

Baptism And Saving Repentance

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**Note 1:** C.E./B.C.E is used instead of traditional A.D/B.C. because the former is less likely to offend non-Christians. As Scripture never commands A.D/B.C, I opted to avoid unnecessary offense.

**Note 2:** Because this treatise is on doctrinal matters, Scripture quotations are from Bible-believing translations. Some translations handle 1 Corinthians 6:9 to hide condemnation of certain types of perverts, and Genesis 1:6 is treated like an ancient myth with "dome." Bible versions containing renderings of Scripture to allow for contra-Scriptural ideas cannot be trusted.

**Note 3:** When the King James Version = KJV and other Reformation-era translations are quoted, there is either no significant difference with the ancient Greek text as evidenced from pre-500 C.E. manuscripts or a correction is offered.

**Important Manuscript Evidence Note:** The oldest manuscripts, being closest in time to the New Testament period, are generally trusted to reflect the text closest to what was originally written. Because attachment to the KJV has been the chief cause of resistance to the original New Testament Greek text, in this note the KJV will be amended to that text. Discussions of manuscript evidence affect these passages:

Acts 2:38: There are five Greek manuscripts from the fifth century and before containing this passage, and four of them have the ASV reading with "your" while only one of them has the KJV reading which omits Greek translated "your" (Metzger, 301; UBS4). The KJV with the original text restored according to what was in the manuscripts closest in time to the New Testament period would read "remission of your sins."

Luke 24:47: Manuscripts from both sides of the Mediterranean Sea from the mid-300's C.E. and before have Greek translated in the NASB "for" rather than KJV "and" (Fitzmeyer, 1520). The scribal alteration undone according to manuscripts closest in time to the New Testament period would adapt the KJV to "repentance for remission of sins" with "for" meaning "para" (Lacueva, 354) = "in-order-for." The Appendix has details.

Luke 23:42: Of seven manuscripts from before 500 C.E., only three have what is translated KJV "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me..."; the three oldest and a fourth have the ancient text (Scrivener, 257; Hodges, Farstad, xvii, 283; Aland, et al, 240) which would go something like "And he said `Jesus, remember me...."

Ephesians 1:1: KJV "in Ephesus" translates an unauthorized scribe addition. Greek text translated "in Ephesus" was **NOT** in surviving manuscripts from before 400 C.E. (Hodges, Farstad, 582) and which have been found on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. This letter was originally a general letter immediately targeted to **ALL** Christians and **NOT** specifically to Ephesian Christians. The original text without the embellishment can be closely translated as "to the saints [existing and] faithful in Christ Jesus" (KJV, ASV) translation "and" plus the verb tense per Marshall, 556; verb meaning per Friberg et al, 289, 131 and Perschbacher, 119 | KJV, ASV).

Acts 8:36-8: What is traditionally versified as 8:37 is an unauthorized scribal addition. There are five manuscripts from the fifth century and before containing the passage from both sides of the Mediterranean Sea, and all five lack what is now called Acts 8:37 (in Comfort, 128). Furthermore, among all the manuscripts copied up to the printing press, the majority of manuscripts still lack the addition (White, 154) and not all of those with what is now 8:37 have the whole (AmerV margin). See the initial discussion of Acts 8:35-8.

After Mark 16:8: The two oldest manuscripts – mid-fourth century and found in Europe and on the Sinai Peninsula – lack anything after Mark 16:8. There is another shorter ending of Mark offered alongside 16:9-20 as another suspected ending in some manuscripts. What is called 16:9-20 is marked as of doubtful origin in manuscripts all the way up to the 1500's (Aland, Aland, 162). Fourth century church writers Jerome and Eusebius report that most manuscripts of their time did not have what is now 16:9-20 (Mann, 674; MacArthur, 1502), and pre-150 C.E. Christian writings show no knowledge of this unauthorized addition. See first article on Mark 16.

*Topics Discussed In Main Body – After preliminary information.*

Part I: Pre-Christian Evidence

Mainstream Jewish Baptism

The Essenes

John the Baptist

Baptisms by Jesus' Disciples On His Authority

Acts 8:35-8

Galatians 3:24-7; Romans 6:2-11; Colossians 2:12

John 3:3-6

Miscellaneous References to "Wash"

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Part II: New Testament Evidence

I Peter 3:21 Uncut

Acts 2:38

Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 10:9-10, and Related

Acts 22:16

More Scripture About Fruit Of Biblical True Faith

When the Jerusalem Temple Curtain Tore

Acts 18:23-29 and 19:1-6

Acts 10:34-8 + 15:8-9

Opening Chapters of I Corinthians

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Part III Early Church Evidence Before 130

Forged Mark 16:16

So-Called Epistle Of Barnabas

Part IV: Common Errors

Baptism Substitutes

Non-Repentance "Baptism"

Faith-Baptism Distinction

Unauthorized Conditions

Delayed Baptism

Pre-Regeneration Righteousness And Similar

**\*\*\*Part V: Digest of Gospel As Preached Early\*\*\***

### *Introduction*

There are two major stances on the role of baptism in Christian salvation. The first holds that repentance and faith are what saves, that submission to baptism is a commanded response to repentance, but that one can be saved while refusing to be baptized. They believe that this is demanded by such passages as Ephesians 2:8-9. This group will be called “non-salvation baptism” advocates in this paper. The second stance insists that people are saved only after a completed baptism. Compare two King James Version punctuations in Acts 2:38b:

1611: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Iesus Christ, for the remission of sinnes, and ye shal receiue the gift of the holy Ghost”

1769: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Iesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”

The non-salvation baptism viewpoint came from the 1500’s Anabaptists, and is still held in descendent groups and other groups in the early 2000’s. The 1611 KJV does allow this interpretation, although the interpretation existed before the 1611 KJV with the Anabaptists. The “and be baptized...Christ” is seen as a tangent command about the response to repentance, with repentance alone and itself bringing “remission of sins.” The other viewpoint has its roots in the nineteenth century and is based heavily on the 1769 KJV, which by itself can only be interpreted to teach baptismal regeneration. The commands are interpreted to be “repent” and then ‘be baptized in order to get the remission of sins.’ We will see that both interpretations deviate from the original New Testament church’s beliefs and practices, which:

- \* 1. taught that faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and repentance confirmed by submission to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ brings “remission of sins,” and \*
- \* 2. practiced that the act of baptism should be done by immersion immediately after acceptance of the Gospel and upon absolutely no other condition than acceptance of the Gospel. \*

Those who truly believe that the Bible is the perfect Word of God and therefore

- ◆ is the final authority in all matters it addresses, and
- ◆ its precepts and sanctioned practices are backed by the wisdom, will, and authority of God Himself, and consequently truly seek to conform to New Testament doctrine and practice, should do likewise.

### *Opening Remarks*

Before I go on to the subject at hand, I want to make some things abundantly clear. First of all, the Scriptural assumptions of this paper are outlined in the header above and the footer below on each page. The passage quoted in the header tells us that every bit of Scripture was given directly by God Himself and comes from Him. Scripture records exactly what God wanted written down for us to read or have read to us as from Him. The passage quoted in the footer tells us that it is a bad idea to create doctrines or mandated practices that cannot be directly inferred from Scripture and its intended interpretation. About the latter, there is a distinction between

1. on one hand using interpretation aids such as ancient language resources, history, or early church writings to help us understand what is written in the Scriptures and intended to be understood,
2. and on the other hand coming up with an entirely new doctrinal innovation and then seeking out Scripture passages to claim the innovation as ‘implicitly a good idea,’ and/or going to early church writings to say that some of our spiritual forefathers thought it was not contrary to Scripture.

It is hoped that the reader can see the difference.

We will center this discussion around the Bible. The Bible has the highest word in this matter; any other evidence will be used to help understand what the Bible says and/or to help confirm our understanding of what the Bible says. Scripture is silent about any further revelation of Scripture after the delivery of the *GREEK* New Testament *WITHOUT TITLES OR VERSIFICATION* in the first century C.E.. Also, we assume that the New Testament church, under the direct leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ’s personal disciples, was closest to how the Lord intended for His church to be. As we try to follow this, we will treat their document as our record from their time. The Greek New Testament and Old Testament Scripture of that time will be how we define ‘Scripture’ in the strictest sense.

Because of this, we will be referring to various language aids such as ancient language lexicons = dictionaries, interlinear New Testaments where each Greek word is printed with literal translations printed directly below these words, English translations, and foreign language translations. The notion

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

that foreign language translations are less the Bible than English translations will not be entertained here. Just as our translations are direct from texts in Greek and Hebrew, so also are foreign language translations. In the exact way that most of us who read English read our King James Version editions, our New International Version editions, our New King James Version editions, or our New American Standard Bible editions and think ‘The Bible says,’ Spanish-reading people read their editions of the Reina-Valera Revisión of 1909 or 1960 and think ‘La biblia dice’ = ‘The Bible says.’ We will consider reading foreign translations and English translations to be reading the Bible in the same sense.

Foreign languages have different grammatical constructions and word-meaning match-up combinations than English. Many times, these aspects make something clear that would normally be missed in English. Hence, that is why I will often draw attention to these foreign translations. Also, foreign translations have an independence from our Bible translation traditions. English translators tend to be influenced by what they have heard in church during the reading of the King James Version. Foreign translators are influenced not by these but by earlier translations into their languages. The 1611 KJV long preface *The Translators to the Reader* referred to consulting “the Spanish” (10<sup>th</sup> page) which was likely the 1602 Valera Bible revision of the 1569 Reyna/Reina Bible. Foreign language translation independence can sometimes shed light on passages.

This study was precipitated by my consternation during Christmas season 1998 after a written correspondence with someone then “identifying with”<sup>1</sup> North Madison Church of Christ in Madison, Indiana. I was confounded by an apparent contradiction between on one hand passages that clearly taught salvation by grace through faith without completed works, and on the other hand passages that seemed to teach that salvation was only after completed baptism. Needless to say, Scripture seeming inconsistent on a matter so important as salvation was of deep concern. This illusion of contradiction was not real. Christians are saved by God’s grace through faith in the Gospel before they do anything at all, but if that faith is true they will be baptized at the earliest opportunity if they know of baptism.

The distinction between belief/faith and repentance versus response works like baptism is what is required for them. One can believe the Gospel and decide to shun sin to obey God immediately and without motion. Baptism and similar require bodily expenditure and arranged opportunities to do them.

The Scriptures do not mandate the extreme positions of the following ‘either-or’ choice which many people seem to assume:

1. hold baptism entirely unrelated to salvation, and that we can evade baptism all our lives and be saved, or
2. believe that salvation is not until after the baptizee arises from the water.

Rather, the Scriptures teach that Christians are saved the instant that they accept the Gospel by faith and believe

In Scripture, “faith” and “belief” mean more than mere intellectual acceptance.’
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enough to respond, but that one sure fruit of true acceptance of the Gospel is willingness to be baptized at the earliest opportunity if baptism is known of. ***This paper was NOT written to denigrate the importance of baptism;*** people who distort Scripture about salvation by faith to self-excuse lives of disobedience do so to their own destruction in the pattern of 2 Peter 3:16. Regardless of this risk, “Do not go beyond what is written” at 1 Corinthians 4:6 is still binding; Scripture says to teach the truth at Ephesians 4:15 and to use Scripture to correct error in the second part of 2 Timothy 3:16 -- further, rejoicing with the truth is commended at 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:6 regardless of mortals’ opinions on truth’s ‘danger,’ or ‘what seems safest to teach’ or ‘what seems best.’ This document is written to follow these Scripture teachings on truth.

*This is best suited to people who TRULY want to know the Bible’s teachings on baptism.*

*The next page will begin our main study. }⇒→*

<sup>1</sup> “Member” is a “denominational” term. In efforts to shun “the denominations” they typically used replacement terms for things their congregation did that were also done among “the denominations.” “Direct our thoughts” instead of “lead us in prayer” is an example. They imagined that subtle changes in wording somehow made these different. Not all Church of Christ congregations engage in this.

*Part I Of V: The History Of Baptism*

Introduction

Baptism was not an invention of John the Baptist; it originated as a ritual performed on converts to Judaism. It was later linked to repentance by the Essenes, who gave the Dead Sea Scrolls and much New Testament terminology. God evidently led John the Baptist to adapt this cultural religious ritual in his ministry. God directed Christians to use Christian baptism at Acts 2:38 and Matthew 28:19-20. Although any historical information is secondary to Scripture, we can see some of the out-of-Scripture assumptions about the meaning of baptism by observing its use before Christianity. We risk error when we neglect that baptism was originally Jewish and take away its Judaic background.<sup>1</sup> Baptism is more than a dip in water. In studying the meaning of the Greek word rendered "baptize/baptism" in the New Testament, we should ask ourselves "What did it mean to the New Testament's ancient audience?" Studying what baptism signified at that time helps us understand what the variants of the Greek word mean -- one has to know the meaning of Scripture's words before s/he can interpret it properly.<sup>2</sup>

Jewish Baptism

The Talmud at Yebamoth 47 a-b relates that potential converts were given explanations of the significance of converting to Judaism. The potential male convert was warned that "Israel is persecuted and oppressed, harassed and afflicted" (in Sandmel, 232) and of legal issues; if he accepted,

"he is circumcised forthwith...As soon as he is healed arrangements are made for his immediate ablution, when two learned men must stand by his side to acquaint him with some of the minor commandments and some of the major ones. When he comes up after his ablution, he is deemed as an Israelite in all respects" (in Slotki; reference in Sandmel, 233).

We see that the Jews baptized only after circumcision, which was conversion. In addition, we see that one was not "deemed as" (Sandmel, 233: "considered") a Jew until baptized, although in both the Old and New Testaments Jews are identified by their circumcision. Jeremiah 9:24-5 says

"Lo, days are coming—declares the LORD—when I will take note of everyone uncircumcised in the foreskin: of Egypt...and all the desert dwellers who have the hair of their temples clipped. For all these nations are uncircumcised, but all the House of Israel are uncircumcised of heart" (JPS 1985).

The New Testament is clearer. Acts 10:45 says "and they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit" (ASV). Galatians 2:8 says of God "for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles" (NASB).

The Old and New Testaments make it clear that circumcision made one a Jew, but the Talmud makes it clear that one is not "*deemed* as," or "considered," a Jew until after baptism. This will become significant when we come to the matter of Christian baptism.

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<sup>1</sup> By extension, when we neglect that the New Testament is a first century document using terminology of the first century C.E., we risk incorrect interpretations of its words and phrases. Of course, the whole New Testament is just as binding now as it was then, but we need to keep in mind what its words and phrases meant to their audiences and were intended to mean to their audiences in order to understand what they mean forever. BIBLE MEANINGS FOR BIBLE TERMS.

<sup>2</sup> This is similar to advances in Bible translation. In the late nineteenth century, archaeological discoveries of ancient papyrus documents caused biblical scholars to learn that the Greek New Testament was not its own special form of Greek but rather was written in a Greek dialect common at its time used for ordinary matters. Word studies of these secular documents helped biblical scholars better understand the meanings of the Greek words and phrases in the New Testament. To be able to understand Scripture, you first have to know what its words mean, and that is why we are studying the pre-Christian history of baptism and what it meant to New Testament-era people.

The Essenes

The Essenes were a monastic, strict, Jewish religious group. They rejected the mainstream Jewish culture and set up monastic communities, notably at Qumran. They were strict believers in a Messianic future, an imminent judgment of the wicked majority, and a very strict moral and ceremonial code of purity. Their practices included purification baths.

They laid a great deal of significance on these purification baths. The Manual of Discipline, also called IQS or the “Community Rule,” says regarding any person who receives these rituals that “No one is to go into water in order to obtain the purity of holy men. For men cannot be purified except they repent of their evil” (IQS 5:13-4 in Gaster; reference from Fritsch, 66). The candidates must have repented before the bath would have any effect on them. However, the washing ritual did not atone for sin. The Manual of Discipline was clear about this. It says of the candidate that

“he shall neither be purified by atonement, nor cleansed by purifying waters, nor sanctified by seas and rivers, nor washed clean with any ablution. Unclean, unclean shall he be. For as long as he despises the precepts of God he shall receive no instruction in the Community of His counsel. For it is through the spirit of true counsel concerning the ways of man that all his sins shall be expiated that he may contemplate the light of life. **He shall be cleansed from all his sins by the spirit of holiness uniting him to His truth, and his iniquity shall be expiated by the spirit of uprightness and humility.** And when his flesh is sprinkled with purifying water, it shall be made clean by the humble submission of his soul to all the precepts of God” (IQS 3:4-9 in Vermes; reference in Fritsch, 66; emphasis mine).

In these washing rituals, one could not bathe unless s/he repented. The person was cleansed by repentance and a submissive spirit to God’s commands. However, by washing the candidate does make the body = “flesh” pure = “clean,” a Jewish term meaning “fit for God’s service”; “purifying water” was based on Numbers 8:7, where Levites are cleansed by three processes, one of which is “sprinkle on them water of purification” (JPS 1985). A sprinkling act apparently followed going “into water” (IQS 5:13). The Essenes were thorough; they sent their converts “into water,” which was “water of purification,” and then “sprinkled with purifying water” (IQS 3:4-9). As in mainstream Judaism, the candidate was sanctified, consecrated, and set apart, by baptism.

John The Baptist

Note: The Gospel of John is by the apostle John, and the person described as baptizing here is John the Baptist; these are two different people.

Now we progress to the first certain case where God Himself used baptism: the ministry of John the Baptist. By John’s time, baptism was a familiar concept to the Jews. At John 1:25 some people sent by the Pharisees asked John “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet” (NASB). They were asking ‘On what authority do you create a new baptism?’ The Jewish priesthood had been baptizing converts to Judaism for ages, and the Essenes had been baptizing Essene Jews in Essene communities, but John was baptizing all the full Jews he could wherever he could. John’s baptism was a new baptism in the Jewish baptismal tradition, and it was a concern to the power-greedy first-century Jewish religious leadership.

John’s baptism was apparently very similar to that performed by the Essenes. We have two main records of John the Baptist: the New Testament, and first-century Jewish historian Josephus. First, let us review John’s baptism of repentance in the New Testament. In Matthew 3:11a John says “As for me, I baptize you with water for(εἰς) repentance” (NASB) and Luke 3:3b reports that John was “preaching a baptism of repentance for(εἰς) the forgiveness of sins” (NASB). We adapt these readings to another suggested translation of εἰς : “because of” (among them: Criswell, Acts 2:38 note; MacArthur, Acts 2:38 note; Mark 1:4 NKJvmg; Acts 2:38 RVAmg “sobre la base del” = upon the basis of-the):

Matthew 3:11a “As for me, I baptize you with water because-of (εἰς) repentance”

Luke 3:3b “preaching a baptism of repentance because-of (εἰς) the forgiveness of sins”

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

It is unlikely that people were willing to be baptized if they had not repented, so for Matthew 3:11 it is most likely that “because of” is meant here. William Tyndale’s early English translation of Matthew 3:11a has “I Baptise you in water in token of repentaunce” (1526). The Spanish paraphrase LBD also presents Matthew 3:11a well: “Yo bautizo con agua a los que se arrepienten de sus pecados” = “I baptize with water to those that themselves they-repent of their sins.” However, it seems rather odd, if repentance alone was necessary for forgiveness of sins, that John was baptizing. There was obviously some necessity for baptism, suggesting “for” in Luke 3:3.

John baptized with water because of repentance, and this baptism was the first result of this repentance, and such repentance led to the forgiveness of sins. Repentance alone was not acceptable and baptism alone was not acceptable; only repentance leading to baptism was acceptable. We have:

Matthew 3:11a “‘I baptize you with water because-of (εἰς) repentance’” (NASB adapted)

Luke 3:3b “preaching a baptism of repentance for (εἰς) the forgiveness of sins” (NASB).

Acts 19:4a has “Joan certament va batejar amb un baptisme de penediment” (Catalan) = “John certainly did baptize with a baptism of penitence.” John’s baptism was done on the condition of repentance, and this repentance + baptism combination was preached and practiced with a purpose “for the forgiveness of sins.” Regarding what John preached of his baptism, the Greek word order places “baptism” before “repentance” and then “forgiveness of sins” at both Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3, as so literally: “un bautismo de arrepentimiento para perdón de pecados” (Lacueva, 137, 233) = “a baptism of repentance in-order-for pardon of sins.” The baptism was to accompany the repentance that was for “forgiveness of sins.”

For some, defining repentance might be useful. Some believe that repentance is all about changing the belief structure. This is not Scripture’s primary concern. In Scriptural repentance, the emphasis is on changing of actions. This is certainly the case about John’s baptism. John preached “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” at Matthew 3:2 (NASB) and “Bring forth therefore fruits answerable to amendment of life” at Matthew 3:8 (per KJV 1611 margin). Luke 3:10-4 explains:

“What should we do then?” the crowd asked. John answered, ‘Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.’ Even tax collectors came to be baptized. ‘Teacher,’ they asked, ‘what should we do?’ ‘Don’t collect any more than you are required to,’ he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, ‘And what should we do?’ He replied, ‘Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay’” (TNIV).

John’s baptism of repentance emphasized a change in the deeds people do.

The first century Jewish historian Josephus gives us more detail about how this combination worked, as well as giving the answer to the age-old riddle about why the sinless Christ was baptized. Josephus explains that John the Baptist

“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 that the soul was thoroughly justified beforehand by righteousness” (*Antiquities* 18:5:2 in Whiston, brackets original; reference in Stendahl, 40).

Josephus provides the answer to the age-old mystery of why the sinless Christ was baptized. John “commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism.” By being baptized, Jesus was not repenting of or confessing any sins; Jesus was exercising “piety towards God.” As a messenger of God, John commanded the Jews to be baptized as an act of “piety towards God.” Therefore, Jesus was baptized “to fulfill all righteousness” according to Matthew 3:15b (NBV).

Josephus and the New Testament may seem to contradict each other. Remember Mark 1:4b and Luke 3:3b state that John preached “a baptism of repentance for(εἰς) the forgiveness of sins” (NASB), and we must always place Scripture above anything else because it is the very Word of God. However, these are not contradictory. W. H. Brownlee suggested that Josephus meant “that

the fulfillment of the moral conditions for cleansing is what brings remission of sins, not baptism per se” (in Stendahl, 40). My reconciliation is identical, but I will explain it differently. John preached “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2 NASB) and “Bring forth therefore fruits answerable to amendment of life” (3:8 KJV 1611 margin reading), and he baptized people “as they confessed their sins” (3:6b NASB). John preached that the people must repent and bring forth deeds fitting this amendment of life. Among these deeds was confirmation of “piety towards God” by submission to baptism. In the baptism “of repentance” (KJV) or “of amendment of life” (GenB), repentance that brought one to baptism caused “remission of sins,” because “the soul was thoroughly justified beforehand by righteousness” (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18:5:2).

The baptism did not itself “put away” sins, because the righteousness of the repentant had already cleansed the soul, just as the Essenes believed. One who was baptized due to “repentance” was truly repentant, because s/he proved a submissive spirit to God in baptism; one who was ‘regretful’ but would not be baptized was not obedient to God, and therefore not repentant. John’s baptism, like mainstream Jewish baptism and Essene baptism, was used to identify and confirm a change. John practiced and preached a repentance + baptism combination intended “for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:3b NASB, others) with “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (NASB).

Unlike previous baptisms among Jews, John’s baptism was not independent of Christianity. At Acts 19:4 “Paul said, ‘John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance | saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus” (TNIV|ASV).

### Baptisms By Jesus’ Disciples On His Authority

Simultaneously to the closing period of John’s baptism ministry, Jesus had His disciples baptizing. John 3:22-3 says “After these things, Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing. John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized” (NASB). John 4:1 says “Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John” (NASB) and clarifies “although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were” (NASB).

This baptism was not in rivalry to John’s. They were simultaneous. Jesus had heard John speak of unworthiness to baptize Him at Matthew 3:14 and parallels; the authority variation was known to both, so John would have stopped if Jesus held their baptisms in rivalry. While both were involved in baptism ministries, John said at John 3:29b-30 “this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease” (NASB), but 4:1 indicates that John was still baptizing when Jesus stopped His baptism ministry. When we recall that Jesus was baptized by John beforehand, and that in Jewish culture baptism identified joining, we infer that these two baptisms were the same.

It is important to note John 4:1a “Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples” (NASB). There was a distinction here between ‘making disciples’ and ‘baptizing disciples.’ We also observe John 12:47b where Jesus says “I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (ASV), yet at John 4:2 Jesus’ role in this ministry is clarified: “Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were” (NASB). Jesus came to save everyone, yet Himself baptized no one. We infer that in Jesus’ baptism ministry, baptism was not part of getting people saved.

John 6:28-9 says “The people asked Jesus, ‘What are the works God wants us to do?’ Jesus answered ‘The work God wants you to do is this: to believe in the One that God sent’” (ICB). Recall that Jesus had been involved in a baptism ministry, but when they asked for a plurality of “works” to “do,” Jesus had just one -- belief on Him. Hence, when Jesus said at 6:29 that the singular “work” “believe” and that ONE “work” only is what “God wants” us “to do,” this excluded baptism.

The Gospel of John was written to New Covenant Christians so “that by believing you may have life in| His name” (ESV|NASB). In New Covenant Gospel salvation, the baptism ritual itself will be distinct from salvation by faith itself, but will be an obligated follow-up to any genuine biblical faith.

*Part II Of V: New Testament Christian Baptism*

A Jewish Christian’s View—I Peter 3:21

Peter was a Galilean fisherman when he became one of Jesus’ personal disciples; he would have been involved at John 3:22-4:2 previously discussed. He was a Jew first, and then he became a Jewish Christian. As a Palestinian Jew, he would have been familiar with the cultural meanings of baptism. The Jews had been baptizing for centuries. He makes a very striking statement about the significance of baptism among Christians in I Peter 3:21, *a verse which many leave the clarifying part off of when quoting*. I present two modified traditional translations of the verse:

<u>ASV NASB RSV IKJV</u>	<u>RVR 1995 RVA RVR 1995</u>	<u>RVR RVA RVR translated</u>
“which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism ( not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a  clear conscience ), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”	“El bautismo que corresponde a esto ahora  os  salva (no quitando las inmundicias del cuerpo, sino como la aspiración de una buena conciencia hacia Dios) mediante la resurrección de Jesucristo”	“The baptism that corresponds to this now  you  saves (not removing the filths of-the body, but as the aspiration of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus-Christ”

Note: the word “como”=“as” in Spanish is in italics in the LBLA and 1909 RVR. In the LBLA and RVR 1909 (no italics in later revisions) formats, italics mark words absent from the Greek text, but added by the translators as implied. Portuguese and most English translations lack “as.”

Note #2: *Many people cut the verse off before the word “not” and teach the verse’s opposite.*

By writing “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” he makes it clear that the water bath does not save anyone. The Essenes taught the same; they taught that the spirit of repentance and submission to God, which was represented by baptism, was what cleansed (1QS 3:4-9). He calls baptism “an appeal to God for a clear conscience” or “the aspiration of a good conscience toward God” = desire to replace a bad conscience = repentance. He calls baptism ‘repentance’; in other words, he identifies baptism as “as” repentance, and so a representation of repentance. By doing so, Peter continues the Jewish tradition of baptism. Like the Essenes and John the Baptist, Peter considered baptism to be the act representing cleansing repentance, which is conversion. Like the Jews, the Essenes, and John the Baptist, Peter did not believe in baptism without a conversion to represent with that baptism.

Remember what Jewish baptism represented. We have already seen that in Jewish baptism, the convert “On emerging from his baptism he is considered an Israelite in every way” (from Yebamot 47 a-b cited in Sandmel, 233). Baptism was after circumcision, and circumcision made one a Jewish convert. The Old and New Testaments make clear that circumcision made one a Jew, but the Talmud makes clear that one was not treated as a Jew until after baptism. The Essenes were quite similar; one was consecrated = set apart by baptism. Christian baptism is the same way; one is a Christian after fulfilling the requirements of salvation -- such as faith, belief, and repentance -- but these Christian attributes are not identified or acknowledged except by baptism. In the pure design of the Lord’s directly commissioned apostles, one was not to be considered a Christian until after baptism. It is for this reason that baptism was performed and is to be performed immediately upon conversion.

Notice that Peter talked about baptism and repentance as the same event. Peter talks about repentance and baptism as the same event because in New Testament times converts were baptized upon conversion, as evident from all baptism stories in Acts. In Peter’s time, delayed baptism was unknown. Delayed baptism was an early second century perversion, foreign to the New Testament:

1. Ignatius, c.110, *Smyrneans* 8, ordered no baptisms be done without bishop authorization;
2. Didache 7:4, c.125(±25 years), ordered baptism candidates to fast one day before baptism.

There is absolutely no mention of any delayed baptism in the New Testament—NONE. The original design of the New Testament church was for baptism to be done *immediately* as identification of true Christians; any baptism practice not fully in line with the pure New Testament design risks impurity.

The Jewish Christian Establishment Of Christian Baptism—Acts 2:38

This is the introduction of Christianity in Jerusalem by the author of 1 Peter 3:21. Among the Jewish audience of Acts 2 it was a cultural assumption that any conversion involved baptism (in Stamps, Adams, Acts 2:38 note) due to a rich tradition of pre-Christian baptism among Jews. Two translations:

NKJV|KJV 1611 (|ASV|): “Repent, and(καί) let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus| Christ, for(εἰς) the remission of |your| sinnes”

Adapted (|ASV|): “Repent, and(καί) let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus| Christ, because-of(εἰς) the remission of |your| sinnes” (from Criswell; MacArthur; Mk 1:4 NKJvMg).

One non-salvation baptism stance believes that repentance itself brings “remission of sinnes,” and that the command to be baptized is a second command to respond to this repentance. This interpretation is allowed by the 1611 KJV, but cannot be understood when one has only the 1769 KJV and its descendent modern English translations to refer to. The first modern non-salvation viewpoint appeared among non-English speakers on the European mainland in the 1500’s. An example of a major non-salvation interpretation is this proposed interpretation of Acts 2:38: “Repent for the remission of sins, and you will receive the gift which is the Holy Spirit; and let each of you be baptized in the name of Christ” (King James, Acts 2:38 note). The Anglicans who both translated and revised the KJV up to 1769 believed “Baptisme is not onely a signe of profession, and marke of difference,” but that it “is also a signe of regeneration or newe byrth” (*Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, XXVII; Schaff 3:504). They held that baptism is a sign of regeneration. The salvation viewpoint interprets this to say one is not saved until after s/he has been baptized. Both are both partially right and partially wrong.

If the act of baptism causes salvation, then the Bible contradicts itself. Ephesians 2:8-9 has “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (KJV). This means no work, including baptism, determines salvation; salvation does not depend on the *act* of baptism -- we do not enter the baptismal pool unsaved and emerge saved.

It is important to remember that in John’s baptism, the baptism was “of repentance” which was “for the forgiveness of sins” (NBV) per Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3. The emphasis was on the repentance.

At Acts 10:43 Peter preached of Christ “through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins” (ASV); here, belief itself causes “remission of sins.” Ephesians 1:13 also proves the impossibility of one needing to do some act to be saved: “In whom, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation -- having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (NASB alternate). This means that one receives the Holy Spirit immediately upon belief, and Acts 2:38 shows that the Spirit is given only after “remission of sins,” so together these verses show that sin is pardoned the moment of belief in the Gospel. Acts 2:38 shows that baptism is expected of anyone who repents due to belief causing “remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

The salvation viewpoint of the verse also fails when the verse is closely broken down. Observe this highly literal translation of the verse:

Acts 2:38b ASV|NKJV|KJV 1611|RV, ASV|KJV 1611): “Repent ye, | and let every one of you be baptized in the | Name of Iesus Christ, for the remission of |your| sinnes.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional Spanish Reina-Valera series has at the beginning of the verse “Arrepeníos” (RVR all) which means “Repent-you,” the “os” being an informal pronoun for “you people.” The RV and ASV, like the KJV, used pronouns starting with “y” to address groups of people, and pronouns starting with “th” to address individuals. Such a distinction exists in Greek, and in Spanish, but unfortunately not in English or widely circulated post-ASV English translations. The RVR and ASV translate a Greek emphasis that the KJV did not. “Repent ye” is a collective command. If one notices, the “let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (NKJV) is a singular command addressing individuals; instead of “every,” the Spanish Reina-Valera Revisiónes of 1909, 1960 and 1995 plus Portuguese de Almeida ERA and ERC use “cada” = “each.” However, the “your sinnes” returns the emphasis to the

<sup>1</sup> There are five Greek manuscripts from the fifth century or before containing this passage, and four of them have the ASV reading with “your” while only one of them has the KJV reading which omits “your”; see Metzger, 301 and UBS4.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

collective body. This supports the non-salvation viewpoint’s contention that the “be baptized” is a tangent individual command to a collective repentance that led to collective remission of sins.

Nonetheless, Acts 2:38 shows that baptism does have something to do with salvation. Before we attempt to reconcile the passages, we will look at an alternative translation of Acts 2:38.

It has been suggested that εἰς “for” is better translated “because of” (among them: MacArthur, Criswell, Mark 1:4 NKJvmg, RVAmg “sobre el base del” = “over the basis of-the”). This would make the NKJV “Repent, and let him be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, because of the remission of sins.” This is unlikely. Christian baptism follows John’s baptism. We already established that for John’s baptism “εἰς the remission of sins” definitely meant “in-order-for the remission of sins.” A second reason is the use of the term by Jesus at the Last Supper: “For this is my blood of the covenant|, which is shed for(περι) many for(εἰς) the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28 ASV,RV|KJV,NKJV). It is impossible that Jesus’ blood was shed ‘because of the remission of sins’; rather, the shedding of His blood was ‘in order for the remission of sins’ as Hebrews 9:22b “apart from shedding of blood there is no remission” (ASV, RV). A third reason is also from Jesus’ words: “that repentance for(εἰς) forgiveness (KJV “remission”) of sins would be proclaimed in His name” (Luke 24:47a NASB; see appendix for why εἰς instead of KJV και “and”) as in “arrepentimiento para perdón” (Lacueva, 354) = “repentance in-order-for pardon.” The εἰς at Acts 2:38 means “in order for.”

We see baptism involved in a process “for remission of sins.” Does this mean that baptism is a saving act, contrary to Ephesians 2:8-9? It does not. The word translated “and” is Greek και, which is a conjunction with multiple meanings. One of these is “and so” (Vine, et al, 694 NT) or “so” (Strong, *Greek Lexicon*, 45). I cite the following verses:

- Matthew 5:15 “Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and(και) it shineth unto all that are in the house” (ASV; from Vine et al, 694 NT.).
- Hebrews 3:19 “So(και) we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (KJV; *ibid.*).
- Luke 10:29 “But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right. So he said to Jesus,| ‘And(και) who is my neighbor?’ (ICB|NBV; *ibid.*).
- Acts 3:19a “Repentez-vous donc et(και) convertissez-vous = repent-you, so[↔]and convert-you | so(εἰς) that your sins may be wiped away” (NVS/NELS/LSG | NASB).

These verses illustrate the “and so” use of και. This means Acts 2:38 can be translated:

- NKJV (|ASV) adapted: “Repent, and-so(και) let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for(εἰς) the remission of |your| sins”
- KJV 1611 (|ASV) adapted: “Repent, and-so(και) be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for(εἰς) the remission of |your| sinnes”

Baptism is a **commanded** follow up to any repentance that leads to the remission of sins. At Acts 2:38a Peter commands repentance, and defines that repentance. The verb tense of “repent” is second person imperative, while that of the “be baptized” is third person passive imperative, stressing individual obedience (in Criswell, Acts 2:38 note). Because of difference in Greek verb tenses, the “be baptized” does not have the same force as “repent” (in Zodhiates, 397). This is seen in the NKJV “let.” In most Spanish, Portuguese, and French translations this is shown by the subjunctive mood, which has several uses, in this case **obligation**. Spanish has either “sea bautizado” (RVA)=“may(let)-s/he-be baptized” or “bautícese” (RVR all; NVI; VP)=“may(let)-s/he-baptize-self” =‘may-s/he-get-self-baptized.’ Portuguese has “seja batizado” (DA ERA/ERC/ECRF, BLH, NTLH)=“may-s/he-be baptized.”

- French “Repentez-vous, et que chacun de vous soit baptisé” (NVS/NELS/LSG) = “Repent-you, and that each of you s/he-might-be baptized.”
- Spanish RVR 1909/1960/1995 “Arrepentíos, y bautícese cada uno de vosotros” and Portuguese original D’Almeida “Arrependeivos, e bautizese cada hum de vosoutros” = “You-repent you, and let-s/he-get-self-baptized each one of you.”
- Portuguese de Almeida ERA and ERC: “Arrependei-vos, y cada um de vós seja batizado” = “You-repent-you, and each one of you let-s/he-be baptized.”

“Bautizar” is an “ar” verb and normal “er”-“ir” verb endings for those are subjunctive.

Imperatives of “ser”=“be”: Spanish “sé” = Portuguese “se” and “sed”= “sede”; subjunctive “sea”=“seja.”

To reflect the Greek, these use normal imperative for “repent” but use the subjunctive for “be baptized” showing obligation. “Repent” is a command, and “be baptized” is an obligation from repentance.

II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

Baptism is not optional with respect to salvation. Submission to baptism is an obligation of any repentance leading to forgiveness of sins. It is often believed that baptism is a command, but that one who refuses to be baptized is disobedient but still saved. This verse is clear to the contrary.

Punctuation needs to be addressed. To clarify the passage, a comma should be returned to its place before "for" as in the 1611 KJV; the original Portuguese D'Almeida Bible “Christo, pera” and two revisions ERC and ECRF “Cristo, para”; the French Segond series; the modern Spanish VP; and these translations from people who viewed baptism necessary for salvation -- the Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate by Catholic bishops, and the 1835 New Testament of Alexander Campbell:

“And Peter said to them, Reform, and be each of you immersed in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Why would I favor a comma between “Jesus Christ” and “for”? The punctuation is important. Some interpret the KJV 1769 punctuation to mean ‘repent, and then be baptized in order to get the remission of sins.’ This interpretation places the emphasis on the act of baptism. This interpretation is inconsistent with the rest of what the biblical author says about repentance and salvation, and is especially inconsistent with another use of the phrase “for the remission of sins” elsewhere by the same author. Luke and Acts were written by one author, Luke, and were originally one two-part book (Luke 1:1-3; Acts 1:1). Let us observe three passages from this joint work:

<u>Luke 3:2b-3</u>	<u>Luke 24:46-7</u>	<u>Acts 3:19 (also written by Luke)</u>
“the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the desert. Then he went into all the area on either side of the Jordan River, preaching a baptism of repentance for(εἰς) the forgiveness of sins” (NBV).	“Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for(εἰς) forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem” (NASB; see appendix about εἰς <i>instead of</i> καὶ “and” KJV).	“Arrependedi-vos, pois, e converteí-vos, para(εἰς) que sejam  cancelados os vuestros pecados” (DA ERC, DA ECRF  DA ERA)=“Repent-you, therefore, and convert-you, to/in-order-for(εἰς) that they-may-be  canceled the your sins.”

Acts 3:19 “convertei” = “convert” is the same Greek word for “turn” at Acts 26:20 “they must repent and turn to God and do works consistent with repentance” (NBV). It simply means to change.

Comparing these to Acts 2:38 shows that Luke intended to be understood as meaning ‘repent for forgiveness of sins’ and ‘let s/he be baptized on name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins,’ suggesting a comma before “for” as in aforementioned sources. This punctuation clarifies that repentance and submission to baptism are equals in a process “for remission of your sins.” The verdict:  
 \* | “You-people-repent-you, and-so let-s/he-be-baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus \*  
 \* | Christ, in-order-for the pardon/remission of you-people’s sins; and you-people shall receive \*  
 \* | the gift of the Holy Spirit.” \*

This translation best matches the evidence granted from other verses and the verb tenses.

To clarify the interpretations of Acts 2:38a, I provide a visual aid below:

Common Non-Salvation Interpretation: Repent----->> For the remission  ----->> Let s/he be baptized
Common Salvation Interpretation: Repent----->> Let s/he be Baptized----->> For the remission
Correct Interpretation: Repent    ----->> For the remission Let s/he be baptized

Among the Jewish audience of Acts 2, it was a cultural assumption that any conversion involved baptism (in Stamps, Adams, Acts 2:38 note) because of the tradition of pre-Christian baptism among Jews. Peter was telling his Jewish audience to repent, and therefore convert to Christ. For Jews and non-Jews, Acts 2:38 shows that baptism is an obligation of saving repentance. Peter commanded repentance, and defined that repentance. Saving repentance leads one to seek identification with Jesus Christ, done by submission to baptism on His name, and this repentance leads to salvation. Proper

repentance is confirmed by baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. One who is unwilling to be baptized in the name of Jesus cannot be saved because s/he does not have Christian repentance. Hence, submission to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ saves a person as confirmation of valid repentance.

What About Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 10, And Related Passages?

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (KJV) at 2:8-9. This proves that there is no deed that causes salvation upon completion, thereby negating any and all baptismal regeneration theories. So does that mean that submission to baptism can have nothing to do with the causes of salvation, as many insist?

Note also John 20:31 “but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and [that by believing you may have life in] His name” (ASV|ESV|NASB). In Acts 16:30 the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (ASV) upon which they replied at 16:31 solely “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved” (NBV, NLT). Then the jailer’s family was preached to with words unspecified, and then he washed their wounds, and after that he was baptized. We turn to Acts 13:38b-39 “through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes [is justified from everything, |a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses” (TNIV|HCSB|TNIV). These passages may seem to suggest that mere belief is enough, and that baptism, as a work, is completely unrelated to salvation.

Continuing the title passage at Ephesians 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (KJV) -- note “unto.” II Corinthians 5:17a says “Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature” (ASV); only after we are saved by the faith “not of works” described in Ephesians 2:8-9 can we do the “good works” which are “ordained” by God. Of course, baptism was specifically “ordained” for Christians. Further:

- ◆ Galatians 5:6 “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, [but only | the kind of faith that works through love” (NASB|ESV| ICB).
- ◆ James 2:22 on Abraham’s *unfinished* sacrifice of Isaac “faith was working with his works, and as the result of the works, faith was completed” (NASB margin) followed by 2:24 “You see that a man is justified by works and not faith alone” (NASB) per 2:22 “as the result of the works, faith was completed.”

True faith has follow-up works. Romans 10:9 “if you might confess in| thy mouth the Lord Jesus and |you might trust| in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (McReynolds, 576|KJV|McReynolds, 576|KJV) and 10:10b “And we |in mouth| say what we believe, and so we are saved” (ICB|McReynolds, 576|ICB). Here is a work: confessing the Lord Jesus vocally. Regarding faith, the person is already assumed to believe what s/he “might trust” about the resurrection; regarding the work, the person is expected to have the confession ready in the mouth. The Gospels indicate muteness was common at that time, but Revelation 22:17 says “whoever wishes” (ICB) can partake of the eternal life of salvation -- even those who cannot speak. John, who wrote near the end of his Gospel at 20:31 “but these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (NASB) at I John 2:3 wrote “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments” (NASB) and “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also” (I John 2:23 NASB) matching Romans 10. True faith causes general good works and the specific act of confession. We must accept that salvation comes at the moment of true belief before the penitent *does* anything at all, because Romans 4:5 says “And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness” (ESV), but this true belief causes *willingness* to do specific acts.

We now turn back to baptism. Baptism shares a special category with confession of the Lord Jesus Christ. Given opportunity, these are specific results to true belief that are required. True belief leads to confession and repentance, the latter is confirmed by baptism, which is also an act of confession. A baptism in the name of Christ is an identification with Christ by an act in His name, which is the strongest confession, and a sign and response of true repentance.

Acts 22:16

Recalling his own conversion, Paul remembers Ananias saying to him “And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sinnes, calling on the name of the Lord” (KJV 1611). Some interpreters who do not understand Ephesians 2:8-10 believe the phrase “wash away thy sinnes” points backwards to “be baptized”; they believe this passage means that baptism washes away sins. First, regardless of Paul’s baptismal situation, at Acts 26:18 Paul explains that the Lord told him that his mission was to the Gentiles “para que reciban, por la fe que es en mí, remisión de pecados y suerte entre los santificados” (RVR 1909) = “in-order that they-might-receive, by the faith that is in me, remission of sins and lot among the sanctified.” For Gentiles, salvation was to be by faith. Second, the Greek and probably the KJV translators meant the phrase “calling...Lord” as an appositive to describe “wash...sins”; another appositive: “get some rest, *go to sleep*.” The phrase “wash away thy sinnes” points *forward*. Third, the word “and” separates “be baptized” from “Arise.” When “and” is interpreted consistently, we see that the second “and” separates “wash away thy sinnes” from “be baptized.” The phrase “wash away thy sinnes” points *forwards*, **not** backwards; this should be even more apparent because the command to "be baptized" expects a passive subject, while the commands "wash" and "calling" expect an active subject.

The grammatical structure of translation is important; observe clearer translations in:

1. A modern literal Spanish translation: “Y ahora, ¿por qué te detienes? Levánte y sé bautizado, y lava tus pecados invocando su nombre” (LBLA) = “And now, for what you(self) you-detain? Let-you-rise and you-be baptized, and wash your sins invoking His name.”
2. The old 1560 English Geneva Bible (GenB): “Now therefore why tariest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sinnes, in calling on the Name of the Lord.”
3. Tyndale's early English New Testament: “And now, why tariest thou? Aryse and be baptised, and wesse away thy synnes, in callyng on the name of the lorde” (1526).
4. Two modern literal English translations: “Now then, why hesitate? Rise; be baptized and, calling on His name, be cleansed from your sins” (NBV) and “And now, why do you delay? Rise and be baptized, and by calling upon His name, wash away your sins” (Amp.).
5. The common French Segond series: “Et maintenant, pourque tardes-tu? Léve-toi, sois baptisé, et lavé de tes péchés, en invoquant le nom du Seigneur” (NVS) = “And now, why delay-you? Raise-you, let-you-be baptized, and wash your sins, in invoking the name of-the Lord.” LSG and NELS have “que” in place of “pourque”; “que” means “what” here.
6. The 1855 edition of the French Version Martin (VM): “Et maintenant que tardes-tu? Léve-toi, et sois baptisé, et purifié de tes péchés, en invoquant le nom du Seigneur” = “And now what you-delay-you? Raise-you, and let-you-be baptized, and you-purify of your sins, in invoking the name of-the Lord.”
7. The 1996 revision of the Reformation-era French Version d'Ostervald has “Et maintenant, que tardes-tu? Léve-toi, sois baptisé et lavé de tes péchés, en invoquant le nom du Seigneur” (VOR) = “And now what you-delay-you? Raise-you, let you be baptized, and wash of your sins, in invoking the name of-the Lord.”

Paul is here told to be baptized, but he washes his sins “by/in calling upon His name.”

Let us go to a more fluid translation that highlights this for us: “Y ahora, no esperes más. Levántate y bautízate, invocando el nombre del Señor para lavarte de tus pecados” (VP) = “And now, no let-you-wait more. Raise-you and baptize-you, invoking the name of-the Lord in-order-to wash-you of your sins.” This highlights that Paul was washing away his sins by calling on the name of the Lord in accordance with Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13 quoting Joel 2:32b.

This is not to say baptism was not necessary. At Acts 22:16 the phrase “be baptized” is literally translated “submit yourself to baptism” (Criswell, Acts 22:16 note) and that is seen in Portuguese translations as “recebe o batismo” (DA ERA) = “you-receive the baptism” or “seja batizado” (BLH, NTLH) = “let-you-be baptized.” The French Bibles have “sois baptisé” (NVS/NELS/LSG, VOR, VM) = “let-you-be baptized.” Acts 22:16 is best read something like:

- And now, for what do you detain? Arise and let you be baptized, and wash your sins invoking His name.
- = And now, for what do you detain? Arise and let you be baptized, and invoking His name wash your sins.

Acts 22:16 shows that submission to baptism is clearly a part of calling on the name of the Lord. Note also that Paul was not instructed to wait, but was told to be baptized immediately.

More Scriptural Evidence That Repentance Leading To Baptism Saves

In Luke 24:46-7 Jesus says “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for(εις) forgiveness (KJV “remission”) of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem” (NASB; see Appendix for why modern texts have εις versus και translated “and” in the KJV). Jesus’ concern for forgiveness of sins was repentance, not baptism. Baptism on Jesus’ name is the commanded confirmation of true repentance; people submitting to baptism confirm that they are truly repentant (Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21).

Let us observe Acts 3:19 where Peter says “Arrependei-vos, pois, e convertei-vos, para(εις) que sejam| cancelados os vuestros pecados” (DA ERC, DA ECRF| DA ERA) = “Repent-you, therefore, and convert-you, to/in-order-for(εις) that they-may-be| canceled the your sins.” Acts 11:18b says “¡Así que también a los gentiles Dios ha dado arrepentimiento para(εις) vida!” (RVA) = “So that also to the Gentiles God has given repentance in-order-for(εις) life!” Note also II Corinthians 7:10a which says “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to(εις) salvation and brings no regret” (RSV I). Finally, note a similarity between Peter and Paul. At Acts 3:19 Peter says “Arrependei-vos, pois, e convertei-vos, para que sejam| cancelados os vuestros pecados” (DA ERC, DA ECRF| DA ERA)=“Repent-you, therefore, and convert-you, to/in-order-for that they-may-be| canceled the your sins”; “convertei” = “convert” comes from a variant of Greek επιστρεφω, a variant of which was used by Paul for “turn” at Acts 26:20b “they must repent and turn to God and do works consistent with repentance” (NBV). A person’s true repentance causes a change toward good works.

Luke 24:46-7, Acts 3:19, and Acts 11:18 make it very clear that repentance is what leads to life and pardon of sins. Acts 26:20 makes it very clear that there are “works consistent with repentance.” I Peter 3:21, Acts 2:38 and 22:16 make it very clear that submission to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is one of those “works consistent with repentance.” The Scriptures make it very plain that it is the repentance leading to submission to baptism (Acts 2:38 “let s/he be baptized,” 22:16; I Peter 3:21) that leads to forgiveness of sins, not the act itself.

The Scriptures give no specific information on the status of people who have repented, seek to be baptized, but have not been baptized yet. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that the New Testament church baptized immediately, so the concept of an unbaptized convert was unknown. The person who was unbaptized was unbaptized because s/he refused baptism; s/he was not repentant, and so unsaved. Delayed baptism is an early second century perversion alien to the New Testament:

1. Ignatius, c.110, *Smyrneans* 8, ordered that no baptisms be done without bishop authorization;
2. Didache 7:4, c.125(±25 years), ordered baptism candidates to fast one day before baptism.

Despite these early occurrences, there is no mention of any delayed baptism in the New Testament. One who was unbaptized had refused baptism, and was not a true, repentant convert. The concept of an unbaptized convert/repentant was not conceived of, so it was not discussed.

The second reason is that God did not ordain baptism to be separated from conversion as many churches have done: He intended baptism to be done immediately upon repentance and conversion. The Scriptures above show that the unbaptized repentant convert who seeks baptism (note also Acts 2:38 “let s/he be baptized”) is saved, but there is no explicit information on the matter. God likely did not want to talk about delays because His command is IMMEDIATELY, so Scripture is silent about any period between repentance/conversion and baptism. Scripture makes it clear that a refusal to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ proves that there is no saving repentance.

God knows the heart, and can act on it. At Acts 15:8 Peter says of the first Gentile converts “And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith” (NASB). We mortals do not know the heart. Baptism is the outward test of true repentance and belief. Christians are to be identified among mortals by baptism. This is one reason why baptism was carried out immediately in New Testament times, and should be today.

When the Jerusalem Temple Curtain Tore

At Luke 22:50 we read Jesus saying “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (ASV). Here, Jesus institutes a New Covenant that is to be based upon His blood. Starting at Hebrews 7:22b we see “Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant” (NASB) and the train of thought continues to Hebrews 8:6-7: “But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second” (ASV). The New Testament acknowledges between Judaism and Christianity only two covenants: an Old Covenant and a “second covenant” = “New Covenant” based upon Jesus Christ.

At Matthew 27:50-51a we read “And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom” (TNIV). The temple curtain separated the rest of the temple from the innermost part of the temple, which had the presence of God and could only be entered by one certain priest on stringent conditions. When that temple curtain tore, that signified the end of the Old Covenant; God ripped that barrier apart Himself from Heaven’s direction down. This is important, because it says much about the relevance of one of the first people saved under the New Covenant.

The Thief on the Cross creates much nastiness among Bible believers. Too much is made of his story sometimes, and sometimes it is minimized. The account should not be used to favor delaying or evading baptism, but as part of the Word of God the account is not inconsequential, nor should the thief himself be scorned as a negative example to reference -- Jesus accepted him as eternal companionship.

Originally, he was a party to mocking the Lord Jesus on the cross per Matthew 27:44 “And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way” (ESV). The end of the thief’s account is as follows from Luke 23:41-3 starting with his words “‘And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.’ And he was saying, ‘Jesus,<sup>1</sup> remember me when You come into Your Kingdom!’ And He said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise’” (NASB). Although this thief was originally antagonistic to Jesus, upon this thief’s repentance, Jesus assured the man of being in the same place as righteous Jesus Himself after death!

When we turn over to the continuation of the crucifixion after Jesus’ death, we find out that after Jesus had died, those hung on crosses next to Him remained alive:

- At John 19:30 Jesus Christ dies
- At John 19:31 the Jewish leaders asked that those on the crosses would have their legs broken to speed up their deaths so that the crosses would be vacant the next day, and
- At John 19:32 both of Jesus’ neighbors had their legs broken.

Now remember, at the very moment of Jesus’ death, the Old Covenant was literally ripped from top to bottom, but the penitent thief was still alive. Jesus knows all things per John 16:30-3. Jesus knew when the penitent thief would die. The penitent thief, however, was promised a place with righteous Jesus by Jesus Himself. Hence, when the penitent thief died after Jesus’ death, he was not saved by anything other than the New Covenant that all Christians are saved under, and Jesus expected this.

This instance is very important to understanding how we are saved. Romans 4:5 states “And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness” (ESV). The penitent thief had no opportunity to do **anything** to confirm his faith. While Romans 10:9 requires willingness to confess Jesus as Lord, Luke 23:41-3 as originally written<sup>1</sup> shows not even this action -- the thief recognized Jesus’ authority over a kingdom, so no doubt would have confessed Him as Lord. The only recorded things the thief did here was show realization that his sins deserved punishment and call on Jesus to treat him with mercy -- and Jesus gave him salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> Of seven Greek manuscripts from before 500 C.E., only three have the reading rendered in the King James Version “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me...”; the three oldest manuscripts and a fourth have the ancient reading (Scrivener, 257; Hodges, Farstad, xvii, 283; Aland et al, 240) which is followed in the NASB.

*A Strange Pair Of Consecutive Passages: Acts 18:23-9 And 19:1-6*

In Acts 18:23-8 Apollos comes to the north side of the Mediterranean Sea. Scripture says of him at 18:25 “This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things [concerning Jesus], though he knew only the baptism of John” (NKJV|NASB|NKJV). After hearing him, at 18:26 two Christians “took him aside and explained to him the way of God” (NKJV) followed by Greek literally meaning “precisely” (Scofield, English, 1528), translated to Spanish “con más exactitud” (RVR) = ‘with more exactness’ and in Portuguese “com mais exatidão” (DA ERA) = “with more exactness.” Although Apollos “knew only the baptism of John” and had to have Christian doctrine expounded to him with more precision, Apollos went on in ministry without Scripture recording a need for him to be baptized again nor of such happening.

In the very next passage, Acts 19:1-6, Paul came to Ephesus and found “some disciples” (NKJV). In Acts, generic “disciples” means ‘followers of the Lord’; what is implicit throughout the book of Acts is explicit at 11:26 “the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (NKJV). In Acts, generic “disciples” always refers to saved people, and the description of these believers at Ephesus as “disciples” means they were saved. However, Paul had to ask them “Did you receive the Holy Spirit, having believed” (Scofield, English, 1528). Paul expected these Ephesian believers to have received the Holy Spirit immediately upon belief, as was the norm among all Christians:

- \* Ephesians 1:1 KJV “at ~~Ephesus~~” was **NOT** in surviving Greek manuscripts from pre-399 C.E. \*
- \* (Hodges, Farstad, 582), which have been found on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. \*
- \* This letter was originally a general letter not specifically to Ephesian Christians. \*
- \* The original text without the unauthorized addition can be closely translated as “to \*
- \* the saints [existing and] faithful in Christ Jesus”.<sup>1</sup> \*

The general New Testament epistle presently called “Ephesians” says at 1:13 “In whom, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (NASB alternate) and 1:14a continues “He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession” (HCSB). The word translated “listening” is ακουοντες a form of ακουω (Strong, *Concordance* 583; *ibid.*, *Greek Dictionary* 4). The word ακουω means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and referring to discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). The general New Testament epistle presently titled “Ephesians” shows that the universal expectation for New Testament Christians was for them to get the Holy Spirit as ‘seal’ of salvation immediately upon fruitful belief. Paul expected these specific Ephesian believers at Acts 19 to have received the Holy Spirit which was the ‘seal’ for inheritance in Heaven immediately upon belief, and showed surprise at this particular state of affairs. Of course, the lack of this ‘seal’ does **not** mean that they were not to have such an inheritance, but just that the guaranteeing token was not present. Acts 19 reinforces that the norm in the New Testament church was reception of the Holy Spirit as ‘seal’ for salvation immediately upon belief in the Gospel.

One might go to Romans 8:9b “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (TNIV|ASV) and to John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me” (ASV). It is important at Acts 19 **NOT** to set Romans 8:9 and John 14:6 against Scripture’s plain indications of the effect of John’s baptism of repentance on salvation and of the meaning of generic “disciples” in Acts. For Romans 8:9 and John 14:6 we must take note not only of what they say but what they do **not** say. Romans 8:9 only says that if one does not have the Holy Spirit s/he is not a possession of Christ, and John 14:6 indicates that no one gets to the Father except by Jesus Christ; these two verses do **not** say that Jesus will not see to the salvations of some who are not His possession = those specifically saved under the Gospel in His Name. Nowhere does Scripture say that the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross nullified salvations from John’s baptism of repentance, and this is evident by the facts:

<sup>1</sup>KJV, ASV| translation “and” plus the verb tense per Marshall, 556; verb meaning per Friberg et al, 289, 131 and Perschbacher, 119| KJV, ASV.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

1. Abraham is shown alive during Jesus' pre-Resurrection life at Matthew 22:32, saved in James 2:23, Romans 4:3, 4:9, and of the same spiritual kinship as those saved under the Christian covenant at Romans 4:16;
2. There can be little doubt that some of John's baptizees died before Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross, yet their repentance leading to baptism secured remission of sins, even as Jesus said what is at John 14:6;
3. Apollos could teach “accurately” of Jesus but was left with John's baptism.

Scripture indicates that Jesus is how people get to the Father, so we know that Jesus has something to do with how John's baptizees and others justified before the New Covenant get their salvations, but Scripture does not explain this; we are left to trust Scripture's doctrine that these are saved via Jesus Christ without us knowing any more about it. We apply this to the Ephesian disciples of Acts 19.

We cannot be sure what caused the unusual problem of Acts 19:1-4, but 19:3-4 hints that part of it was that the Ephesian believers had experienced the baptism of John but knew little to nothing of Jesus. In our study of John's baptism we found that it was a baptism of repentance for salvation, and because these Ephesian believers had been baptized into John's baptism per Acts 19:3, we see more clearly that these disciples were indeed saved. They 1) were called generic “disciples” by the Scripture book of Acts, which in Acts always means saved people, and 2) had been baptized with John's baptism of repentance which resulted in salvation. Although saved, they did need to be baptized again, but this time in “the name of the Lord Jesus” (ASV). John's baptism of repentance brought salvation, but not the Holy Spirit, so the Ephesian disciples did not have the Holy Spirit; because Paul wanted the Ephesian disciples to have the Holy Spirit, He baptized them in “the name of the Lord Jesus.” Still, we recognize that although the Ephesian disciples needed a second baptism, they were already saved beforehand.

What of these passages? Apollos could teach “accurately” things of the Lord even though he only knew John's baptism. The Ephesian disciples needed reminded at 19:4 that John was “saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus” (NKJV). Apollos knew much about the Lord Jesus, but the Ephesians, while believing enough to be deemed “disciples” and to have been said by Paul of “having believed,” did not know to believe on Jesus. Apollos knew and believed enough about Jesus that although he only knew John's baptism, he did not need Christian baptism; the Ephesians did not meet these criteria and Christian baptism was done. However, it is evident in both cases that Christian baptism was *not* a necessity for salvation, but to the Ephesian disciples of Acts 19, this lack of necessity did not preclude them from *immediately* receiving a second baptism after being shown of its appropriateness and of a need to believe on Jesus.

### Acts 10:34-48<sup>1</sup>+15:8-9

Here we have a case where a Jewish-Christian apostle converts a group of Gentiles for the first time. This is after Peter's first sermon to Jews in Acts 2. The lead-up to this account includes an explanation in Acts 11:14 where Cornelius was told that Peter would “bring you a message though which you and all your household will be saved” (TNIV). In this account we have Acts 10:43b-4 “through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word” (ASV). This was before Peter “commanded them to be baptized” (ESV) in Acts 10:48. The Holy Spirit fell on these new converts *before* baptism, and these converts received the Holy Spirit when they “heard the word.” The word translated “heard” is ακουοντας a form of the word ακουω (Strong, *Concordance* 583; *ibid.*, *Greek Dictionary* 4). The word ακουω means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and about discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). This means that these converts received the Holy Spirit upon acceptance of the Gospel before they were baptized.

Reception of the Holy Spirit is vital. Ephesians 1:13b says “after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (NASB alternate), and 1:14a continues “He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank those present in the congregation of Washington Baptist Church, Elrod/Dillsboro-area, Indiana, on August 3, 2005 for pointing this passage out to me.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

redemption of the possession” (HCSB). The word translated “heard” is ακουοντες a form of the word ακουω (Strong, *Concordance* 583; *ibid.*, *Greek Dictionary* 4). The word ακουω means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and regarding discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). The audience of the book of Ephesians received the Holy Spirit and guarantee of redemption upon hearing in the belief/follow sense the Gospel. Likewise, the converts of Acts 10 were given the ‘seal’ or guarantee of inheritance among the redeemed when they received the Holy Spirit upon acceptance of the Gospel “message through which” they “would be saved” (Acts 11:14 TNIV) and before baptism.

When Peter recalled the occasion at Acts 15:8-9, he said “And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith” (ASV). Titus 3:5 has “él nos salvó, no por nuestras propias obras de justicia sino por su misericordia. Nos salvó mediante el lavamiento de la regeneración y de la renovación por el Espíritu Santo” (NVI) = “He us He-saved, not by our own works of righteousness but by His mercy. Us He-saved through the washing of the regeneration and of the renovation/renewal by the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5 and Acts 10:34-48+15:8-9 describe the same phenomenon: upon acceptance of the Gospel by faith, the Holy Spirit comes and gives us a washing that regenerates us, but before we are baptized.

However, it must be noted that again these converts of Acts 10 were baptized immediately in Acts 10:48. No examination of lifestyle change was required of them, nor periods of instruction. No conditions were required; once these converts testified with their speaking in tongues that they were saved, they were baptized. They were baptized upon initial evidence of salvation with no delay.

### Opening Chapters of I Corinthians

I Corinthians 9:22b-23 records Paul writing “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. | And I do all things for the gospel’s sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof” (TNIV|ASV). Paul wanted to do anything right to get people salvation. However, at I Corinthians 1:14 he writes “I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except” (TNIV) a few people, and at 1:17a he writes “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (ASV). It follows that if Paul wanted “by all possible means” to “save,” yet saw no need to baptize, then baptism must not have been part of the means for people to be saved.

Despite the fact that Paul was not sent by Jesus Christ to baptize per I Corinthians 1:17, Paul did write this to the same audience at I Corinthians 3:5-6: “What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (ASV). Paul takes credit for planting the seeds of salvation, yet baptized only a few of the Corinthian Christians. Obviously, Paul did not consider the act of baptism to be part of the means of attaining salvation.

On the other hand, nowhere in this letter or elsewhere in Paul’s letters does he separate baptism from the conversion experience. The rest of the New Testament also keeps the conversion experience and baptism together. The fact that baptism is not part of the means of salvation does **not** authorize separating baptism from conversion against the approved examples of Scripture.

### Acts 16:30-4

At Acts 16:30 Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (ASV) upon which they replied at Acts 16:31 solely “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and all your household” (NASB). Then the jailer’s family was preached to with words unspecified at Acts 16:32. After this, he washed their wounds, and after that he was baptized at Acts 16:33 “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, him and all his, immediately” (ASV). The matter of baptism was not of such urgency that it precluded medical treatment; the wounds of Paul and Silas were washed which would have been a

matter of mortal health, and then baptism was done. All would have had a perspective on the eternal life of the soul which certainly would have been viewed as a more weighty matter than physical health, yet medical treatment was done before baptism. It is evident that immediate baptism here was not viewed as a matter of eternal urgency. Therefore, it is evident that completed baptism was not viewed as the deciding factor of eternity -- the belief specified was.

Despite this, at Acts 16:34 it was only after baptisms were finished that food was put out for all. On this conversion experience, completed baptisms were taken care of before eating. The comfort of food was delayed to address the priority of new converts being baptized. Flippancy in delaying baptism is not in accordance with this or any other approved example of Scripture.

An Example From Scripture: Acts 8:35-8

First, we must note that Acts 8:37 is the addition of some presumptuous scribe or Latin translator who was not satisfied with what God had written at Acts 8; it was not in the text of Acts that God wrote. There are five manuscripts from the fifth century and before containing the passage, and all five lack what is now called Acts 8:37 (textual data from Comfort, 128). Furthermore, among all the manuscripts copied up to the printing press, the majority of manuscripts still lack the addition (White, 154) and not all of those with what is now 8:37 have the whole (AmerV margin).

Why is Acts 8:37 in the King James Version and in most traditional translations, such as the De Almeida in Portuguese and the Reina-Valera in Spanish? The presence of Acts 8:37 in traditional Greek texts is greatly due to the influence of the Latin Vulgate and other Latin editions of the Bible. Due to the popularity of the Latin Bible in medieval times, some conformed Greek manuscripts to the Latin Bible. Eventually, the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century editors of Greek texts accepted this popular reading from minority support and included it in their editions of the Greek New Testament. Translators picked and chose readings from these editions and translated them. Therefore, the traditional translations include them. The discovery of ancient manuscripts has shown that Acts 8:37 is a forgery. We will not honor somebody's irreverent handling of the Word of God; Acts 8:37 will henceforth be ignored.

At Acts 8:27 we meet the Ethiopian eunuch. He is reading the Book of Isaiah. Philip, a Christian of the Jerusalem congregation, is sent to meet him. At Acts 8:35 Philip "told him the good news about Jesus" (NBV). The first words that the Scriptures report the Ethiopian saying are "See, here is water. What is to prevent my being baptized" (Acts 8:36 NBV). That is what the Ethiopian said to accept the Gospel. This means that part of Philip's explanation of the Gospel was an explanation of baptism. We see that to the New Testament church, baptism was an integral part of the Gospel message. The Ethiopian eunuch saw the acceptance of baptism as the acceptance of the Gospel. At Acts 8:38, the next authentic verse, Philip *immediately* and *unconditionally* grants him his request. This means that to Philip a request to be baptized was acceptance of the Gospel. This passage clearly shows that to the New Testament church, the acceptance of baptism was the acceptance of the Gospel.

Often Misinterpreted Galatians 3:24-7; Also Romans 6:2-11/Colossians 2:12

Galatians 3:27 is traditionally rendered “For as many of you as have been baptized into(εις) Christ have put on Christ” (KJV). Some interpreters, not understanding Ephesians 2:8-10, believe this verse indicates completed baptism puts one into Christ so s/he can be saved. Paul did not intend this incorrect over-interpretation; he was alluding to a cultural rite. There is another possible translation of εις “into” here: “in” (Strong, *Greek Lexicon*, 27), "em" = "in" (De Almeida editions). Let us adapt the KJV to this: “For as many of you as have been baptized in(εις) Christ have put on Christ.” Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is the identification of the believer with Jesus Christ and His authority; this is similar to I Corinthians 10:2 where the Israelites of the Exodus were described as being “batizados em(εις) Moisés” (de Almeida ERC) = “baptized in Moses,” and thereafter they recognized the Law delivered by Moses to be their authority about God. The word usually translated “baptize” actually means "dip" (Vine et al, 50 NT), "make overwhelmed" (Strong, *Greek Lexicon*, 16) or "immerse" (Hayford, 1446; *New*, 36; *Catechism* 1214); a Spanish translation is "sumergir" (*Catecismo* 1214) most

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naturally translated "submerge." The immersion in water represents an immersion in Christ's name to identify with Christ, as in Acts 2:38 "let s/he be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Similar imagery is used elsewhere by Paul; note Romans 6:3-5 and Colossians 2:12. Romans 6:3-5 is in the middle of a passage explaining a picture representation of how Christians are to relate to sin: Romans 6:2b "We are those who have died to sin" (TNIV). This is obviously a picture because reality is that Christians still face the sin problem per 1 John 1:8-10. Romans 6:11 closes "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin" (ASV). Romans 6:2-11 gives a picture of the Christian's viewed relationship to sin, Romans 6:3-5 is part of that passage, and also explains Colossians 2:12. Behold:

### Portuguese (DA ERA)

"Ou, porventura, ignorais que todos os que fomos batizados em(εις) Cristo Jesus, fomos batizados na(εις) sua morte? Fomos, pois, sepultados com ele na(εις) morte pelo batismo; para que, como Cristo foi ressuscitado dentre os mortos pela glória do Pai, assim também andemos nós em novidade de vida. Porque se fomos unidos com ele na semelhança da sua morte, certamente o seremos também na semelhança da sua ressurreição;"

### In English

"Or, by-venture, be-you-ignorant that all the that we-were baptized in(εις) Christ Jesus, we-were baptized in(εις)-the His death? We-were, then, buried with Him in(εις)-the death by-the baptism; in-order-for that, as Christ was resurrected of-among the dead-ones by-the glory of-the Father, so also we-may-walk us in newness of life. Because if we-were united with him in-the similarity of-the His death, certainly the we-will-be also in-the similarity of-the His resurrection."

Colossians 2:12: "when you were buried with Him in baptism and thereby raised to life with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (NBV).

As Paul writes metaphorically at Colossians 2:12; Paul's meaning is more clear in the last sentence of Romans 6:5, where baptism is shown to be a baptism in Christ's "semelhanca" = "similarity." Sadly, many interpreters focus so narrowly on Romans 6:3-5 that they neglect the main point of 6:2-11 -- viewing ourselves as dead to sin. Baptism had symbolic meanings. Let us now go to Galatians 3:24-7.

We now observe what Paul was alluding to. In Galatians 3:24 the Law is called "our tutor to Christ" (NASB literal), and then in 3:25 Paul writes "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (NASB). This is a reference to a cultural norm in Roman society: a youth who became an adult put aside his childhood clothes in favor of new clothing, representing the move into adulthood (Life, 2121). This is a case where knowledge of ancient cultural norms facilitates understanding the meaning of 'put on.' Galatians 3:24-7 teaches that by identifying oneself with Christ via baptism in His name, one abandons the tutor = the Mosaic Law, and "puts on Christ," representing spiritual maturity.

Romans 6:2-11 and Galatians 3:24-7 assume every Christian baptized. These pictures would be irrelevant for unbaptized Christians and that state was not intended. Baptism accompanied conversion.

### Frequently Misunderstood Passage: John 3:3-6

At this passage Jesus said "unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (NASB). Some see 'baptism' where the Scriptures have "water," but Christian baptism did not exist then, so Christ could not have been referring to it here. It could not have been a reference to John's baptism, since those who followed John's "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4/Luke 3:3) were understood among the Jews as "thoroughly justified beforehand by righteousness" (Josephus *Antiquities* 18:5:2 in Whiston). The repentance aspect of John's baptism was what "thoroughly justified beforehand" those who were baptized.

Before John 3:5 comes John 3:3b, where Jesus says "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (NASB). This "born again" refers to a second birth. At John 3:6 "of the flesh" replaces 3:5 "of water" while "the Spirit" remains the same in both; behold the sequence:

- John 3:3b "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (NASB)
- John 3:5b "unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (NASB)
- John 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (NASB).

Jesus meant that there is a necessity of two births at John 3:5. The Hebrews used such words as "water" and "drop" to describe natural birth (in Hayford, 1577). In modern American terminology, an expectant mother's "water breaks" in the birth process; this resembles ancient Hebrew terminology.

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Jesus and Nicodemus were Hebrews. Jesus meant 'unless one is born naturally and then spiritually, s/he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' This is a case where studying cultural metaphors of first century C.E. Palestinian culture would have made the allusion to the same cultural metaphor understandable to us when combined with considering the whole passage of Scripture of which this verse is a part.

### Often Misread Non-Baptism References To “Wash”--I Cor 6:11/Eph 5:25-6 //Tit 3:5/ Heb 10:22

Some interpreters who do not understand Ephesians 2:8-10 misunderstand some New Testament references to “wash.” For example, I Corinthians 6:11 has “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (NASB). The idea of washing away sin predates New Testament times and is found in the Old Testament. After David’s sin with Bathsheba, he called on God to “Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin” (Psalm 51:2 NIV, TNIV) and also to “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7 NIV, TNIV). Read also Isaiah 4:4 “When my Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and from Jerusalem’s midst has rinsed out her infamy-- In a spirit of judgment And in a spirit of purging--” (JPS 1985). Isaiah 1:15d-16a says “Your hands are stained with crime--Wash yourselves clean; Put your evil doings Away from My sight” (JPS 1985). Finally, Jeremiah 4:14a says “Wash your heart clean of wickedness, O Jerusalem, that you may be rescued” (JPS 1985).

It is important to remember that even after becoming a Christian, Paul continued to identify himself as a Pharisee as shown by Acts 23:6 and Philippians 3:5. In Judaism the concept of washings for purification was very important and so would have been important to Paul also. It is also important to note that the book of Hebrews is an attempt to convince hesitant Jewish-Christians that Christianity is an improvement on Judaism and does so assuming the merit of Judaism. As we read the passages that follow, we must remember that they are rooted in Judaism and not strip that context from them.

Washing is a metaphor, a *symbol* of cleansing. Observe a reference to washing by water as a symbol: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with|by|/in the word” (Ephesians 5:26 NASB adapted<sup>1</sup>). The word translated “word” here is ρηματι and is not λογος translated “Word” in John 1:14; Paul uses the same word ρημα (Strong) in Romans 10:8b “the word(ρημα) of faith, which we preach” (KJV, ASV, RV)=“ the message(ρημα) of faith that we preach” (NBV).

In the ancient Near East, brides were prepared for marriage by a ceremonial bath (Life, 2140), a “washing of water.” In Ephesians 5:25-6, Christ is shown washing His bride = the church by/in the “word” (ibid.) which Romans 10:8 suggests means “the word of faith” (KJV, RV, ASV) = “the message of faith” (NBV). For the washing, Paul’s readers would have understood what Paul meant because they were familiar with the marriage custom. In Ephesians 5:25-6 Jesus is shown preparing His bride through the ceremonial bath by/in the word [of faith]. We see that the washing is done by the word [of faith] and that the water-washing is a marriage custom metaphor for the cleansing by/in the word [of faith]. Jesus cleansed the church by/in the word [of faith] that figuratively washes us by/in water: “washing of water by/in the word [of faith]”=‘washing in the word [of faith]’ or ‘washing by the word [of faith].’ That Paul is not referring to baptism is even more clear because here what is “cleansed” by this marital “washing” is the whole church at once in past tense; on the other hand, in every stated reference to baptism in the New Testament, it is individual people getting baptized at varying times.

Titus 3:5 has “él nos salvó, no por nuestras propias obras de justicia sino por su misericordia. Nos salvó mediante el lavamiento de la regeneración y de la renovación por el Espíritu Santo” (NVI) = “He us He-saved, not by our own works of righteousness but by His mercy. Us He-saved through the washing of the regeneration and of the renovation/renewal by the Holy Spirit.” We turn now to Acts

<sup>1</sup> NASB “with”; “by” Strong, KJV 1769,1611, NKJV; RVR 1909,1960,1977,1995, LBLA “por”=by/through and NVI “mediante”=through; DA ERA/ERC/ECRF “pela”=by/through-the; “in” from Strong, and DRV translation of Latin Vulgate.

11:16 where Peter said “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say ‘John baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit’” (NLT alternate). We see that the real cleansing and “washing” of the repentant believer is actually done by the Holy Spirit, through the word(ρηματι) of faith, and not by a physical dipping in water. Furthermore, Titus 3:5 itself clearly teaches against any notion that baptism is a saving action: "no por nuestras propias de justicia" (NVI) = "not by our own works of righteousness." There is no such thing as a saving action.

This “washing of the regeneration and renovation/renewal by the Holy Spirit” of Titus 3:5 happens immediately upon belief in the Gospel. Ephesians 1:13 says "In whom, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (NASB alternate) and 1:14a continues “He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession” (HCSB). The word translated “listening” is ακουοντες a form of the word ακουω (Strong, Concordance 583; *ibid.*, Greek Dictionary 4). The word ακουω means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and referring to discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). Recall our study of Acts 10:34-8 and also our study of the consecutive passages Acts 18:23-9 and 19:1-6. When we receive the Holy Spirit upon ‘hearkening’ to the Gospel, Titus 3:5 teaches that the Holy Spirit washes us with a washing that renovates/renews and regenerates our spiritual nature. Recall that even after becoming a Christian, Paul continued to identify himself as a Pharisee as shown by Acts 23:6 and Philippians 3:5, and in Judaism the concept of washings for purification was very important, so this concept would have been important to Paul also. Paul very likely had no idea that as stringently as he taught salvation entirely apart from deeds however righteous, some in the future would here mistake one of his references to the concept of Jewish washings as instead a reference to baptism.

Acts 10:34-48 with Acts 15:8-9 clarify what Titus 3:5 refers to. The lead-up to this account includes an explanation in Acts 11:14 where Cornelius was told that Peter would “bring you a message though which you and all your household will be saved” (TNIV). In this account we have Acts 10:43b-4 “through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word” (ASV). This was before Peter “commanded them to be baptized” (ESV) in Acts 10:48. The Holy Spirit fell on these new converts *before* baptism, and these converts received the Holy Spirit when they “heard the word.” The word translated “heard” is ακουοντας a form of the word ακουω (Strong, Concordance 583; *ibid.*, Greek Dictionary 4). The word ακουω means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and about discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). This means that these converts received the Holy Spirit upon acceptance of the Gospel before they were baptized. We have already discussed the significance of receiving the Holy Spirit per Ephesians 1:13-4.

When Peter recalled the occasion at Acts 15:8-9, he said “And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith” (ASV). Titus 3:5 has “él nos salvó, no por nuestras propias obras de justicia sino por su misericordia. Nos salvó mediante el lavamiento de la regeneración y de la renovación por el Espíritu Santo” (NVI) = “He us He-saved, not by our own works of righteousness but by His mercy. Us He-saved through the washing of the regeneration and of the renovation/renewal by the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5 and Acts 10:34-48+15:8-9 describe the same phenomenon: upon acceptance of the Gospel by faith, the Holy Spirit comes and gives us a cleansing that regenerates us, but before we are baptized. Again, we see that Titus 3:5 does not refer to baptism.

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers and was heavy with Judaic concepts. Hebrews 10:22 has “let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts |sprinkled from an evil conscience| and our bodies washed with pure water” (NASB|ASV|NASB). In English, “baptism” is from βαπτίζω and it means nothing other than to "dip" (Vine et al, 50 NT), "make overwhelmed" (Strong, *Greek Lexicon*, 16) or "immerse" (Hayford, 1446; *New*, 36; *Catechism* 1214) and the Greek word translated "sprinkle" is παντιζω (Vine et al, 596 NT). It is

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

important *NOT* to see “baptized” where Hebrews 10:22 says “washed”; Hebrews 10:22’s “sprinkle” is separate from “wash” and no Christian ordinance in the New Testament is described as involving sprinkling, and “wash” does not refer to an ordinance either. Rather, Hebrews 10:22 refers to Jewish priestly consecrations that enabled priests to approach God under the Old Covenant backed by imperfect animal sacrifices. The context is explained in the Hebrews 10:19-22 passage:

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts |sprinkled from an evil conscience| and our bodies washed with pure water” (NASB|ASV|NASB).

The Jewish audience would have recognized that “sprinkle” at Hebrews 10:22 refers to Numbers 8:7 where Levites are cleansed by three things, one of which is “sprinkle on them water of purification” (JPS 1985). The “sprinkle” figuratively refers to the consecration of believers in order that they may approach God. The “washed with pure water” refers to Leviticus 16:3-4 (pointed out in Radmacher, Heb 10:22 note). Aaron was only to approach the presence of God in the tabernacle’s Most Holy Place when dressed in his priestly clothes, and before putting them on he was to “bathe his body in water” (JPS 1985). The Old Covenant was backed by the blood of imperfect animal sacrifices, but the author’s point is that Christian believers are so purified by their salvations through Christ’s blood that they can even more freely approach God than even the Jewish High Priest could under the Old Covenant.

### Forged Addition To Mark: Mark 16:16

“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned” (DRV). We cannot treat this verse as Scripture; Mark 16:9-20 is a later, uninspired addition to the inspired, original Gospel of Mark, which ended at 16:8. The two most ancient Greek manuscripts, Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (4th century, Europe and Sinai Peninsula, respectively), lack the passage entirely. Many of the old manuscripts that do have the entire passage mark it as doubtful (White, 255), and it is lacking in the Sinaitic Old Syriac version, some manuscripts of the Sahidic Coptic version, and some other ancient versions (White, 255), among them important Ethiopic manuscripts (Mann, 674) and some manuscripts of the Armenian translation (Trinitarian, 4). Jerome and Eusebius (fourth century C.E.) reported that the overwhelming majority of Greek manuscripts known to them lack the passage (MacArthur, 1502; Mann, 674). There are manuscripts with marks addressing doubt about the passage’s authenticity as late as the sixteenth century (Aland, Aland, 292).

Apparently the early church also saw some confusion about the issue, both because of their scribal markings, and because there is a shorter, alternative ending to Mark found (often with the Long Ending) in some ancient manuscripts and ancient translations: the pre-Latin Vulgate translation known as the Old Latin, plus the Syriac, Ethiopic, and two Coptic translations (Major, Manson, Wright, 208) in the language used by the Egyptians. The Old Latin manuscript *k* from around the turn of the fourth/fifth century includes the Short Ending *in place of* the Long Ending (Aland, Aland, 292). The Short Ending is as follows:

“But all that was enjoined them they reported briefly to those who were about Peter. And after this Jesus Himself [appeared to them and] from the East even to the West sent forth through them the holy and incorruptible proclamation of eternal salvation” (in Major, Manson, Wright, 208).

In Bible translations, this ending is translated in the NASB (after 16:20), NLT and NRSV (before 16:9), REB (part of 16:8), TEV, CEV, and NAB (after 16:20), RSV I and RSV II (margin notes), and a footnote of the NJB. In Spanish it can be found in the margins of the RVA and the VP, and after 16:20 in LBLA. Fifth century Codex Washingtonus inserts after Mark 16:14 this further addition:

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"And they replied saying 'This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who by means of unclean spirits does not allow men to comprehend the true power of God; therefore reveal now thy righteousness.' Thus they spoke to Christ, and Christ answered them: 'The limit of the years of the authority of Satan is fulfilled, but other afflictions draw near, even for those sinners on whose behalf I was delivered up to death, in order that they might return to the truth and sin no more; that they might inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven'" (in Throckmorton, 191).

In the fourth century Jerome quoted the beginning of this addition in Latin (*ibid.*). Since this passage was already considered spurious enough, some fictionally inclined translator(s) or copyist(s) saw no reason why not to "improve" this story further.

The best evidence that Mark originally wrote Mark 16:9-20 can be found only in ancient translations. It is found in one of two Old Syriac versions, the Old Latin, the two translations into the Coptic language used by Egyptians, the Vulgate, the Gothic, and some Armenian manuscripts (Trinitarian, 4). We just saw that the Old Syriac, Coptic, and Old Latin include the Short Ending alongside the Long Ending. Recall also that the oldest Old Latin manuscript replaces Mark 16:9-20 with the Short Ending, and that some manuscripts of one Coptic version lack the verses entirely.

Besides the manuscript evidence, there are no references to Mark 16:9-20 in the earliest Christian literature: I Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, the Didache, so-called II Clement, and so-called Barnabas. This is all authentic Christian literature written before 150 C.E. that has survived, and in these works, all references to the post-Resurrection appearances come from Matthew, Luke, and John. In addition, the forged pre-150 C.E. New Testament-based Gospel of Peter's<sup>1</sup> last parallel with the Passion/Resurrection portion of Mark is "Then the women fled frightened" (13:57 in Elliott, 157). No parallel to Mark 16:9-20 exists, and shortly after the parallel to Mark 16:8 the fragment ends as the forger is beginning to tell a fishing story with the words "But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew took our nets and went to the sea. And there was with us Levi, the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord..." (in Elliott, 158). This fishing story is likely drawn from the John 21 fishing story. The events of John 21 come after the events which supposedly occurred up to and inclusive of Mark 16:14 in every harmony of the Gospels that I accessed (Open Bible, Word, MacArthur, in Miller, in Radmacher, in Barker, in Hayford, NVSR, LSG, Thomas and Gundry, RVR, Ryrrie, Life) and in F. LaGard Smith's chronological Bible. The forger of "Gospel of Peter" was apparently unfamiliar with anything after verse 16:8.

The two oldest manuscripts containing Mark 16 end with verse 8, and another very ancient manuscript ends at verse 16. There were two attempts at creating a more satisfying ending for Mark. If the traditional ending was authentic, there would have been dispute over whether the verse ended at 16:8 or 16:20. However, there are two known independent attempts to add a "better" ending, indicating that there were multiple scribes unhappy with Mark's abrupt ending. The oldest Old Latin manuscript replaces the traditional ending, one of two Old Syriac versions lacks 16:9-20, and many manuscripts of the Coptic, Armenian, and Ethiopic versions lack the passage. The verses were omitted from the Latin West to the Syriac East all the way to the Coptic South throughout the first five centuries. The passage was never accepted without doubt as long as manuscripts were being copied. Pre-150 C.E. Christian literature is absolutely silent about any part of the passage.

Mark ends at 16:8. Mark 16:9-20 is a forged addition of some arrogant scribe/s presumptuous enough to add his or their words to the Word of God. Mark 16:9-20, including verse 16, cannot be treated as Scripture. Rather, Mark 16:16 provides valuable internal historical evidence -- see below.

<sup>1</sup> It used to be believed that this gospel was written to advance the Docetic heresy of ancient times where the Lord Jesus Christ only seemed to have a physical body. One reason is verse 10 about Jesus on the cross "But he was silent, as if he had no pain" (Ehrman, 32). This however could have been an attempt to honor the Lord's courage in tolerating the pain of His murder, which seems more likely. Nonetheless, that the forger viewed the Lord Son of God as having a physical body is seen in Pilate's statement "I am clean of the blood of the Son of God" at verse 46 (*ibid.*, 34) and "they pulled the nails from the Lord's hands" at verse 21 (*ibid.*, 33). Unfavorably to Docetism, the Lord Son of God is attributed blood and hands which required pulling to get nails out – signs of a real, physical body.

*Part III Of V: Early Church Interpretations Before 130 C.E.*

Introduction

We have two pieces of evidence that point to a view that baptism was connected to salvation by the earliest churches. While these uninspired, post-apostolic writings cannot be treated on an equal plane with the Scriptural evidence, they do make excellent secondary historical evidence. We must note, however, that during the second century there was a drift toward legalism in the church, observable in the Didache from the East and Hermas from the West.

Forged Addition To Mark: Mark 16:16

Recall the evidence above for assuming that Mark 16:9-20 is the forged addition of a later scribe. Mark 16:16 says “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be| condemned” (KJ21|DRV) meaning ‘The one that believes and so is baptized will be saved.’ This addition connects baptism to belief and to salvation. First, the forger sees baptism as a result and proof of salvation-type belief. Second, the forger warns that s/he who does not believe is condemned, and makes no reference to baptism. The forger understood that s/he who does not believe would not be baptized; belief confirmed by baptism meant salvation. Surviving works of Irenaeus, 170’s and 180’s C.E., seem first to allude to this passage, suggesting a early second century date for this scribal forgery.

So-called Epistle Of Barnabas

Barnabas was written by an anonymous author; a late second century tradition attributed it incorrectly to Barnabas. This letter is too anti-Judaic to be from the pen of a Levite who was Paul’s co-worker; see Paul’s letter to the Romans, chapters 9 and 11. Lately, most scholars assume a date around 130 C.E. because of an apparent allusion to rebuilding the Jerusalem temple; such a physical rebuilding of the temple began around 130 C.E.. The author writes about the Jews “For because they went to war, it was torn down by their enemies” (16:4; Goodspeed, 41). The author explains how believers are “the spiritual temple that is being built for the Lord” (16:10; Goodspeed, 42). The author writes “I will also tell you about the temple, how those wretched men went astray and set their hope on a building, as being the house of God, instead of on God who made them. For they propitiated him in the temple like most of the heathen” (16:1-2a; Goodspeed, 41) and “You know that their hope was in vain” (16:2b; Goodspeed, 41). The author’s references to the temple’s rebuilding are a ‘spiritual rebuilding.’ All references to the physical temple are in the past tense, not in the present tense. Note that the author did not say “You know that their hope is in vain.” The author believed that the physical temple has been replaced by the spiritual temple. The physical rebuilding had apparently not begun yet. A date after 70 C.E. and before 130 C.E. is necessary.

This epistle features strongly allegorical interpretations of the Jewish Scriptures = Old Testament. It is important to remember this.

The author writes “About the water it is written of Israel how they would not accept the baptism that brings forgiveness of sins, but would build for themselves” (11:1; Goodspeed, 35), and the latter part is also translated “but would create a substitute for themselves” (in Holmes, et al, 303). The last clause refers to Jewish baptisms described earlier among pre-Christian evidence that signified conversion to Judaism; recall that Scripture indicates that circumcision identified one as a Jew, but the Jew was not considered a Jew by other Jews until after Jewish baptism. The author of so-called “Barnabas” is rejecting these Jewish conversion baptisms as useless and indicating that Christian baptism signified conversion to Jesus Christ which brings “forgiveness of sins.” This matches our inferences from Jewish history and Scripture, and this seems to be how it was seen among Christians just a few decades after Paul’s martyrdom.

*Part IV Of V. Major Errors In Application And Interpretation Of Baptism*

Introduction

There are at least six types of baptism error among Christian groups. Some combine errors. The pure New Testament design differs from all of these.

- "Baptism" by modes other than immersion;
- "Baptism" of people too young to accept the Gospel;
- Separating baptism from faith;
- Unauthorized conditions;
- Delaying baptism;
- Salvation only upon completed baptism.

\*\*\*I REMIND EVERYONE THAT SALVATION IS BY ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL AND THIS ALONE. HENCE, NOT BEING PROPERLY BAPTIZED DOES *NOT* IN ITSELF HINDER SALVATION.\*\*\*

Error I Of VI--Baptismal Substitutes

This error teaches that one can properly administer baptism by pouring or sprinkling, rather than by immersion. The Didache from c.100 at chapter 7 calls for baptism in a hierarchy of varying types of water, then as a second rate option "if you have neither, then pour water on the head" (in Holmes, et al, 259). The Westminster Confession says "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person" (28:3, translated Schaff, 3:662). Scripture teaches otherwise. Let us note the Greek of Acts 2:38b: "let every one of you be baptized(βαπτισθητω)" (NKJV). The Greek verb is "βαπτίζω" and means to "dip" (Vine et al, 50 NT), "make overwhelmed" (Strong, *Greek Lexicon* 16), "immerse" (Hayford, 1446; *New*, 36; *Catechism* 1214), or "completely submerge" (Stamatis, 191); a Spanish translation is "sumergir" (*Catecismo* 1214) most naturally "submerge." In contrast, the Greek words translated "pour" are "βαλλω, καταχεω, εκχεω, εκχυνω, επιχεω" (Vine et al, 478 NT) and "sprinkle" is "ραντιζω" (ibid., 596 NT); none appear at Acts 2:38. Scripture obligates us to be **dipped, immersed, completely submerged** at Acts 2:38. We are not saved by being baptized, so why not wait for opportunity to do it right?

Romans 6:4 "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we might too walk in newness of life" (RSV I). Romans 6:2-11 give pictorial representations of how Christians are to consider themselves dead to sin. However, the passage assumes that in baptism, one gets buried and raised -- hence, immersion.

At Matthew 28:19a "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, |bautizad = baptize|(βαπτιζοντες) them..." (NASB|RVA margin and translated|NASB). This is a form of βαπτίζω, which means "dip" or "immerse" or "submerge." The Lord specifically commanded the church to immerse, dip, submerge. Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38 show that both the church and the individual are responsible to perform baptism obediently by immersion. By definition of what God wrote in His Greek New Testament, any "baptism" that does not include immersion is not baptism.

Not only are ritual pouring sprinkling invalid substitutes for baptism, they do not imitate Christ. At I Corinthians 11:1 Paul writes "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (NASB) calling us to imitate Christ. Mark 1:9b says "Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized(εβαπτισθη) by John in the Jordan" (NASB); Luke 3:21b "Jesus too was baptized(βαπτισθεντος)" (NBV); Matthew 3:16a "And when Jesus was baptized(βαπτισθεις)" (RSV I). In all three we see Jesus baptized by immersion. If immersion was how Jesus was baptized, then why should not all Christians, who are called to imitate Christ, be baptized exactly the way Jesus was? If Jesus was properly baptized by immersion, then that is how His Christian imitators should perform baptisms.

Qumran literature does hint that sprinkling followed immersion in Essene baptism, such as "when his flesh is sprinkled..." in 1QS 3:4-9; churches may have followed. If sprinkling and/or pouring closed first century baptism ceremonies, it might be why some churches of later centuries deviated. However, the New Testament mentions only immersion, showing its necessity. Ritual pouring and ritual sprinkling are illegitimate fabricated substitutes for baptism; immersion is specifically commanded in the Word of God, and was part of the only practice followed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have never been baptized as the Bible means "baptism" need to be baptized.

Error II Of VI--Non-Repentance "Baptism"

The next error "baptizes" infants. The Catholic church claims that "Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism" (*Catechism* 1250), and the Orthodox hold this so urgent that they even do "air baptism" by raising them in air during illnesses where water would not be safe (Stamatis, 194) and expect a water "baptism" later (*ibid.*). The Lutheran Augsburg Confession, in 1530, ascribed this to the "true church" at Article IX:

"Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that by Baptism the grace of God is offered, and that children are to be baptized, who by Baptism, being offered to God, are received into God's favor. They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the Baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without baptism" (translated Schaff, 3:13).

The Westminster Confession of Faith continues this with "also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized" (28:4, Schaff, 3:662). In the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, Article XXVII states:

Original English Edition Of 1571

"The baptisme of young children, is in any wyse to be retayned in the Churche, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ" (Schaff, 3:505)

American Revision 1801

"The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ" (*ibid.*).

The Westminster Shorter Catechism has "the infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized" (Question 95, Schaff, 697). The Congregationalists order baptism "to be administered to all converts to Christianity and their children" (Declaration Of The Congregational Union of England And Wales, Article XVIII; Schaff, 3:732). The Methodist Articles of Religion state "The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church" (Article XVII, Schaff, 3:811). The Reformed Episcopal Articles of Religion includes this: "The baptism of young children is retained in this Church, as agreeable to ancient usage and not contrary to Holy Writ" (Article XXVI, Schaff, 3:823).

Let us see if this practice of "baptizing" non-repentants or pre-repentants is indeed "not contrary to Holy Writ." First of all, the words of Jesus are expressly clear that children are saved by being children. Jesus Christ said to His disciples "Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3 RSV I). Jesus said elsewhere "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Mark 10:14b-5, Luke 18:16-7 NIV). Who is more like a little child than a little child? The words of the Lord Jesus Christ are clear; children will enter the kingdom of God because they are children.

Second, we refer to Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God-- not because of works, lest any man should boast" (RSV I). Salvation is absolutely never dependent upon works. The medieval church's notion that children, who are incapable of belief, faith, and repentance, are saved by baptism teaches that children are saved by baptism itself. Ephesians 2:8-9 is quite clear to the contrary. Baptism never saves anyone. This includes infants and young children. This means that the reasons for which "infant baptism" was invented are contra-biblical.

The best possible reason for baptism of infants is found in the Orthodox churches' Longer Catechism of the Eastern Church. It reads as follows:

"293. How can you show from holy Scripture that we ought to baptize infants?

"In the time of the Old Testament, infants were circumcised when eight days old; but Baptism in the New Testament takes the place of circumcision; consequently, infants should also be baptized.

"294. Whence does it appear that *Baptism* takes the place of *circumcision*?" (in Schaff, 2:492)

A quotation of Colossians 2:11-12a follows in their catechism: "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the

II Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (ESV)

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circumcision of Christ, buried with him in Baptism" (ibid.). The rest of Colossians 2:12 says "in which you were also raised in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (RSV I). Baptism is not the new circumcision, because baptism is not administered "without hands." The passage shows that Christ Himself is the new circumcision, the "circumcision of Christ." Furthermore, the apostles did not interpret Colossians 2:11-2 -- their own words -- as requiring "infant baptism," because otherwise the church under their leadership would have practiced it. However, we know that the church under their leadership did not "baptize" pre-repentants.

The Scriptures clearly spell out an order that the New Testament church intended and practiced. At Acts 2:38 Peter commands "Repent-you, and so let s/he be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in order for the pardon/remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (eclectic translation, justified part II). Acts 2:41a says "So then, those who had received his word were baptized" (NASB). It does not say "and their children were baptized." It does not say that they dragged people off the street and forced them into the baptismal pools. Only those who had accepted Peter's message of repentance were baptized. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commands "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, |bautizad = baptize| them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, |enseñad = teach| them to observe everything that I have commanded you" (NBV|RVA margin and translated|NBV|RVA margin and translated|NBV). Baptism is to accompany the production and instruction of converts, and not before.

We now come to an instance of household baptism:

Acts 16:31-4 KJV 1611

"And they saide Beleeue on the Lord Iesus Christ, and thou shalt be saued, and thy house. And they spake vnto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And hee tooke them the same houre of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptizd, hee and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, hee set meat before them, and reioyced, beleeuing in God with all his house."

Acts 16:31-4 NKJV

"So they said, 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household."

Note the last clause: "having believed in God *with all his household*." Recall that the 1611 KJV was an Anglican (Church of England) translation, and that Article 27 of their Articles declares that they believe in "infant baptism." The 1611 Anglican translators admitted that this household baptism was done upon a household composed entirely of believers.

Why are the Scriptures so silent about instances of "infant baptism"? The Scriptures answer this when they describe baptism itself. Note I Peter 3:21 below:

ASV | NASB | RSV I | KJV

"which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism (|not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a |clear conscience|), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ "

RVR 1995|RVA|RVR 1995

"El bautismo que corresponde a esto ahora |os| salva (no quitando las inmundicias del cuerpo, sino como la aspiración de una buena conciencia hacia Dios) mediante la resurrección de Jesucristo"

RVR|RVA|RVR translated

"The baptism that corresponds to this now |you| saves (not removing the filths of-the body, but as the aspiration of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus-Christ"

Peter calls baptism "an appeal to God for a clear conscience" or "the aspiration of a good conscience toward God" = desire to replace a bad conscience = repentance. He calls baptism 'repentance'; in other words, he identifies baptism "as" repentance = representation of repentance. This means that *where there is no repentance, there is no baptism*. This means that the "baptism" of infants is not baptism. According to the Word of God, infant "baptism" or any other non-repentant "baptism" is not baptism. If one has been improperly "baptized," then s/he needs to be baptized.

Error III Of VI--Faith-Baptism Distinction

This third position holds that baptism or some human fabricated substitute is merely a commanded response to saving faith, with repentance being part of saving faith. It is supposed that one can refuse baptism and be a saved Christian, albeit a disobedient Christian; submission to baptism is not considered necessary for salvation. This position does well by not attributing to baptism the status of sin-cleanser. This position does wrong by teaching that submission to baptism is not imperative to salvation. These groups also typically delay baptism; this practice will be discussed in the next essay.

This position has a very serious problem. Look at Acts 2:38a "Repent-you, and so let s/he be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in order for the pardon/remission of your sins" (eclectic translation; see Acts 2:38 essay in Part III). Note that submission to baptism is put with "Repent" before "for remission of sins" in Acts 2:38. Submission to baptism follows any repentance "for the remission of sins." Note also I Peter 3:21 "which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism (not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a [clear conscience] ), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ " (ASV|NASB|RSV I|KJV). These verses make it clear that baptism represents repentance leading to salvation. Baptism is more than a matter of obedience; it is intimately connected to the causes of salvation. Contrary to what many groups teach, baptism is more than a "matter of obedience" to respond to salvation; baptism is a **required** representation and follow-up of the repentance necessary for salvation. This is seen clearly in Acts 22:16 "Now then, why hesitate?| Get up, [let-you-be baptized| and, calling on His name, be cleansed from your sins" (NBV|TNIV|translated from BLH, NTLH "seja batizado"; LSG/NELS/NVSR, VOR, VM "sois baptisé"|NBV). Submission to baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" **is** "calling on His name" and is part of the conversion experience.

An example from Scripture is next. Recall the story of Acts 8:26-39 about Philip and the Ethiopian. First, the Ethiopian "had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet" (8:27b-28 KJV). The Ethiopian was leaving Jerusalem to go to a distant region in order to be an official there. He was "an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians" (8:27a KJV). After the Ethiopian learned the gospel, he asked "see, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (8:36b KJV). The Ethiopian's indication of acceptance of the Gospel was a request to be baptized. We see that part of this New Testament gospel explanation involved an explanation of baptism. Some groups delay discussion of baptism until after conversion; this **subtracts from the Gospel message of the New Testament church**. After the Ethiopian accepted the Gospel, "he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (8:38a KJV). Baptism immediately accompanied the Ethiopian's conversion, and an acceptance of baptism was part of accepting the Gospel. This was the way things were in the New Testament church: acceptance of baptism was acceptance of the Gospel.

Error IV of VI--Delayed Baptism

Some groups delay baptism after conversion even when means are available. This is common in Baptist groups as well as in many Pentecostal groups. In many cases, this is partially done to avoid reckless baptism; the trial period tests sincerity of the convert. I was baptized five months minus three days after my conversion and the time I wanted to be baptized.<sup>1</sup> These groups separate conversion and baptism. This practice is foreign to Scripture, and those who knowingly, deliberately, and approvingly depart from procedures sanctioned by the Word of God because of their own ideas say via their actions that they think they have a better way of doing things than God has; this is true regardless of whether they think that consciously or not, and it is presumptuous at the very least.

Acts 2:38-41 describes a Gospel presentation and mass conversion. Acts 2:38a reads "Repent-you, and so let s/he be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in order for the

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<sup>1</sup> A more sensible way is another Baptist church which had an acceptance of the Gospel one Sunday, and the following Sunday announced a baptism for that person to be held the next Sunday.

## II Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (ESV)

pardon/remission of your sins" (eclectic translation; see Acts 2:38 essay in Part II). Acts 2:41 ends the scene with "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (RV, ASV). Those who accepted Peter's "word" were baptized "in that day."

Romans 6:2-11 and Galatians 3:24-7 assume every Christian baptized. The first passage taught Christians to think of themselves as dead to sin, and baptism was part of a picture of this. Galatians 3:24-7 pictured baptism as a step into spiritual adulthood. These baptism pictures would be irrelevant for unbaptized Christians and that status was not intended. Baptism was to accompany conversion.

Recall the story of Acts 8:26-39 about Philip and the Ethiopian. First, the Ethiopian "had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet" (8:27b-28 KJV). The Ethiopian was leaving Jerusalem to go to a distant region in order to be an official there. He had "great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians" (8:27a KJV). After the Ethiopian official learned the gospel, he asked "see, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (8:36b KJV). The Ethiopian official's acceptance of the Gospel was a request to be baptized. We see that part of this New Testament gospel explanation involved an explanation of baptism. Some Christian groups delay discussion of baptism until after conversion; obviously this *differs from the Gospel message of the New Testament church*. After the Ethiopian official accepted the Gospel, "he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (8:38a KJV). Baptism immediately accompanied the Ethiopian official's conversion.

The following baptisms are all of the baptisms mentioned by the book of Acts:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1) 2:41, first converts;            | 6) 16:15, Lydia's conversion;   |
| 2) 8:12, Philip's preaching;        | 7) 16:33-4, conversion of Philippian jailer and household -- despite Paul and Silas's ordeal, it was baptism before food; |
| 3) 8:36-39, Ethiopian eunuch;       | 8) 18:8, conversion of some Corinthian residents;   |
| 4) 9:18,22:16, Paul's baptism;      | 9) 19:4-5, baptism of some Ephesian "disciples."  |
| 5) 10:47-8, first Gentile converts; |   |

In every one of these instances, believers were baptized immediately upon conversion -- even 16:30-4 where delay would have been convenient. Why is there no mention of delayed baptism in Scripture? Acts 2:38a provides the answer: "Repent-you, and so let s/he be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in order for the pardon/remission of your sins" (eclectic translation; see Acts 2:38 essay in Part II). Baptism is commanded by God in writing. Delaying baptism is delaying obedience to God.

Matthew 28:19-20a says "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, |bautizad = baptize| them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, |enseñad = teach| them to observe everything that I have commanded you" (NBV|RVA margin and translated|NBV|RVA margin and translated|NBV). Baptism, in order of mention, comes after "making disciples" (conversion) and before teaching obedience to the Lord's commands. The Lord has decreed "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (John 15:17 KJV) and "Love your enemies" (Mathew 5:44b KJV). Should we ever delay obedience to these commands? Of course not; these commands are to be obeyed at all times. Jesus Christ placed baptism between two actions that have immediate and urgent priority: conversion and instruction to obey. Baptism must also be immediate and urgent.

### Error V Of VI--Unscriptural Conditions

Some groups, such as Baptist and Amish groups, add conditions to baptism that are not mentioned in Scripture. I have below four sets of multiple conditions for baptism within Baptist circles. This is by no means an all-inclusive list, but serves as a set of examples:

1. My former church baptized me on four conditions: conversion several months previous to that evidenced by changed life, my intention to regularly attend that church, approval of the pastor, and subsequent approval of the deacons = approval of the church's leadership. My former church rejected any and all "Baptist church manuals."
2. In Grover Stevens's former Baptist church, he reported three conditions: the candidate had to have evidence of conversion, desire to join the baptizing church, and the congregation voted on whether to receive the candidate, and therefore whether to baptize (Stevens, 7, 23). Unlike my experience, here the congregation decides before baptism.

3. One "Baptist church manual" has "professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart, and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church...may, upon baptism, be received into its membership" (Brown, 33), and "shall be examined before the church" and the church must have "ascertained their character and standing." If five people object, admission is denied (ibid., 34). These are four conditions.
4. Another "Baptist church manual" has "faith and repentance" (New, 34), and "give evidence of conversion and assent to Baptist faith and practice" (ibid., 51). Candidates must "have met with a change of heart" (repentance) and believe that their "sins have been taken away" (ibid., 17). They must "love and trust Christ and will seek to follow all his ways" and "enjoy prayer, the reading of the Word, the worship in the sanctuary, and the fellowship of Christians" as well as "carefully considered the doctrines of this church" and "accept them as consistent with the teaching of God's Word" (ibid.). It mentions "Persons applying for membership by baptism" and states that "No one should be received into membership without the unanimous vote of the church" unless the church finds that the dissenters have no just cause (ibid. 51). Many of these phrases are multiple ways of describing the same condition; these seem to be around 10 conditions.

The common conditions are 1) conversion, and 2) intentions of and acceptance for "local church membership." We have just seen that Scripture teaches conversion as a condition for baptism.<sup>1</sup> What about the condition of "local church membership"? Does Scripture authorize it? We will return to this.

In addition to Baptists, there are Amish communities that add requirements foreign to Scripture. A community described by John Hostetler required multiple periods of biweekly instruction and a total commitment to the Amish community before a pouring ritual they call "baptism." The candidates chose whether or not to follow the pouring ritual and so join the community; neither the community nor its leaders make these choices. Furthermore, submission to the pouring ritual was a vow of commitment to the Amish community, as well as a representation of repentance (Hostetler, 79-82).

The Baptist condition of "local church membership" is drawn from Acts 2:41 "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (RV, ASV). In this verse I do not see any command or authorization to withhold baptism from believers because of where church is attended. Furthermore, this verse says "in that day," and not after a multi-week period of instruction like one required in the Amish community described above.

Recall the story of Acts 8:26-39 about Philip and the Ethiopian. First, the Ethiopian "had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet" (8:27b-28 KJV). The Ethiopian was leaving Jerusalem to go to a distant region in order to be an official there. He had "great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians" (8:27a KJV). Upon acceptance of the gospel, he asked "see, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (8:36b KJV). This New Testament Gospel presentation included an explanation of baptism. Some groups discuss baptism only after conversion. This subtracts from the Gospel message of the New Testament church.

The next authentic verse, Acts 8:38, says "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Then "the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (KJV). Philip did not require the eunuch to attend the Jerusalem church, of which Philip was a member, in order to baptize him. The eunuch converted, and was therefore baptized immediately and **unconditionally**, and then he continued to Ethiopia away from the Jerusalem church and all other established churches in Palestine. Church attendance was not a condition for baptism in the pure New Testament church.

Philip baptized the eunuch upon conversion. He did not require the eunuch to return to Jerusalem for several weeks of instruction. He baptized him immediately and **unconditionally** upon acceptance of the Gospel. Obviously, requiring multi-week periods of instruction before baptism was not part of the New Testament church's design and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> The notion that baptism should be delayed to enable opportunity for a crowd to assemble and make baptism a "public confession of faith" is refuted by Acts 16:33 where the Philippian jailer is baptized in the middle of the night immediately upon conversion, and in Acts 8 where the Ethiopian official is baptized immediately upon conversion on a desert road.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

Acts 2:38a commands us to "Repent ye, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins" (ASV|NKJV|KJV 1611|ASV). Submission to baptism is commanded to all. Adding restrictive non-Scripture conditions to baptism restricts obedience to God's explicit command WITHOUT Scriptural authorization. Recall how Jesus rebuked the Pharisees when they "made void the word of God because of" their "tradition" at Matthew 15:6b (RV, ASV).

### Error VI Of VI--Pre-Regenerational Righteousness And Similar

Some believe that baptism by immersion saves a believer when accompanied by belief in Jesus as Christ and Lord; most are among groups self-named "Churches of Christ" or "Christian churches" and some Pentecostal circles. Rightly, the convert is baptized promptly, and it is taught that refusal to be baptized leads to condemnation. Wrongly, many of those in these groups mistake the act of baptism as means of salvation; some even insist that baptizees must intend for the baptism to remove sins<sup>1</sup> -- this is very dangerous because it puts faith in their baptisms and not in Jesus' finished work on the cross.

At John 4:1-2 Jesus was involved in baptizing, but "Jesus himself did not baptize. His followers did" (ICB). At 12:47 He said "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (ICB); He came to "save" but "did not baptize," showing distinction. John 6:28-9 says "The people asked Jesus, 'What are the works God wants us to do?' Jesus answered 'The work God wants you to do is this: to believe in the One that God sent'" (ICB). They asked for a plurality of "works" to "do," but Jesus had just one -- belief on Him. The underlying Greek is JOHN'S USAGE<sup>2</sup> to convey exactly what Jesus communicated either in Greek or Aramaic. Per 4:1-2 and 12:47, when Jesus said at 6:29 that the single "work" "believe" and that ONE "work" only is what "God wants" us "to do," baptism was excluded.

Such groups miss the meaning of Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast" (KJV, emphasis mine) and Romans 4:5 "And to the one who does not work but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness" (ESV|Campbell et al, 290|ESV). Here, Paul distinguishes belief and works; this is PAUL'S USAGE<sup>2</sup> relevant to both passages. Such groups also fail to notice this at Titus 3:5 "He saved us, **not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness**, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (NASB, emphasis mine) where the Holy Spirit washes away our iniquity and gives us new life at initial belief.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Done using the 1769 edition of the King James Version at Acts 2:38. The original 1611 KJV had a comma "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Iesus Christ, for the remission...." Also, early 19th century church leader Alexander Campbell, who is claimed by groups who believe this as one of their first, also had in his translation said comma for "Reform, and be each of you immersed in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to the remission" not favorable to said teaching.

<sup>2</sup> In writing the Bible, God authorized His human secretary-authors to use their distinct personal styles, which complement each other. This does not negate that every word is what God directed written.

<sup>3</sup> This "washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" happens immediately upon belief in the Gospel. Ephesians 1:13 says "In whom, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (NASB alternate) and 1:14a continues "He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession" (HCSB). The word translated "listening" is ακουοντες a form of the word ακουω (Strong, *Concordance* 583; *ibid.*, *Greek Dictionary* 4) and means "hearken, listen to," "heed, obey," "take in or admit to mental acceptance" (in Perschbacher, 13) and regarding discipleship "follow, obey" (Friberg et al, 40). For more, see also these two essays in Part II: 1) Acts 10:34-48+15:8-9, and 2) consecutive passages Acts 18:23-9 and 19:1-6. When getting the Holy Spirit upon 'hearkening' to the Gospel, Titus 3:5 teaches that the Holy Spirit washes us with a washing that renews and regenerates our spiritual nature. Even after conversion, Paul continued to identify himself as a Pharisee per Acts 23:6 and Philippians 3:5, and in Judaism the concept of washings for purification was important, so it would have been important to Paul also. Paul likely had no idea that as stringently as he taught salvation entirely apart from any deeds at all, in future times some would still miss his emphatic and repetitive teaching and take anything he wrote to mean that salvation is only upon completed baptism.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

No one is ever saved by performing some act; no one is unsaved before doing something, and then saved after doing it. This includes the act of being baptized in water, which is a ‘deed done in righteousness.’ Sometimes it is claimed that God saves us through faith during baptism. However, if the baptizee has the same faith

- 1) before baptism that motivates confirmation of that faith by baptism, and
- 2) which s/he is acknowledged to have after baptism,

the fact remains that the baptizee would not be saved because of that faith but rather because of that baptism. This would conflict with Romans 4:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Titus 3:5 which state that salvation is not earned by any physical act of the body.

Another error of this position is that the unregenerate person can do something to please God. John 3:3-6; behold the sequence:

- John 3:3b “unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (NASB)
- John 3:5b “unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (NASB)
- John 3:6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (NASB).

Jesus taught a necessity of two births at John 3:5. The Hebrews used such words as “water” and “drop” to describe natural birth (in Hayford, 1577). In modern American terminology, an expectant mother’s “water breaks” in the birth process; this resembles ancient Hebrew terminology. Jesus and Nicodemus were Hebrews. Jesus meant ‘unless one is born naturally and then spiritually, s/he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ Jesus notes that a person must be born of the Spirit. We proceed to Romans 8:2b-8

“through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful humanity to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in human flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind controlled by the sinful nature is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God. He refuses to obey God’s law. And really he is not able to obey God’s law. Those people who are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God” (TNIV | ICB).

*Note that living in the sinful self we CANNOT please God.* Continuing on, at Romans 8:9a we have “But you are not ruled by your sinful selves. You are ruled by the Spirit” (ICB) and at Romans 8:10b “But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness” (TNIV). This means that without the rebirth through the Holy Spirit, nothing we do will please God. We cannot please God without rebirth and regeneration.

Continuing this thought, we return to Titus 3:5 and combine that with Ephesians 1. Titus 3:5 says “He saved us, **not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness**, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (NASB, emphasis mine).<sup>1</sup> We now turn to Ephesians 1:13 which says “In whom, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (NASB alternate) and 1:14a continues “He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession” (HCSB). The word translated “listening” is ακουοντες a form of the word ακουω (Strong, Concordance 583; *ibid.*, Greek Dictionary 4). The

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference by Paul to the ancient Jewish concept of consecration washings. Even after becoming a Christian, Paul continued to identify himself as a Pharisee as seen from Acts 23:6 and Philippians 3:5, and in Judaism the concept of washings for purification was very important, so this concept would have been important to Paul also. Paul very likely had no idea that as stringently as he taught salvation entirely apart from deeds however righteous, in future times some people would still miss his emphatic and repetitive teaching and then interpret anything he wrote at all to mean that salvation is attained only upon completed baptism.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

word ακουω means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and regarding discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). When we make the decision to heed the Gospel and to follow it, immediately the Holy Spirit is delivered to us. At Titus 3:5, this regenerates us. In John 3:3-6 and Romans 8:2-10, this gives us new birth, and gives us the potential to please God. Only after regeneration can we do anything to please God.

Recall that confession is tied to mandated response to the Gospel just as tightly as baptism is tied to mandated response to the Gospel:

- Romans 10:9 “if you might confess in| thy mouth the Lord Jesus and |you might trust| in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (McReynolds, 576|KJV|McReynolds, 576|KJV)
- Romans 10:10b “And we |in mouth| say what we believe, and so we are saved” (ICB|McReynolds, 576|ICB).

Intelligible confession of the Lord Jesus with the mouth<sup>1</sup> before people is impossible underwater at least with first century technology; intelligible oral confession and baptism must be done separately one after the other. Now, which is to be done first? At Acts 10:46 new converts were “exalting God” (NASB) and so were baptized at Acts 10:48. Acts 2:41 says of Peter’s first sermon “They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls” (ASV), and regarding a sermon of Philip at Acts 8:12 “But when they believed Philip preaching |el evangelio= the gospell| concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (ASV|RVR 1909/1960/1995, RVA and translated|ASV). People accepted the teaching of the Gospel about Jesus Christ, and upon belief, were baptized. How would the baptizer know who believed? Oral confession would be a good inference, and at Acts 8:12 the Gospel was about God’s kingdom and “of Jesus Christ,” so confessing acceptance of Who Jesus is seems to be what preceded baptism. However, if one is not saved until after completed baptism, that confession cannot please God. It is best to understand verses used to advance ‘salvation via completed baptism’ in other ways as already outlined in this document.

The order is spelled out in Ephesians 2:8-10 “for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them” (ASV). The order is specified: faith, salvation without works, and then good works as prepared by God for Christians -- baptism is a work specifically appointed by God for Christians. ***Baptism and confession can only follow the faith that saves us; this has been explained as we examined relevant contexts and relevant Scripture passages throughout this document.***

Of course, faith must be active. Galatians 5:6 says “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only | the kind of faith that works through love” (ESV|ICB). James 2:14-26 explains this, culminating with “faith apart from works is dead” (ESV). However, we must take notice of one of the examples of how faith must be active: the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham mentioned at James 2:21-3, narrated at Genesis 22. When we turn to the end of the narration, we notice this at Genesis 22:9 where “The arrived at the place where God had told him” (JPS 1985), 22:10 says “And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son” (JPS 1985) -- but at 22:12 God says to Abraham “Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son from me” (JPS 1985), and then at 25:8-9 “And Abraham breathed his last, dying at a good ripe age, old and contented; and he was gathered to his kin. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him” (JPS 1985). It is necessary to conclude that the sacrifice of Isaac was NOT COMPLETED, yet James 2:14-26 considered it a positive example of a faith that did work.

<sup>1</sup> It is important that the same Greek word rendered “in” for “believe in thine heart” is the same Greek word rendered “with” in the KJV for “confess with thy mouth” and should likely be translated “in,” giving “confess in thine mouth.” Hence, the confession must only be ready in the mouth. It is important to note that people who could not speak were a recurrent concern in the Gospels; they were not exceedingly rare. However, the Bible indicates that “whosoever wishes” (ICB) could partake of eternal life – including those who cannot speak. Hence, completed confession is not necessary for salvation any more than completed baptism. These are matters of the will.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

Romans 4:5 says “And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness” (ESV). As demonstrated earlier in this section, the separation of bodily works from the causes of salvation is also stated at Titus 3:5 and Ephesians 2:8-9. This is sometimes avoided by asserting that baptism is God’s work. This is not shown by Scripture. Throughout the New Testament, those who baptize are always shown to be people. We start with John 4:2 where Jesus’ disciples are given credit for baptizing. At Matthew 28:19a Jesus Himself commands “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, [bautizad = baptize] them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, [enseñad = teach] them to observe everything that I have commanded you” (NBV|RVA margin and translated|NBV|RVA margin and translated|NBV). These disciples were to make converts who would follow the Lord as disciples, they were to baptize, and they were to teach. Here, those baptizing are the disciples. At Acts 8:38, Philip is given credit for baptizing the Ethiopian official. At 1 Corinthians 1:16 Paul indicates he baptized the household of Stephanus. In Scripture, every time the baptizer is specified, it is always a person and never God. Hence, when a person is baptized, the baptism is considered done by a person and received by another person. Hence, because no one is saved by doing some physical act per Romans 4:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Titus 3:5, we reject that completed baptism causes salvation.

We finally note another attempt to avoid recognizing baptism as a work. This effort is calling baptism a “work of faith.”<sup>1</sup> Of course, that does not deny that it is a work.<sup>2</sup> However, we will see if “faith” in the New Testament includes completed baptism. At Acts 10:34-48 we are told about a conversion of a number of people including Cornelius. The lead-up to this account includes an explanation in Acts 11:14 where Cornelius was told that Peter would “bring you a message though which you and all your household will be saved” (TNIV). In this account we have Acts 10:43b-4 with

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<sup>1</sup> The term “work of faith” appears in the KJV and ASV of a few passages: 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 2 Thessalonians 1:11. In both cases, it refers to a faith that already exists and is active and doing good things in general. The term is never used to describe a specific work that makes “faith” into “faith” only upon completion of it. In other words, the term “work of faith” in Scripture is NEVER shown to be a specified work that has the following significance: “`Faith’ is NOT `faith’ until that work is completed – only upon completion of that work is `faith’ made `faith.’” This definition of “work of faith” is not a definition found in Scripture – the Scriptures define it as general activity motivated by already existing faith among people who are already identified as saved Christians.

<sup>2</sup> Also interesting is the effort to try to make unusual pre-New Covenant healings which were each administered differently into a prototype for universally available salvation in New Covenant times administered as a singular “so great a salvation” Hebrews 2:3 (NKJV) “through faith” and “one faith” Ephesians 2:8, 4:5 (ASV). In those abnormal pre-New Covenant healings, sometimes one or more specific works was required to be completed before healing, but in common New Covenant salvation, biblical “believe” is the only “work God wants” us “to do” (ICB) according to John 6:28-9, and Ephesians 2:8-10 indicates that salvation is “through faith” which is “not of works” (KJV).

In addition, it interesting to note that in one case where multiple people were healed, Jesus gave a command to 10 lepers, but healed them as they were going – see Luke 17:12-19

“Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, `Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ So when He saw them, He said to them, `|Go show yourselves| to the priests.’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, `Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’ And He said to him, `Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well’” (NKJV|RSV I, NLT|NKJV).

The 10 lepers were all healed: “as they went, they were cleansed” (NKJV) per 17:14. They had NOT completed their ONE command to get to the priests and show themselves, yet because they believed and were obeying accordingly, they were cleansed; this one had not even made it to the priest when he noticed, but was already given his health by “faith.” This closely resembles our salvation now.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

“through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word” (ASV). This was before Peter “commanded them to be baptized” (ESV) in Acts 10:48. The Holy Spirit fell on these new converts *before* baptism, and these converts received the Holy Spirit when they “heard the word.” The word translated “heard” is ακουοντας a form of the word ακουω (Strong, *Concordance* 583; *ibid.*, *Greek Dictionary* 4), which means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and about discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). This means that these converts received the Holy Spirit upon acceptance of the Gospel before they were baptized.

Reception of the Holy Spirit is vital. Ephesians 1:13b says “after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed in Him, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (NASB alternate), and 1:14a continues “He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession” (HCSB). The word translated “heard” is ακουοντες a form of the word ακουω (Strong, *Concordance* 583; *ibid.*, *Greek Dictionary* 4). The word ακουω means “hearken, listen to,” “heed, obey,” “take in or admit to mental acceptance” (in Perschbacher, 13) and regarding discipleship “follow, obey” (Friberg et al, 40). The audience of the book of Ephesians received the Holy Spirit and guarantee of redemption upon hearing, in the belief/follow sense, the Gospel. Likewise, the converts of Acts 10 were given the ‘seal’ or guarantee of inheritance among the redeemed when they received the Holy Spirit upon acceptance of the Gospel “message through which” they “would be saved” (Acts 11:14 TNIV) and before baptism.

At Acts 15:8-9 Peter recalled this event saying “God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith” (ASV). Titus 3:5 has “él nos salvó, no por nuestras propias obras de justicia” (NVI) = “He us He-saved, not by our own works of righteousness” but “by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (NASB). Titus 3:5 and Acts 10:34-48 + 15:8-9 describe the same phenomenon: upon acceptance of the Gospel by faith, the Holy Spirit comes and gives us a washing that regenerates us, but before we are baptized. Titus 3:5 indicates that the Holy Spirit does a regenerating washing, and Acts 15:8-9 says of the converts there that God was “giving them the Holy Spirit” and “cleansing their hearts by faith,” but in Acts 10 the Holy Spirit came before baptism. It follows that in Scripture “faith” does *not* include completed baptism. Because of this, it is still evident

### An Aside: The Notion

“God Would Not Give Anybody Anything Without Them First Finishing Some Deed To Receive It.”

Many people are of the belief that God would never do anything for us without us first completing some act to verify acceptance of the gift; that the holy and infinite God would give us something so priceless as salvation without first a finished effort on our part is foreign to them. However, notice Luke 17:12-9

“Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ So when He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go show yourselves’ to the priests.’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’ And He said to him, ‘Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well’” (NKJV | RSV I, NLT | NKJV).

The 10 lepers were all healed: “as they went, they were cleansed” (NKJV) per 17:14. They had not completed their one command to get to the priests and show themselves, yet because they believed and were obeying accordingly, they were cleansed. Although this is a healing and not salvation, it does demonstrate that God has at least once been willing to give something when He was obeyed but no commanded act had been fully completed for Him.

## II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV)

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that Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 4:5 mean salvation by faith without any works at all -- with works following from people who are created anew in Christ by this salvation per Ephesians 2:10.

Ephesians 4:5 clarifies the matter with Ephesians 2:8-10. Ephesians 2:8-10 says “for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For [in Christ Jesus, God made us new people] for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (ESV|ICB|ESV). We are saved “through faith” and “not a result of works.” When we go over to Ephesians 4:5, in the very same epistle, we have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (NBV). No more than the Lord Jesus is simply a belief, or a dip in water with religious significance the exact same thing as the Lord Jesus, is faith and baptism one and the same. This passage clearly makes a distinction between faith and baptism, and when it says at 2:8-10 that we are saved “through faith” and “not a result of works,” baptism is excluded, but is one of those works that is referred to as coming from salvation.

I Peter 3:21 is clear *when the clarifying part is NOT left off and disregarded*: “which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, [not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a [clear conscience] ), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (ASV|NASB|RSV I|KJV). Peter at 1 Peter 3:21 clearly states that the ritual of baptism, in itself resembling a bath which removes dirt from skin, saves no one. Rather, he explains that one is saved by the repentance baptism represents. The convert believes the Gospel and so desires to replace a bad conscience, and is willing to follow that repentance with baptism. At the very moment one has the mental and spiritual state represented by proper baptism, then s/he is saved. What brings us to the water is what gets us saved.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Campbell is often claimed as an early holder of the belief that no one is ever saved until completed baptism. The 1830’s do not show Alexander Campbell holding this belief. Behold his own words regarding an unbaptized convert who had no opportunity to be baptized:

*“We can not tell with certainty.* But I am of the opinion that when a neglect proceeds from a simple mistake or sheer ignorance, and when there is no aversion, but a will to do everything the Lord commands, the Lord will admit into the everlasting kingdom those who by reason of this mistake never had the testimony of God assuring them of pardon or justification here, and consequently never did fully enjoy the salvation of God on earth” (Campbell, 175).

However, he echoes a fitting warning:

*“But I will say with the renowned President of Yale, that ‘he who, understanding the nature and authority of the institution, refuses to be baptized, will never enter the visible nor invisible kingdom of God.’ By the ‘visible and invisible kingdom’ he means the kingdom of grace and glory. He adds on the same page, ‘He who persists in this act of rebellion against the authority of Christ will never belong to his kingdom’” (ibid.).*

I give a hearty ‘Amen’ to the warnings of this nineteenth century President of Yale and of Alexander Campbell.

Recalling the first quotation of Alexander Campbell above, I believe that we CAN “tell with certainty.” We are “saved through faith” according to Ephesians 2:8 (Campbell et al, 348), and so the faith that sends us to the water or would send us to the water is what saves us. This has been shown throughout this document.

*Part V Of V: The Relationship Of Baptism To The Gospel As Originally Preached*

Baptism by immersion is more than a commanded response to repentance; baptism is the confirming proof of one's repentance (Acts 2:38, Luke 3:3b/Matthew 3:11, I Peter 3:21). In each and every non-anonymous baptism in the New Testament, baptism immediately followed conversion. These examples imply that every anonymous baptism, such as I Corinthians 1:16, was done upon converted believers; there are no specific examples to the contrary. Baptism was *never* administered before repentance and belief, but *always after*. Furthermore, baptism was absolutely never delayed. No New Testament church is shown waiting for special services to baptize, and no New Testament church is shown requiring a 'trial period.' Baptism was done *immediately after* conversion, as it should be done always. On the other hand, baptism was never intended to save anyone. Romans 4:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, and Titus 3:5 show clearly that works or deeds never save a person -- in fact, Ephesians 2:10 indicates that no one is able to do any good work "ordained" (KJV) by God for Christians until after salvation.

It is important to note that the New Testament after Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross mentions salvation by faith/belief in the Gospel and repentance many times more than it even mentions the subject of baptism. Preaching on the matter of salvation should likely reflect this truth; messages on how to be saved should center on, spend most time on, and pay most attention to the workings of the Gospel and on accepting it -- baptism should then be explained as a specific response.

The Gospel as first taught can be summarized with these passages from the original teachers:

*The Gospel From The Original Preachers' Words :*

1 Corinthians 15:1b "the gospel which I preached" (ASV), 15:2a "and by which you are saved" (NBV), 15:3b-5a "this was what was most important: that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say; that he was buried and was raised to life on the third day as the Scriptures say, and that he showed himself to" (ICB).

*Believe :*

1. Acts 16:31a "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (NBV, NLT).
2. Romans 4:5 "And to the one | who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (ESV|Campbell et al, 290).
3. Ephesians 2:8-10 "for by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For |in Christ Jesus, God made us new people| for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (ESV|ICB|ESV).

*Repent :*

1. Luke 24:47b "repentance |para = in-order-for| remission of sins should be preached in| His name" (ASV|RVA and translated|ASV|NBV).
2. Acts 3:19 "Arrependedei-vos, pois, e converteitei-vos, para que sejam| cancelados os vuestros pecados" (DA ERC/ECRF| DA ERA) = "Repent-you, therefore, and convert-you, to/in-order-for that they-may-be| canceled the your sins."

*Make It Active -- General And Specific :*

1. Acts 26:20b "they must repent and turn to God and do works consistent with repentance" (NBV).
2. Acts 2:38 "You-people-repent-you, and-so let-s/he-be-baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, in-order-for the pardon/remission of you-people's sins; and you-people shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (eclectic translation; see Acts 2:38 essay in Part II).
3. 1 Peter 3:21 "which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, | not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a |clear conscience|), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (ASV|NASB|RSV I|KJV).
4. Romans 10:9 "That if you might confess in | your mouth Jesus as Lord, and |might trust| in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (McReynolds, 576| NASB | McReynolds, 576| NASB, NBV).
5. James 2:26 "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead" (TNIV).
6. Galatians 5:6 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, |but only | the kind of faith that works through love" (NASB|ESV|ICB).
7. Philippians 2:12b "ocupaos en vuestra salvación" (RVR 1909/1960/1995, RVA) = "You-busy-you in your salvation."

We see that the gospel as originally preached is this: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection, repent and convert yourself, and respond to this by readiness to confess Him as Lord and by submissiveness to baptism in His name. Repentance would be part of faith when recognizing Jesus as Lord and Jesus’ purpose in dying; if we recognize that we are guilty of sin, and Jesus taught against sin, and we truly want to obey Him as Lord, we will shun lives of sin. In all but extreme and extenuating circumstances where there is no opportunity, biblical belief and repentance will cause good works in general, and baptism and confession for specifics.

Scripture shows that we are saved by faith “not a result of works,” so one is saved when s/he has truly believed the Gospel and truly repented. However, regarding baptism, the evidence seen indicates that s/he should not be treated as a Christian until s/he has *shown* repentance and verified conversion identifying with the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism, *unless* s/he suffers from non-deliberate hindrances caused by post-New Testament aberrations from Scripture, such as:

1. being a victim of a ritual wrongly called a “baptism” and being deceived or misled into accepting it as enough of a real baptism to cause belief that s/he should not be baptized, or
2. being a victim of a church which contra-Scripturally withholds baptism despite acceptance of the Gospel, and the victim is not aware that s/he can be baptized elsewhere or of the illegitimacy of this withholding.

Of course, any Christian who has been through a ceremony called “baptism” which Scripture indicates is not should disregard that ceremony and be baptized -- but *in these above cases and similar cases*, Christian graciousness should be the norm and the person should best be treated as fully Christian saved by God’s grace without merit like all Christians, but having imperfect understanding. In contrast, if anyone

- ◆ claims to be a Christian convert,
- ◆ fully acknowledges never having been baptized,
- ◆ does all sorts of good deeds of the highest excellence while flowing with feigned praises of the Lord Jesus Christ,
- ◆ all the while steadfastly refusing to be baptized despite known opportunity,

then s/he proves that s/he is *not* a Christian.

Before we bring this to an end, let me inform the reader of three things. First of all, purposes and beliefs about baptism have been reasons for non-cooperative divisions among Christ’s redeemed followers. Since completed baptism is not what makes someone a Christian, I propose that such baptism-related unauthorized divisions among Christ’s redeemed followers be minimized at the very least. Nonetheless, even though one would think that more of Christ’s redeemed followers would want to make a joined effort to serve the Lord

1. on the principle of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and
2. to more closely approach the dying will of Christ expressed at John 17:20-1,

I expect that this proposal will have limited reception. Second, there would be less need to quarrel in the church about the role of baptism if all the churches would normally administer baptism promptly upon conversion as per the New Testament pattern. Salvation of people was the whole point for the Son of God to leave Heaven and endure life and agonizing death as a human being while bearing the divine penalty for people’s sins. Therefore, I wish more believed that the experience of the conversion linked to salvation should *NEVER* be trifled with in *any* way by the churches in normal practice: this includes timing, order, or any other matter. Third, some Christian groups seek to give respondents to the Gospel an act to do in order to signify “accepting Christ”; examples of such include raising a hand during invitation time, or “coming forward,” or praying a “sinner’s prayer,” or something like “ask Jesus to come into your heart and be your personal Savior,” or some of or all of the above. There are no such practices mentioned in the New Testament, but rather the New Testament describes and calls for a specific act to immediately indicate acceptance of the Gospel: baptism by immersion in water; why avoid following the Lord’s way as sanctioned in the written Word of God?

*Appendix: Why "For" Instead Of "And" At Luke 24:47*

Compare the two different textual readings for Luke 24:47:

- "and that repentance for(εἰς) forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (NASB following modern Greek texts).
- "and that repentance and(καί) forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (NASB adapted to KJV following traditional Greek text).

The KJV translators used a Greek text based on that of Erasmus, who had access to less than ten manuscripts, all from the tenth century and later (RSV I and RSV II prefaces). A similar but slightly different Greek text was used for the Spanish Reina-Valera tradition. This tradition, which dates from 1569, differs from the KJV's source text at II Timothy 1:18. Here, the KJV has "ministered unto me" but "unto me" comes from a few Greek manuscripts and the Latin Vulgate (NKJVMg) leaving just "ministered"; the Latin Vulgate was translated in a thirteenth century Spanish version as "seruicio me fizo" (Nuevo, 367) = "service to-me he-did" and later into Spanish as "servicios me prestó" (Amat) = "services to-me he-did." In contrast to the Latin Vulgate and KJV's minority Greek reading, the 1569 Reina Bible agrees with the majority of Greek manuscripts, reading "nos ayudó" = "us he-helped," which the 1602 Valera Bible and later Revisiónes of the Reina-Valera tradition match verbatim. The Reina-Valera tradition also reads with the majority of Greek manuscripts at Matthew 27:41 by mentioning Pharisees (NKJVMg):

<u>Traditional Reina-Valera (RVR 1909)</u>	<u>1602 Valera Bible</u>	<u>Translated Into English</u>
"De esta manera también los príncipes de los sacerdotes, escarneciendo con los escribas y los Fariseos y los ancianos, decían"	"Dešte manera tambien los principes de los Sacerdotes ešcarneiendo, con los Ešcribas, y los Pharišeos, y los Ancianos, dezian"	Of-this manner also the principals of the Priests mocking, with the Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Elders, they-were-saying

The 1560 Geneva Bible brought over by the Pilgrims in 1620 also goes with the Majority Text reading: "Likewise also the high Priests mocking him, with the Scribes, and Elders, and Pharises, said" (GenB). In contrast, the KJV goes with manuscripts similar to those followed by the fourth century Latin Vulgate at this passage, and therefore does not insert mention of the Pharisees here.

Efforts regarding manuscripts remained disjointed even around the Reformation. Sometimes, the 1611 English translators themselves were indecisive about readings. For example, the KJV 1611 marks the beginning of Luke 10:22 and puts in the margin "Many ancient copies adde these words, And turning to his Disciples, he said."

Since the early years of the Reformation, God has disclosed over 5000 manuscripts to help Christians recover His exact Word. Although the vast majority of these manuscripts are from the eleventh century and later (White, 188), God has also disclosed from His hiding places numerous manuscripts and manuscript fragments from the fifth century and earlier. Today, Christians have access to translations of texts that more closely resemble what God originally put on paper.

Here is the ancient manuscript evidence regarding Luke 24:47:

<u>Manuscripts With "For" (εἰς)</u>	<u>Manuscripts With "And" (καί)</u>
Papyrus 75, turn of 2nd/3rd century, Egypt	Alexandrinus, 5 <sup>th</sup> century, Egypt
Vaticanus, 4th century, Europe	Washington, turn of 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> century, Egypt
Sinaiticus, 4th century, Sinai Peninsula	Ephraemi, 5 <sup>th</sup> century, Europe
	Bezae, 5 <sup>th</sup> century, Europe

(Codex information from Throckmorton, vii-x; papyrus from Comfort, 63; textual from Fitzmeyer, 1520.)

The chart shows that the reading "for" is found in manuscripts closest in time to the writing of the New Testament, regardless of which side of the Mediterranean we examine. We conclude that God wrote through Luke "repentance for (εἰς) forgiveness of sins" at Luke 24:47, as in "arrepentimiento para perdón de pecados" (Lacueva, 354) = "repentance in-order-for pardon of sins."

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These last seven versions are of compromised doctrinal value and are to be considered inferior in value to the rest.

The NJB is included here because the Greek text of II Timothy 3:16 includes *four* purposes of Scripture, but the NJB provides renderings for only the last three, omitting KJV/NKJV "for doctrine" or ASV, ESV, NASB, TNIV, ICB "for teaching." Hence, the NJB is not even a translation.

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Ex-Church of Christ Discussion Board: <http://makephpbb.com/phpbb/index.php?mforum=members> -- one of two boards affiliated with <http://www.ex-churchofchrist.org/> . This board is open to anyone in or out of the Churches of Christ.

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