

## The Nation's Moral Decline & Ezekiel 33 Questions on Baptism & Re-Baptism (Bible Study)

Fred R. Coulter—November 22, 2008

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*Jesus and the Forgotten City: New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey. Sepphoris was only four miles from Nazareth and was being built by Herod Antipas while Jesus was growing up. So, the author puts in there, 'Was this where Jesus and Joseph worked?' Obviously, they wouldn't work on any temple to Zeus, but it will blow your mind!

They had four-story apartment buildings. They paved the streets in the city square with the rough-cut square stone. When you see on the History Channel, and I have a 'beef' with them, because every time they do something on the Bible, they make the people in the New Testament look like they just evolved out of gunnysacks. When you see how sophisticated that was, and you see the buildings that they had, it will really blow your mind as to how advanced they were.

{more current church news: approximately 5 minutes}

Let me read you something just to show you that the more things change, the more they remain the same:

from the Preface of *A Harmony of the Gospels*—1<sup>st</sup> edition 1974.

Immorality and dishonesty have been exposed, even among the once trusted political, economic and religious institutions of this world.

In some nations the exposé of scandalous conduct on high levels have shaken the confidence in governments. The result has been a public demand for a return to morality, ethics and honesty. On an individual level, the result is that more and more people are seeking a deeper meaning to their personal lives.

*and they will because of all the things coming upon them now*

In their search of greater understanding, many have come to realize that there is a missing dimension in their lives and that missing dimension is the spiritual need that cries out to be filled.

1974—*the more that things change, the more they remain the same! You cannot solve spiritual problems with political solutions!* It won't work!

{more current church news: approximately 3 minutes}

Let's look at one Scripture that we've gone over many, many times. The book of Revelation becomes more understandable the further we go down the road toward the end. This being the last book of the Bible also tells us what's going to happen at the end.

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, **who is deceiving the whole world...**" This is a present tense participle in the Greek, meaning *active, ongoing deceiving of the world!*

I think that the election of 2008 we saw this more than any other election. Such open lying an deception that they're not afraid to tell bald-faced lies when everybody knows the truth. Satan has been busy using many different helpers:

- governments
- education
- religion

***This filters down to everything deceiving the whole world!***

How is Satan doing it? *This will also help answer:* Why did God do what He did? We'll go back and see what God commanded Saul and so forth.

Ephesians 2:1: "Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins." *We have two categories of people who live in the world:*

1. those who are called who have received God's Holy Spirit and are called to rule and reign with Christ and receive eternal life.
2. the living dead

They are alive in the flesh, but are all dead in their sins and trespasses! All people carry the law of sin and death in them, so therefore, all have 'sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

You will recall that in Exo. 14 God said that He would have 'war with Amalek in every generation' because of what he did to the straggling

children of Israel as they were coming out of Egypt. They slaughtered the weak and so forth. Even though they did what they did, and the children of Israel were able to beat them back, God said that He would have 'war with Amalek in every generation.' So, here's one of the generations. This is what the young people wanted to know: Why does God do it?

1-Samuel 15:1: "And Samuel said to Saul, 'The LORD sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel. And now listen to the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, "**I will punish Amalek** for *that* which he did to Israel, how he set against him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now, **go and strike Amalek**, and completely destroy all that they have, and **do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.**"'" (vs 1-3).

So, the question is why did God order that? Especially infants and suckling? If He killed all the men, how would the children be raised? *If He killed all the men and women, then you have a greater problem!* Then you have a population coming along that will breed a lot of hatred and so forth toward the Israelites.

The answer is *all of them, whether young or old*, are part of the living dead, as well as the Israelites, because most of them weren't called either. God also punished His own people!

There is a second resurrection, and those people will be resurrected to second physical life after the Millennium. Will this not be a better environment for them to grow up in, having the blindness removed from their eyes so they will have an opportunity for salvation? Even though God used the children of Israel to do these things, He did not offer salvation to the children of Israel.

Eph. 2:1 is the answer: *they are all dead in their sins and trespasses!*

Really, when you understand it, the only difference in a full grown human being and a newly conceived life in the womb is growth! So, rather than let them live the way they were living, God took away all their lives and He will resurrect them. *That's God's judgment!* It all goes back to Adam and Eve!

Now let's read about the second category, which is *us*. God has to intervene in our lives and call us.

Ephesians 2:2: "In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of

disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world. But God, Who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us... [we need to understand that] ...even when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made *us* alive together with Christ. (*For you have been saved by grace.*)" (vs 2-5).

We are the called, the ones who are the living *living*, ***because we will qualify for the first resurrection!*** The living dead are the ones who will die and wait for the second resurrection regardless of the circumstances on how they died, or regardless of the age in which they died.

The reason is because God has something greater for those who are going to be in the first resurrection. Let me show you how this deception continues, because we have a convergence of things in America that have been born out by the election of 2008.

When the Protestants attempted to keep the commandments of God—howbeit ignoring Sabbath and keeping Sunday—there was a morality in the land. People were taught that there is a God and he does rule over everything and here are the commandments you are to keep. There was a greater sense of morality, personal responsibility and being able to have a good degree of understanding and common sense.

Now, through the process of time, we find that:

- through education
- through deterioration of morals
- through deterioration of religious teaching from the Bible
- through deterioration in government
- through the onslaught of atheism and agnosticism

Now we come to a generation, which is this generation...

Article: *America's Disturbing New Moral Code* by Joseph Farah (wnd.com) 2008

Which ties in with this great deception and 'the prince of the power of the air.'

Is morality just a matter of opinion?

That's what everybody thinks today, 'that's what you believe, that's your opinion.'

Is there an actual absolute standard of right and wrong?

Is a new moral code developing in America today based on temporary cultural assumptions?

Those are among the most important questions Americans can ask themselves.

The reason is that the older the population are generally the most moral in their values. But guess what's happening? *The generation of veterans of WWII are dying at the rate of 1500 a day!*

Guess what is also happening? *Those who are graduated out of high schools and colleges are all of those who have been trained in socialism and no moral standards!* They are brought up believing that sex with anyone or any thing is perfectly acceptable. Furthermore, 'we have a right to be taken care of by the government'

Much more important is, for instance, who should be the next President of the United States? A month ago Barna Group released the findings of research that clearly shows that Americans are re-defining what is meant to do the right thing in their lives.

Mike Huckabee has a book called *Do the Right Thing*. If you don't have an absolute standard of what is right and wrong, what is good and evil, how can you do the right thing? What ultimately happens? *Everyone does what is right in his own eyes!*

The pollsters asked adults whether in the previous week they had viewed pornography, used profanity in public, gambled, gossiped, engaged in sexual intercourse with someone to whom they were not married, retaliated against someone, got drunk or lied.

The majority of respondents acknowledged engaging in at least one of these eight behaviors.

*That was sort of being 'fudgingly' honest, because they probably lied on a daily basis!*

Specifically, 28% admitted to using profanity in public; 20% admitted to gambling, including the purchase of lottery tickets; 19% admitted to intentional exposure to pornographic images; 12% admitted to getting drunk; 11% admitted that they lied; 9% said they had sexual intercourse with someone to whom they were not married; 8% had they retaliated against someone.

While only 1% of married adults acknowledged having sex with someone other than their spouses, 21% of single adults that they had sex with someone in the previous week.

In fact, reported the Barna Group, those younger than 25 were more than twice as likely to engage in these activities.

*What you are going to see is an increasingly more Sodom and Gomorrah type society and morals!*

Their choice made even the baby-boomers—never regarded as a paragon of traditional morality look like moral pillars in comparison, the study concluded, amount the people younger than 25:

64% admitted using profanity in public; 30% engaged in sex outside of marriage; 37% lied; 26% gossiped; 33% use pornography; 12% engaged in acts of retaliation.

*Here's something interesting:*

Self-described liberals were five times more likely than those who described themselves as conservative to participate in immoral sex.

What are they taught in the schools? *Here in California, and other states, they have a homosexual program that starts in kindergarten that goes all the way through grade 12!* The way you destroy the mind of young people is to get them engaged in sex and thinking on sex, and they will not study, they will not improve their lives, because their minds are consumed in flaming passion with how to engage in sex. After all, it's approved by the school.

George Barna who directed this study, and who has been surveying national trends and morality for more than 25 years, said the results were significant.

We are witnessing the developing and acceptance of a new moral code in America, and also, a new government to go along with it.

Rev. 11 talks more than just about the city of Jerusalem. It talks about the whole moral set and religious set of the world, and also the governmental set.

Revelation 11:8—talking of the two witnesses: "And their bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt..."

Here in California they passed the constitutional amendment that marriage should only be defined between man and woman, but now there's a new term for the opposition, called *the homosexual mafia!* The lawless ones rioting in the streets and demanding that the Supreme Court of California rule on the Constitutionality of the amendment that the people approved.

They were the ones who voted that homosexual marriage should be allowed. Rather than understanding what the Bible says, that God created man and woman for a great purpose and that in bringing children into the world they're also participating in God's creating plan.

*No!* They say that sex is something you do because it feels good, with anyone you want to, because that's the law of the land.

The results were significant because we are witnessing the development and acceptance of a new moral code in America.

Those younger than 25 have had little exposure to traditional moral teachings and limited accountability for their behavior.

Isn't that true? Did we have an eight-year-old shoot his father and uncle.

The moral code began to disintegrate when the generation before them—the baby boomers—pushed the limits that had been challenged by their parents, the baby boomers.

The result is that without much fanfare or visible leadership, the U.S. has created a moral system based on convenience, feeling and selfishness.

Another word is *narcissism!* You're only concerned with what *you* think, what *you* want, with how *you* feel, and what *you* are going to do in life. You don't care about what your parents think. You don't care about what other people think. You're going to go do what you want to do, and 'the devil take the hindmost' and yes, the devil will take the hindmost.

It may be an understatement, but this trend does not bode well for America's future. Once there was a widely accepted moral code in America, it was the Bible!

I might mention that the very first order for the Bible that we got out of *The Washington Times* advertisement was from Mechanicsville, PA., where those 'bitter people cling to their religion and their guns.'

That doesn't mean the people don't violate the code, they always did, but not with the ease and regularity we are witnessing today, especially with those who have little or no grounding in the Scriptures.

Mr. Barna has more sobering words about his findings, what they portend for the future: "The consistent deterioration of the Bible as a source of moral truth has led to a nation where people have become independent judges of right and wrong, basing their choices on feelings and circumstances."

It's not likely that America will return to a more traditional moral code until the nation experiences significant pain from moral choices.

We have crossed the threshold. The evidence of that moral deterioration has been the financial collapse of the economic system (2008). What that did is cut down on gambling, because there's not as much money. It has cut down on drinking, and it will cut down on illicit sex. But it isn't going to convert the people, that's only a temporary drawback.

Are you feeling the pain, yet? It is time to take another look at what we believe and how we act. Are you ready to reconsider the value of the moral code handed down on Mt. Sinai?

Well, we have an answer!

(go to the next track)

The truth is, and God would honor it, if they would teach the Ten Commandments in the schools you would teach the children how to act; what is right and what is wrong. Guess what? *That would reduce the need for all the policemen, all the extra laws*, because when you end up with a lawless society you need more police to enforce the law against the lawless people. That's why we've developed a police force now that are semi-military.

What is the solution to this deteriorating morality? *God is going to have to continue dealing with the nation and the people, and we've got to do our part.* My prayer is for all the Church of God, that they need to get up and get going and do their part as well.

Our part will be Church at Home {[churchathome.org](http://churchathome.org)} What going to happen is that those people who believe in Biblical morals will more and more be in their homes, because they can't go out and participate in all the things in this society.

- Why is Protestantism collapsing?

- What are the moral values of this nation deteriorating?
- Where are we headed as a nation and individually?

{news about Church at Home and advertisements: approximately 3 minutes}

### **Question: Ezekiel 33**

This is where a lot of people find 'Ezekiel's watchman on the wall.' How many ministries—Protestants and Churches of God—have said they're doing the work of 'Ezekiel's watchman on the wall.' If that's the case there's a lot of them on the wall, and it may be a little crowded.

- How do we apply it today?
- Do we presume to appoint ourselves in Ezekiel's place?
- Is this just specifically for Ezekiel's time?

***or***

- Are there principles that we can learn for our day that we need to do, which God requires us to do?

Ezekiel 33:1: "And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them, "When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and set him for their watchman; if, when he sees the sword come upon the land, he blows the ram's horn and warns the people, Then whoever hears the sound of the ram's horn and does not take warning, if the sword does come and take him away, his blood shall be on his own head. He heard the sound of the ram's horn and did not take warning. His blood shall be on himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have delivered his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming, and does not blow the ram's horn and the people are not warned; if the sword comes and takes *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity. But I will require his blood at **the watchman's hand**.'" (vs 1-6).

Notice that he didn't say *at Ezekiel's hand*'; he said *the watchman's hand*! So, even though God set Ezekiel as a watchman, it can apply to more than just Ezekiel alone. That doesn't mean that we presume to set ourselves in Ezekiel's shoes, because we'll see what some of the commands of God for Ezekiel to do were when he first began his prophetic warning to the children of Israel.

Verse 8: "When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked one, you shall surely die...'"

We're coming to a point that this needs to be given in the world today, and right here in America. What do we have right here that we read? *An article written by a man not in the Church, but 'hit the nail right on the head' about the morality must come from the Bible! That is a warning!* But his name is Joseph Farah, not 'Ezekiel's watchman on the wall.' But *it's still a warning!*

If someone hears it or reads it, they've had a warning! If you're standing on a curb and you're ready to take a step off the curb, and there's a speeding truck you're not seeing, and someone yells, 'Watch out!' You hear the warning and step back, you've saved your life. If you don't hear it and step in front of the on-coming car, you've lost your life!

How God is going to weigh all of this in a way that He judges nations and individuals, we'll just have to wait and see.

"...if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked one shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at your hand" (v 8). *So, there is a responsibility!*

Verse 9: "But, if you warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul. And you, son of man, speak to the house of Israel. Thus *shall* you speak, saying, 'When our transgressions and our sins *are* on us, and we are wasting away in them, how then shall we live?'" (vs 9-10).

We have to adjust that as we get down closer to the Tribulation. But let's also understand that when you come to the principle of how this applies in the way that God works, what we're talking about is the way that God works in many different circumstances:

- whether it be to an individual
- whether it be to a nation
- whether it be to a group

But the ultimate fulfillment of this will be Rev. 7 and the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude. Here you have all of those who go through the Tribulation and the sword comes and everything happens, what do they do? *They repent and turn to God! God spares them!*

Who is going to do all of that warning? *God doesn't tell us!* But nevertheless, there are going to be all of those signs, wonders, wars, killing and slaughtering that will take place, and people will begin to return to God. They're going to find out that their little idols, statues, and their atheism and agnosticism is going to disappear. Just like the old

saying: *In a foxhole with shooting bullets, there are no atheists.*

Verse 11: "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no delight in the death of the wicked, except that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?'"

Yes, it is true that the House Israel is still here today. They are going to face the sword, famine and pestilence, and all of those things are going to come. They do need to be warned! But I think they need to be warned by many, many people, not just one man standing up and trying to do it all himself, and take all the credit and say, 'I'm Ezekiel's watchman on the wall.'

Where was Ezekiel? *We'll find out later that he was in a slave-camp, a captivity-camp by the River Kebar! He was right there with them.*

Verse 12: "Therefore, son of man, say to the children of your people, 'The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it in the day he turns from his wickedness....'"

Just make two very important notations on repentance:

1. Ahab—God told Elijah to go down and tell Ahab that he's the most wicked, evil person your life and the dogs are going to lick up the blood of you and Jezebel!

Elijah went down there and told Ahab what was going to happen. What did Ahab do? *He repented!* So, Elijah is on his way back home and the Word of the Lord came to Elijah again and said, 'Go back to Ahab and see *My servant Ahab* how he's walking tenderly.' He put on sackcloth and ashes, so God even gave Ahab a space of time, but it still happened. The end came the way that God said.

2. Likewise we have a lot of people who have lived sinful lives whom God is going to call, and they're going to repent because they're so terribly miserable. There has to be some way for them to find contact with God. It's not going to be through one church or one organization, or one man; *it's going to be through many!* That ought to be our constant prayer.

- 1) God, how is this going to be done?
- 2) God, what do You want us to do?
- 3) God, help us as Your people who know the Truth!

***We do have a responsibility!***

Verse 13: "When I shall say to the righteous *that* he shall surely live; if he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he has committed, he shall die for it." *That is IF* he doesn't repent.

Verse 15: "***If*** the wicked restores back the pledge, gives back again what he had robbed, walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, then he shall surely live; he shall not die."

Verse 14—because he does: "...that which is lawful and right."

Verse 16: "None of his sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live."

Here is the sin of Israel, and 'the chickens are coming home to roost!' We are seeing Protestantism disintegrate in front of our eyes because of the mega churches, which have to water down the Gospel. That's why we are seeing the *new kind* of Protestantism with men like Rick Warren, David Land, Joel Osteen and host of other ones who are on the religious channels.

That's why I think that our part will not only be the website that we have, not only the books, publications and Bibles that we have, but it will be Church at Home (**churchathome.org**).

You have to reach new people some way. We can help those who have been in the Church of God and have been drawn through and quartered and all the different things that have happened to them. They have to get their heart, mind and spiritual lives readjusted again. We can help them, as well, and we can do this without a great expenditure of money.

How does that reconcile getting together on the Sabbath? Church at Home will be a start; everything else will lead them down the path of other things, and we are going to refer them to **truthofgod.org** website where they will have all the information that they will need.

We will present to them different things. For example: I was explaining to you about a man whom I believe is a 'closet' Sabbath-keeper. He was saying, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' *Fertile ground!* If we present it in the right way, which we can, I think there will be many more people open to understanding about the Sabbath, and that's the first step with reconciling with God.

Church at Home will be more of a public outreach to bring people to the knowledge of the Truth, and then help them along step-by-step. We will have calls for repentance:

- What is your life like?
- What is your family like?
- Have you been involved in drugs and illicit sex?
- How do you overcome that?
- How do you change your life?
- Where is God?
- How is God going to work in your life?

All of the things we can put on that website, and we don't have to go out and purchase expensive time on radio, television or any of those things. We can also maybe have some online advertising to go along with it. Who knows what will happen.

We have to do like the Bible says, 'Cast your bread upon the water and it will come back to you after many days.' That will be our part. Whatever any of the other Churches of God do, or whomever God raises up to do whatever He wants them to do, that will be their part.

- What about the time when meetings will be prohibited? *We'll be the underground Church at Home!*
- What do they do in China? *They have millions of house churches!*

If our government becomes more communistic and more heavy-bearing socialism, that's maybe where the Church is going to go. But it's not going to be blotted out. Almost every television program having to do with religion, must meet the approval of the station and the owners for their political and religious beliefs.

So, you're never going to get on Trinity Broadcasting Network—radio or television—if you don't believe in the trinity. You're never going to get on there if you point out the errors of all the ministers and their preachings and teachings. As long as there's still freedom of speech on the Internet, we need to go for it the best way we can. We will do some of the things that are here, but not proclaim ourselves to be 'Ezekiel's watchman on the wall.'

Verse 17—here's what's happened to Protestantism: "Yet, the children of your people say, 'The way of the LORD is not fair.' But as for them, it is their way that is not fair"—*because they want to add their ways and then only select what they approve of what they find in the Bible!*

That's why the book of Job is so hard to understand. As you read through the arguments of the three friends, and Job's arguments, there's a lot of truth in what they say. Then you ask: How can these men be wrong? *Analyze it a little more carefully and understand that they're speaking partly truth, partly opinion and partly error!* Then separate it out that way. Then you will see why Job was wrong, why his three friends were wrong, and why Elihu was right.

If someone is going to truly be 'Ezekiel's watchman on the wall' or in the prison camp, he's going to have to do something every similar to what Ezekiel was asked to do. He's going to have to be a sign and wonder to the people.

Ezekiel 3:1: "And He said to me, 'Son of man, eat what you find. Eat this scroll, and go speak to the house of Israel.'" Very similar to what we find in Rev. 10 about the 'little book.'

Verse 2: "So, I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, 'Son of man, cause your belly to eat, and fill your belly with this scroll that I give you.' Then I ate it; and in my mouth it was like honey for sweetness. And He said to me, 'Son of man, go! Go up to the house of Israel and speak to them with My words'" (vs 2-4).

What did Jesus tell the apostles in Matt. 28? *Go into all the world!* So, we have a responsibility in the same way. God doesn't want us to take the Word of God and just sit on it, wrap it up in a napkin and wait for the return of Christ. We might find ourselves like the lazy servant who buried it.

Verse 5: "For you *are* not sent to a people of a strange speech and of a difficult language, *but* to the house of Israel; not to many people of a strange speech and of a difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, **if I had sent you to them, they would have hearkened to you.** But the house of **Israel will not be willing to hearken to you**, for they will not be willing to hearken to Me..." (vs 5-7).

- **Hearken** means much more than just listening. It means that **you hear and you do!**
- **Listen** means *you hear the words*. Like you can have music in the background, you can listen to it, but it doesn't affect you that you know of!

'My opinion is....' Or someone else will pipe up and say, 'Well, my opinion is....' *That's what we have here!*

"...for they will not be willing to hearken to

Me; for all the house of Israel *are* of a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces and your forehead strong against their foreheads. I have made your forehead as an adamant stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or dismayed by their faces, for they *are* a rebellious house.' And He said to me, 'Son of man, receive all My words which I shall speak to you. Receive them to your heart, and hear with your ears. And go! Go to those of the captivity, to the children of your people, and speak to them, and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD;' whether they will hear or whether they will forbear'" (vs 7-11).

That was Ezekiel's mission. After he got there, what did he have to do? *He had to walk naked bound in cords, as if he was in captivity!* Then he had to be assigned to the house of Israel and lay on his left side 390 days. I imagine that was 390 days where during a specified time of the day he would lay there to bear the sins of the children of Israel.

Then after he was done with that, he had to lay 40 days for the sins of the house of Judah. All during that time he had to make special bread and eat it. The original instructions were that you take all of these grains and mix it with human dung. Then Ezekiel was told to eat it. And he said, 'Ah, Lord God, I've never had anything unclean enter my mouth!' God said, 'Okay, cow dung!'

My answer to someone who wants to be 'Ezekiel's watchman on the wall,' if you do these things, then I will agree with you that you are 'Ezekiel's watchman on the wall.' But if you don't, then you can take *in principle* what God says, and go preach and do what God tells you to do. How the people respond is up to them!

The reason that I bring this up is that I want you all to think about and pray about it, and because there has been a number of people that have been kind of like the 'prodigal son,' who got his inheritance, went out and wasted it and ended up having to serve someone who was a hog rancher and he had to feed the swine. While he was there hungry and starving, and not even able to eat the feed that was going to the swine, *he came to himself!*

There are going to be a lot of people who have been connected with the Church of God that we are going to see *are coming to themselves* in addition to brand new people who through circumstances in their lives are coming to themselves and repenting, too.

Now, this is not beat up Laodicean time; we already have enough stripes with the rod, 40 times save one, for being Laodiceans.

Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (vs 14-16).

That's obviously being put away from the Church, because the Church is the Body of Christ. If He spews out of His mouth, they're coming out of His Body! I've thought about this many times, when you ask:

- What happened to all the 140,000 that were associated with the large Church of God we have known for years?
- Where did they go?
- What happened to them?
- Did this happen to some of them?

Let's notice what the attitude was, and what the problem was, v 17: "For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.'" *That's similar to what we read in Ezek. 33!*

Verse 18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich; and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see.... [this is a process of repentance] ...As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent" (vs 18-19).

Verse 20—This question has been asked of me several times by those who have been in the Church years ago, and have through the process of their lives and the difficulties they have gone through, come back to see that they need to get right with God.

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock...." What does this tell us? After they have been spewed out of the mouth, Christ has not given up on them, because He's knocking. I would have to assume that this is *the door of their mind!* I've had many people say to me, who have come back out of those circumstances, that even though they were living lives that they knew they should not be living, and knew that they weren't right with God, that they never forgot. It was with them all the time.

**"...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (v 20).**

The reason I bring this up is because I have had a good number of people ask, 'Should I be re-baptized, considering how I lived and what I did with the knowledge of God, and so forth?' May answer has been:

You spend time in prayer and fasting, and ask God to show you if you still have God's Holy Spirit or not! Or whether you just a little bit of it, or whether you never really had God's Spirit in the first place, but were drawn to the Church because of all of the physical benefits, the people and things like this?

We have two categories here:

- 1) those who came and were baptized but never converted
- 2) those who came, were baptized and converted, but drifted away and God brought them back

Those people who were converted probably never really lost the Spirit of God, but always had the Spirit of God there to prick their conscience. *I don't think those people need to be re-baptized!*

The others who were never converted need to be baptized their baptism before was only getting wet and agreeing with the organization. A lot of you have been in contact with a lot of different brethren who fit into those two categories, and your input in dealing with them will help us with dealing with them in the future, too.

### **Comments & Questions:**

If they were truly baptized once, did receive the Holy Spirit and have drifted away, then as we have mentioned with the Passover, that the renewing of your baptismal covenant with God, and provided there's sufficient repentance that they should renew their relationship with God and when the Passover comes around that helps kindle the Holy Spirit with them. So, that answers part of it.

### **Question on the baptism of John; Acts 19**

I think in principle, I think what you're saying about the baptism of John can have some validity, but I do not believe that in this day that people were baptized under the baptism of John. However, the baptism of John, though it was a baptism unto repentance... Let's see what Paul did:

Acts 19:1: "Now, it came to pass *that* while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the upper parts *and* came to Ephesus; and when he found certain disciples, he said to them, 'Did you

receive *the* Holy Spirit after you believed?' And they said to him, 'We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit.' Then he said to them, 'Unto what then were you baptized?' And they said, 'Unto the baptism of John.' And Paul said, 'John truly baptized *with* a baptism unto repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him Who was coming after him—that is, in Jesus, the Christ.' And after hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Now, when Paul laid *his* hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with *other* languages and prophesied" (vs 1-6).

***There we have a Biblical example of re-baptism!*** We can take the principle from this, because there weren't baptisms unto John's baptism, but there were baptisms kind of like this: *you've been attending the Church for a good number of years, don't you think it's time you get baptized?* Take them out and baptize them and never really go through:

- Do you know what sin is?
- Have you repented of sin?
- What has your life been?
- Do you understand about this and the covenant of baptism?

There may be a good number of people out there that God would put in the category of Laodiceans that are not against Him, but not wholly for Him. Those people would have to be re-baptized again.

You don't want to get into who baptized you. We don't know if this minister was converted or not, so we don't know if you received the Holy Spirit or not. You can't go back and second-guess that. God is going to make the judgment on giving the Holy Spirit whether the individual has repented to God Himself. That has to be the question, and that's why Paul ask, 'Have you received the Holy Spirit?'

Therefore, it would have to come back to the person who finds himself in the circumstance saying, 'I don't know if I've received the Holy Spirit or not; what should I do?'

You need to really appeal to God whether you received the Holy Spirit of God or not. Or whether it is now that you are repenting and you still have the Holy Spirit of God, but now you have to stir it up like Paul said; that's a different case.

You're right when you say, 'Who baptized you?' *Oh well, he left the Church, so therefore your baptism is not valid! You can't do that either,* because that would be a never-ending chain!

Same thing with Passover, a lot of people say they are not worthy of taking the Passover. The truth is the only worthiness we have is through Christ. It's not because of our own works and things that we do. ***The fact that you understand that you still have a long way to go and you still have sins to overcome is proof that you need to take the Passover so you can renew the covenant with Christ and go forward from there!***

That would also help answer the question, which is a basic question: **Does the individual have the Holy Spirit of God or not?**

*Ultimately, it gets down to your individual choices and repentance to God, and then baptism is a service that God requires those who are baptizing for the repentant sinner.*

**Concerning Divorce and Remarriage:** There are so many different aspects in divorce/remarriage, personal morality and all of those things. The best that can be given are some guidelines and then each situation has to be dealt with on an individual basis.

**Comment:** Baptism is a covenant, ***an irrevocable covenant***, not a vow in the sense of a vow. It is stronger than a vow, it is a covenant.

**Comment:** Many Protestants are devout and sincere, and they are trying to improve their lives and they get baptized, but they don't know anything about keeping the commandments of God or any of those things. So, we generally, if God begins dealing with them and they come to the knowledge of repentance, ***we baptize them again unto a true baptism!***

**Comment/Question:** Regardless of any organization or minister, is the baptism valid before God, in God's eyes? The only way to answer that is for the person in prayer and fasting to beseech God and ask Him to reveal whether he/she has the Holy Spirit or not.

Here's a very important Scripture concerning that, because the ultimate question about baptism or re-baptism, after having been baptized once is: Did you receive the Holy Spirit of God, regardless of who did it?

2-Corinthians 13:5: "**Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves. Don't you of your own selves know that Jesus Christ is in you?** Otherwise, you are reprobates." *That shows that it has to be the individual questioning his baptism has to prove it himself!*

Does it require a minister? *Ananias baptized*

*Paul and it doesn't say that he was a minister! But you have to know about the Word of God, and know what needs to be.*

What if you're baptized by those who are trinitarians, does that invalidate it? *Well, it depends on what else comes along with it!*

I can tell you that I've met Seventh Day Adventists who the only thing you can conclude is that they are converted, and I've met some that the only thing you can conclude is that they're not converted. Again, you have to go by the individual judgment!

Is baptism just an outward show? *No! It's a personal covenant that you're making and it depends upon your heart and repentance!* Also, what we're seeing is that if you put all of the ingredients together it requires everything that we have talked about here.

*I appreciate all your input!*

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 12:9
- 2) Ephesians 2:1
- 3) 1 Samuel 15:1-3
- 4) Ephesians 2:2-5
- 5) Revelation 11:8
- 6) Ezekiel 33:1-6, 8-13, 15, 14, 16-17
- 7) Ezekiel 3:1-11
- 8) Revelation 3:14-20
- 9) Acts 19:1-6
- 10) 2 Corinthians 13:5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 14
- Revelation 7, 10
- Matthew 28

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Jesus and the Forgotten City: New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey
- *Do the Right Thing* by Mike Huckabee

Article: *America's Disturbing New Moral Code* by Joseph Farah (wnd.com)

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