



Royal Vision

May-June 2005

PENTECOST

Your Body's
Normal Condition

Mr. Armstrong's Training
In Physical Health

PENTECOST and the Purpose of Our Calling

ROYAL VISION

MAY-JUNE 2005 • VOLUME 8, NUMBER 3



About the cover Barley in the field. A sheaf of barley, representing Jesus Christ, was waved by the high priest every year in Israel. (Dreamstime)

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FROM THE EDITOR GERALD FLURRY

The Purpose of Our Calling

SPRING 2005 IS BUDDING WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR the Philadelphia Church of God. The most prominent sign of growth is the Church's new Hall of Administration, currently under construction at the Church's headquarters on the Imperial College campus in north Edmond, Oklahoma. The two-story building will serve as the main facility for PCG editorial, news bureau, accounting and other departments. Construction on the hall began in late 2004 and is scheduled to finish in the latter part of 2005.

Even as our building program moves forward, God works hard to keep our priorities straight. We must never forget the lesson of the Laodicean failure.

"Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host [Christ], and by him the daily... was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down" (Daniel 8:11). NOTICE THIS: THE FIRST MAJOR SIN OF THE LAODICEANS WAS THE WORK BEING DESTROYED! This gets to the heart of why the Laodiceans failed.

In 1988, Joseph Tkach Sr. personally told me that the main focus of the Worldwide Church of God's work was changed to

Ambassador College. Worldwide Church of God leaders deceived themselves into thinking that's what God wanted them to do, but that idea was right out of the mind of the devil! It meant the destruction of the work! The truth is, when the work was destroyed, the college was *already dead*—they just didn't know it! The college was there to do God's work. When the work goes, everything else goes. It's just a matter of time.

Mr. Tkach was losing his war with Satan when he thought he was serving God. But deep down, he had to know something was wrong.

What is the first major sin? Destroying God's *work* of preaching the gospel around the world. That is always the commission of God's Church.

In this "last end" we have that same commission, but the *emphasis* has changed. We are commanded to *prophesy again* as Herbert W. Armstrong did (Revelation 10:11). The emphasis is on the warning—not the gospel, as it was with Mr. Armstrong. That is because time is so short and world events are so horrifying. We still preach the gospel to the world, but we emphasize



SIGN OF GROWTH Construction of the new Hall of Administration is well under way. An exciting step in finishing God's final warning work.

the warning that leads to the good news. The warning still points to the return of Jesus Christ—the good news of the coming Kingdom of God (or the gospel). This vision of Daniel 8:9-27 ends with the return of Christ.

This “last end” demands that we emphasize the warning. Mankind is about to experience the worst suffering ever. Like a good meteorologist, we must warn about the coming of the “perfect storm.” We are just giving “meat in due season,” and yet we also tell them about the good news (gospel) beyond the storm.

Still, THIS WORLD MUST BE GIVEN THE MOST INTENSE WARNING EVER! Our warning must equal the unparalleled severity of the coming storm.

AS I UNDERSTAND IT, GOD WANTS US TO GIVE THE STRONGEST WARNING MAN HAS EVER HEARD!

So why does Satan try to destroy the work first and foremost? The *only* reason we have been called “out of season” is to do God’s work. Otherwise we would be called when the rest of the world is.

In a sense, God has put us in jeopardy by calling us today. Why? To do the work—declare His message.

Why are we in God’s true Church today? For one magnificent reason: to do God’s work. I repeat: TO DO GOD’S WORK. We must prophesy again as no people have ever prophesied for God. We must deliver God’s message.

This is at the very heart of why 95 percent of God’s people have failed Him today! That is what it means to be Laodicean or lukewarm. They want to do their own work—not God’s work.

Now God has led us, through the PCG, to “raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen” (Amos 9:11). That reveals a lot about the Philadelphia spirit! The lukewarm saints have allowed God’s tabernacle to crumble.

The *place* of God’s sanctuary was cast down. *The International Critical Commentary* says, “The word for *place* is rare, implying a construction.” Yes, it is rare: It’s talking about the Ambassador Auditorium. It has already been destroyed spiritually, and I would expect that it will be destroyed *physically* as well.

The work was resurrected. But “the *place* of his [God’s] sanctuary was cast down.” And it remains cast down as a monument to the Laodiceans’ spectacular failure!

The fallen house of God is a reminder to the Philadelphia Church of God that the place or facilities God gives will fall into ruin if we don’t do His work!

We must never forget why God gives us a place of His sanctuary. *Always* it is there to do the work.

If the *place* is no longer used for that purpose, it and everything else falls into ruin.

The priority in Daniel 8 is THE WORK. When Satan destroyed that, he knew everything was destroyed. IF YOU DON’T DO THE WORK, YOU’LL DIE AS A CHURCH. The work identifies the Church (Revelation 3:7-8). You, individually, must put your heart into the work, or you will die spiritually!

Christ’s whole life revolved around FINISHING God’s work (John 4:34). The key word is *finish*. That is where we must always focus. If we finish the work we’ll endure to the end and be in God’s Kingdom. Christ is the Head of our work today. We must have the same passion Christ had. He declared the Father and the Family! We must follow Him and never, ever follow a man!

Look how quickly the leaders in Pasadena got rid of *Mystery of the Ages* after Mr. Armstrong died! They lost their commission and everything fell apart. Joe Tkach Jr. said that *Mystery of the Ages* was riddled with errors—but in fact, it was critical to the work! One evangelist (who died recently) said it was essential to God’s work; shortly after that, his boss said it was “riddled with errors,” and that man said, “Yes sir!” We must have more spiritual depth and courage than that!

“And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered” (Daniel 8:12). *Transgression* means they had been given God’s law and then knowingly broke it. They were not sinning in ignorance. That is why their eternal lives are at stake!

We saw them transgressing and casting the truth to the ground, and practicing and prospering in that evil work.

Most of the WCG evangelists said, *If that’s what they’re saying at headquarters, that’s what we must do.* They transgressed—they knowingly sinned—and they led 95 percent of the members

away from God.

It’s dizzying to realize that when they were told to do the OPPOSITE of what they were doing ALL THEIR LIVES, these ministers said *yes sir!* Something was terribly wrong with their religion. One of those men who was so supportive of *Mystery of the Ages* actually fought us in court when we tried to print it.

Mr. Armstrong actually said *we can measure our righteousness by how much our heart is in the work.* The work is everything! It’s not a matter of saying the right thing, it’s a matter of looking to the Head and following His direction in what He leads us to do. We must always keep God in the picture!

Let’s ensure we keep our hearts in finishing God’s work, which is our only purpose. We are not in the college business—we are here to do a work. If Imperial College doesn’t do the work, it is going to die. The work is the purpose for the Church! If we don’t do that work, we won’t be in God’s Family. ❖

This world must be given the most intense warning ever! Our warning must equal the unparalleled severity of the coming storm.



The Doctrine of Baptisms

■ A survey of one of the Church's fundamental doctrines.

By Wik Heerma and Max Rumler

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG OFTEN said the Bible was written primarily for the end time—for us today. With this end-time focus, the Apostle Paul warned that when God's people ought to have been ready to teach the basic doctrines and principles, some of them had "need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12).

He continued, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of *the doctrine of baptisms*, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and

of eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:1-3, 11).

One of the foundational doctrines referred to by Paul was the doctrine of baptisms—*plural*. The Bible speaks of three baptisms: the baptism with water, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and the baptism with fire (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16). John said that he baptized with water, not with the Spirit or with fire. What is the difference in being baptized with water, the Spirit or fire? In order to teach the truth about the different baptisms, we need to know what they are and fully understand their significance.

What was the purpose of John's baptism with water? How was it different from the baptism of Jesus Christ? How did John know who he was to baptize? Was he the first to baptize? Why did Jesus authorize His disciples to baptize? Why were those baptized by John expected to be re-bap-

tized in order to receive the Holy Spirit?

As teachers in embryo, we must be grounded in the basic, fundamental doctrines of the Church. How are you progressing as an undergraduate teacher to assist Jesus Christ in the World Tomorrow? Could you provide answers to the questions posed above?

This article will investigate and analyze the doctrine of baptisms.

John the Baptizer

Why did God send John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah? Why did John baptize? What was the message he preached? In order to understand the answers to these questions, we need to consider the society in which John lived.

Prior to the time of John, under the Old Covenant, "Gentiles always could come into the congregation (Church) of

Israel—and many did. Even as they were first leaving Egypt, ‘a mixed multitude went up also with them’ (Exodus 12:38). These were Gentiles” (*Which Day Is The Christian Sabbath?*).

It was through the ritual of circumcision that a Gentile could become a naturalized citizen of the nation of Israel (verses 48-49).

“Always Gentiles could come in and become naturalized citizens of Israel. Thousands did” (ibid.).

At the time of John the Baptist, however, the Jews considered themselves the only covenant people of God. They were conceited and proud of their lineage from Abraham and self-righteous in their application of the literal letter of the law.

It was into such a climate that God commissioned John, when He said: “Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach *the baptism of repentance* for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:2-4).

John was the messenger who preceded the Messiah. He came to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. He was called John the Baptist because he *baptized*. “Baptize” is translated from the Greek word *baptizo*. *Baptizo* means to IMMERSE, to submerge, to plunge into, to put into. John baptized individuals by *immersing*, or *plunging*, them in water. To the Jews of the time, John was doing something very unusual. He was *immersing* people in water—plunging them under the water. Though the Jews failed to grasp it, there was a far deeper meaning in John’s baptizing than there was in a ritualistic washing or the ritual of circumcision.

Circumcision of the Mind

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Old Covenant who made a pact with Abraham and married ancient Israel. Long prior to the time John the Baptist came on the scene, Christ—as Lord of the Old Covenant—had separated from Israel because of her sins. He could not co-exist with her. Under the Old Covenant God did not offer Israel His Holy Spirit. It was a covenant promising temporal, physical, material blessings for obedience to God’s law.

One year after their exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had proven incapable of keeping their part of the covenant they agreed to at Sinai. Moses imposed on the Israelites an *added* law of rituals and sacrifices to remind the Israelites of the seriousness of

sin and the need for a Messiah. This added law was only to be temporary. It was to last only until “the seed should come to whom the promise was made” (Galatians 3:19). These laws foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ and were a “reminder of sin” to teach the people the need for the Messiah—the Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7)—who would pay the penalty of sin for all mankind. After that event, these sacrificial laws were to cease (Hebrews 10:1-12). These ritualistic washings and animal sacrifices were merely physical substitutes to remind Israel of Christ’s sacrifice, which cleanses us of sin. It was also to point toward the coming of the Holy Spirit and its function.

These temporary rituals did not define sin or address the questions of repentance and forgiveness. Only God’s spiritual law can define sin. The rituals were reminders. They did not take away sin or grant forgiveness (Hebrews 10:4). Only the blood of Christ can do that (Hebrews 9:14).

Without Christ’s sacrifice—or the shedding of blood—there can be no forgiveness, but neither can there be any forgiveness without repentance.

John came preaching a new way: one

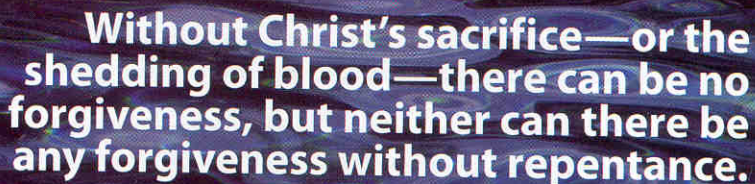
His wife spiritual and eternal life with Him in the Kingdom of God.

After announcing the terms of this New Covenant, Christ purposed to make the most supreme sacrifice of laying down His life to pay the penalty for man’s sins and, at the same time, freeing Him to remarry. The way to enter this new marriage was not through adherence to a law of physical rituals and sacrifices, but through repentance and faith—evidenced through the ordinance of baptism.

It was to prepare individuals for this new covenant that “the *word of God* came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:2-3).

The physical nation of Israel was never promised this Kingdom of heaven at Mount Sinai. But John declared a message that the Kingdom of God was about to be established—it was at hand.

Paul clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 15:19 that if we have hope in this life only, we’re most miserable people. That’s basically the message that John conveyed to the Jews of his day. He told them that all we do, as



Without Christ’s sacrifice—or the shedding of blood—there can be no forgiveness, but neither can there be any forgiveness without repentance.

of faith, repentance and forgiveness. This is the way of the New Covenant, and is based on spiritual laws with spiritual and eternal promises—a covenant where circumcision is of the mind; evidenced through the ordinance of baptism.

Spiritual Seed of Abraham

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1-2). John came to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. Christ was coming with the most astonishing good news message ever! He was coming to announce that the kingdom of heaven would soon be established on Earth as the Kingdom of God.

So passionate was Christ’s love for His wife that He came to Earth, offering her the opportunity to be party to the terms of a new and better marriage covenant. Under this New Covenant, Christ offered

human beings, is live and die.

John made quite an impact. His message was radical, declaring a *new government*. Don’t forget that the Jews were under the Roman oppression at the time and were ready for something revolutionary—and John looked like a revolutionary (Mark 1:6). The Jews of John’s time looked for a revolutionist who could lead them to a new government and do away with the Roman occupation forever.

In Mark 1:2, John is identified as one *preparing the way*. John preached by example as much as he preached by words. He had a radically different lifestyle. He was an example to the people of what repentance meant for the nation—an example of not putting your faith and trust in the *physical*, but totally relying upon God for everything.

In effect, John preached: “You are outsiders to this Kingdom of God that I’m talking about; you are not citizens. And just like the Gentiles in ancient

Israel had to go through circumcision and ritual washings, so you too have to go through the process of repentance and baptism. You need to do something that shows you want to be a part of this new kingdom—this new rulership.”

John gave them a perspective they could understand: that citizenship of the Kingdom of God was like a Gentile being brought into the nation of Israel. In order to receive the inheritance of the Kingdom of God, they first had to prepare themselves, and that required repentance and baptism.

It was necessary for John to determine whether individuals had brought forth “fruits meet for repentance” prior to baptizing them. You can be sure he did some serious baptismal counseling. John was

The people that came to John in Jordan “were baptized of him in Jordan, *confessing their sins*” (Matthew 3:6). They had been counseled and understood what repentance was all about.

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come, to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. 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” (verses 7-10). John really told the Pharisees

that they needed a Savior—and that that Savior was on the scene.

Christ administers not only the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but also the baptism with fire for those who do not believe and repent. The lake of fire is not just for those who are called and fall away. It’s for anyone who ultimately refuses to repent and to obey God (verse 12; Revelation 20:14-15).

The baptism with fire is not an outward sign of receiving the Holy Spirit—a personal sensation when you are baptized, as many believe—but the destruction of the rebellious (Malachi 4:1-3).

The Baptism of Christ

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him” (verse 13). What was this all about? Christ had the Holy Spirit from birth. He had no sin. Why was He baptized? “But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” (verse 14). Jesus Christ was his younger cousin, but John knew that his cousin was different.

Christ had emptied Himself of His divinity, yet had lived without sin. John wondered then why Christ should be baptized. After all, what was there to repent of? Christ, however, was baptized as an example to His disciples. His baptism helped the disciples understand that His sacrifice was about our reconciliation with the Father. Christ was baptized because He would lay aside His mortal life and come up with a new spirit, immortal life. Even though John didn’t fully understand that at that time, he went ahead and baptized Christ.

Thus we see that baptism is *more* than repentance. It is more than the washing away of our past sins. It pictures the burial, the laying aside of our life in the hope of rising in the new life, as one comes out of the water and has hands laid on him or her.

Jesus Christ already had the Holy Spirit from birth without measure, but here Christ submitted to the ordinance of baptism to be seen by human beings (verses 16-17).

John then bore witness of that. Preaching this radical message of repentance and a different kingdom was not popular. John was soon imprisoned and killed.

In John 1:6, we again see that John was sent by God. “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe” (verse 7).

John wasn’t sent to gain a following, or to proselytize. He wasn’t sent to set up the Kingdom of God, but he was sent to be

Repentance is not penance. It means acknowledging that you were wrong, turning from your wrong way, and going in the opposite direction.

given discernment from God to determine the sincerity of people’s repentance. When the ancient Israelites had broken the law, they washed themselves and were clean, as far as they were concerned. Sacrifices had reminded them of sin, but repentance goes much further than that.

To properly repent, one has to not only acknowledge that he has broken God’s law, he also has to turn from sin—from what he *is*—from the nature, or propensity, within him that leads him to sin. One has to make an about-face—go in the opposite direction. As an outward symbol of their understanding that they were outsiders to the Kingdom of God—that they would not simply receive the Kingdom of God because they were the physical offspring of Abraham—these people also needed to be baptized and *through baptism* become spiritual “seed” of Abraham—a concept the Jews of John’s time grappled with.

Repentance Means Change

Repentance is not penance. It means *acknowledging* that you were wrong, turning from your wrong way, and going in the opposite direction. It does not involve giving something up or doing certain things as *compensation* for having gone in the wrong direction. Penance is something that came out of the Roman and Greek worlds and entered the great pagan church.

and Sadducees what he thought of them: *You are hypocrites to think you can simply be dipped just like you would if you’d become ritualistically unclean. You don’t understand repentance. You give the appearance of righteousness, but repentance means much more than just claiming to repent. You need to produce fruits, evidence over time, that you are changing your ways.*

All who claim to repent should be able to show outward fruits of their innermost change. Failure to produce these fruits of repentance could lead to another baptism—with fire.

Baptism With Fire

“I indeed baptize 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 baptize you with the Holy [Spirit], and with fire” (verse 11). Here we see how John’s baptism was different from that of Jesus Christ. John was not called to give the promise of the Holy Spirit. Instead, he was to assist Jesus Christ in having these people understand that they were not a part of the Kingdom of God automatically, that it would take action on their part. John was sent to prepare these people to be able to bear the message of Christ. He had to bring them to a state of mind where they were humble enough to understand that they were mere human beings, full of sin, and

a witness of Christ, that all men through Him might believe. "John bare witness of him [Jesus Christ], and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (verse 15).

John taught that, as well as keeping the law, we need the grace of God—His unmerited pardon—to be saved (verses 16-17), but he did not directly declare the Father. Jesus Christ came to declare the Father (verse 18). John was sent to prepare the minds of people to be receptive to Christ's message.

Immersed Into the Body of Christ

When we read Luke 3:1-6 and really study the context of the scriptures from Isaiah, we see that the focus is on the millennial Kingdom of God. John came to prepare for the Kingdom of God. He didn't simply come to prepare for the person of Jesus but to prepare people for the *message* that Christ would bring.

Through baptism, John taught people that they had to walk in newness of life—pictured by rising out of the baptismal water. Their birth from the loins of Abraham was insufficient.

In the context of what was quoted by John we also read, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (Isaiah 40:9). True understanding of baptism moves us to support the proclamation that God's reign is near because we see that we are the beginning of a process that is going to sweep the Earth!

Repentance has everything to do with government, and there were some people who had an issue, a problem, with government. "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?" (John 1:19-22). These people questioned John's authority. *Why are you baptizing? What is wrong with our instruction to wash? And by whose authority do you do this?*

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I

baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not" (verses 25-26).

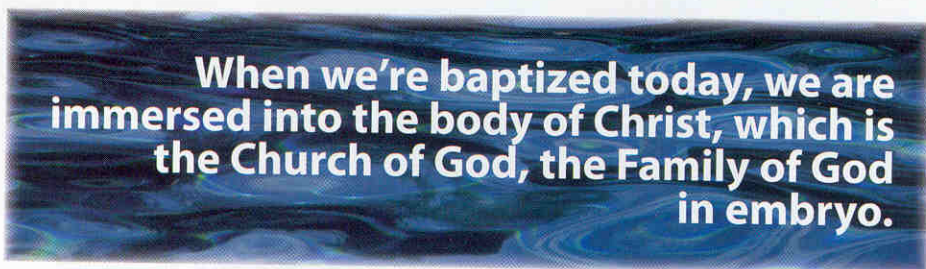
The Pharisees questioned John's authority, but they were really questioning Christ's authority! (Mark 11:27-33).

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Not the sin of Israel—the sin of the **WHOLE WORLD**. That was quite a message, because, again, it focused on the fact that the Jews had no advantage over the Gentiles as far as their salvation and their incredible human potential were concerned. John preached the requirements for all men to be born into the Family of God—to be born again! In verse 31, John admitted that it took

Now John baptized as well as Jesus Christ. Why was that? This was about six months after Christ started His ministry (John 2:13). "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him" (John 3:26).

These men thought John would be upset about this because Jesus Christ called His disciples out of this group of John's followers. But notice John's reply in verses 27-30.

John's job was running to an end, but Christ's job was only starting. So John was not out to gain a following; he was there as a witness. He was there to prepare. And so what, then, was the difference between Christ's baptism and the baptism



God's revelation to see who Jesus Christ was, and then declared the necessity of baptism with the Holy Spirit (verse 33).

When we're baptized today, we are *immersed* into the body of Christ, which is the Church of God, the Family of God in embryo. As part of the same ceremony, through the laying on of the hands of one of God's ministers, we are then baptized with the Holy Spirit—receiving that precious gift which enables us to keep God's holy, spiritual law (Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; 19:1-6).

John declared the Christ who baptized with the Holy Spirit. In John's mind, Jesus was elevated from being his sinless cousin to being the Lamb of God, the One who would take away the sin of the entire Earth. He was ecstatic about this understanding and shared that excitement with his disciples (John 1:34-39).

Andrew, one of John's disciples, continued in that excitement (verses 40-41). John truly did prepare Andrew's mind. How else would he have understood that truth?

John's Baptism Not Sufficient

"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized" (John 3:22-23).

of John?

"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,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee" (John 4:1-3). Christ was training the disciples for the job that they were to do. The Holy Spirit wasn't given until Acts 2. John's baptism was a preliminary; it was not sufficient. That is why in Acts 19 you can see how these people baptized by John's baptism had to be baptized again.

Walking in Newness of Life

Christ's baptism is more than an acknowledgement of sin and repentance; it is an understanding of God's plan, that by the authority and faith of Jesus Christ—not John—we bury our past and leave it under the water. We rise out of the water to live a new life—led by the mind and Spirit of God. Being baptized with Christ's baptism indicates our willingness to believe Him and what He teaches. Those who submitted to John's baptism indicated a *willingness* to listen to Christ, but many fell away after they heard Jesus Christ's message because they didn't really count the cost—they didn't really commit to the new way of life being taught by Jesus Christ. They said, in effect, *No, this is not for me.*

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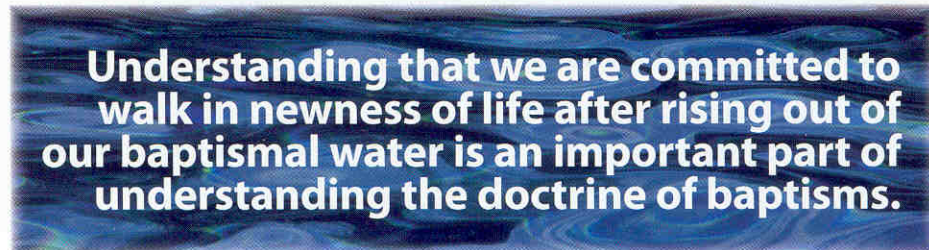
Romans 6:4 tells us that we are to walk in newness of life after we are baptized. Understanding that we are committed to walk in newness of life after rising out of our baptismal water is an important part of understanding the doctrine of baptisms.

“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” (1 Peter 3:21). This is more than a washing away—more than the Old Testament rituals—it’s more than putting away our past sins as symbolized by John’s baptism. It is a clear conscience made free from sin and a resolve to walk in newness of life. Baptism is the ordinance by which we demonstrate our faith: faith in Christ’s death to cover

our sins, and in His life in us—through His resurrection—to lead us in the way of righteousness and away from sin.

Through our knowledge of the doctrine of baptisms, let’s make sure we really

death and burial of our old selves and our new life in Christ, we are the hope of the world. It is through the repentance and baptism of the firstfruits that Christ is going to lead the world to repentance and



understand that this doctrine is not just a message of repentance but also of great hope—hope of a better world and way of life beyond the present. Through the

baptism—to a whole new world and way of life—a world where all, through our teaching and example, will understand the doctrine of baptisms. ❖

CORRECTIONS

The article “Did Christ Really DIE?” in the March-April edition of *Royal Vision* contained some significant errors. The article stated, “Mr. Armstrong wrote, ‘Jesus came NOT in the nature of angels—that is, spirit nature. He was MADE FLESH—made HUMAN—He took on, at birth, HUMAN NATURE. He was tempted in all points like we are. He was forced to resist the pull of human nature, even as you and I. He, God, BECAME MAN—man so that He COULD DIE for us, that our sins might be erased and forgiven!’ (Good News, op. cit.). Christ took on human nature, yet He did NOT take on the carnal mind that is *enmity* against God (Romans 8:7). His mind was never like ours, because He had a full measure of God’s Holy Spirit from birth. Yet He did take on the properties of a human being, or the nature of man in that sense.”

Christ indeed became a fleshly man, and was subject to the pulls of the flesh. He was tempted in all things as we are. However, Christ did not take on what we today refer to as “human nature.” Human nature is the evil nature that mankind has acquired from Satan. It was not created in man and is not something we automatically take on at birth. Instead, we become receptive to Satan’s continual broadcast at birth, while Christ, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, was able to resist this influence and refrain from any evil. So instead of using the above quote and saying, “Christ took on human nature, yet He did NOT take on the carnal mind...” it should have read, “Christ was subject to the pulls of the flesh, yet His mind was at one with God all the time. Therefore He continually chose never to sin (John 4:34; 10:30; 17:11; Hebrews 4:15).”

In chapter 11 of *The Incredible Human Potential*, Mr. Armstrong wrote, “Adam and Eve chose *and acquired* the ‘nature’ or attitude of sin from Satan. It was not passed on by heredity. ...

“Then how *do* we humans come to have (universally) this evil attitude we call human nature today? ...

“The spirit in every human being is automatically tuned in on Satan’s wavelength. You don’t hear anything because he

does not broadcast in words—nor in sounds, whether music or otherwise. He broadcasts in ATTITUDES. He broadcasts in attitudes of SELF-centeredness, lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, envy, resentment, competition, strife, bitterness and hate.

“In a word, the selfishness, hostility, deceitfulness, wickedness, rebellion, etc. that we call ‘human nature’ is actually SATAN’S NATURE. It is Satan’s ATTITUDE. And broadcasting it, surcharging the air with it, Satan actually NOW WORKS *IN* the unsuspecting all over the world today! That is *HOW* Satan deceives the whole world today (Revelation 12:9 and 20:3). Being invisible, people do not see or hear him.

“This prince of the power of the air—this god of this world—IS THE REAL SOURCE OF WHAT WE HAVE COME TO CALL ‘HUMAN NATURE’!

“Here is the real CAUSE of all the world’s evils!”

Christ had the spirit in man and received Satan’s broadcast, but never did He have Satan’s attitude of hostility, rebellion or wickedness. Christ was totally at one with His Father.

The article also stated that: “From birth as a mortal, Christ had the full measure of the Holy Spirit. This was the only way He could be resurrected back to immortal life....” The only way Christ could be resurrected back to immortal life was if He lived a sinless life. God’s Holy Spirit enabled Him to do this, but wasn’t the cause or reason why He lived sinless of and by itself. Christ Himself chose to develop holy righteous character in every decision He made throughout His life.

Finally, the sidebar “Self-Examination Removes Deception” should have concluded as follows: “As we approach Passover, each of us must grasp that if you were the only person alive who had ever sinned it still would have taken the death of the Logos to redeem you—to pay the penalty for your sins! You need to be very cognizant of the fact that it is as if you, individually, were there in A.D. 31 and personally nailed Christ to the stake, took up a spear and thrust it into His side while you stood and watched His life drain away to pay for your personal sins.” After all, our sins killed Christ, and thus we all have become guilty of the blood of our Lord and Savior.