

# Difficult Passages- Lake Geneva conf.1984 - Part 2

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon explores the significance of difficult passages of Scripture, focusing on 1 Peter 3:21-22 and the role of baptism in salvation.*

**Duration:** 47:10

**Scripture:** Mark 9:49

**Topics:** "Conference"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of Christ's resurrection in relation to the forgiveness of sins. He uses the analogy of a friend taking on someone else's jail sentence to illustrate how Jesus took on the penalty for our sins. The speaker emphasizes that when we see Christ risen, we can have a good conscience toward God, knowing that the sin problem has been settled once and for all. The sermon also touches on difficult passages of Scripture, such as Mark 9:49-50, and encourages the audience to ponder and seek answers to these passages.

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## Transcript

We've been taking up some difficult passages of Scripture. The Bible has many verses and passages that really are difficult. Before we get to tonight's, I'd like to share a couple with you, just for you to be thinking about, see if you can come up with the answers to these.

Mark chapter 9 and verses 49 and 50. I have never heard what I considered to be a satisfactory explanation of these two verses. It reads in the King James, and it might be slightly different if you have a more modern translation, but in the King James it reads, Mark 9 49, for everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

Salt is good, but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another. Isn't that a great one? Does anybody know what that means? You know, the trouble is that we think, well, everybody else knows what that means, and I just won't ask, because if I ask, then they'll know how ignorant I am. Always come to the Word of God with that type of a questioning at it, and what does that mean? And search for the answer.

Another one I'd like to give you, John chapter 13. I'd like to give a prize to the first one that'll come to me with an explanation of this. Not the salt passage, but this one.

John 13, verses 31 and 32. It reads, Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

I'll give a Bible by an obscure author worth about five dollars to the first one that comes to me and explains what those two verses mean. Good, isn't it? Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

And you say, well, that's just a holy jumble of words. Well, it is, but it's meaningful and it's beautiful, but you have to understand what it means, don't you? Okay, for our study tonight, let's turn to 1 Peter 3. The verse that I want to deal with particularly is verse 21. 1 Peter 3, verse 21.

The light figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have always been taught that baptism does not save. We have always been warned against the teaching of baptismal regeneration.

We've been told that salvation is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism is not necessary for salvation. But this verse says the light figure whereunto 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. What does it mean? Now, let's read the whole passage.

Let's go back to verse 13. And who is he that will harm you if you be followers of that which is good? But then if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you as evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

For it is better if the will of God be so that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil doing. Just let me summarize that by saying that those verses up until now, Peter is dealing with the subject of Christians suffering at the hands of ungodly men, and they're not suffering because they've done anything wrong. They're suffering for the testimony of the Lord Jesus, and that's good.

That's pleasing in the sight of God. They're not being persecuted because they've done wrong, but they're being persecuted because of their connection with Calvary. Now, he's going to give the Lord Jesus as an illustration of that one who suffered for well-doing, and then he's going to give Noah as an illustration of it, too, and he's going to show that present suffering for well-doing eventuates in future glory.

Okay, let's begin now with verse 18, For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure were unto 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, who has gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him. The Lord Jesus is now set before us as an example of one who suffered, but he didn't suffer for sins that he had committed, he suffered for sins that we had committed.

When it says, For Christ also has once suffered for sins, suffered there means died, and if you have a modern translation of the Bible, it probably says died in that particular passage. I know it does in the New International Version, and it does in the New American Standard Bible. Christ died for sins, and then it says here that he died for sins once, but it really means once for all.

The word once is used in two different ways in the New Testament. It can mean once upon a time, or it can mean once for all. Praise God, it means here once for all.

That's the word. The finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. He died for sins once for all, the just for the untouched.

My, that touches my heart. Doesn't it touch yours? The sinless Son of God, bearing our sins in his body on the tree. The righteous one dying for the unrighteous.

Heaven's death dying for earth's worst. The shepherd dying for the sheep. The creator dying for his creatures.

It passes human understanding, and should be punctuated with a gasp, a holy gasp. Christ died for sins once for all, but just for the unjust. Why? That he might bring us to God.

We had wandered from God. We had become alienated from God. We needed to be reconciled to God, and through his wonderful death, through his wonderful work at the cross of Calvary, he provided a righteous basis upon which we could be reconciled with God.

God can receive us into his presence now as believers in the Lord Jesus without condoning our sin, without overlooking our sin, without approving our sin, but on the basis of the fact that those sins have been atoned for. Being put to death in the flesh. When it says being put to death in the flesh, it means being put to death as far as his body was concerned, and of course that's exactly what happened.

Isn't it amazing that the mighty God should come down into this world and take upon him a human body? Why? So that as man he might die for men. Amazing. It passes understanding.

As far as we know, angels can't die. He didn't come as an angel. He came as a man so that he might be put to death in the flesh, but it said quickened by the spirit, and that has to do with his resurrection, doesn't it? Wicked men took him and put him to death, not for evil doing, but for well doing.

They put him to death, but the Spirit of God raised him from the dead. You know, all the righteous attributes of God demanded that the Lord Jesus rise from the dead. God could not leave him in the tomb.

That's what it means when we read he was raised by the glory of the Father. All the moral excellence of God the Father demanded that Jesus Christ be raised from the dead, and here you have it. You know, these versions of scripture are wonderful because the Spirit of God says so much in so few words.

You have a real compendium of Christian theology just in the little passage we've gone over already tonight. I love the word of God, quickened by the Spirit. Now, it says by which also.

That word which refers back to the word spirit, which is a relative pronoun, and the antecedent of that relative pronoun is spirit. By the Holy Spirit. Peter is going to tell us about something that the Lord Jesus did by the Holy Spirit.

What did he do? It says he went and preached to the Spirit in prison. That word preach really means made proclamation, and the question of course arises, when did he make this proclamation? The Apostle's Creed says he descended into hell. I utterly reject that part of the Apostle's Creed.

I don't believe the Lord Jesus descended into hell. He said to the dying thief, Today thou shalt be with me. Where? In paradise.

And where is paradise? Well, if you turn to 2 Corinthians 12, you'll find that paradise is the same as the third heaven. In the New Testament, there are three heavens. There's the atmosphere above us, the blue.

There's the stellar heaven, and then there's the third heaven, the dwelling place of God. Paradise. And Jesus said to the dying thief, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.

He went and preached to the Spirit in prison. Some people think that he went to Hades and preached and gave a second chance to the people of Noah's day, to the people who lived before the flood. Other people believe that Jesus went and preached, proclaimed his glorious victory in Hades, and emptied the saved compartment of Hades and took those saved people of the Old Testament back to heaven with him.

Is that what the passage is really saying? He went and preached to the Spirit in prison. Well, I don't believe it is. In the New American Standard Bible, it says to the Spirit now in prison.

Now, actually, that word now isn't in the original of the New Testament. They added that word, and yet I think that's what it means, to the Spirit now in prison. Who are the spirits who are now in prison? I believe that they're the unbelieving people of Noah's day who rejected the message of Noah and are now in prison awaiting the final judgment.

Noah is spoken of in 2 Peter 2.5 as a preacher of righteousness, and what this passage of Scripture is saying, I believe, is that by the Spirit of God, the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ went and preached through Noah to the men of Noah's day. They rejected the message, they would have nothing to do with it, and they are now in prison. They are now in Hades awaiting the final judgment of the great white throne which we talked about the other day.

So, how do you know that? Because that's really what it goes on to say in verse 20. Notice verse 20, "...which sometime were disobedient." Spirits now in prison which sometime were disobedient. When were they disobedient? When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was to prepare it.

In other words, these are men who lived during the 120 years when the ark was being built. All that time Noah was preaching, all that time Noah was suffering for well-doing. He was being ridiculed, he was being put to shame, but he faithfully proclaimed the message.

Look, friends, a flood is coming. There's only one place of safety. That place of safety is the ark that I'm building.

Come into the ark and be saved. And they laughed, they scoffed, they scorned him. Poor old man, a landlocked ark in a world that has never seen a flood.

You know, there is that about faith that makes it look ridiculous to the people of the world, isn't it? If you're a Christian young person here tonight, there is that about faith in the Lord Jesus, faith in the word of God that might make you look ridiculous to the people of the world. No, it is. I'll tell you, God will vindicate you every time.

A lot of young people have this question, if we're right, if Christians are right, that means all the rest of the world is wrong? And what a minority we are, and we really are, too. Those who accept the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior form a very small minority in this world. You mean to tell me that you people are right, and all the rest of the people aren't? Yes, that's just what I mean to tell you.

You say, is that arrogance? No, that's not arrogance. There was a time in the history of the world when only eight people were right, and all the rest were wrong. Are you with me? Only eight people went into the ark.

Only eight people were right, and all the rest were wrong. I don't have to hang my head in shame to say that believers in the Lord Jesus are the ones who are right. That's what the verse goes on to say.

While the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. Eight souls saved by water. And then it goes on to say, the life figure were run to even baptism doth now save us.

Now, I'd like to go over this slowly, which is not my nature, but especially for those of you who are taking notes, I'd like you to write down some simple sentences that I think will clarify this difficult passage of Scripture. First of all, the ark was baptized in water. I don't have to labor that point, do I? Here is the ark.

The rain is coming down from above, and the great fountains of the deep are opened up from the bottom, and it's really not stretching a figure of speech to say that the ark was baptized in water. It was soaked on the outside. Two, number two, those inside the ark were saved.

It's a wonderful thing. You know, I don't believe a drop of water went inside that ark. It was pitched within and without the tarp.

It was a splendid construction job, and I don't believe a drop of water ever got in to the people inside the ark. The people inside the ark were saved, number three, those outside the ark perished. You can say rather ABC, I know.

Number four, the ark pictures Christ. Here we're getting to the meat of it. The ark pictures Christ, and the water pictures the judgment of God.

I hope you're getting this picture in your mind. There is the ark floating in the water, water above it, water below it, water on the sides of it. The ark pictures Christ.

The water pictures the judgment of God, okay? Christ was baptized unto death at the cross of Calvary. Just as the ark was baptized in water, and the ark speaks of Christ, Christ was baptized in death at the cross of Calvary. I'm not speaking about his baptism in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.

I'm speaking about what happens at the cross. You say, was that a baptism? Yes, that was a baptism. Psalm chapter 42 and verse 7. Psalm 42 and verse 7, and these are the words of the Lord Jesus, spoken

prophetically.

Deep, call us unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Dear friends, that's Calvary.

That's Calvary, where all the waves and billows of the wrath of God went over the Lord Jesus Christ. And then again in Luke chapter 12, verse 50. Luke chapter 12, verse 50.

The Lord Jesus actually uses the word to describe his approaching death at the cross. Luke chapter 12 and verse 50. Get the wrong book.

Luke 12, 50. I'll read 49. I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it be accomplished? What was he referring to? He's referring to his death on the cross.

He speaks of it as a baptism. I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it be accomplished? Christ was baptized in death at the cross of Calvary. Okay, the next thing to write down.

Those who are in Christ are saved. Remember, those who were in the ark were saved. The ark pictures Christ.

Christ was baptized unto death. Those who are in Christ are saved. Not a drop of the judgment of God ever gets near the person who's in Christ.

We read that the other night. Shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. Those who are outside of Christ are lost.

All of those who are outside the ark perish. They perish in the judgment of God, and that judgment awaits those who reject the sinner's savior. So, when I read those words in 1 Peter, the like figure we're into baptism doth now save us, I understand it to refer to Christ's baptism unto death at Calvary, and my identification with him.

Just the fact that he died at Calvary doesn't save me. I have to receive him, and in water baptism, I witness to my identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. And in many places of the world today where a person does that, he suffers for well-doing.

Don't forget, that's the context of the passage. In many countries of the world today, you can go home and tell your relatives that you trusted Christ and live a fairly normal life, but I want to tell you, when you go out and step down into the waters of baptism, the battle breaks forth, and in many countries you're put to death because of your testimony. You suffer for well-doing.

Now, let me just go over that again. The ark was baptized in water. Those inside the ark were saved.

Those outside the ark perished. The ark pictures Christ. The water pictures the judgment of God.

Christ was baptized unto death at the cross of Calvary. Those who are in Christ are saved. They're not saved by their own baptism, but they're saved by his baptism at the cross, and those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, identify themselves with that work by being baptized in water.

Now, the verse backfires on those who insist that water baptism is a way of salvation. They say, how did it backfire on them? Because all those that were in the water died. The ones that were outside the water, free from the water, were the ones that lived.

The very opposite. The passage does not teach baptismal regeneration. There are other reasons why we do not believe that water baptism saves us.

For one, it would mean that the work of Christ was not sufficient. It would mean that the work of Christ at Calvary must have something added to it by baptism, which would then be a meritorious work, and we utterly reject that because the Lord Jesus finished the work at the cross of Calvary, and you cannot add to a finished work. Another reason why we believe that water baptism does not save us is that the Lord Jesus never baptized anybody.

John chapter four, verses one and two. John chapter four, verses one and two. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John too, though Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples.

Now, that's a strange thing, isn't it? If baptism were essential to salvation, it's a strange thing that the Son of God coming down into this world never baptized anyone, and yet he came to seek and to save that which was lost. A third reason we believe baptism does not save is that the Apostle Paul thanked God that he had baptized very few people in his public ministry. First Corinthians, chapter one, verses 14 through 16.

First Corinthians, chapter one, verses 14 through 16, says, I thank God that I baptized none of you but Chrysostom and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name, and I baptized also the household of Stephanus. Besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. Now, Paul is not saying that baptism isn't important.

He's saying it isn't essential, and he thanks God that he didn't attract men to himself. Now, it would be a strange thing if baptism were essential for salvation that Paul would thank God that he had baptized very few. Another reason we believe baptism is not essential for salvation is that the thief on the cross got to paradise without being baptized.

Jesus said to him, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. Then in Acts, chapter 10, you have the salvation of Cornelius and his household. Cornelius and his household believed in the Lord Jesus.

They received the Holy Spirit, that is, they were saved, and then they were baptized. That's the community that we fit in, Gentiles. You believe, you receive the Holy Spirit, and then you're baptized in water.

Another reason we believe it is because baptism is connected with death in the Bible, not with spiritual birth. People who believe in baptismal regeneration connect baptism with birth, but baptism uniformly, believers' baptism is connected with death. We're buried with him by baptism into death.

Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life. And then, of course, we believe that baptism doesn't save because, as we mentioned the other night, 150 passages in the New Testament teach that salvation is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, plus nothing. Jesus said, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

He didn't say come to the baptismal tank. He said, come unto me. And if you examine that verse carefully, you'll find not one drop of water, but Jesus only.

That's the way of salvation. Salvation is in a person, and his name is Jesus, and those who have Jesus have salvation, and nothing can improve on that. Now, we want to be balanced in our handling of baptism, too, because we're emphasizing that baptism is not the door to heaven.

That's true. It's not the door to heaven, but it's still important. I often remind myself that the Lord Jesus himself walked 60 miles to be baptized.

I wouldn't be surprised if there were people here that had never crossed the street to be baptized. Doesn't make sense, does it? But Lord Jesus was up around the Sea of Galilee, and he walked down to where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. That's where John the Baptist baptized him.

About 60 miles. And he thought it was important to thus identify himself with the godly remnant of the nation of Israel. He said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Baptism doesn't say, but it sure is essential to obedience.

A couple of Sundays ago, I mentioned in Palos, you can go to heaven without being baptized, but if you do, you'll be unbaptized for all eternity. Now, that's not an enviable position. Baptism is one way in which we can obey the Lord Jesus down here that we'll never be able to obey him up there.

There are things like that, you know. Another one is the remembrance of the Lord and the breaking of bread. You say, well, we won't have to do that when we get to heaven.

No, it's one way in which we can show our love, our obedience to the Savior down here that we just won't be able to do it when we get to heaven. I want to do it now while I have the opportunity. Baptism doesn't save you from the penalty of sin, but it saves you from a bad conscience.

One of our interns this past year, a dear fellow from New Jersey, came to realize that when he professed to be a Christian, he wasn't really a Christian. He had made a profession, and he had been baptized, but there was no change in his life whatever. No change whatever.

Subsequently, he came into a living, vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and that it really began to burn in his heart that he had never been baptized as a believer. And, you know, it really took courage for that dear fellow to go down into the waters of baptism out there before all the people that I wasn't really saved when I was baptized before. I'm saved now by the grace of God, and I want to be baptized.

And I saw him the next day, and I said, George, you have a good conscience? He said, I have a good conscience. The answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Maybe there's someone here in the meeting tonight that you don't have a good conscience.

Maybe you have always kidded yourself that you're allergic to water or something like that. Some other lame excuse. Well, give up your lame excuse and be obedient to the Lord and follow him in the waters of... I can honestly tell you the night I was baptized was one of the happiest nights of my life.

I had the sensation of leaving the place without my feet touching the floor. Of course, they did. But it made me think of that verse, the Ethiopian eunuch that said he went on his way rejoicing after he was baptized.

That's exactly what happened to me. I went on my way rejoicing. Maybe God is speaking to someone here tonight to follow the Lord in the waters of baptism.

Now, it says in verse 21 not to putting away the filth of the flesh. The flesh, of course, in the New Testament can mean the fallen nature of man, or it can mean his body. And I think here it means the body, because our identification with Christ does cleanse us from the filth of the fallen nature.

But the answer of a good conscience toward God, or it could mean the demand or the appeal of a good conscience toward God. And I believe there's a real sense in which believers' baptism, our identification with Christ in his baptism, does give us that good conscience toward God. But just let me remind you again tonight that there are places in the world where when people do step out and are baptized for the Lord Jesus in his name, they suffer for it.

And that's the context here, suffering for well-doing instead of for evil doing. And then Peter brings in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's the resurrection that shows God's satisfaction with the work of Christ.

And when I see Christ risen, I have a good conscience toward God because I know that the sin question has been dealt with. Supposing I were sentenced to jail, and let's say three months. And a friend comes along and says, Bill, I don't want you to go to jail.

Let me go to jail for you. And so I say, fine. And he goes to jail to serve my sentence.

And at the end of three months, I'm walking down Lake Geneva one day, and I look across, I see him. He's walking there. What do I know when I see him walking on the other side of the street? What do I know? I know my sentence has been served.

I know the penalty of my crime has been paid. And when I see the Lord Jesus risen, I know that the sin problem has been settled once for all, and God will never bring it up again. And then it goes on to speak of the glory of the Lord Jesus, who's gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God.

You suffer for well-doing down here. God will have the last word. God will vindicate you.

He vindicated the Lord Jesus. He vindicated Noah, and he'll vindicate you as well. Who has gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God.

Angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him. Now, there's one other passage dealing with baptism that I promised somebody that I would mention, and so let's go to 1 Corinthians 15. Not that it's the same idea, although it's linked somewhat.

1 Corinthians 15, and verse 29, "...else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead? If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead? Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord when I die daily." Now, you have to examine it in the context. The Mormons have taken this verse out of the context. They've assembled vast genealogical tables, and you can go and be baptized for Abraham, Lincoln, or anybody else who has ever died.

That's what the verse means. Notice the context. This chapter has to do with the resurrection.

Paul is saying it's foolish. It's foolish to suffer for the Lord if there's no resurrection, if this life is all. He says if this life is all, the most sensible position would be, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

People say, I think I'd rather be a Christian even if this life were all. Well, Paul doesn't agree with you. Paul doesn't agree with you at all.

Read the chapter, and you'll see what he said. But there is a resurrection, and that's what makes it all worthwhile. The context here has to do with persecution because of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What was happening when Paul wrote this? People were getting baptized as believers in the Lord Jesus, and the next day they were dead. Literally dead. Did that stop it? No.

Others would come forward and be baptized to take the place of those who had died. Baptism for the dead. Baptism to take the place of those who had died.

And Paul says what a foolish thing it would be to fill up the ranks, to go down into the water, to take the place of those who had been martyred if there's no resurrection. I'll fit it into the context and see if that's what it says. It says, else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead? If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized, and why do we stand in danger every hour? You know? They'd be foolish to do it, and we're foolish to do it too.

We're foolish to expose ourselves to danger every hour. I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus. I die daily with a living death.

Paul was hunted, chased, pursued all the time because of his testimony for the Savior. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it me if the dead rise not at all? Ah, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die. So I would suggest to you in this particular verse of scripture that Paul, when he says, else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, he's speaking about that the ranks, filling in the ranks.

Let me use the illustration of an army marching into battle, and out front there's a man with a flag, the flag bearer. And somebody takes a shot at him, and down goes the flag bearer, and the flag starts to go down. But does it go down? No.

Somebody steps forward and grabs that flag, grabs that flagpole, and marches on with it. He steps forward to fill up the rank of the one who had died. But that's what was happening in Paul's day, and people were stepping forward and being baptized, filling up the ranks of those who had been martyred for the namesake of the Lord Jesus.

And he says, the only reason why it's wise to do that is because there is a resurrection, because God's going to write the last chapter, and because we will be vindicated in that coming day. Now, if you just turn back to 1 Peter chapter 3, and let me just go over it just once more and tie the threads together. Verse 18, For Christ also hath once died for sins, the righteous one for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, to effect his marvelous work of reconciliation, being put to death, as far as his body was concerned, but raised again from the dead by the Holy Spirit of God.

Now, it was by that same Holy Spirit of God that the Lord Jesus, in the Old Testament, went and preached through Noah, a preacher of righteousness, to the spirits who are now in prison. Who are those spirits who are now in prison? They're the unbelieving people of Noah's day, the ones who rejected his message, who once were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing for 120 years. The unbelieving people of his day were in few that his eight souls were saved by or through water.

Now, Peter says, I see a picture in this. The light figure unto baptism doth now save us. The ark pictures Christ.

The water pictures the judgment of God. The ark was baptized in the judgment of God. Christ was baptized in the judgment of God at the cross of Calvary.

That's the saving baptism. The light baptism, the light figure unto baptism, doth even now save us. That is, in our identification with him is that wonderful work at the cross of death, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.

It was not an external cleansing, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. And when I take my place in believers' baptism and identify myself with the Savior, I have a good conscience toward God. And then God, realizing that the Lord Jesus suffered the just for the unjust, not for sins that had raised him from the dead, glorified him at heaven's highest place.

He's gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. Just one final thought. It's important to be baptized.

It's important to be baptized in water. I believe it's important to be baptized by immersion. I think immersion is the only mode of baptism that pictures what baptism means--buried with him in baptism, raised with him from the dead to walk in newness of life.

It's important. But you know, there's something that's even more important, and that's to go out and live the baptized life. God is not a ritualist, and God isn't pleased just to see people's bodies just go under water.

He wants to see those people come up from the water and go out and live the baptized life. You say, what's the baptized life? It's living as those who have died with Christ, have been buried with him, and are walking with him in newness of life. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you again for your word, and we thank you for the Spirit of God as well.

We think of this tremendous passage and how the Savior is glorified in it all. We think of how in the sacred scriptures all the time we're brought back to him, brought back to him as our example, the one on whom we are to fix our gaze. We pray for those of us tonight who have been baptized in water, that its significance might not be lost upon us, that day by day we might be living the baptized life.

And should there be some here who've never obeyed, perhaps they're decided Christians, consistent Christians, and yet have never thought enough of it to be baptized in water. Father, we pray that while they still have the opportunity, that they will step out and say in this public way, yes, he died for me, he died as my representative. When he died, I died.

When he was buried, I was buried. When he rose again, I rose again. And I'm not ashamed to confess his name.

We ask it in that peerless name.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/difficult-passages-lake-geneva-conf1984-part-2/>

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