

Catford Lectures 2014-2015

Part 3

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[00:00:01] I wonder if we can commence the meeting this afternoon with a hymn. 149. Hymn 149.

Thinking especially of the third verse. Unto thy death baptised we own, with thee we died.

With thee our life we're risen and shall be glorified. From sin the world and Satan we're ransomed by thy blood. And here would walk as strangers alive with thee to God. We'll sing the whole hymn 149. Lord Jesus, we remember the travel of thy soul.

When through thy loss did pity the ways did o'erthrow.

[00:01:10] Baptised in death's foul quarters, for us thy blood was shed.

For us the Lord of glory was numbered with the dead.

O Lord, thou now art risen by travel always o'er.

For sin the ones that do suffer vow less to die no more.

[00:02:07] Sin, death and hell are vanquished by thee, the Judge's hand.

And lo, we share thy triumphs, thou firstborn from the dead.

Unto thy death baptised we own, with thee we died.

With thee our life we're risen and shall be glorified.

[00:03:07] From sin the world and Satan we're ransomed by thy blood.

And here would walk as strangers alive with thee to God.

Amen. I'd like us to read as the start of the meeting this afternoon, just two verses from the Ephesian

epistle in chapter 4.

The fourth chapter of Ephesians, and we'll read just verses 4 and 5.

[00:04:26] There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

It's my desire and intention this afternoon to speak on the subject of baptism.

And I would just make it clear that it's not my intention to be controversial nor to be provocative, [00:05:04] although I would be very happy if we are all provoked into a deeper and more careful study of God's word. But I wonder whether sometimes we have a rather superficial view of the matter. And I think it would be very helpful if what we do very simply is to look at various verses where baptism is spoken of and see if we can't find some help and instruction. And really my starting point is this verse where we're told here that there is one baptism.

Now, I think we would all always be very clear and careful in encouraging one another whenever we read a verse of the Bible to understand its context and not to pluck what we might say proof text from here and there which hang in isolation. [00:06:05] Because I think we should agree that if we look into the scriptures on the subject of baptism, we must conclude that there's quite a variety in the various baptisms spoken of. So how is it on the one hand that we have various different examples of baptism and yet here we come to a verse that says there is one baptism? Well, I think the answer will be clear and hopefully by the end of our time together we'll be able to come to a conclusion as to this verse here in Ephesians. It's not a subject over which the brethren have ever divided and I think it's important to say that. It should not and is not a divisive matter and so we should be able to rest assured as we take up the subject on that account. [00:07:02] Also, I would suggest that it's a subject which is deliberately left a little bit in the background because there are more important things. Now in saying that, I'm not saying it's completely unimportant, otherwise I wouldn't seek to take up a lecture on the subject. But, you know, Paul was not sent to baptize.

He had here a special revelation as to the Lord's Supper and as to Christ and the assembly and certainly those things really should come into the foreground in our study and understanding of the truth. And the matter of baptism is a little bit relatively left in the background and for a good reason, I think. But nevertheless, I think we will be helped by a study of it this afternoon. Now, the way I propose to approach it is this.

[00:08:04] We've, or I have, looked at a number of scriptures in preparation and one has come to certain conclusions. And I think it might be a practical way of going about it if I, at the beginning, make a number of statements which I am persuaded the scriptures support. So by way of a start, I'll make these statements and then we're going to look at a number of scriptures and I trust as we do that, we will see that the scriptures support the statements that have been made. And we might just summarize at the end by a reference to them. So the statements I think the scriptures have borne out are the following.

Baptism is always unto something or someone and in that case it's identification with that someone.

[00:09:09] Baptism is the act of the baptizer, not the one baptized.

The command was to baptize, not to be baptized. It is not an act of obedience. In this the scripture is very clear, I think. No man can fulfill it by himself.

Another must do it for him.

It is a privilege desired or conferred.

It is in view of living here on earth and not a matter concerning heaven. Baptism, both baptism and the Lord's Supper are for the wilderness. We'll have no need of either when we're with the Lord. It is not a testimony to what a person is already, [00:10:01] but rather the formal and orderly entrance into a place of privilege, admission into the professing body or house.

Baptism as a sign does not go beyond death and resurrection and hence is individual and so is not a means to or even a sign of the unity of the body.

Now we'll look at the scriptures that I think will help us and I want to deal with them in a way that takes them up in a chronological order in the order in which they would have taken place historically. It might seem a little bit counterintuitive that the first scripture we look at is 1 Corinthians and chapter 10, but I'm sure we'll see why this has to come first.

[00:11:09] So 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verses 1 and 2.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

So chronologically in the history of the things of God, the first mention of something which we're told here was a form of baptism is when the Israelites went through the Red Sea and in the cloud.

[00:12:03] We're told here they were all baptized unto Moses and so this helps us in regard to the statement that baptism is always unto something or someone. In this case, it was unto Moses and thereby they were associated with and identified with Moses and it was something that happened to them as a result of following Moses as he led them through the Red Sea. In other words, the baptism wasn't an act that they undertook specifically. This was the result of their following Moses through the Red Sea and in being guided and protected by the cloud.

As a consequence of that, they were baptized and we're told here that they were all baptized unto Moses [00:13:06] and so we might say, well, that's our first distinct example of baptism and quite clearly it's not the same as other baptisms that the scripture speaks of. Very different circumstances and here the person in view was Moses.

Well, now we can go to the Gospels, Matthew's Gospel and in reading chapter three, you'll understand I've selected just this one as an example of the baptism of John.

We could, of course, have turned to either Luke's Gospel or Mark's Gospel but for the purposes this afternoon, this should be adequate. [00:14:06] So Matthew chapter three and I want to read a fair portion from verse three. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same time John had his raiment of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins and his meat was

locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the nation round about Jordan and were baptised of him in Jordan confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who have warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits, meat for repentance [00:15:02] and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance. But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptised of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me? [00:16:01] And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now to be so, for thus it becometh us to fulfil righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straight away 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, in whom I am well pleased. I think we see from this portion that we can say that in regard to John's baptism, it was a baptism unto repentance, and it was directed to the Jewish company. And we have that stated very clearly here.

[00:17:03] Verse 11, I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance. So now we have something which establishes that baptism is always unto something or someone. First we've had unto Moses, and now unto repentance.

And the interesting thing is that the Lord Jesus submitted to, if you like, the baptism of John.

Now, of course we read in this portion that those that came to John came confessing their sins. And we might ask ourselves, on what basis then did the Lord Jesus come to John? He could not come confessing his sins.

And as a consequence, of course, John at first was rather reluctant to baptise the Lord Jesus. [00:18:09] But the Lord Jesus, in answer, says, Thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness.

And I think what we can say is that in being baptised, the Lord Jesus was baptised unto John. In other words, he identified himself with that message which John brought. And I trust we know something of that already. John the Baptist was the one who prepared the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus. And John's message was that the nation had need of repentance.

And that was a matter that, of course, the Lord Jesus could identify with without any contradiction as to his person. [00:19:01] He had, of course, no need of repentance. But he identified himself with the truth that the nation needed to repent. And so, without any inconsistency, the Lord Jesus was baptised with John's baptism. And John, in his preaching, he mentions another baptism that the Lord would bring or introduce, and that's the baptism with the Holy Ghost, verse 11. So now we have yet another type of baptism.

I'm hoping you're keeping a note of these variations.

We said also, one of the statements I made was that baptism is in view of living here on earth. And

do you not think it's remarkable that following the Lord's baptism, we read, he went up straightway out of the water and the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove. [00:20:06] We know that following the Lord's baptism, this was the start of his earthly ministry. And is this not then consistent with the statements that we've made already? In view of living here on earth and serving on earth, at the beginning of his earthly ministry, the Lord was baptised. Could there be any man more suited or fitted for heaven than the Lord Jesus?

When he came, was he not suited for heaven?

Of course, there could be no one more suited. So, in no way was baptism in view of his going into heaven. He was already suited to be there. That's from where he came. [00:21:04] And I trust we might just see this distinction. That the baptism is not in regard to heaven, but in regard rather to living on earth. Well, turn now to John's Gospel, and again the third chapter.

John chapter 3, and now we'll read from verse 22 and we'll go into chapter 4.

John 3, verse 22.

After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea. And there he tarried with them and baptised. And John also was baptising in Anon, near to Salem, because there was much water there. [00:22:02] And they came and were baptised. But John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And it came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptiseth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all. He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony. [00:23:04] He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples. I would like us to look carefully at the last few verses of chapter 3, because we're going to see elsewhere another verse, and we need to bear this in mind. [00:24:05] The Father loves the Son, and hath given all things unto his hand. He that believeth on the Son has everlasting life. And he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. If we want a verse that deals with the matter of heaven, this is it. So let us be very clear that when we're talking about the salvation of a soul in regard to eternity, this is the matter that covers it.

He that believes on the Son has eternal life.

On the other hand, he that believes not the Son is already condemned, and God's wrath, it stays on him. So, verse 6 says nothing of baptism.

[00:25:04] And that's because baptism has nothing to do with the matter of eternity, or the salvation of a soul in regard to eternity. Let's be very clear about that. So, in this portion we saw how John continued baptizing, and now we have the Lord Jesus baptizing. But we're told very expressly in chapter 4 and verse 2 that Jesus himself didn't baptize, but his disciples. So, I think we can derive from that this important matter.

To whom were the disciples of the Lord Jesus baptized when his disciples baptized them?

It wasn't to John, but rather to the Lord Jesus.

I think this is right. [00:26:02] The Lord Jesus himself didn't baptize because he was the one unto whom those being baptized were being baptized. The disciples baptized those that came, and they baptized them unto Jesus himself.

And so, now, all our verses, they're maintaining consistency with the statement we've made that baptism is always unto something or someone. Okay, now we need to turn back to Matthew, and this time to the end, chapter 28.

And now, we're going to see a matter which I'm going to describe as the commission of baptism given to the twelve, or rather by this time the eleven, of course, because Judas has dropped out of the scene. [00:27:06] And I would suggest that the disciples, their commission was a baptism to disciple Gentile nations of identification with the remnant.

And this is something not yet fulfilled. We'll see why in a minute. The commission to the twelve was not from heaven, but from Galilee. It was from a risen Lord, but not yet ascended Lord.

Although I think in one of the Gospels, it's as the Lord ascends. But certainly, it's not out of heaven. The commission was not sent from heaven, but from Galilee. And the commission to bring the nations into connection with an accepted remnant of Jews on earth. And so let's read now just two verses in Matthew 28, verses 19 and 20, the last two verses.

[00:28:10] Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age, rather than world, which is a more precise translation. So, the disciples were to go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, unto the end of the age.

And I suggested that this is a commission that's not yet been fulfilled.

[00:29:01] And I suggest also that it will be in a coming day. And so this is really a distinction from the baptisms we've seen already.

This commission was not to the Jewish nation, which was really, John the Baptist's focus was on the Jewish remnant. These disciples are now told to teach and baptize all nations and to bring them under the sway of the revelation of God that the Lord Jesus as Son himself brought the revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But this was never completed.

And we might just turn now to Galatians chapter 2.

[00:30:02] I make no apologies for making us dig into God's Word because really, there can be no better way of dealing with any subject than to appeal to the scriptures themselves. So Galatians chapter 2 and verse 7.

But contrary-wise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, and this is Paul speaking, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter, for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the circumcision.

[00:31:07] So it seems that whilst having been commissioned to go and teach and baptize all nations, that here in this portion in Galatians, they've really given that up now into the apostles' hands. And he was the one who went to the Gentiles.

And we read that they unto the circumcision.

And we know that these apostles, they remained at Jerusalem when there was the first scattering. We don't make any comment as to the likeness or otherwise of that, but nevertheless, it seems a fact.

[00:32:01] So rather than going and fulfilling the commission, they seem to have given this matter over to Paul, who now took the wonderful truth to the Gentiles.

And we've said already that Paul was not sent to baptize. He had revelation in regard to a much wider sphere and a higher matter of things.

The Lord's Supper and Christ and the church.

And so it seems rather interesting to me to take note of this, that the commission to go to all nations was given into the hands of one who was not sent to baptize.

So I suggest that what we see at the end of Matthew's gospel, we can say as a special commission, was not completed and has not yet been fulfilled, but will be. [00:33:06] And bear in mind that when the Lord comes in glory with his saints to establish the millennial reign, prior to that, there will be this wonderful work among the nations in the preaching of the remnant, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. And we know that in a coming day, all the nations of the earth will recognize the special place that the nation of Israel has in regard to the blessing of God. They will follow the Jew.

They will go up to Jerusalem. Nations that do not send delegates to go up to Jerusalem, they will have reign withheld. And I suggest you want to do some further study. [00:34:01] You look into prophetic scripture and I think you'll see then, in a coming day, the fulfillment of the commission given to the disciples at the end of Matthew. Preach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Okay, now Mark's gospel and chapter 16.

Mark's gospel, chapter 16, and we'll read from verse 14.

[00:35:01] Help if I'm in Mark, I'll just turn to Luke. Mark 16 and verse 14.

Shall be damned or is condemned already.

Okay, this is, I think, another portion that comes at the end of the gospel. This I would link with what we've just read in Matthew 28. [00:36:01] Here it's clearly the 11 and the commission is to go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Now, take notice of that.

To every creature.

I think we must link this with a commission not yet fulfilled, but one which will be in a coming day. What I wanted us to notice very especially is the order of things in verse 16.

He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be condemned.

Take note of the order, please.

[00:37:02] Firstly, believe.

Secondly, baptized.

Thirdly, saved.

Believed, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

So we have here a very clear verse that confirms what we've said, that baptism is unto something. And here we have salvation following baptism.

But we've already said, haven't we, at the end of John's gospel, that in regard to the salvation for eternity, he that believes on the Son has eternal life. He that believes not the Son, the wrath of God abides on him. So two things are possible.

Either the scripture is wrong here, or the order is wrong, or there's another explanation. [00:38:06] And I'm quite certain that the Holy Spirit was not mistaken or at fault in inspiring the writers of the scriptures to have the verse as we have it. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. So there's nothing wrong with the order. I think the explanation is that this salvation is not what we would speak of as the salvation spoken of in John's gospel. It is not now the saving of a soul for eternity, but this is a matter of what is outward or administrative. And so in regard to the gospel of the kingdom and in a coming day, in regard to living on earth and God's dealings with men and the blessings that are to be received, [00:39:06] the salvation is consequent upon believing and being baptized. In other words, those that believe and accept as a profession the lordship of Christ will be blessed.

They will be saved in regard to the administration of things on earth.

On the other hand, those that don't believe are already condemned because that's the starting point. We're all dead in trespasses and sins. And if we don't believe, then the wrath of God remains on us. We're condemned already. And so baptism is neither here nor there. If we don't believe, the absence or presence of baptism has nothing to add. So the order here, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. [00:40:05] And so we must conclude that this can't be the salvation that we look for when we say a person is saved, they are a believer in the lord Jesus, they have now eternal life. This is something to do with rather their position on earth.

And it follows the taking a place of profession of accepting the lordship of Christ, which is the result of believing the preaching of the gospel. Now we can turn to the book of the Acts, and we'll come to another form of baptism.

Acts chapter 1 and verse 5.

For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. [00:41:08] Chapter 2 and verse 1.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, and the Spirit gave them utterance.

This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit spoken of by John in regard to the coming of the Lord Jesus.

And this now is something quite different from the other baptisms we've read of.

[00:42:05] This is the work of the Holy Spirit forming on earth the body of Christ.

It's the inaugural setting up of the church.

And when a believer, when a sinner believes on the Lord Jesus and is saved for eternity, has eternal life, at this point those that took such a place were formed into one body by the action of the Holy Spirit coming upon them. And this coming was accompanied by signs which were especially pertinent to the Jew, and it's a subject for another time. We don't want to go too much into it. But this is the baptism of the Holy Spirit of which, or the unity of which, the Lord's Supper is a figure and not baptism.

[00:43:16] And we'll just go on into chapter 2, verse 38.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now, here I would say we have a, not another baptism as such, but a different focus in regard to Paul's speaking of it.

When Paul speaks of baptism, as he does here, I suggest what we have in view is this. [00:44:01] A saving in the form that we had at the end of Mark, a saving administratively on earth, a saving, a washing away of sins as a sign. And Paul's approach seems to be to the Jews, the Jewish nation, it seems to be this. You Jews have crucified Christ whom God has raised and exalted.

So repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And in this way, it seems to be, Paul seems, Peter seems to connect it with the kingdom of heaven. So, in these verses, Peter says, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. So, the baptism was to take place and following that, there would be remission of sins and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. [00:45:11] For the promise is unto you and to

your children and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Now, remember when the Jews crucified the Lord, they really said, well, let this thing be on our heads and on the heads of our children. And so, they brought on themselves the condemnation of God because they were the ones that crucified the Messiah. And that same one whom they crucified, God has now raised up and exalted. And Peter says to them, you have to judge that matter, you have to distance yourself from that company that rejected their Messiah. [00:46:01] And the way you do that is by baptism. In other words, by acknowledging, identifying yourself now with that risen and exalted Christ, the one whom you crucified. And if you do that, you clear yourselves in regard to the earthly position of your association with a nation that crucified Christ. And as a consequence of clearing yourself, there is administratively remission of sins and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Now, I suggest that this is quite a different approach that we would have today. When we preach and we speak of baptism, we are not coming at it from this angle. And I think it's right, therefore, to say that we have a different aspect of baptism as far as Peter is concerned. Okay, we must move on because time is not on our side. [00:47:04] In chapter 3 of Acts, verse 14.

But ye denied the Holy One and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know. Yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I want that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. [00:48:03] And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. Again, I suggest that what we have here is this special approach of Peter to the Jews, that at this transitional point in Acts, they've not yet completely rejected Christ. There's still, you might say, potentially a possibility that they would receive their Messiah. So, Peter's approach is that, well, if you are converted, then the Lord Jesus will come again.

He shall send Jesus Christ, which was preached unto you, and there'll be times of refreshing. So, he's taking a particular view in regard to dispensational truth, we might say.

[00:49:01] And this, I think, is Peter's approach. So, what we have here, really, in Peter is John the Baptist's baptism in principle. This was what John, his baptism of repentance was to a nation who ought to repent from their sins and receive their Messiah. And if they'd done that, they would have been brought into blessing. And, really, what we have here in Peter is, in principle, the subject matter of John's baptism of repentance.

Well, chapter 8, now, of Acts.

Acts 8, and we read from verse 12.

[00:50:01] But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also. And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet, he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They laid their hands on them, and they received the

Holy Ghost.

And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. [00:51:09] Now, I read this because it's a word of caution.

It's often insisted upon in what people refer to as believers' baptism, a phrase that we don't really get in Scripture.

Here we have a preaching, verse 12, when they believed Philip, they were baptized both men and women. In verse 13, we have then Simon himself believed also, and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip. Now, I just bring this out because it's a cautionary matter.

[00:52:01] And it highlights really what do we mean when we say believed.

It's clear that Simon's baptism followed belief, and it certainly was a matter of profession.

But insofar, we might say, how far did it go? It's a question.

And what it shows is that in regard to baptism, it's a matter of profession. And that's all we can go on. We cannot see into the heart of somebody. We rely on their profession. And baptism is something which is connected with profession. And it seems as if the apostles, there's no condemnation of them here for baptizing Simon. He professed, he believed, and he professed, and it was quite in order that he was baptized. [00:53:05] But, you see, certainly what followed was not commendable. And so this would link really with the word of John the Baptist to those Pharisees and Sadducees that come. He said, who told you to flee from the wrath to come? Go forth and produce fruits worthy of repentance.

We might just read now, because we're going to have to skip some of the verses, I think, in view of time. Verse 34, chapter 8. The eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet? This of himself or of some other man? And Philip, opening his mouth and beginning from that scripture, announced the glad tidings of Jesus to him. And as they went along the way, they came upon a certain water. [00:54:02] And the eunuch says, behold water, what hinders my being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop. And they went down both to the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. I've read from Mr. Darby's translation, because in the authorized, we have a verse in verse 37 that has no authority. And we need to notice that, you can look into that yourself. But, you know, this verse, I think, tells us that baptism is a privilege desired and conferred.

If it was a matter of obedience or command, then the eunuch's question would be completely irrelevant. Here is water, what does hinder me to be baptized? [00:55:02] Well, if it's a command, there's no question. But, you see, the eunuch understood that there was some privilege or blessing to be received. And so he says, what hinders me? There's no hindrance. And so they both went down into the water.

Acts chapter 9 and verse 18. And with this we must close.

Taking up just before the end of where we left off. I want to read Acts chapter 9.

And we'll read from verse 17.

Acts 9 and verse 17.

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, [00:56:06] hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. Now, with this we should read chapter 22.

Because although it's jumping ahead in the book, it's Paul's recollection of this incident. So Acts 22 and verse 16.

This is Paul recollecting what Ananias said.

Ananias said to Paul, and now why tarryest thou? Rise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

[00:57:01] So here we can see that Ananias is really approaching the matter of baptism from the same point of view as Peter. He's directing his thoughts to Saul.

We know he was a godly and devout Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. We might say completely representative of the Jewish nation, who in their hardness of heart had rejected their Messiah and crucified the Lord Jesus. So from that point of view, Ananias, like Peter, his message was to Paul, at this point Saul, Be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Bear in mind that Saul had a reputation, and Ananias was very fearful when first told to go to Saul. [00:58:03] But this Saul is one well known to be a persecutor of believers.

And Saul, insofar as his testimony on earth, had to disassociate himself from what he once was.

A persecutor of the Lord Jesus, by persecuting those who were believers of the Lord Jesus. That was his reputation, publicly.

And he had to demonstrate that he had put that behind him once and for all. In being baptized, he thus, as Ananias said, washed away his sins.

Not, we would say, as we understand from God's side, in regard to eternal salvation. That, of course, is a consequence of trusting in the Lord Jesus as Saviour. [00:59:05] But nevertheless, it was necessary, for an outward testimony, that Saul set aside his former reputation, and this is what he did. So, here we see Ananias taking up the matter of baptism in the same way that we've seen Peter do in the early parts of Acts. OK, so we go back now in Acts to chapter 13.

We'll just go through the book of Acts in order. Chapter 13, and now verse 24.

When John had first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. So this single verse is one we want to use to back up what has been said already. [01:00:05]

That John's baptism was a baptism of repentance aimed at, focused on, the nation of Israel.

So, to Jews, John's message was, repent of your sins, be baptised unto repentance.

So, in this verse, John first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. Now, chapter 16.

And these next three references are grouped together in my thoughts.

Chapter 16 and verse 15.

Verse 14 says there's a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple. [01:01:06] We'll read all the verse.

Of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us.

Verse 30.

This is the Philippian jailer. He brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of that night, and washed their stripes, and was baptised he and all his straight way. [01:02:02] And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. And he could, in Mr Dardis' translation, read, And having brought them into his house, he laid the table for them, and rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God. Chapter 18, verse 8.

And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptised. Now, all I want to remark on in regard to these verses is that what we have here is, I believe, a principle that we find established from the very beginning.

[01:03:03] That it's God's desire to save households.

This goes right against the thoughts and orders of this day.

The family unit is at the centre of God's thoughts in regard to men and women. He established this from the beginning. It's God's principle that the best place for children to be born and brought up is in a family setting. One man, one woman and children.

The household.

Nowadays, we're told, this is all very old-fashioned.

And we don't need it.

Households, families can be made up in any way you like. [01:04:01] Two men, two women.

We can live in communes, groups.

The state is as well able to bring up children as a family. This is the sort of message we're bombarded with these days. But God and the Scripture says no. From the beginning, I have set up as a basic unit the family.

And we find that all through Scripture. We find it in regard to the Old Testament. The setting up of a household.

What God connects with a man, he connects with his house. And there's blessing and there's authority to be enjoyed. And we do well to stick within the confines.

What I'm saying here, and I'm only wanting to go this far, [01:05:04] is that it's God's intention that there's blessing in the making and bringing up of Christian households. All of us here are here not as individuals, although we are all here as individuals, but we're here as part of our various households. And the reason we're here as households is a practical demonstration of the principles of which we read in this chapter. Now, of course, it's a happy thing when an individual is converted. And it sometimes happens. And we're told that God has set the solitary in families. And it's because of this reason that the family unit is the place of nurture and enjoyment of blessing. And so what we see here is that the Lord is not indiscriminately seeking to save just individuals in isolation. [01:06:09] In other words, he didn't just desire to save Lydia and Crispus and the Philippian jailer and leave the rest of them to their own devices. No. In saving Lydia, he had in view that all her household would be blessed. And it's a very happy thing to see we have a household headed up by a sister, and households headed up by two brothers, Crispus and the Philippian jailer. So let us rejoice in this principle and go on desiring to maintain and encourage this very matter, that God seeks to draw out for himself in this world Christian households in which there is blessing in being under the lordship of Christ. [01:07:11] Acts 19, verses 1 to 7.

It came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus finding certain disciples. He said unto them, Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptised? And they said unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, [01:08:05] and they spake with tongues and prophesied, and all the men were about twelve. Now this is a very remarkable account.

It's a special case. It's, we might say, an exception to the general rule. And it's brought in, I think, to help us understand in a dispensational way the way in which blessing is and has gone out beyond the Jews, bringing in the Gentiles, the Samaritans, and every tribe and tongue in principle. And just two things we want to notice here.

Firstly, these were twelve certain disciples, and they had been baptised unto John.

[01:09:06] And on hearing this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And this shows us what we've seen already, that John's baptism, a baptism unto repentance, must be of a different kind to the other baptisms we've been seeing, what we might say Christian baptism as such. And that's really what particularly I want to draw attention to. The necessity that these twelve should be baptised unto the Lord Jesus, because hitherto they'd only been baptised to John's baptism. But another remarkable thing we must just take note of is that here they were baptised first, and subsequently the Holy Spirit came upon them. [01:10:02] And one thing we might just mention or comment as a result is that this, I think, shows us that baptism is a matter connected with our position on earth, and not a vital matter connected with matters of eternity.

Because otherwise we would have to conclude that this was out of order, or that it is necessary to be baptised first before we receive the Holy Spirit. And we know elsewhere, and we will see, that in fact the reverse is true in other cases. So what we're seeing here is a distinction between the matter of baptism and the matter of what we would say eternal salvation. One is in view of our earthly position, and one is in view of our heavenly or spiritual eternal position. [01:11:07] We'll move now to Romans, and we've said already that Paul's writings, he takes up baptism in a different way, certainly from John, and his approach to it is different from the way in which Peter takes it up, and Ananias has taken it up. For Paul, we've said baptism is a picture, it's related to death and burial.

And it doesn't really get any further than that, perhaps with a slight exception in Colossians, as we'll see. Here in Romans 6 we read, [01:12:04] Therefore we are buried with him, Christ, by baptism unto death, 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. So Paul is now, he's come, he finds believers who have been baptised, and we don't know the circumstances of their baptism. They could have been in varying different companies that we've seen examples of in Acts. But nevertheless, he takes them up as he finds them, and he says, As many as have been baptised unto Christ Jesus, this is Christian baptism, have been baptised unto his death.

[01:13:02] So this verse establishes what we've said already, baptism is always unto something or someone, and in Paul's taking up the matter, it speaks of death and burial. 1 Corinthians.

First chapter, 1 Corinthians 1.

Verse 14.

I thank God that I baptised none of you but Christmas and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptised in mine own name. And I baptised also the household of Stephanus. Besides, I know not whether I baptised any other. So this verse, in reading it, we notice that Paul was not sent to be baptised. [01:14:04] He did baptise one or two, not very many.

That wasn't his purpose in coming, because had it been otherwise, it may have been viewed that he was making disciples of himself. And that wasn't his purpose. For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. And we can just notice also, in verse 16, he mentions having baptised the household of Stephanus. So again, we see this lovely principle that God's blessing is not just with the individual. The object of God's heart is that the household might come into blessing too. Chapter 12.

[01:15:09] And verse 13.

For by one spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. Now, we just noticed this verse, because we've said already that water baptism, the Christian baptism, has nothing to do with the body, with the church as such, with heavenly matters, but rather things on earth. And the baptism that does affect the body and heavenly things is the baptism of the spirit.

[01:16:01] The work of the spirit, that which we saw in the beginning of Acts. By one spirit are we all baptised into one body.

And membership in Scripture, we never read of membership of the church.

It's always membership of the one body.

And it's not our doing. We don't apply to become a member of the church that such a concept is unknown in Scripture. Neither do we do anything, we don't apply to become a member of the body. We are members of the body if we're truly a believer in the Lord Jesus. Why so? Because we have been made so by the work of the spirit. The Holy Spirit baptised all into one body.

It's his work, and it's not affected by our responsibility or our failure. [01:17:07] And as such, it's a completely different matter from the matter of water or Christian baptism that we're looking at. And the figure, as we've said, of this matter is not baptism, but the Lord's Supper. When we remember the Lord, we have the Lord's Supper.

This is dealing with this matter of there being one body and one fellowship. Chapter 15.

Now again, this is a different matter which we need to cover to be complete in our dealing with the subject.

Chapter 15 and verse 29.

[01:18:02] Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? We need to read this verse and comment on it because it's often misunderstood.

And you may hear baptism of the dead or for the dead spoken of as if it's something separate matter in itself. And the explanation is very simple.

This is not a special type of baptism.

For example, if a believer has died and was never baptised, some suggest that other believers were baptised in their place. Well, that's not a scriptural practice and it's not what's referred to or intended here.

[01:19:07] What is referred to as baptism for the dead or baptism for the dead?

It's this. Individuals believe on the Lord Jesus and are baptised.

They take place publicly in the profession of Christendom. And in a time of persecution, there's suffering and there's persecution. And if such a believer should die, fall asleep in Lord Jesus, be taken out of the company of Christians on earth, what happens as it did in this place and it does now?

Well, other ones, there are new converts to take their place. And the idea is, as Paul's saying, look, if there's no such thing as resurrection, [01:20:06] why is it that when some Christians die, others are willing still to become Christians and to take their place? Why would they do that if there's no advantage, if there is no such thing as resurrection? Why is it that there are these new recruits coming in to take the place, to fill the empty seats, as it were, of believers who've died and gone to be with the Lord Jesus? And it's really emphasising the truth, the necessity of the truth of resurrection.

Why would new converts fill up the ranks of those who've died in the Lord if the dead rise not at all? Why then are they baptised for the dead or in place of the dead? So this is, it's really a reference to the same baptism, Christian baptism we've seen. [01:21:07] We know that like an army, you know, if there's an army in conflict and soldiers fall, well, new recruits are sent to fill up the ranks and so it is in the things of the Lord. Believers die and go to be with the Lord Jesus and there are young ones coming up in the faith, new converts. So the numbers of the Lord's own are being maintained and supplemented in this way. And so if someone is baptised as a new convert, in this sense they're now baptised in the place of those who are no longer alive. Nothing more complicated than that.

Galatians 3.

[01:22:13] Verse 27. For as many of you as have been baptised unto Christ have put on Christ.

Very simply, this is in line with Paul's way of taking up baptism. That when we're baptised unto Christ, we put on Christ.

This is outwardly. We profess now to be Christ's.

We're taking, it's like putting on a uniform really that says now we're Christ's. When we're baptised as an outward profession, we're now wearing the badge of being Christ's. And it's an outward thing, not an inward thing. [01:23:03] Otherwise, we would have to understand that in being baptised in this way, we take on the new life of Christ.

And we know that that is a work of God and it's not linked. It's not the result of water baptism. Being baptised unto Christ, outwardly we put on Christ.

Colossians 2.

And verse 12.

Buried with him in baptism, in whom ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead.

[01:24:02] This verse, again, Paul's way of taking it up. Baptism, as far as Paul is concerned and teaching us, is burial.

We are buried with Christ in baptism. And I've read from Mr Darby's translation and there he, in the text, it says in which ye have been also raised. But in his notes, he suggests an alternative translation is in whom. And I think that's more accurate because our burial is in baptism unto Christ.

But our being raised up is not a consequence of baptism. It's a consequence of being associated with Christ. Our being raised into newness of life is a work of the Lord Jesus.

[01:25:03] And so what Paul's saying is outwardly we're buried with him in baptism.

And this one unto whom we're baptised, he's the one in whom we have also been raised through faith of the working of God. Right, we're getting to the end. We'll be pleased to know one Peter in chapter 3. One Peter chapter 3, verse 21.

[01:26:02] Speaking of the few that with Noah were in the ark, he says, eight souls were saved through water. Which figure also now saves you, even baptism? Not a putting away of the filth of flesh, but the demand as before God of a good conscience. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us. Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We've read that from Mr Darby's translation and the authorised. Another verse, because of course this is Peter, this aligns with what we've said. The way Peter takes up baptism and speaks of it to his audience.

[01:27:06] Primarily Peter was addressing converted Jews.

You see he, you'll remember, he spoke of it as clearing themselves of their association with a company that had rejected and crucified their Messiah. And so he says this baptism is a figure, it does also now save us. Not, of course, the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but it doesn't save us as we save for eternity. This is not soul salvation, but nevertheless it saves us. How does it save? By clearing us from what we were once associated with, a company that had rejected and crucified the Lord Jesus. [01:28:02] And so he has this particular focus, primarily to the nation of Israel, that they must distance themselves and that's what baptism does. And what we're saying is that baptism, Christian baptism, water baptism, it does something.

It's important because it does something, if we don't do it, we don't undergo it, we're not in the good of what it does. But what it does is connected with our earthly position, not with our eternal state. The thief on the cross, for instance, had no need of baptism. I know it was before the church was established, but the Lord could say to him, today thou shalt be with me in paradise. He wasn't going to be on earth for more than an hour or so. [01:29:01] He had no need of baptism. He was as ready for heaven as any could be.

And this is the wonderful thing. Our heavenly portion is by faith and trust in the personal work of the Lord Jesus. And the work of God in our hearts and souls saves us from our sins, makes us fit for eternity. We're sealed by the Holy Spirit and we're ready, if the Lord were to come, we'd be ready to see him face to face. But while we're left down here on earth, it's right that we proclaim publicly our position.

This is what Christian baptism does. It sets us on a right course as regard our position.

[01:30:06] Just three more points to cover because this will bring us hopefully full circle and we'll see

the link. I'm going to ask a question now and I'm going to warn you in advance that you may find it a strange question. Before you react violently, let me get to the end.

How does one become a Christian? Answer, by baptism.

Now you're thinking, hang on a minute, that's not what you've said from this platform. That's not what I understand from the scriptures. Well, when I say, how do you become a Christian? I'm being very specific.

I didn't say, like the Philippian jailer, what must I do to be saved? [01:31:05] I wasn't asking that question. If I asked you that question, the answer would not be by being baptised. No, the answer would be by believing on the personal and the work of the Lord Jesus and so on. We're so familiar with this phrase Christian that I wonder whether we really think about its scriptural import.

I'll ask you another question. How many times... I mean the Bible must be full, surely, of the word Christian. It must be mentioned all the time because surely it's full of Christian truth. How many times does the word Christian appear in our Bibles? Well, it depends what translation you use, firstly. The answer is either three or four. But if you can count four, you'll notice that one of those is in brackets. It's only added to make the sense. [01:32:03] Let's read the three, only three occurrences of the word Christian. Acts 11. Well, they're familiar verses. Acts 11, verse 26. It's where we're told the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. So the believers had a reputation in Antioch and that was the first place that they began to be called, by others, notice, Christians.

The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then in Acts 26, verse 28, Paul has come before King Agrippa and King Agrippa says, Almost you persuade me to become a Christian.

[01:33:02] And lastly, in 1 Peter 4, verse 16, Peter says, But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet, if any suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. So, you see, Paul, Peter's there saying, if anyone suffer as a Christian, in other words, because he's known to be a Christian, and he bears the reproach of the Lord, if you and I suffer because of that, let us not be ashamed. If we suffer the reproach of the world because we're doing something wrong, then it's our own fault. But Peter's saying, if it's because of your testimony as a believer in the Lord Jesus, then don't be ashamed. [01:34:01] So those are the only three occurrences of the word Christian. And you'll notice that when you read the beginning of any letter in the New Testament, it's not addressed to the Christians at Corinth, or Ephesus, or Philippi, it's to the saints, or to the believers. And in the New Testament, believers on the Lord Jesus are referred to as saints, brethren, the Lord's own, his sheep, and so on.

In other words, what I'm saying is, the word Christian, though so very familiar to us, and we will say, yes, I'm a Christian, where do you go? I go to that Christian assembly, or I'm reading a Christian book. The point is that its focus is on an outward testimony to the world, who are not the Lord's.

[01:35:03] What they see, as we say in Christendom, is Christianity or not.

So when I ask the question, how does one become a Christian? What I'm saying is, what is it that we do that the world can see? Because the world can't look into our hearts and know whether we're truly a believer in the Lord Jesus or not. Hopefully it can see our fruits.

But what is it that the world can take account of? Well, it's our profession.

And the way in which we become a Christian outwardly, the way in which the scriptural way, the formal and orderly way we take up this course, is through baptism. Now, you'll then say, well, what about those that are baptised, call themselves Christians, but are not truly saved? [01:36:09] Well, I want to just turn our thoughts now to the end of Matthew, Matthew 24. Matthew 24 and verse 45.

Let's read from verse 44.

Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. [01:37:02] But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and he shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. So, we're now looking not at the church, but we're looking at Christendom. In which, under that banner of being a Christian, there are both true and false believers. Believers that possess life, and those that only profess life.

And there's the faithful servant, and the wicked servant. And the wicked servant is clearly not a believer, because when the Lord comes, his portion is with the hypocrites, and as a consequence there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [01:38:11] Clearly this is the judgement of the unbeliever. But the point is this.

There are two things that are true of both these servants. They both have a Lord, and the Lord in both cases calls them my servant. And that's how it is.

Whether or not you're a true believer, if you take the place outwardly of the Christian testimony, through baptism, which is the scriptural and formal and orderly way, into the outward form, you would say the house, the great house, in which there are vessels to honour and dishonour. If any have taken such a position, then the Lord holds them responsible.

[01:39:04] So they've called him Lord, they've taken on themselves that outward position, they've been in the place of profession, they've been in the place of outward blessing, but with that comes responsibility.

And so when the Lord comes, he treats them as his servant, because they've taken that place. And he holds them responsible in the same way that the faithful servant is responsible. And they have called him Lord. Of course we know elsewhere that there are those that say, Lord, Lord, open to us, and he says, I never knew you. This is the eternal matter.

The Lord knows those who are his. But as far as the outward position is concerned, we have just this outward profession. The place we take is through baptism.

[01:40:04] So it's a matter of responsibility, a matter of solemnity. But this is why I say, how do we become a Christian? Through water baptism.

We may be a true believer, and if we've not yet been baptised, then we're not formally in the place of Christendom outwardly.

On the other hand, there are many who are in that place, but they're not true believers. So this is why we desire to be consistent and to see these two side of things. So, our last point is, as to the mode and formula.

What does the scripture say as to how should baptism be administered? And what does it say in regard to the terminology, the words that are used? [01:41:03] Well, at the end of Matthew, chapter 28, we've seen already that the commission was in verse 19.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And in Acts, all through the Acts, we've seen that they should be baptised unto the Lord, or in the name of the Lord. So, this brings us back to our starting verse, which was Ephesians 4, verse 5, where we're told there's one Lord, one faith and one baptism. In Christian things, the Christian testimony, there's one Lord. Well, we know actually there's more than one Lord, absolutely, because the scriptures say, [01:42:01] My Lord said unto his Lord, speaking of King David speaking to Jehovah.

Well, in this world, of course, there are many Lords. But for the believer on the Lord Jesus, we know there's only one Lord. There are many faiths in this world, many religions.

So, it's not a statement of absolute. It's not saying absolutely there's only one Lord, one faith, one baptism. But in the context of Ephesians, saying in the matter of the Christian profession, there can't only be one Lord, because there can only be one Master. We can only serve God. We can't serve God and man, for instance. We can only serve one Lord. And there's only one faith. That's faith in the Lord Jesus as the Son, God's Lamb.

Any other faith is of no importance and no account in things of Christ.

[01:43:08] And in the same way, there's only one baptism. And I say this because we may hear, or we may read, that certain people were baptised into the Church of England, or they were baptised into the Roman Catholic Church, or they were baptised into this or that. And the Scriptures are saying, well, there's only one baptism, and it's unto Christ. And so, as to the form of words, when we baptise, we baptise in the name of the Lord, or unto the Lord, and in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Because the names of God as revealed by the Son coming here, we now know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the revelation of God for the Christian, for the believer on the Lord Jesus. [01:44:03] That's the testimony we've heard, and the only God the Christian accepts is the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And so we're baptised in that name of the Christian revelation, and unto the person of the Lord Jesus himself. So, that really is the formula. I wouldn't, myself, be over-anxious about saying this exact form of words must be used. As long as the general principle is understood, that we're being baptised unto the Lord Jesus, and in the belief and acceptance of the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The New Testament Christian revelation of God. I am persuaded that the mode of Christian baptism is by immersion in water.

Because that is consistent with the figure of baptism.

[01:45:05] But I think more important that the mode is the person to whom we are baptised, as we've

said already. We're baptised unto the Lord. And bear in mind, you might ask, those who are baptised unto Moses, how wet did they get? And the answer is, not at all. Because we read they went through the sea as on dry ground.

And so while in every practical case where I have baptised someone, it's been accomplished by full immersion in water.

But, we wouldn't say that if, for various reasons, that wasn't done, and there wasn't complete immersion, maybe it was only sprinkling.

[01:46:05] That, you know, doesn't invalidate the baptism. Because when the Lord came to that evil servant, he still accounted him as his servant, and he had still claimed him as Lord. So, if the position is taken up, and especially if it's taken up bona fide, in good faith, then before God and the world, it's proper and valid baptism. It's always good to fulfil the principle and the type as far as possible.

But, if what we might feel is not quite the right circumstances pertained, then there's no need for it to be repeated.

Because the most important thing is the taking of the place in this great house of Christendom, being baptised unto the Lord in the acknowledgement of the revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. [01:47:15] So, there's one baptism. I don't think God, that's how God sees it.

If there's been Christian baptism, under whatever circumstances, that's it. God takes account of it. And there's required responsibility.

And so, we just make that point as a word of warning or caution that the best thing is for us to be in the good of the baptism we've undertaken, if we have been baptised.

The most important thing is, well, are we in the good of it? And as John the Baptist said to those coming, to the Pharisees, who told you to flee from the wrath to come? [01:48:07] Go forth and produce fruits appropriate to repentance. And so that would be the positive thing we would encourage one another. If we've taken the place outwardly of being under Christ, then we have a wonderful sphere of spiritual blessing to go in for. And that's the most important thing, because that's spiritual and it's eternal. But, of course, there are these matters that are related to earth and are nevertheless important. So, one faith, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. The Lord takes account of it. And the most important thing is it's our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, unto whom we're baptised in that full and wonderful revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. [01:49:03] I wonder if, in closing, we can sing the hymn 483.

This hymn, I believe, was written by Mrs. Trench, the wife of James Trench of Dublin, written for her own baptism.

So it's an appropriate hymn to sing. 483. The Lord is risen. The Red Sea's judgment flood is passed in Him who bought us with His blood. The Lord is risen. We stand beyond the doom of all our sin through Jesus' empty tomb. 483. The Lord is risen. The Red Sea's judgment flood is passed in Him who bought us with His blood.

[01:50:08] The Lord is risen. We stand beyond the doom of all our sin through Jesus' empty tomb.

The Lord is risen. With Him we also rose.

And in His grave, save anguish of our foes, the Lord is risen beyond the judgment land.

In Him with resurrection life we stand.

The Lord is risen. Redeemed now to God.

[01:51:06] We tread the desert which His feet have trod.

The Lord is risen. The sanctuary's our place.

Where now we dwell before the Father's face.

The Lord is risen. The Lord is gone before.

We long to see Him and to sin no more.

The Lord is risen. Our triumph shall be.

Our house prevailed by people, Lord of three.