

# BAPTISM

Baptism  
by Steve Gray  
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*One Lord, one faith, one  
baptism, One God and  
Father of all, who is above  
all, and through all, and in  
you all.*

*Ephesians 4:5-6*

**I've Found The Living Fountain**  
**by Charlotte H. Bishop Gray**

*The prophet John was a Baptist,  
He filled his mission in life;  
He said to the people he preached to,  
I am a forerunner of Christ;  
To give knowledge of salvation  
And open up the way  
For the baptism that Jesus brought  
To take its place today.*

*I will not trust in water, then,  
To make me white and clean;  
For a fountain is opened in the house of God  
To take away every stain.  
Now call on Jesus, ye thirsty ones,  
This promise is to you;  
The Holy Ghost sent down from God  
Will cleanse you through and through.*

*I've found the living fountain  
Down by the river of life  
I've found a place for you to drink  
I've found a faith that never will shrink  
Down by the river of life.*

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## Introduction

The framework of any religious conviction is built on a central principal of faith that is the foundation of that belief system, and there are few points on which all people of faith will absolutely agree. For example, the fundamental belief in Judaism is that the Law of Moses<sup>1</sup> should continue to be observed, that Jesus was only a prophet, and the true Messiah is yet to come. The authority of Catholicism is built on the principle that the Pope is a direct descendent from the Apostle Peter and as such is the spokesperson of Christ on earth. For the most part, Protestant denominations are built on the principal of faith that Jesus Christ was the Messiah and, depending on the specific denomination, that salvation is obtained through Him by various methods and practices. Given this plurality of religious beliefs, it is absolutely critical to our own soul that we build our faith and practice on what we sincerely understand to be the truth. It has been said to “know what you believe, it is too important to drift.”

In most cases, the spiritual and religious traditions of our parents are the ones that we adopt as adults, often without any consideration on our own. The obvious question then is how do we recognize the will of God and follow His plan to salvation? The answer lies in the Bible, which was inspired by God.

### ***2 Timothy 3:16-17***

*<sup>16</sup> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

### ***2 Peter 1:20-21***

*<sup>20</sup> Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

There are many strategies on how to effectively study the Bible. For example, if one intended to become skilled at algebra, they would not begin in the middle of the textbook or select random pages to study. If you wanted to read and understand a book of classic literature, you would start at the beginning of the book. The same principal somewhat applies to studying the Bible; it is important to start at the beginning. God's will for us begins with Genesis and ends with Revelation. This study on baptism will follow a course from the beginning to the end and examine the subject of baptism, water and Holy Ghost, throughout the Bible.

***Job 32:8***

*<sup>8</sup> But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*

***2 Timothy 2:15***

*<sup>15</sup> Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

The Bible is divided into two sections that deal with two basic principals of the interaction of God with man. The Old Testament, written before the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, is the first section. It is divided into categories of the events of creation, the early history of man, the Law of Moses, a history of the Jewish or Hebrew nation, poetry, and prophecy. The basic principle of the Old Testament Law was obedience to God through works that included sacrifices, rituals, and the celebration of festivals and has the Ten Commandments as a foundation.

***Exodus 24:12***

*<sup>12</sup> And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.*

### ***Deuteronomy 4:5-6***

*<sup>5</sup> Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. <sup>6</sup> Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*

The New Testament is the second section of the Bible that consists of seventy separate works. Among these works are the four narratives of Jesus' Disciples, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, commonly called the Gospels. Also included in the New Testament are writings of the Apostles' ministry after Pentecost and early letters written by various authors to a number of individuals and groups of Christians. The central theme of the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law of Moses (the Old Covenant) and bringing salvation to all people through a New Covenant built on the foundation of faith in the work of Jesus Christ.

### ***Hebrews 8:10-13***

*<sup>10</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: <sup>11</sup> And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. <sup>12</sup> For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. <sup>13</sup> In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

### ***Hebrews 10:1***

*<sup>1</sup> For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices*

*which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

There are few doctrinal issues in the New Testament that provoke more discussion than the subject of baptism, both water and Holy Ghost. Differences of administration, purpose, requirement, and effect are debated throughout the Christian community. Some of the questions are why did John the Baptist baptize, why was Jesus baptized, how does water baptism relate to us in this day and time, and how does this relate to Holy Ghost baptism?

“Concerning baptism, let us first remember that water is not to be understood whenever baptism is mentioned; neither is baptism to be understood whenever water is mentioned. The meaning of the word baptize is to consecrate, to purify, usually by pouring out on or putting into,” wrote Rev. E. Joseph Clelland, Sr.<sup>2</sup>

Water baptism was not a new concept to the Jewish people at the time of John the Baptist. The origin and practice date back to the Old Testament covenant and the Law of Moses. However, when John the Baptist began his ministry, he made it clear that there were two baptisms, one of water and one by the Holy Ghost which was to come.

***Ephesians 4:5***

<sup>5</sup> *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

If this statement by the Apostle Paul in writing to the church at Ephesus is true, which baptism is valid and which one was eliminated? Is it water baptism or Holy Ghost baptism?

I have faith in the fact that the water baptism of John the Baptist was a temporary ritual to usher in the ministry of Jesus Christ bringing a new covenant<sup>3</sup> built entirely on faith and grace. Additionally, I believe that the rituals of the Law of Moses that included the celebration of feasts, sacrifices, washings and water baptisms were all eliminated by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whereby providing the way that we could be saved

by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This is the spiritual baptism that was experienced by the Apostles and others with them in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost recorded in the second chapter of Acts.

# Common Beliefs and the Practice of Water Baptism

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Baptizing, or ceremonial bathing in water, is considered a symbolic experience and a purifier in many religions of the world with Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism among the most recognized.

For many doctrinal positions of the Christian faith, water baptism, commonly performed either by a complete immersion or a simple sprinkling, is absolutely necessary for salvation. Other Christian theologies consider water baptism as an outward or ceremonial sign of an inner spiritual work in the soul or a public display of faith and commitment. Water baptism is also understood as a religious sacrament marked by the symbolic use of water resulting in admission into the community of believers. These theological positions acknowledge that water baptism takes its rightful place in the practice of the Christian convert along with other sacraments such as communion, and is traditionally understood to be equivalent to the baptism of John the Baptist. From the Bible and religious Jewish history, there is clear evidence that baptism or washings were part of the covenant life under the Law. “Since early Christianity was a part of the Judaism of Jesus’ day, it is without question that baptism in today’s church was originally Jewish.”<sup>4</sup>

In Judaism, the Hebrew word for water baptism is mikveh. This term means any gathering of waters and is used in modern day Jewish religious practice to define immersion in water in a ritual of purification. The use of the mikveh dates back to the beginning of Jewish history.<sup>5</sup> This event is usually held in a specially built pool and is sometimes practiced by Jewish women to achieve ceremonial cleanliness, by Jewish men before Yom Kippur<sup>6</sup>, and as the final step in conversion to Judaism (proselyte). Adherents believe the immersion symbolically cleanses the convert of past misdeeds and prepares the convert for a different future and destiny. Following immersion, the candidate is officially considered a Jew and can legitimately recite the blessing for immersion that

includes the words 'who has sanctified us with the commandments'.<sup>7</sup> With regard to a proselyte, Emil Schurer, in his history of the Jewish people states that "For as no Jew could be admitted into fellowship with Israel except through circumcision, so it was quite as much a matter of course that a Gentile, who as such was unclean, seeing that he was not in the habit of observing the regulations with regard to Levitical purity, should be required, on entering into such fellowship, to take the bath of Levitical purification."<sup>8</sup>

In Islam, the five daily prayers can be said after completing a washing of the body with clean water. The ritual of which is set out in the Qur'an: "When ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands and arms to the elbows, rub your heads with water, and wash your feet to the ankles. If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body." *Surah 5.7.*

In Hinduism, there are three general methods of connecting with God. One method is in the ritual of special washings and special worship in special places<sup>9</sup>.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) practice water baptism for the dead or baptism by proxy. A living person, acting as proxy, is baptized by immersion in water. During this baptism ceremony, a declaration is made that the baptism is being performed for and on behalf of a deceased person, whose name has been submitted for that ordinance. Adherents to this faith believe that there is a world to come in which all those who have died without being baptized in their mortal life, but who have been baptized by proxy after death, will have the opportunity to be redeemed.

# The Old Testament and the Law of Moses

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We learn from Genesis that in the course of the creation, God separated the water from the land, created seas and rivers, and that “the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life.”

## ***Genesis 1:1-2***

*<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. <sup>2</sup> And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

By chapter six of Genesis, water is flooding the earth to destroy all living things, cleansing the sin from the face of the Earth with the exception of Noah, his family, and the animals that he brought with him on the ark. In Exodus, we learn that the escape from Egypt by the Hebrew people was accomplished by the drowning of Pharaoh’s army. The discourse between God and Moses on Mount Sinai resulted in the giving of the Ten Commandments and the Law. It is in the Law that ceremonial or ritual cleansing with water appears.

This concept of ritual purity by washing in water, established by the tenets of the Law, was practiced in many ways. Moses’ brother Aaron was consecrated as the first high priest by first being washed with water then anointed with oil. As a part of the tabernacle furnishings, a brass laver, or large bowl was fabricated for ceremonial washings. Prior to the priest approaching the altar of God in the Tabernacle, they were required to wash their hands and feet.

## ***Exodus 29:4-7***

*<sup>4</sup> And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.*

<sup>5</sup> And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: <sup>6</sup> And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. <sup>7</sup> Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.

**Exodus 30:18**

<sup>18</sup> Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.

**Exodus 30:20**

<sup>20</sup> When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord:

**Leviticus 8:4-11**

<sup>4</sup> And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. <sup>5</sup> And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done. <sup>6</sup> And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. <sup>7</sup> And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. <sup>8</sup> And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. <sup>9</sup> And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses. <sup>10</sup> And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. <sup>11</sup> And he sprinkled thereof

*upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them.*

***Numbers 8:5-7***

*<sup>5</sup> And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>6</sup> Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. <sup>7</sup> And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.*

There were various washings of an individual, if they were defiled by particular acts considered unclean. In addition, a person could be absolved from guilt by washing their hands with water in public and declaring their innocence. It is obvious that the idea of ritual purification is reinforced by the first two books of the Bible along with additional Old Testament passages that also emphasize the concept.

***Numbers 19:17-18***

*<sup>17</sup> And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: <sup>18</sup> And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave*

***Deuteronomy 21:5-7***

*<sup>5</sup> And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the Lord; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried: <sup>6</sup> And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: <sup>7</sup> And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.*

Old Testament writings prophesied of the age in which we would be sprinkled by the truly cleansing water of the Holy Spirit, not the physical water of the earth. The properties of this spiritual water would bring a complete cleansing from all filthiness, all internal pollution and idols, and purify the soul instead of just cleaning the body. We would then be given a new heart and a new mind by the power of the Holy Ghost and the ability to walk before God with His laws written in our hearts.

***Psalm 51:1-3***

*<sup>1</sup> Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

***Isaiah 1:16***

*<sup>16</sup> Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;*

***Isaiah 44:3***

*<sup>3</sup> For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:*

***Jeremiah 4:14***

*<sup>14</sup> O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

***Jeremiah 33-34***

*<sup>33</sup> But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God,*

*and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

***Ezekiel 36:24-27***

*<sup>24</sup> For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

***Zechariah 12:10***

*<sup>10</sup> And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

# Four Hundred Years of Silence

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The prophet Malachi closes the Old Testament with the admonition to continue the strict observance of the Law, and to look for the coming of the prophet Elijah. This prophet or messenger, understood to be John the Baptist, would prepare the way before the Messiah. This Messiah, Jesus Christ, would bring a new and everlasting covenant with a spiritual cleansing by the power of the Holy Ghost.

### ***Malachi 3:1***

*<sup>1</sup> Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.*

### ***Malachi 4:4-6***

*<sup>4</sup> Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. <sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: <sup>6</sup> And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

Four centuries would pass from the end of the Old Testament writings until the beginning of the New Testament with the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. This era has been called the “years of silence” because there were no canonical Scriptures written during this time. Recorded Jewish and other secular history from this era provides details of Hebrew life, especially the writings of Josephus.<sup>10</sup>

It was during this period of silence that the Jewish people lost political control of Judea and their own destiny because of occupation from expanding world powers. The assault on Judea began with Alexander the Great in 332 BC and with him came the imposition of Greek (Hellenistic) ideas on Jewish culture. The Egyptians and the Syrians were in control of the region at various times during this period, often banning obedience to the Law.

The final decisive incursion came with the Romans in 63 BC led by the great general Pompey. He marched into Judea and after a three month siege against Jerusalem captured the Temple. Pompey profanes the sanctity of the Temple by entering the Holiest of Holies.<sup>11</sup> Hundreds of Jews are sent to Rome, eventually forming a strong Jewish community in that city. Judea became a territory subject to the Romans, and by 40 BC, the Roman Senate declared Herod the Great as king of Judea. Temple life and the administration of the Law decline into bribery, conspiracy, and scandal.

The throne of David had long been vacated by the lineage of the tribe of Judah, and for the most part, the priesthood declined into various political rivalries. The development of Jewish sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes and the racial tensions with the Samaritans confuse the understanding, interpretation, and practice of the Law. All of these claimed to be the true Israel of God.

The Pharisees were primarily from the middle-class of Jews and as a result had an influence on the common people. They were noted for their strict observance to the letter of the Law, rigorous application of their own oral laws, the importance of good works, the resurrection of the dead, and belief in angels and spirits. The Pharisees built a virtual fence around the written Law by imposing their oral laws, so that if obeyed, there would be no chance of any violation of the written Law.

The Sadducees were from the wealthy aristocracy of Jews and held powerful positions in Temple operations. They tried to get along with the Roman occupying government and were most often appointed to various religious offices,

especially that of high priest. If a high priest became a threat to the Romans, he was deposed and sometimes killed and a new high priest appointed. The Sadducees held opposing views from that of the Pharisees. They read only the first five books of the Old Testament (The Pentateuch – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), rejected any oral law, did not believe in the resurrection, angels or spirits, and denied the immortality of the soul.

With the discovery of the great library known as The Dead Sea Scrolls in 1946, a clear picture emerged about life in the Essene community. These Jewish men lived in the wilderness settlement of Qumran, located in the northwest section of the Dead Sea about a days walk from Jerusalem. Not mentioned in the Bible, the Essenes were an austere, celibate community that believed they were the remnant of Jews who were purifying themselves for the coming of the Messiah. Their daily life consisted of studying and copying the Scriptures, prayer, and numerous ritual washings. Additionally, they believed that the Temple in Jerusalem had been defiled and was no longer useful to serve the truly righteous.

The Samaritans were a mixed race of Jewish people that settled in the northern part of Judea. Jewish exiles, returning from Babylon to Judea in about 550 BC, considered the Samaritans to be non-Jews. As a result of their rejection by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, the Samaritans' built their own temple, which was destroyed prior to the era of the New Testament.

By the opening of the New Testament period, we can somewhat understand the disarray of Jewish thinking with regard to the Law. From this rich tapestry of voices of Judaism, there emerged a battle for the soul of Israel. "They believed intensely that God was going to act on their behalf. Exactly how or by what means or when was unknown to them. It was in this type of setting that the events recorded in the Gospels transpired."<sup>12</sup>

However far Judaism and its' leaders had strayed from the intent of the Law, there were sincere people who lived under the Law that were waiting for the promised Messiah. These are the prominent individuals that we read about in the beginning of the Gospels. Among them is Zacharias and Elisabeth (parents of

John the Baptist) and their neighbors, Mary and Joseph - the earthly parents of Jesus, people of the Temple like Simeon and Anna, visitors to the infant Jesus - the shepherds and the wise men, the future Disciples of Jesus, and many others. It is clear that if there was ever a time that the Jewish people and the rest of the world needed the Messiah, it was now!

***Hebrews 8:13***

*<sup>13</sup> In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

***Hebrews 10:16-17***

*<sup>16</sup> This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; <sup>17</sup> And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

# The New Testament and The New Covenant

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With the beginning of the New Testament, the silence that has endured for four centuries is about to be broken. God was moving on the scene to bring the redemption that had been promised. A voice from the wilderness and the Messiah were about to be born into the world. The many years of wait and anticipation were finally over.

### ***Isaiah 40:3-5***

<sup>3</sup> *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.* <sup>4</sup> *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:* <sup>5</sup> *And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

### ***Galatians 4:4-6***

<sup>4</sup> *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,* <sup>5</sup> *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* <sup>6</sup> *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

### ***Hebrews 7:11-12***

<sup>11</sup> *If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?* <sup>12</sup> *For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.*

# The Birth of John the Baptist

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## **Luke 1:1-17**

<sup>1</sup> Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, <sup>2</sup> Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; <sup>3</sup> It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. <sup>5</sup> There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. <sup>7</sup> And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. <sup>8</sup> And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, <sup>9</sup> According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. <sup>11</sup> And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. <sup>14</sup> And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the

*Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

***Luke 1:57-80***

*<sup>57</sup> Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. <sup>58</sup> And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup> And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. <sup>60</sup> And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. <sup>61</sup> And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. <sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. <sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. <sup>64</sup> And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. <sup>65</sup> And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. <sup>66</sup> And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. <sup>67</sup> And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, <sup>68</sup> Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, <sup>69</sup> And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; <sup>70</sup> As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: <sup>71</sup> That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; <sup>72</sup> To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; <sup>73</sup> The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, <sup>74</sup> That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the*

*hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup> In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. <sup>76</sup> And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; <sup>77</sup> To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, <sup>78</sup> Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, <sup>79</sup> To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. <sup>80</sup> And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.*

It is obvious from Zacharias' comments that his son's mission was to prepare the way of the Lord. The redemption of Israel, and the rest of the world, was beginning.

# The Ministry of John the Baptist

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## **Matthew 3:1-12**

<sup>1</sup> In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, <sup>2</sup> And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. <sup>3</sup> For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>4</sup> And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, <sup>6</sup> And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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 Ghost, and with fire: <sup>12</sup> Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

**Mark 1:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;* <sup>2</sup> *As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.* <sup>3</sup> *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.* <sup>4</sup> *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.* <sup>5</sup> *And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.* <sup>6</sup> *And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;* <sup>7</sup> *And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.* <sup>8</sup> *I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*

From Matthew and Mark's writings, we recognize the glaring differences between the hierarchy of Judaism and John the Baptist. He was not of the Temple, he was not a Pharisee, Sadducee, or a splendidly robed priest or rabbi, but came out of the wilderness, clothed in ragged attire proclaiming repentance for the remission of sins, counseling his converts to turn away from their selfish pursuits, and baptizing them in water. To the thinking of the Temple priests, if anyone had the authority to baptize, it was them; it was their responsibility to decide who should be baptized and purified, not this rough and tumble guy from the wilderness. In addition, both of these writers make a point to express that John the Baptist was not the promised Messiah, who would be the one that would baptize with the Holy Ghost.

From the Gospel of Luke, we discover that John the Baptist appeared on the scene about 29 AD, in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius. The lone prophet from the wilderness would condemn the corruption that was rampant at this time in the celebration of the Law, and call for Jews to repent and be baptized in water.

**Luke 3:1-18**

<sup>1</sup> Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; <sup>4</sup> As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; <sup>6</sup> And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. <sup>7</sup> Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin 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. <sup>9</sup> And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. <sup>10</sup> And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? <sup>11</sup> He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. <sup>12</sup> Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? <sup>13</sup> And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. <sup>14</sup> And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. <sup>15</sup> And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the

*Christ, or not; <sup>16</sup> John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: <sup>17</sup> Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. <sup>18</sup> And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.*

### **John 1:6-25**

*<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. <sup>11</sup> He came unto his own, and his own received him not. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup> Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. <sup>16</sup> And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. <sup>19</sup> And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? <sup>20</sup> And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. <sup>22</sup> Then said they unto him,*

*Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? <sup>23</sup> He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. <sup>24</sup> And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?*

Luke and John write that John the Baptist's mission was to "prepare the way of the Lord" and "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." John the Baptist clearly states that he "was sent to baptize." His water baptism was not just a ceremony of ritual purification, but a life changing event in preparation for the coming of the Lord. He denounced the Temple hierarchy and warned them not to assume their heritage would provide any special consideration in the new kingdom. John the Baptist made it unmistakably clear that he was "not the light" nor was he the important individual in God's plan for salvation; just a forerunner of one greater that would baptize with the "Holy Ghost and with fire".

The fact that ritual purification with water was so deeply embedded in Jewish tradition would help explain how water baptism was easily accepted by the converts of John the Baptist. As mentioned earlier, water baptism and ceremonial washings were a part of Jewish religious practice at this time.

# The Baptism of Jesus

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“John and his baptism were part of the law, and as we very well know Jesus came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. We shall find by careful study that Jesus did not ignore the law but subjected Himself to it from the manger to the cross. He was circumcised as any other Jewish child, as it was His custom to keep the Passover, and He sent the leper whom He had just cleansed to offer for his cleansing according to the law. There is not evidence that Jesus did not keep the whole Law of Moses.<sup>13</sup>

## ***Matthew 3:13-16***

*<sup>13</sup> Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. <sup>14</sup> But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? <sup>15</sup> And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. <sup>16</sup> And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*

## ***Mark 1:9-11***

*<sup>9</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: <sup>11</sup> And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

## ***Luke 3:21-22***

*<sup>21</sup> Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, <sup>22</sup>*

*And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.*

***John 1:26-33***

*<sup>26</sup> John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; <sup>27</sup> He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. <sup>28</sup> These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. <sup>29</sup> The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. <sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. <sup>31</sup> And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. <sup>32</sup> And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. <sup>33</sup> And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

John the Baptist demonstrates his meekness and respect when he said that he should be baptized by Jesus. However, Jesus responds to him that it “needs to be so now,” an indication that water baptism would not always be practiced. And with that declaration, Jesus was baptized with water by John the Baptist. What a wonderful response from God when Jesus comes up out of the water, the Holy Ghost descended on Him like a dove, gentle and peaceful.

One of the core beliefs of advocates of water baptism is if Jesus was baptized, then we should be baptized in the same manner as other converts to John the Baptists’ preaching. Questions that arise from that line of thinking are did Jesus need to repent and publicly demonstrate His conversion by being baptized in water? Since water baptism was a sign of conversion, what was Jesus

converting from? As the Son of God, wasn't He holy from His birth? And further, since Jesus was circumcised, is circumcision a requirement for salvation? Jesus obeyed the Law and celebrated the feasts, most notably the Passover, is this required for us to achieve and sustain our salvation?

In Jesus' day, when a Gentile would convert to Judaism, as a final step in the process, they would have to be baptized to identify themselves as a convert. Obviously, Jesus was not converting from anything, but His baptism was a fulfillment of the Law and the identification with His father, God. Jesus was baptized to publicly announce Himself as God's Son, and to publicly proclaim the beginning of His ministry.

At this very public and historic event, of all of the things that John the Baptist could have said about the Messiah, he proclaimed that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire and would take away the sins of the world. The writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John clearly state the fact that there are two baptisms; the baptism of John the Baptist with water and the baptism of the Holy Ghost brought about by the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. One baptism would be done away with while the other would remain. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

## John The Baptist - Arrest, Imprisonment, and Death

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John the Baptist was arrested by King Herod Agrippa II and put in prison. This must have been a time of enormous distress for this great man of God, because he had doubt as to whether or not Jesus was who he said he was. If Jesus was not the Christ, then should he look for the Messiah to come? The time had come for John the Baptist's ministry to end, that bright and shining light was fading.

### ***Luke 7:20-28***

*<sup>20</sup> When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? <sup>21</sup> And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. <sup>22</sup> Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. <sup>24</sup> And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? <sup>25</sup> But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup> But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup> This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. <sup>28</sup> For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than*

*John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (see Matthew 11:2-11)*

***Matthew 14:1-12***

*<sup>1</sup> At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, <sup>2</sup> And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. <sup>3</sup> For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. <sup>4</sup> For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. <sup>5</sup> And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. <sup>6</sup> But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. <sup>7</sup> Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. <sup>8</sup> And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. <sup>9</sup> And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. <sup>10</sup> And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. <sup>11</sup> And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. <sup>12</sup> And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.*

Almost thirty five years after the death of John the Baptist, the Jewish historian Josephus recorded comments regarding the defeat of the army of Herod Agrippa II by Jewish zealots in 66 AD, and the connection with the death of John the Baptist almost 30 years earlier. “Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins

[only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late.”<sup>14</sup>

Jesus stated that He had a greater witness than John the Baptist and would finish the work that was started.

***John 5:33-36***

*<sup>33</sup> Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. <sup>34</sup> But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. <sup>35</sup> He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. <sup>36</sup> But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*

# The Ministry of Jesus

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Leaving John the Baptist at the Jordon River, Jesus begins His public ministry. One of His first recorded acts was appointing Disciples, students of His teaching. Enthusiastically following Him, these men were the core group of people who would be responsible to carry the message of the Gospel to the world. It appears from the Scriptures that they were His most trusted earthly confidants. They called him rabbi, or teacher, and were taught the principals of the New Covenant with a message of salvation for the world. Although these Disciples practiced water baptism, there is never any mention in the Bible that they were baptized in water by John the Baptist, Jesus, or anyone else.

## ***Matthew 11:1***

*<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.*

## ***Matthew 4:12-17***

*<sup>12</sup> Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; <sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: <sup>14</sup> That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, <sup>15</sup> The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; <sup>16</sup> The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

## Jesus' Disciples Baptize

### **John 3:22-30**

<sup>22</sup> After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. <sup>23</sup> And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. <sup>24</sup> For John was not yet cast into prison. <sup>25</sup> Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. <sup>29</sup> He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease.

### **John 4:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, <sup>2</sup> (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) <sup>3</sup> He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

Only the Gospel of John tells us that Jesus' Disciples baptized. It appears that Jesus sanctioned water baptism by His Disciples, perhaps to affirm John the Baptist's ministry. The other Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not mention anything about the Disciples practicing water baptism. It seems reasonable that if water baptism was a prevalent practice by the Disciples, the other Gospels would have mentioned it in their writings.

One would think that if water baptism was a necessary work in the plan of salvation that Jesus would have performed it or would have instructed others to do so. The Scriptures never record that Jesus baptized anyone; evidence that water baptism was not the avenue to salvation. If water baptism was a key process in the work of salvation, Jesus would have mentioned it in His Sermon on the Mount, the great spiritual revelation recorded in Matthew 5. Several passages of Scripture record Jesus' miraculous healing and forgiving of sins, but never mentions water baptism in conjunction with the blessing.

## **Miracles of Jesus**

### ***Matthew 4:23-25***

*<sup>23</sup> And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. <sup>24</sup> And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. <sup>25</sup> And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.*

### ***Matthew 9:2-6***

*<sup>2</sup> And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. <sup>3</sup> And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. <sup>4</sup> And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? <sup>5</sup> For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? <sup>6</sup> But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then*

*saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. (see Mark 2:1-12)*

**Mark 1:40-44**

<sup>40</sup> *And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* <sup>41</sup> *And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.* <sup>42</sup> *And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.* <sup>43</sup> *And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;* <sup>44</sup> *And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*

**Luke 7:44-50**

<sup>44</sup> *And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.* <sup>45</sup> *Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.* <sup>46</sup> *My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.* <sup>47</sup> *Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.* <sup>48</sup> *And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.* <sup>49</sup> *And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?* <sup>50</sup> *And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

**Mark 10:46-52**

<sup>46</sup> *And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son*

*of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.<sup>47</sup> And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.<sup>48</sup> And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.<sup>49</sup> And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.<sup>50</sup> And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.<sup>51</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.<sup>52</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. (see Luke 18:35-43)*

#### ***Luke 19:5-10***

*<sup>5</sup> And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.<sup>6</sup> And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.<sup>7</sup> And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.<sup>8</sup> And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.<sup>9</sup> And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.<sup>10</sup> For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

#### ***John 5:2-15***

*<sup>2</sup> Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.<sup>3</sup> In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.<sup>4</sup> For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water:*

*whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.* <sup>5</sup> *And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.* <sup>6</sup> *When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?* <sup>7</sup> *The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.* <sup>8</sup> *Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.* <sup>9</sup> *And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.* <sup>10</sup> *The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.* <sup>11</sup> *He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.* <sup>12</sup> *Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?* <sup>13</sup> *And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.* <sup>14</sup> *Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* <sup>15</sup> *The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.*

In all of these accounts of miraculous healing and forgiving sins, Jesus never mentions baptism with water. It would seem obvious that if water baptism were essential to the conversion process, Jesus would have instructed these converts to be baptized in water. Particularly, one would think that the event of Jesus healing the man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:2-15), with the pool of water available, He would have baptized the man immediately. Jesus only instructed him to take up his bed and walk.

## Nicodemus – The Two Births

### *John 3:1-8*

*<sup>1</sup> There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: <sup>2</sup> The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. <sup>8</sup> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Proponents of water baptism say that Jesus provided the authority for such a physical act when he spoke to Nicodemus. John tells us this conversation took place at night, possibly suggesting that Nicodemus may have come to talk to Jesus in secret. Unlike many of his peers, Nicodemus apparently believed that Jesus was the Messiah. The message from Jesus to Nicodemus has become one of the most quoted passages in the Bible. The dialogue in these verses is an important encounter between Nicodemus, who symbolizes the Old Covenant Law and the Temple, and Jesus who represents the New Covenant - the Kingdom of God and the spiritual birth, which is the foundation for salvation by grace and faith.

Did Jesus give authority for water baptism as a process in the born again experience? There are several explanations for this passage of Scripture. Some will suggest that this is an explicit reference to water baptism and that to become

a child of God, one must not only be born of the Spirit but must be baptized in water. Nowhere in this passage is baptism mentioned. Therefore, it is unjustifiable to interpret water baptism from this passage.

Another explanation is that Jesus implied the natural birth when he mentioned “born of water” stating that you have to be born in the world physically before you can be born into the Kingdom of God spiritually. This is a credible explanation.

The most practical explanation is that Nicodemus, a well-informed theologian according to the Law, would have looked to Old Testament scripture to understand the phrase “born of water” and considered the passages in Psalm 51:1-3, Jeremiah 4:14, and Ezekiel 36:24-27 (see pages 6-7). These passages contain the statements “wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity”, “wash thine heart from wickedness”, and “then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.” If we accept this reasoning, Jesus was saying that He would wash us with the “water of the Word”, cleansing us from our sins, and then place His Spirit in our heart. The message is that we must be forgiven of our sins and then sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **The Transfiguration**

### ***Matthew 17:1-13***

*<sup>1</sup> And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, <sup>2</sup> And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. <sup>3</sup> And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. <sup>4</sup> Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. <sup>5</sup> While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well*

*pleased; hear ye him. <sup>6</sup> And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. <sup>7</sup> And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. <sup>8</sup> And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. <sup>9</sup> And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. <sup>10</sup> And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? <sup>11</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. <sup>12</sup> But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.*

The Disciples saw three figures on the mountain that day, Moses (representing the Old Covenant Law), Elias (John the Baptist, representing water baptism), and Jesus (representing the New Covenant). They were afraid when a voice spoke from a bright cloud that shadowed them. But the voice declared that Jesus was the Son of God and they were to listen to Him. The Law of Moses and the ministry of John the Baptist would be fulfilled by that sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. Jesus would go to the cross to complete the work of salvation, and usher in a new covenant by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, just as John the Baptist had prophesied that day Jesus came to him to be baptized.

## **Jesus and the Temple Leaders**

Jesus gave recognition to the wilderness preacher's work which was also recognized by the chief priests, scribes, and elders of the Temple. The Temple hierarchy realized that John the Baptist was a prophet from God, but apparently most failed to heed his preaching.

### ***Luke 20:1-8***

*<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the Gospel, the chief priests*

*and the scribes came upon him with the elders, <sup>2</sup> And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? <sup>3</sup> And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: <sup>4</sup> The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? <sup>5</sup> And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? <sup>6</sup> But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. <sup>7</sup> And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. <sup>8</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

## **The Great Commission**

By this time in the ministry of Jesus, the transition from the Law and the Old Covenant to Jesus Christ and the New Covenant was almost accomplished. Jesus needed to suffer on the cross and be resurrected by His Father, then the baptism by the Holy Ghost would be poured out on all people. Nearing the end of His earthly existence and in His closing remarks to the His Disciples just prior to His death, Jesus must have sensed their grief and fright. In the opening verses of the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, He begins the dialogue with the words “let not your heart be troubled.” He continues in the next several chapters to let them know that they would be taught all things, and that they would remember His words after they had been baptized by the Holy Ghost.

The Great Commission, not a Biblical term, is a principle in Christian theology that assigns emphasis to evangelism. Most of the Scriptures dealing with this subject were given directly to the Disciples of Jesus just prior to His death.

The first occurrence of Jesus’ commission to His Disciples is found in the Gospel of Matthew. In commanding His Disciples to preach the Gospel to the world that would include the baptism of the Holy Ghost, did Jesus also command his Disciples to continue with the baptism of water? Matthew does not mention water.

***Matthew 28:17-20***

*<sup>17</sup> And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. <sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: <sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

If water baptism was to decrease as John the Baptist declared in his preaching, why in Matthew's account, did Jesus tell His Disciples to baptize? On the surface, it appears that Matthew's account does not harmonize with the explanation provided by the other Gospel writers. It is important to seek an understanding that harmonizes all of them and not build our faith on the widely held concept of one account. If we examine the only time that Jesus referred to water baptism, He confirmed the only baptism that would be legitimate was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. There would only be one baptism!

***Acts 1:4-5***

*<sup>4</sup> And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. <sup>5</sup> For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

Since the passage in Acts 1:4-5 are the last words of Jesus prior to His ascension, He speaks of John's baptism of water as the one that is past and the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the one of the very near future. There is nothing in the account by Matthew that implies Jesus intended His Disciples to continue to baptize with water. If Jesus had wanted His Disciples to make the baptism of water a permanent part of their ministry, the other Gospel writers would have known it and would not have failed to give an account of such an application. We

can basically understand when both baptisms started, but it is not clear when water baptism completely ceased to be practiced by all of the Apostles.

There are many definitions of baptism, one of them being to identify with, or identification. If we are baptized by the Holy Ghost, we are identified with the “Father, Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Again, if the formula stated in Matthew was the proper way to baptize with water, the other Biblical writers would have mentioned this specific command.

The second occurrence of Jesus’ Great Commission to His Disciples is in Mark. Some Bible scholars say that Mark 16:9-20 may not have been part of the Apostle’s original writings. However, it is dangerous territory to make any assumptions about Scripture being added or taken out. If we believe that ALL Scripture was inspired by God, then we need to deal with those passages that might not be clear and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us.

***Mark 16:14-16***

*<sup>14</sup> Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. <sup>15</sup> And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Could Jesus have intended for them to baptize with water? If so, Mark does not mention water as has been written many other times in conjunction with the baptism of John to Baptist. I do not believe the Jesus meant water at all but a baptism of the Holy Ghost. Belief is the first step to being saved and there is overwhelming evidence from the Bible that if we are not baptized with the Holy Ghost, we cannot be saved! I believe that the baptism stated by Mark is Holy Ghost baptism. It is an act of baptism that is not seen or experienced temporally, but spiritually.

In the third account of the Great Commission, Luke, ever the historian and desiring to “set things in order,” never mentions anything but baptism by the Holy Ghost or the “promise of my Father.”

***Luke 24:44-53***

*<sup>44</sup> And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. <sup>45</sup> Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup> And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: <sup>47</sup> And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And ye are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. <sup>50</sup> And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: <sup>53</sup> And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

In the fourth Gospel, John’s account of the Great Commission was “as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” John also tells us that we would be baptized by Jesus with the “Holy Ghost and with fire.”

***John 20:19-21***

*<sup>19</sup> Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. <sup>20</sup> And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad,*

*when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

In my opinion, of the four Gospels, John is the most doctrinal. The message of salvation brought by Jesus Christ is more clearly defined by John in chapters 14 thru 18. If Jesus had commanded His Disciples to baptize in water, John would certainly have known it and would have indicated what would have been an all important command from Jesus. Jesus said that as His father God had sent Him into the world, so He was sending His Disciples into the world.

***John 21:17***

*<sup>17</sup> He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

Jesus never asked Peter to baptize anyone. His command to him was to feed my sheep, in other words, preach the Gospel to them.

In another of Jesus' Great Commission to His Disciples, He never mentioned water baptism, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit with power. The book of Acts, written by Luke, records the final dialog between Jesus and His Disciples prior to His ascension. He directs their attention to water baptism as in the past and that the Disciples, and others, soon would be baptized with the Holy Ghost. It would seem logical and most significant that if water baptism was a obligatory act to complete salvation, Jesus would have brought this to His Disciples' attention especially at this time and with this Great Commission.

***Acts 1:8-9***

*<sup>8</sup> But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. <sup>9</sup> And when he had spoken these things, while they*

*beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

Another account of the Great Commission is recalled by the Apostle Peter after Pentecost. Describing to the Jerusalem Apostles his experience preaching to Cornelius, Peter emphasized the fact that he recalled Jesus' commandment to preach to the people. The physical act of water baptism is never mentioned.

***Acts 10:36-42***

*<sup>36</sup> The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:); <sup>37</sup> That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; <sup>38</sup> How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. <sup>39</sup> And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: <sup>40</sup> Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; <sup>41</sup> Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

The last account of what is considered the Great Commission is found in the writings of the Apostle Paul. It is apparent that the church in Corinth continued to baptize in water most likely because it was a prominent characteristic of the ministry of John the Baptist as well as a Jewish rite in which they and their ancestors were educated. Paul made it very clear that his commission was not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. If water baptism was necessary, Paul would have carried it out. How could he thank God that he had only baptized a few people if this work were necessary? God, not man, was doing the baptizing with the Holy Ghost.

***1 Corinthians 1:12-18***

*<sup>12</sup> Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; <sup>15</sup> Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. <sup>16</sup> And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. <sup>17</sup> For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. <sup>18</sup> For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

## Baptism by the Holy Ghost at The Day of Pentecost

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Any discussion of water baptism and its purpose in God's plan for the salvation for mankind must include the baptism of the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit). As we have learned from the Gospels, John the Baptist made it distinctly clear that there were two baptisms, one in water and one by the Holy Ghost.

With the coming of the Holy Ghost on the day of the Jewish ceremonial Feast of Pentecost, the plan of salvation was finished. The baptism that Jesus spoke of to His Disciples, not of water but of the Holy Ghost, had finally been poured out as had been prophesied long ago in Old Testament writings by Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Joel. It is clear that this Holy Ghost baptism, taking the place of temporal water baptism, was the one spoken of by John the Baptist when Jesus came to him at the Jordon River to be baptized.

### ***Acts 2:1-4***

*<sup>1</sup> And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

The sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost had been given to all people. Jesus' Disciples, now called Apostles, and others that would come including the Apostle Paul, were charged with taking the Gospel to the world.

# Baptism After Pentecost

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There would be a time of change and learning for these Holy Ghost inspired, sanctified people of God. As absolute the spiritual baptism was, we learn that the Apostles participated in the provisional water baptism after Pentecost. However, this is not evidence that water baptism was to persist since we learn that they generally continued some of their old Jewish customs such as cautioning their converts to abstain from certain meats, requesting that the Apostle Paul adhere to circumcision with the Gentiles, and among other things, initially questioning the legitimacy of preaching the Gospel to Gentiles. The Apostles and their converts would soon learn to put away the old customs and rituals of the Law and the necessity of water baptism, and embrace the understanding that God's mercy and salvation was by grace alone.

These early Christians would be in a learning mode after Pentecost. They would understand the words of Jesus to His Disciples just prior to His death about the Comforter (the Holy Ghost).

## ***John 14:26***

*<sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

The Apostle Peter gave the first recorded sermon after the "day of Pentecost" and the general baptism of the Holy Ghost. He directs the congregation to the Old Testament quoting Joel's prophesy of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all people and declared the prophesy fulfilled.

## ***Acts 2:36-41***

*<sup>36</sup> Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and*

*Christ. <sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? <sup>38</sup> Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. <sup>40</sup> And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. <sup>41</sup> Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Supporters of water baptism as a necessary work for salvation point to this verse as Biblical proof that believing and the act of water baptism brings repentance. The basis for this doctrinal position is not supported in the Scripture because the theme of the entire New Testament is that salvation is not by works but by grace alone!

Rev. E. Joseph Clelland, Sr. writes, “After the Day of Pentecost, many of these Disciples hung on to the old traditions for a while until Bro. Paul (Apostle Paul) started preaching the Word of God more perfectly. John’s baptism was decreasing. There came a time for the period – a stop!”<sup>15</sup>

In the next chapter of Acts, the Apostle Peter preaching from Solomon’s Porch at the Temple provided his congregation with the formula for salvation, but never mentions water baptism. Although the Apostles practiced water baptism after Pentecost, if the act of immersion in water was a component in salvation, Peter certainly would have continued to bring it to their attention.

### ***Acts 3:19-20***

*<sup>19</sup> Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; <sup>20</sup> And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:*

As the new church grew, the message of the Gospel began to spread beyond Jerusalem and the surrounding cities. In the next reference to baptism in Acts, the Apostle Philip goes to Samaria, a city populated by what most pious Jews thought were social outcasts. His preaching achieved results and there “was great joy in that city.” There was a man named Simon, whom the people believe had some type of mystical powers, and he also believed. Presumably, these people were baptized in water in keeping with the message of John the Baptist. However, when the Apostles came from Jerusalem, they prayed for them to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Obviously, their water baptism had not saved them.

***Acts 8:12-17***

*<sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup> Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. <sup>14</sup> Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: <sup>15</sup> Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: <sup>16</sup> (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) <sup>17</sup> Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

Another water baptism event at the hands of the Philip occurred when the Lord send him into Gaza. There he met a man from Ethiopia, who was the treasurer for the queen of that country. This man was reading from the Old Testament scripture, in the book of Isaiah, about a prophecy concerning the Messiah. Philip came to the Ethiopian man’s chariot and had a Bible study right there in the desert, expounding to him the Scripture.

**Acts 8:29-39**

<sup>29</sup> Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. <sup>30</sup> And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeſt? <sup>31</sup> And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me? And he deſired Philip that he would come up and ſit with him. <sup>32</sup> The place of the ſcripture which he read was this, He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth: <sup>33</sup> In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who ſhall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. <sup>34</sup> And the eunuch answered Philip, and ſaid, I pray thee, of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of ſome other man? <sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the ſame ſcripture, and preached unto him Jeſus. <sup>36</sup> And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch ſaid, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? <sup>37</sup> And Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt. And he answered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. <sup>38</sup> And he commanded the chariot to ſtand ſtill: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup> And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch ſaw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

It appears that Philip baptizes the Ethiopian man in the provisional ritual of water baptism taught by John the Baptist. It is not recorded if the Ethiopian man received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but we would only ſuſpect that he did ſince Philip underſtood the meſſage of the Goſpel. Since the New Teſtament was not yet written, the Ethiopian man did not have the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 or Jeſus words to His Diſciples in John 16 about the Comforter. Otherwiſe, the Ethiopian might not have needed to ſtop his chariot.

After the Apostle Paul was struck down on the road to Damascus, he was baptized by a Disciple in Jerusalem whose name was Ananias, a devout Jew according to the Law. It is understandable that if the Apostles were practicing water baptism, then Ananias would follow the same avenue with Paul's conversion. However, Paul preached many times during the course of his ministry to the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost which he could not have done without the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

***Acts 9:17-18***

*<sup>17</sup> And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. <sup>18</sup> And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

Nearing the end of his public ministry, the Apostle Paul recounted his conversion to King Agrippa in this stirring passage of Scripture. The King was so moved by Paul's testimony that he almost was persuaded to be a Christian. Paul never mentions water baptism as a practice in preaching to the Gentiles, only forgiveness of sins and sanctification (baptism of the Holy Ghost).

***Acts 26:13-19***

*<sup>13</sup> At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. <sup>14</sup> And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. <sup>15</sup> And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. <sup>16</sup> But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen,*

*and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; <sup>17</sup> Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, <sup>18</sup> To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. <sup>19</sup> Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:*

Another reference to water baptism after Pentecost is recorded when Peter preaches to a commander in the Roman army named Cornelius and his household. After they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, Peter suggests that these new converts, all Gentiles, be baptized in water. No specific formula or order here just baptized in water. Prior to their participating in ceremonial water baptism, these people were sanctified by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Water baptism was not necessary for their salvation!

***Acts 10:44-48***

*<sup>44</sup> While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. <sup>45</sup> And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. <sup>46</sup> For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, <sup>47</sup> Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? <sup>48</sup> And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.*

After the event with Cornelius, Peter returned to Jerusalem and relates the conversion of Cornelius to the Apostles. The Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem seemed to be skeptical of the Gentiles, who they thought had not been appropriately converted through old customs and rituals to become a Jew outwardly. Peter recounts that during the course of his preaching, the Holy Ghost

came on all of them and he recalled the words of Jesus regarding John the Baptist's water baptism and the baptism by the Holy Ghost.

***Acts 11:11-18***

*<sup>11</sup> And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. <sup>12</sup> And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: <sup>13</sup> And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; <sup>14</sup> Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. <sup>15</sup> And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. <sup>17</sup> Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? <sup>18</sup> When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

After this time, there is no other account in the Bible were Peter practiced water baptism. It appears he finally understood the reality that there was one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. He also writes in his epistle that it was not water that saved us.

***1 Peter 3:18-22***

*<sup>18</sup> For Christ also hath 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: <sup>19</sup> By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; <sup>20</sup> Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight*

*souls were saved by water.* <sup>21</sup> *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:* <sup>22</sup> *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*

Several passages in Acts that reference baptism are attributed to the Apostle Paul. However, in all cases water baptism is not specified, and in fact, only the baptism by the Holy Ghost would have saved them. As has been stated earlier, not all references to baptism are to be understood to denote water baptism. One of the meanings of baptism is to “consecrate and purify by a pouring out or pouring into.”

#### ***Acts 16:12-15***

<sup>12</sup> *And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.* <sup>13</sup> *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.* <sup>14</sup> *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.* <sup>15</sup> *And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

#### ***Acts 16:25-34***

<sup>25</sup> *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.* <sup>26</sup> *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.* <sup>27</sup> *And the keeper of the prison awaking*

out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. <sup>28</sup> But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. <sup>29</sup> Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, <sup>30</sup> And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? <sup>31</sup> And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. <sup>32</sup> And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. <sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. <sup>34</sup> And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

#### **Acts 18:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; <sup>2</sup> And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. <sup>3</sup> And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. <sup>4</sup> And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. <sup>5</sup> And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. <sup>6</sup> And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. <sup>7</sup> And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. <sup>8</sup> And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. <sup>9</sup> Then spake the

*Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:*

***Acts 19:1-6***

*<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, <sup>2</sup> He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. <sup>3</sup> And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. <sup>4</sup> Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup> When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

The Apostle Paul was sent by God to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Jesus Disciples, now Apostles since Pentecost, initially were sent to preach to the Jews, people of their own race. It is to Paul that we look for understanding of what was expected of Gentiles at that time.

***Acts 13:24-26***

*<sup>24</sup> When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. <sup>25</sup> And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. <sup>26</sup> Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.*

As we have discussed, the customs of the Law and water baptism died a gradual death after Pentecost. In the last passage from Acts that we will review,

we find that the Apostles seem to understand that the practice of water baptism was to be eliminated. The Baptism of John was just a provisional deed to bring these people to Jesus Christ.

***Acts 18:24-28***

*<sup>24</sup> And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. <sup>25</sup> This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup> And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. <sup>27</sup> And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: <sup>28</sup> For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.*

“After Pentecost, believers were baptized presumably with water. They sold their possessions and gave to Apostles and had all things in common and continued daily in the Jewish temple, and in breaking bread from house to house. Shall we sell our lands, live in common, frequent Jewish temples and break bread daily from house to house? We see as much authority for doing so as for baptizing with water. If the example of Apostles and believers is Scripture authority for water baptism, it is also Scripture authority to sell our lands, live in common, frequent Jewish temples, etc. We cannot believe that we are required by Scripture or otherwise to do all things which the Apostles and believers did, however good and proper it may have been for them at that time. Much less should we gratify our own predilections by electing to follow their example in water baptism and to reject it in other particulars?”<sup>16</sup>

## Letters of the Apostle Paul

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From the writings of Paul and from his own testimony we understand the Gospel, the elimination of the practices of the Law, and the fullness of grace. Writing to the church in Rome, he states in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans that because of Christ's obedience to God, many could be made righteous. Although sin had been in control, grace has sovereignty through the obedience and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

### ***Romans 5:19-21***

*<sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: <sup>21</sup> That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### ***Romans 6:1-5***

*<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? <sup>3</sup> Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

If righteousness, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, now has control of our spiritual life, why should we continue to live in sin? If we have turned our backs on sin and have left our old life behind, why would we want to

continue to live under the bondage of sin? The opening statement in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans is “God forbid” that we should “continue in sin”. If we “are dead to sin”, then sin has been irradiated from our life by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (sanctification). Being baptized with Christ and buried with Him unto death are figurative of the destruction of our carnal nature and the resurrection of a new life in Christ. This is the born again experience that Jesus discussed with Nicodemus. “We see no more water about baptism into Christ than we see wood in the cross upon which all Christ’s children must be crucified”.<sup>17</sup>

### ***1 Corinthians 10:1-4***

*<sup>1</sup> Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; <sup>2</sup> And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; <sup>3</sup> And did all eat the same spiritual meat; <sup>4</sup> And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

Paul reminds the church at Corinth that their forefathers, the Hebrew nation in the wilderness with Moses, were baptized or brought under the covenant of the Law. He symbolically uses the crossing of the Red Sea and the guidance of God by a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day as being baptized into Moses or brought under the obligation of the Law. No physical water is implied in this passage.

### ***1 Corinthians 12:12-13***

*<sup>12</sup> For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

As there are many components that make up the human body, so there are many members in the body of Christ. Under the Old Covenant with Moses, the Jewish nation was the chosen people of God. Now under the New Covenant of

grace, we are baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body, regardless of our race, creed or color.

***Galatians 3:25-30***

*<sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. <sup>26</sup> For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

If we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, then we have been immersed, plunged, drenched, and overwhelmed in Christ. The Old Covenant Law was our teacher to lead us to Christ. Now we are the children of God by the work of Jesus Christ. "Thus the law did not *teach* us the *living, saving* knowledge; but, by its *rites* and *ceremonies*, and especially by its *sacrifices*, it directed us to *Christ*, that *we might be justified by faith*. This is a beautiful metaphor, and highly illustrative of the apostle's doctrine." <sup>18</sup>

***Ephesians 5:25-27***

*<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

The word of God washes, cleanses, and sanctifies by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This is the true principle of the New Testament.

***Colossians 2:10-15***

*<sup>10</sup> And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: <sup>11</sup> In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the*

*sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: <sup>12</sup> Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.<sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; <sup>14</sup> Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; <sup>15</sup> And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

Again, Paul repeats the same theme as Romans 6 and I Corinthians 12. We are raised from the dead works of our carnal nature, triumphing over our sin, through faith in the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

### ***Hebrews 6:1-3***

*<sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And this will we do, if God permit.*

In this general letter (Hebrews) to the Jewish nation, Paul says that it is time to grow in grace and build on the basics of the Gospel. He urges them to move towards maturity and not linger in the elementary principles of their spiritual journey.

### ***Titus 3:3-7***

*<sup>3</sup> For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy*

*he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; <sup>6</sup> Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; <sup>7</sup> That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Finally, Paul's writing to Titus reflects on their old sinful state and the manifestation of their sinful nature. However, the grace of God and His mercy have washed away their old disposition of sin and renewed their life by the power of the Holy Ghost. This work, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, was given abundantly through the work of Jesus Christ.

## Conclusion

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It is apparent that it took time for the ritual of water baptism to diminish after Pentecost. Just as in the Law, it was a “type and shadow” to bring us to Christ. If we conclude that water baptism is necessary for salvation, than salvation would be of works and the operation of the Holy Spirit would not be of faith alone. If we conclude that water baptism is only a sign of an inner work, then we depreciate the work of the Holy Ghost by placing our faith in works.

There is overwhelming evidence in the Bible that it is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, that saves us. It is unfortunate that many people have been taught the practice of water baptism that was never intended to survive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Although many still hold the view that water baptism should take its place somewhere in the process of salvation, it is never the less not faithful to the teaching of the Bible.

The power of the Holy Spirit accomplishes and sustains salvation in our life. This power is never mentioned in connection with water baptism.

### ***Acts 20:32***

*<sup>32</sup> And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

### ***Ephesians 2:8-9***

*<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

***Ephesians 4:5-6***

*<sup>5</sup> One Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

***2 Thessalonians 2:13***

*<sup>13</sup> But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

***Hebrews 9:8-14***

*<sup>8</sup> The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: <sup>9</sup> Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; <sup>10</sup> Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. <sup>11</sup> But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; <sup>12</sup> Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: <sup>14</sup> How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

***2 Peter 1:3***

*<sup>3</sup> According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

# Definitions of Baptism

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- The term baptize is not a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Catholic term; it is a Greek term. Baptizo in the Greek meant to "dunk," "dip," "plunge," "submerge," or "immerse." Originally, it had no religious connotation. Rather, the word baptize was used to describe a ship that had been sunk in a battle or a piece of cloth that was dipped in dye. Other times it was used to refer to someone who had drowned or a cup that was dipped into a pitcher to drink from. Its use was general in nature.
- Immersion, submersion of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed
- To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe
- A ritual of immersion in water by which one identifies publicly with the fellowship of Christ and the church
- A ceremony, trial, or experience by which one is initiated, purified, or given a name
- To dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (such as a ship that is sunk)
- Identification. When Lydia would dip her fabric in a large jar of purple dye, the fabric would take on the same color as the dye. The fabric was baptized in the dye. This baptism refers to immersion, but also identification.
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# Acknowledgements

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All scripture: The Holy Bible, King James Version 1995 (electronic edition of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version). Bellingham, Washington: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “Law of Moses” refers to the Old Covenant law given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai recorded in the Book of Exodus. This covenant includes the Ten Commandments and the ritual laws pertaining to the nation of Israel. It is also referred to as “the Law” or “the Old Covenant”.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. E. Joseph Clelland Sr., *Baptism, Circa 1952*

<sup>3</sup> The phrase “New Covenant” refers to the New Testament covenant of grace by faith in the work of Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Ron Moseley, PH.D., “The Jewish Background of Christian Baptism” <http://www.bebaptized.org/Jewishroots.htm> (June 16, 2006)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.myjewishlearning.com> (June 16, 2006) & <http://chabad.org> (June 16, 2006)

<sup>6</sup> Day of Atonement - the most holy day of the Jewish calendar. See Exodus 30.

<sup>7</sup> *The Conversion Process*, <http://www.myjewishlearning.com> (June 16, 2006)

<sup>8</sup> Emil Schurer, D.D., M. A. *A History of The Jewish People In The Time of Jesus Christ, Volumes 1-5*, reprinted from the edition originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1890. Hendrickson Publishers, Inc 4<sup>th</sup> printing 2003

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.raptureready.com/resource/steward/19.htm> (July 29, 2006)

<sup>10</sup> Josephus, who became known as Flavius Josephus after becoming a Roman citizen, was a first century Jewish historian of priestly and royal ancestry who survived and recorded the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. His works give insight into important first century Judaism.

<sup>11</sup> The Holiest of Holies was the most consecrated place in the Temple where the priest would go in, once a year, to sprinkle the blood of an animal on the Ark of the Covenant to ask for God’s forgiveness. This once a year ceremony was called the Day of Atonement. The priest was the only person allowed in this special place. For more details, see Exodus 30.

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<sup>12</sup> Efirid, James M., *These Things Are Written*, James Knox Press, 1978, page 87.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. E. Joseph Clelland, Sr., *Writings of Rev. E. Joseph Clelland, Sr.*, 1989

<sup>14</sup> Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1996, c1987). *The works of Josephus : Complete and unabridged. Includes index. (electronic ed. of the new updated ed.)* (484). Peabody: Hendrickson.

<sup>15</sup> Rev. E Joseph Clelland, Sr., *The Writings of E. Joseph Clelland*, 1989, Page 62.

<sup>16</sup> *Water Baptism – A Pagan and Jewish Rite, But Not Christian*  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17222/17222-h/17222-h.htm>

<sup>17</sup> *Water Baptism – A Pagan and Jewish Rite, But Not Christian, Moon*, (see previous)

<sup>18</sup> Clarke, A. (1999). *Clarke's Commentary: Galatians (electronic ed.)*. Logos Library System; *Clarke's Commentaries (Ga 3:24)*. Albany, OR: Ages Software.