts were seen as completely unclean
 - a They needed more than **cleansing**

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- b They needed complete submersion, complete immersion
 - (1) It was felt that through this immersion the old person died
 - (2) All debts were cancelled through this ritual drowning, cleansing
- D John the Baptizer used a water cleansing to summon people to repentance
 - 1 He was an historical figure whom the Church saw as preparing the way for Jesus
 - 2 He called all Israel to baptism
 - a He issued a radical summons
 - b He called Jews to undergo a complete immersion.
 - c He invited them to act out a sign of dramatic repentance, changing the direction of their living
 - 3 His call to Israel to be baptized claimed God's People had become as unclean as pagans!
 - a Mark 1:4*
 - (1) *And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5* The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.*
 - 4 His baptism was not a formal rite
 - a It was just a symbolic action indicating a recognition of sin
 - b And it indicated a desire to change one's way of living
- E The Greek word for "baptize" means "drown"
 - 1 The verb is an intensive form of the verb "dunk," "dip"
 - 2 It indicated a complete submergence
 - 3 The word described a ritual death, a ritual drowning
 - 4 At the time of Jesus and John, the word did not refer to any known religious ritual
- F Jesus Himself was baptized
 - 1 Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist
 - a This baptism was reported by Mark simply as the moment of His divine anointing for His mission
 - (1) By this action, Jesus dies to any self will
 - (2) Emerging from water, He is filled with the Spirit of God
 - (3) Mark 1:9*
 - (a) *It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10* And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.*
 - (4) Mark uses the baptism to prove to us that the ministry which resulted after the baptism was not something Jesus just did on His own
 - (a) Everything He did was what God wanted -- He was filled with God's Spirit
 - (b) He acted out in visible form the will of the invisible Spirit of God
 - b The action was excused by Matthew (because it was so embarrassing to the Church)
 - (1) Matthew 3:13
 - (a) *Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14* And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"*
 - (b) *15* But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him"*
 - c And it was made insignificant by Luke
 - (1) Luke used a participial phrase used to describe Jesus' Baptism

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- (2) The accent of the story was upon Jesus praying, Jesus remaining in a state of prayer
- (3) This act of praying was when the Spirit was received
- (4) Luke 3:21
 - (a) And it happened, in the baptizing of all the people, Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened; 22 and the Holy Spirit came down in a bodily form as a dove upon Him. And there was a voice out of Heaven, saying, You are My Son, the Beloved; I am delighted in You.
- (5) Readers should not ignore this minimizing of baptism and the stressing of prayer
 - (a) Later the Church, too, received the Spirit while gathered in prayer
 - [1] Acts 1:13*
 - [a] When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphas and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.
 - [b] 14* They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.
 - [2] Acts 2:1*
 - [a] When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2* Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
 - [b] 3* They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4* All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
 - (b) Luke is instructing the Church
 - [1] He shows us how we can renew our experience of the Spirit
 - [2] We can't be re-baptized again and again
 - [3] But we can become people of continuing prayer
- d The baptism was ignored by John
 - (1) He does report that either Jesus or His disciples baptized during the ministry of John -- the only one to so report
 - (a) John 3:22*
 - [1] After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized.
 - (2) This baptizing was not conferring the Christian Sacrament
 - (3) John 4:1*
 - (a) The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John. 2* although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.
- 2 After Easter, Jesus commanded the Church to continue Baptism as a solemn ritual
 - a Matthew 28:18*
 - (1) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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.
 - (2) 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.
 - b Mark 16:15*
 - (1) [This text is part of the "Longer Ending" added by someone other than Mark, but accepted as part of the inspired Gospel]
 - (2) And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16* "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

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- II THE PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHURCH
 - A Baptism was practiced from the first days after Easter
 - 1 Paul writes his main letters just over twenty years after Easter
 - 2 He writes to Greeks in Corinth and Rome
 - a He can make references to Baptism
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 12:13*
 - (a) 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.
 - (2) Romans 6:3*
 - (a) Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? *
 - (b) 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
 - b And he could draw out the theological implications of the ceremony
 - (1) It was familiar to Paul
 - (2) And he knew that it also was familiar to both the Corinthian and the Roman churches
 - B The baptized were immersed into the Spirit of our God
 - 1 At first the immersion was into Jesus
 - a They were immersed into His saving, living Spirit
 - b Acts 19:5*
 - (1) When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
 - 2 Quickly this immersion came to include the entire Trinity
 - a People were immersed into the missions, the relationships with us of each aspect of our God
 - b Matthew 28:19*
 - (1) "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.
 - C The immersion made the individual part of the Church
 - 1 They received the one Spirit, the life force, of Jesus
 - 2 So they were one with Him and with all others sharing, possessing this life force
 - a They became extensions of Him
 - b They became extensions of His body
 - 3 And they received equality with all the members of the Church
 - a All uniqueness was drowned in the Baptismal water, distinctions of greater and lesser
 - b Upon emerging from the water, all shared equally in the Spirit
 - (1) It made them part of the New Covenant sealed with the blood of Jesus
 - (2) It entitled them to all the blessings of this Covenant
 - c Their death through this immersion was their assurance of this equality with all other Christians
 - d As a result, there was no Jew or Greek, master or slave in the Church
 - (1) Colossians 3:9*
 - (a) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10* and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 - (b) 11* where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

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- D In Romans, Paul spelled out the implications of Baptism
 - 1 Romans 6:3*
 - a Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4* We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
 - b 5* If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.
 - c 6* For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- 7* because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.
 - d 8* Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9* For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.
 - e 10* The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11* In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 - 2 We die with Jesus in our drowning
 - 3 We are buried with Jesus in our remaining under the water
 - 4 We rise with Him in our emergence from the water
- E Acts revealed again and again the necessity of Baptism
 - 1 To receive the Spirit
 - 2 To belong to the Church
 - 3 Acts 8:36*
 - a Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"
 - b 37* Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38* So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.
- III THE EFFECTS (RESULTS) OF BAPTISM
 - A All sin was forgiven
 - 1 We die in Baptism
 - 2 And we stay dead!
 - 3 No one can indict a dead person with a sin or any crime
 - a Romans 6:4
 - (1) Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
 - (2) 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.
 - (3) 7 For whoever has died is freed from sin. 8 But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*
 - B A person was made part of a saintly Church
 - 1 Our forgiveness endures
 - a Therefore we remain sinless in God's eyes
 - (1) Not because we act as saints
 - (2) But because the holiness of Jesus in which we are constantly immersed drowns our sinfulness
 - b Paul sends his greetings to the "saints" in the Churches
 - c Romans 15:25*
 - (1) But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.

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- 2 Paul was not unrealistic; the Christians in these churches remained human, remained individuals
 - a They were members of problem churches – or churches with problems
 - b Paul had much difficulty with the members of the Jerusalem Church
 - (1) Galatians 2:4
 - (a) But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us— 5 we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you.
 - (b) 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction.
 - (c) 13 And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.
 - (d) 14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"
 - (2) The Corinthians experienced a wide variety of serious problems
 - (a) Internal divisions
 - [1] 1 Corinthians 1:11
 - [a] My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. 12* What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."
 - [b] 13* Is Christ divided?
 - (b) Incest
 - [1] 1 Corinthians 5:1
 - [a] It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. 2* And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?
 - (c) Lawsuits between church members
 - [1] 1 Corinthians 6:1
 - [a] If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? 2* Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?
 - [b] 3* Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!
 - [c] 4* Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church!
 - [d] 5* I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?
 - (d) Dogmatic difficulties – denying the resurrection of dead Christians
 - [1] 1 Corinthians 15:12
 - [a] But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
 - [b] 13* If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14* And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.
 - 3 Despite all these problems and faults, they remained filled with the Spirit of Jesus
 - a His holiness was greater than their sin

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- b His holiness enabled them to be saints!
- C They were united with each other as well as with God
 - 1 1 Corinthians 10:15
 - a *I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.*
 - b 16* Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?
 - c 17* Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.
- D And, regardless of their failures, they needed only one Baptism!
 - 1 There were no exceptions to the forgiveness of Jesus
 - 2 **The early Church faced extreme persecutions**
 - a Not all remained true to Jesus and the Church
 - b Some, to escape torture and death, publicly cursed Jesus
 - c Later they repented and returned to the Church
 - d **A debate ensued in the Church**
 - (1) Surely these apostates needed re-baptism
 - (2) They had violently shattered their bonds to Jesus and the Church
 - (3) And they had made it more difficult for others to follow Jesus
 - e The Spirit of Jesus in the gathered bishops resolved this dilemma
 - (1) There was to be no re-baptism!
 - (2) Jesus could never and would never divorce them
 - (3) This answer was enshrined in the Nicene Creed: "...one baptism for the forgiveness of sins..."
- E Our relationship with Jesus endures
 - 1 **The Church was described as the bride of Christ**
 - 2 Revelation 21:2*
 - a Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
 - 3 **And Jesus will never divorce us! He can never divorce us!**
- F So why is there the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Confession? Penance?
 - 1 **Our experience with this Sacrament is a rather late innovation**
 - a During the 6th or 7th century changes began to occur
 - (1) The Sacrament became private
 - (2) The Sacrament became devotional
 - b This development was not founded on the original tradition
 - (1) It was imported into Europe from the practice of Irish monks
 - (2) They made the Sacrament a devotional practice
 - 2 **Early Church practices were radically different**
 - a The confessing was done publicly to a bishop surrounded by the Church
 - b **It was limited to a few major offenses**
 - (1) Six or seven very serious actions that threatened the social welfare
 - (2) Things as serious as murder
 - c **The bonds to the Church, not to Jesus, were broken by these actions**
 - 3 **The Sacrament reconciled the individual to Church**

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● IV WHO WAS BAPTIZED?

● A Women

- 1 The baptism of women was possibly the greatest revolution in cultural history
 - a Remarkably, there is no debate reflected anywhere in the NT over their inclusion into the Church by Baptism
 - b The ceremony was done despite the fact that there was no Jewish precedent for it
- 2 The result of this acceptance of women by the reception of Baptism is still not understood today
 - a Women achieve on a spiritual level an equality that has not been fully realized on a practical level
 - b Galatians 3:28*
 - (1) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 - c Women receive the same Spirit
 - d They are entitled to an equality of dignity and place

● B Greeks, Pagans

- 1 **Their inclusion occasioned a major and prolonged debate**
- 2 Introducing pagans into the Church was a problem with two very different aspects
 - a [1] The first problem: What conditions should be set for their acceptance into the Church?
 - (1) There were different positions regarding these conditions
 - (a) The most liberal: there are no preconditions – this extreme understanding was represented by Paul and eventually was the view that won
 - (b) The most conservative: they must accept all of the Law -- the other extreme view was represented by the people of "James," conservative Christians from Jerusalem
 - [1] Gentile males must be circumcised
 - [2] And females and males must observe the whole kosher law of clean and unclean
 - (c) The middle position: they must accept some basic rules of the Jewish law -- The "Jerusalem Council" in Acts represented this stance
 - [1] Acts 15:27
 - [a] Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.
 - [b] 28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.
 - (2) God probably resolved the debate by His action
 - (a) **The action is reflected in Acts**
 - [1] Acts 10:44*
 - [a] While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.
 - [b] 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.
 - [2] The pagan household of Cornelius was filled with God's Spirit without accepting or obeying any requirements of the Law
 - (3) If God was sharing His Spirit with the Greeks with no preconditions, the Church could not set requirements for their inclusion and membership
- b [2] The second problem: How could there be table fellowship between the Jewish and Greek Christians?
 - (1) **How could they share the one Bread?**

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- (2) How could both the clean and the unclean sit and eat together the Lord's Meal when the Law specifically forbade social mixing with the unclean?
 - (a) Peter vacillated on this question
 - (b) Paul confronted him after he wavered
 - [1] Galatians 2:14*
 - [a] 11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.
 - [b] 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.
 - [c] 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"
- 3 The meaning and application of this controversy is not understood by us
 - a There are no preconditions for receiving Jesus
 - (1) He comes into our lives as a gift
 - (2) **He does not join with us as a reward**
 - b Jesus makes us all clean, makes us all parts of His body
 - (1) **He attaches Himself to us and thus attaches us to Him**
 - (2) We do not first attach ourselves to Him
 - (3) **We respond to His baptizing Himself in us**
 - (4) We accept the gift of His love, His Spirit
 - (5) And, in turn, we attempt to immerse ourselves in Him
- C Children
 - 1 The NT refers to whole households being Baptized
 - a The term "Household" clearly includes children
 - b Acts 16:15*
 - (1) And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.
 - 2 There is a significant and important story in Mark regarding Jesus and the children
 - a Mark 10:13*
 - (1) Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them.
 - (2) 14 But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."
 - (3) 16* And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.
 - b The story contains two clues that it is referring to a problem regarding infant Baptism
 - (1) Jesus says, "Do not forbid" or "Do not hinder them"
 - (a) He uses a technical word that the Church quickly employed as a person advanced towards Baptism
 - [1] As a candidate, a "catechumen-ate," advanced from stage to stage toward **Baptism**, the assembled Church was asked a question regarding the person's readiness to advance
 - [2] They were asked, "Is there anything in her/him to **"forbid"** advancement?"
 - [3] Jesus uses this term to state that children should not be barred from fellowship with Him

Topic

- (2) And Jesus uses an action associated with Baptism, the laying on of hands
 - (a) **The gesture was important in the NT to show unity**
 - (b) It very quickly was made part of the baptismal entrance into the Church
- 3 The Jewish background of the early Christians offers the best reason to believe they regularly Baptized infants
 - a Again we must recall these Jewish roots
 - (1) Jews were accustomed to initiating infants into the People of God on the 8th day by circumcision
 - (2) Indeed, they felt God required male infants to be circumcised on the 8th day of their lives to be made part of His People
 - b These Christians, in all probability, changed the service of initiation from circumcision to baptism
 - (1) This switch is likely since they continued to use the example of male circumcision as a manner of understanding Baptism
 - (2) They interpreted baptism as a spiritual circumcision
 - (a) Colossians 2:11*
 - [1] In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.
 - c Given their centuries-old practice of initiating male infants, it is inconceivable they would suddenly delay initiating their children until they became adults
 - (1) **Remember: both ceremonies made one part of the People of God**
 - (2) They entitled a person to the protection of the covenant promises
 - (3) **They would want their children to experience these blessings**
- V HOW WAS BAPTISM RECEIVED?
 - A The early Church baptized using full immersion
 - 1 They did it in running water
 - 2 Or, as a second best, collected rain water was used
 - 3 They felt a stagnant pool of water couldn't symbolize the living water of our God
 - B Baptism was received only after a long period of preparation
 - C It was conferred on Holy Saturday, on the Eve of Easter
 - 1 The whole church gathered with and around its bishop in prayer to celebrate Easter
 - 2 After preparatory prayers, the catechumenates split into two groups
 - a Men went off with deacons
 - b Women went off with deaconesses
 - 3 The separate groups went to a stream
 - a The ceremony began with the catechumenates removing all of their clothes
 - (1) **This action was seen as the moment of their dying to self**
 - (a) In their society, clothes helped to identify the status of any person
 - (b) For example, all clothing references are significant in Mark
 - [1] He cites a man fleeing naked into the night in the Garden
 - [a] Mark 14:51
 - {1} A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52 he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.
 - [b] The fleeing naked is a hint the man is losing his baptismal robe
 - [2] Another young man by retaining his robe is capable of making the Easter proclamation -- note that he not is not said to be an angel in Mark!
 - [a] Mark 16:5

Topic

- [1] As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. 6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.
 - [b] He remains loyal to Jesus, human and crucified, and is able to witness to Him
 - (c) Removing clothing, standing naked, was dying to all that makes me, me
- (2) The importance of this stripping off of clothing and of the old man sheds light on several NT passages
 - (a) The person stripped off the old flesh with its attached vices
 - (b) Ephesians 4:22
 - [1] You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds;
 - [2] 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
 - (c) Colossians 3:9
 - [1] Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.
 - [2] 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! 12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.
- b The person then entered water
- c Just as with circumcision, he could not baptize himself/herself
 - (1) He was accompanied by a deacon who lowered him into and raised him out of the water
 - (2) The Christians felt a new spiritual bond was created with the person who did the baptizing
 - (3) This deacon/deaconess could be seen as the catechumenate's spiritual father
- d Full immersion demonstrated that they died, drowned, with Jesus
- e The catechumenate remained under water briefly showing he/she was buried with Jesus
- f The catechumenate then emerged from the water
- g The catechumenate then donned new, white clothes
 - (1) He/she wore this clothing whenever they gathered with their fellow Christians for the next week
 - (2) The new white garment was an outward sign that he/she was a new person inwardly
 - (3) Galatians 3:27
 - (a) As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
 - (4) Colossians 3:9
 - (a) Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.
 - (b) 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!
- 4 All the baptized were brought back to the praying Church
 - a The bishop imposed hands, accepting them into full union with the Church
 - b He Confirmed them
 - c Finally, they made their first communion -- the final sign of complete union with whole Church

Topic

- 5 [My guess only:] They took a new name
 - a They did this precisely because they experienced a real death and rebirth
 - b They wanted to disassociate themselves completely from their old lives
 - (1) This might explain the new name taken in Confirmation
 - (2) They claimed this new name as they appeared before the bishop to be accepted into the Church
- D Why have most mainline Churches drifted away from full immersion?
 - 1 The change was done for practical reasons
 - a There were too many converts for full immersion
 - (1) During the centuries of sporadic persecution, there were relatively few converts
 - (2) When Constantine legalized Christianity, there was an explosion of them
 - (a) Within fifty years a radical change occurred in the Empire
 - (b) At first a person was persecuted if he/she was discovered to be a Christian
 - (c) Fifty years later, the same person could have been persecuted if he/she were not a Christian
 - (3) Suddenly thousands upon thousands were seeking baptism
 - (4) There were not enough streams to allow for **baptism** by full **immersion**
 - 2 The streams of Europe, especially Northern Europe, were too cold for immersion
 - a Barbarian chiefs in Northern Europe would convert
 - b The whole tribe followed him into the Church
 - c The running streams could be frigid
 - 3 **Substitute symbols were required and used**
 - a Sprinkling
 - b Pouring
 - 4 We must always remember these are substitutes symbolizing full immersion
 - a They were not replacements for **immersion**
 - b The manuals still recommend **immersion**
 - 5 Demanding full **immersion** for validity seems to border upon making the sacramental action an act of magic -- unless it is performed correctly, it can't work!
 - VI THE SIGN OF BAPTISM
 - A The sign is full immersion in water -- even if sprinkling or pouring is used as a practical substitute
 - 1 This **immersion** tells us that Jesus **immerses** Himself fully in us
 - a He unites and identifies everything that He is with each of us
 - b He (Love) **immerses** Himself in us
 - c Therefore we can **immerse** ourselves in Him (Love,) with being loved
 - 2 We should not base our interpretation of the Sacrament upon meanings of the substitute signs of **sprinkling and pouring**
 - a Such interpretations can lead to false understandings of Baptism
 - b Seeing "water" alone as the sign, not **immersing** in water, I reached such an erroneous interpretation
 - (1) I looked at the **pouring** of water
 - (2) I saw **Baptism** as a cleansing
 - (3) The true action, the true sign, the true meaning of **Baptism** was much more radical
 - B Remember: the sign is not the water alone

Topic

- 1 The proper sign is **immersion** in water signifying not cleansing but death
- 2 We are united with Jesus through a Sacramental death
- C The Baptized person stays under the water briefly
 - 1 **The early Christians remained under water to signify a unity with Jesus in burial**
 - 2 One scholar claimed this was the main reason that the Passion accounts stressed the burial of Jesus
- D Finally, the newly Baptized person emerged from the water
 - 1 He/she rose to a new life
 - 2 He/she now lived the life of the resurrected Jesus
- VII THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM
 - A There is no salvation outside Jesus
 - 1 Acts 4:12*
 - a "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
 - 2 The statement should not be interpreted as if the name were magic
 - a In the Bible, the "name" represents the person as experienced
 - b And the person of Jesus is 'God loving and serving us'
 - c We cannot discover salvation in anything else but in being loved by Jesus
 - (1) Sometimes we are aware that it is God's love communicated through Jesus that we are experiencing
 - (2) At other times we can experience the wonder of love, acceptance, service as offered us by others
 - (a) In reality they are channels of God's Love
 - (b) All human love, true love, has God as its ultimate source
 - [1] 1 John 4:7
 - [a] Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God: everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.
 - [b] 9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
 - [c] 11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.
 - (c) Nothing else but this service, acceptance, love, can fulfill us
 - [1] Power, sex, popularity, youthful looks all fail
 - [2] Material goods fail
 - (d) So the claim about salvation is based on
 - [1] Human experience
 - [2] The reality of our being created in the image of a God of love
- B We are baptized into an experience of being loved
 - 1 We immerse ourselves in love offered us as a gift
 - 2 Experiencing love is absolutely necessary for serenity
- C Centuries ago, Catholics misunderstood the necessity of Baptism because of a misunderstanding of Scripture
 - 1 The root of the problem for Catholics had been the words of John 3:3-6
 - a John 3:3

Topic

- (1) *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?"*
- (2) *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.*
- b This text seemed to require baptism for entrance into Heaven
- 2 **This text created different reactions when applied to adults and to infants**
 - a For Catholics, the text offered no threat to non-baptized adults
 - (1) The Church early recognized different forms of Baptism
 - (a) Jesus Himself promised salvation to one of the thieves on the cross with Him
 - (b) This thief had not had an opportunity to be **baptized**
 - [1] Luke 23:42*
 - [a] Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." 43* And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
 - [2] Obviously, the thief was able to enter Heaven without ever receiving a Baptism of water
 - (2) Therefore several different forms of baptism came to be recognized by the Church
 - (a) [1] Water baptism
 - (b) [2] Baptism of Blood
 - [1] Some catechumens were arrested and martyred before they could receive baptism
 - [2] The shedding of the person's blood was seen as his/her baptism
 - (c) [3] Baptism of Conscience
 - [1] **The term applied to a person trying to live by what he/she thought was right and wrong**
 - [2] If such a person knew that God wanted him/her to be baptized, he/she would accept the Sacrament
 - [3] So the person had an **implicit desire for the Sacrament**
 - [4] **God surely would not punish such a person because an accident of birth, (time or place,) made it impossible for the individual to learn of Jesus and His teaching**
 - b The text did create a problem for unbaptized infants
 - (1) All adults can be covered by one of the forms of baptism
 - (2) **But no child can be**
 - (a) The child cannot make an act of faith because of his/her immature infant conscience
 - (b) The child cannot make a free act desiring **baptism**
 - (3) **How can we keep these innocents out of Hell?**
 - (a) "Limbo" is the solution offered:
 - [1] This solution to the problem is as old as Augustine (4th century AD)
 - [2] **But it has absolutely no scriptural basis**
 - (b) This is the background to creating "Limbo"
 - [1] **God was experienced as too good to eternally sentence anyone innocent, including innocent children, to Hell's pain forever**
 - [2] **But theologians could not get children into Heaven because of John 3:3-6**
 - [3] So they created a new place
 - [a] A place of no pain
 - [b] A place of joy

Topic

- [c] But a place with no experience of God and His bliss
- (4) **Remember, this non-Scriptural solution was created because the God of the Scriptures was experienced as so good!**
- D The solution for other Christians who read the Bible literally seems more severe
 - 1 **The Bible offers only Heaven and Hell**
 - 2 And a person must believe in Jesus and be **baptized** in order to be saved
 - 3 **So the universe contains only two groups**
 - a **Christians who are destined for Heaven**
 - b **And all others who are destined for Hell**
 - (1) All primitives who have never heard of Jesus
 - (2) All Jews who have attempted to live exemplary lives
 - (3) All victims of the holocaust -- they are now also victims of God!
- E No problem exists today for mainline Christians -- including Catholics
 - 1 Scripture scholars are certain that John 3:3-6 does not require the Sacrament of Baptism
 - a **It simply attests salvation cannot come from within us, from within the limits of our flesh**
 - b It affirms that salvation must come as a gift from above, a gift of love
 - 2 And all love has as its ultimate source our loving God
 - 3 Therefore, no priest I know still believes in **Limbo**
- VIII POINTS TO REMEMBER
 - A Baptism is Discipleship
 - 1 **Following Jesus**
 - 2 **Staying with Jesus**
 - 3 **Staying with God loving us**
 - B Baptism is Christmas
 - 1 Jesus comes to us and **unites** with us
 - 2 He joins with us in a **union** that is permanent
 - 3 His **uniting** with us turns our stables into His Temples
- IX ADDENDA
 - A EXCOMMUNICATION
 - 1 Paul ordered the Corinthian Church to expel a member from its midst
 - a **1 Corinthians 5:4***
 - (1) *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5* deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
 - (2) *6* Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7* Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened.*
 - 2 **This text is important to help us understand a difficult term**
 - a Most people think those who are excommunicated are expelled from the Church
 - (1) **They are not**
 - (a) They cannot be
 - (b) "One baptism for the forgiveness of sins" attests to this
 - (2) No one, ever, under any conditions can be expelled from the Church

Topic

- (3) The reason no one can be ejected from the Church is because Jesus will never divorce any of us!
- b The term means what it says
 - (1) "Communion" is broken
 - (2) Visible fellowship is ended
- c Paul tells us why this should be done
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 5:1
 - (a) *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. 2* And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?"*
 - (b) *3* Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present.*
 - (c) *4* When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5* hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.*
 - (d) *6* Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?"*
 - (2) Excommunication should never be done as a punishment
 - (3) Rather, it should be done as a loving gesture, albeit one of tough love
 - (4) The action is intended to shake a person into seeing the gravity and evil of her or his action
 - (a) Hand the body over to Satan -- who rules the world outside the fellowship of the Church
 - [1] *"deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh."*
 - (b) Do this only to save His soul on the Day of the Lord -- to help Him
 - [1] *"that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."*
- 3 In the early Church, fellowship was vital – life depended upon it
 - a In a society where large family associations offered employment, education, social and religious life, and, most important, physical protection, Christian converts were often expelled from their families
 - b The Church provided such a community
 - c Sadly today, the experience of fellowship is often lost
 - d People who are excommunicated stay home and feel like they've lost little or nothing
 - e Their reaction is a criticism on the lack of service and communion experienced in many churches
- 4 Excommunication is a tough love action on the part of the Church
 - a It is done as a last resort to shake the sinner into seeing how grave a sin is
 - b And it is done as a last resort to shake the Church as a whole into seeing how grave this sin is
- B PURGATORY
 - 1 Purgatory is not much talked or preached about today
 - a But it is a part of the Catholic faith
 - b It is a part of our teaching that has relevance for our daily living
 - 2 The traditional understanding of Purgatory is rejected by many other Christians
 - a Purgatory was seen as a place of pain where a person was sentenced for a period of time
 - b With no clear Scriptural foundation, the concept was based on human justice systems
 - (1) A person committed a crime
 - (2) He was arrested, tried, convicted, imprisoned

Topic

- (3) He was not freed until the penalty was served
- c Dark Age Catholics felt, in a similar way, that there was a double penalty for sin
 - (1) **One penalty was eternal and temporal**
 - (a) The forgiveness offered by Jesus removed this eternal punishment
 - (b) **The sin was forgiven forever**
 - (2) But a temporal punishment remained
 - (a) **Restitution was demanded before it could be removed -- some fine had to be paid to correct the scales of justice**
 - (b) This restitution could be made before death
 - (c) If not, it must had to be made after death by suffering in Purgatory
- d God's justice was patterned upon the way which kings used to enforce their judgments
- 3 There is a new understanding of Purgatory that poses no problem for many other Christians
 - a This new teaching is based on the natures of God and of man
 - (1) Heaven consists in being in the presence of God
 - (a) **God is perfect**
 - (b) **He must love perfectly and be loved perfectly**
 - (2) **At the moment of death we are finally able to respond correctly to His love**
 - (a) All limitations to our being loved and loving back are removed
 - (b) But we've failed to develop the ability to love because of our
 - [1] Selfishness
 - [2] Self-centeredness
 - (c) And we've developed so many attachments to lesser goods
 - b We experience, therefore, an instant purgation at the moment of death
 - (1) **God must be loved perfectly**
 - (2) To do this, we break with pain from all other attachments
 - (a) The pain varies by how deep are these attachments
 - (b) And the pain varies by how many are the attachments
 - (3) **To do this, we undergo an expansion of our ability to love which demands effort, pain**
 - (a) The pain, the effort required, varies by how open we've been to being loved
 - (b) And the strain involved varies by how much we have developed the ability to love
 - (4) For some, nearly no effort will required; for others, the process will be very painful
- C HOLY WATER
 - 1 All use of holy water should be a reminder of our baptismal life
 - 2 **We use it on ourselves**
 - a In using it when we enter a church, we are challenged to recall our Baptismal holiness
 - b **"We have been "soiled" by the messages of life**
 - (1) So many of them tell us that we're not good enough
 - (2) We listen and we condemn ourselves
 - (3) Jesus tells us that we are a priceless treasure
 - (a) He's offers Himself to purchase us to His love
 - (b) He makes us saints
 - c We need to use holy water when entering a Church

Topic

- (1) To remind ourselves that we are God's beloved
- (2) To remind ourselves that we are joining a communion of saints in the Lord's Supper
- d We should not need to use it when exiting a Church
 - (1) Exiting, we need to recall our Confirmation mission to witness
 - (2) We need some use of oil to remind us of this challenge
- 3 We use holy water on items
 - a **The sprinkling should be a challenge for us to put these items into a correct perspective**
 - b These items have no magic
 - c We are invited to use them in a way in which we will increase our experience of Jesus cleansing us with His love and filling us with His Spirit
- D POINTS TO REMEMBER
 - 1 Baptism is Jesus, God's Love, immersing Himself in us
 - 2 So that we, in turn, can immerse ourselves in Him, in Love
 - 3 Baptism is our assurance we can be loved
 - a **By others**
 - b By ourselves
 - c **By God**