

Welcome to the: **The Fourth Annual** on May 19, 2007

Minnesota Bible Lectureship

This year's theme:

THE BAPTISM OF THE BIBLE

(Ephesians 4:4 - One Lord, one faith, one baptism)

8:00 a.m. - Registration (Refreshments will be provided.)

9:00 a.m. - Introduction, Prayer, and Song

9:15 a.m. - ***The Mode of Baptism*** - Baxter Exum (Madison, WI)

- What does the Greek word "baptism" mean?
- Is baptism always a burial in the Bible?
- What is the historicity of other modes such as sprinkling?

10:15 a.m. - ***The "One" Baptism*** - Dan Mayfield (Owatonna, MN)

- By the time of the Ephesian letter what was the "one" baptism?
- What was the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit?"
- Do all the commands to be baptized concern only water baptism?

11:15 a.m. - ***The Gospels & Epistles on Baptism*** - Rennie Frazier
(Inver Grove Heights, MN)

- What are Christ's teachings on Baptism?
- What are Paul's teachings on Baptism?
- What are Peter's teachings on Baptism?

Noon - Lunch (There are restaurants very close to the lectureship.)

1:30 p.m. - ***The Book of Acts on Baptism*** - David Shearer (Marshalltown, IA)

- What role did baptism play in Peter's sermon on Pentecost?
- What was baptism's role in all the conversions in Acts?
- Does preaching Jesus include preaching baptism?

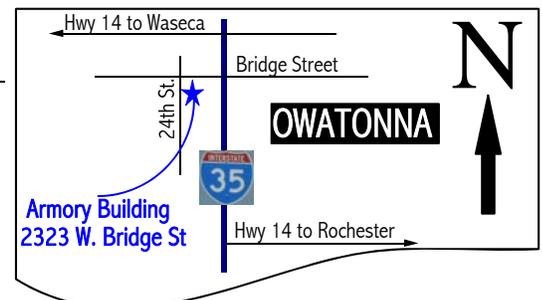
2:30 p.m. - ***Objections to True Baptism*** - Christopher Graber (Burnsville, MN)

- Is baptism a part of being saved by grace through faith?
- Is requiring baptism for salvation trying to be saved by works?
- What are some common mistakes on baptism verses?

3:30 p.m. - ***Prerequisites for Baptism*** - Randy Martin (Lakeville, MN)

- What cost must one count before baptism?
- How mature should one be before baptism?
- When does one become accountable for sins?

- This lectureship is sponsored by the Owatonna Church of Christ and the South Twin Cities Church of Christ.
- It will be held in the **Armory Building** on the west side of Owatonna just 1/3 mile west of I-35 on Bridge Street.
- For more info contact - Dan Mayfield (507) 451-7368
- Randy Martin (612) 220-1124





Baxter was born on May 25, 1972, and became a Christian at the age of 11. He married Keola Vosburgh in May 1993. Their son, Silas, was born on April 25, 1997, and their daughter, Tabitha, was born on December 22, 2000.

In May 1993, Baxter graduated cum laude from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Bible and a minor in Communication. He is currently working on a master's degree in Organizational Leadership from Regions University in Montgomery, Alabama.

Upon graduation from Freed-Hardeman, Baxter began preaching for the Janesville (Wisconsin) Church of Christ and served for seven years with the Janesville congregation. In April 2000, he and his family moved to Madison, Wisconsin, and Baxter began preaching for the Four Lakes Church of Christ. Madison is Wisconsin's capital city and is located in Dane County—a county listed as a "Priority Area for Church Planting" according to Mac Lynn's Churches of Christ in the United States. With a population of more than 450,000, the harvest has truly been plentiful. Since Baxter moved to Madison, the congregation purchased and paid for a church building, became completely self-supporting, and has started supporting a number of effective mission works. The educational program has expanded from two small children's classes to a fully staffed program divided into five age groups. In the future, the greatest challenge will be reaching out locally, especially at the UW Madison campus (with 40,000 students) as well as among the rapidly growing Latino population.

Baxter has spoken at a number of congregations in Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alaska, Illinois, and Wisconsin. He has also been a speaker at several lectureships, including the 63rd Annual Bible Lectureship at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee.

“The Mode of Baptism”

Baxter T. Exum
Minnesota Bible Lectures
May 19, 2007

When we look at the religious world around us, we find that there are many diverse opinions on the subject of baptism. Certainly there are many denominations that sprinkle water on the heads of little babies. Others baptize adults, but do it for the wrong reason. Others do it for the right reason but in the wrong way. And right there, we have summarized almost 95% of the religious world. And when we think about it, and when we start checking around and asking some questions, we find that the Lord's church is one of only a tiny fraction of the religious world who baptize for the right reason, at the right time, and in the right way.

As I was doing the research for this morning's lesson, I ran across some rather unique practices. In New Zealand, for example, there is apparently what is known as the Athlete Church Extreme (ACE), and they practice what they refer to as “Bungee Baptisms.” They gather over a river, they make the appropriate calculations based on a person's weight and the elasticity of the rope, and that person is initiated into the church by jumping off the bridge and being dunked roughly waist deep in the river below. In fact, their website goes on to explain that they celebrate communion while skydiving, and if you look closely, you can see that each skydiver is holding onto a loaf of bread. Well, this is a little bit unusual!

And yet when we start to explain baptism to the world around us, it seems that we are often the

ones who are strange. In fact, it almost seems sometimes that we are speaking a different language altogether. I remember getting estimates for some project at the church building down in Janesville, and I was showing the electrician what we needed to have done. As I was standing there in my office, the man asked me what was behind a particular wall. I explained that our baptistery was behind that wall. He said, “No, this wall right here.” And I said, “Yes, there’s water behind that wall.” And the man got a little bit irritated and said, “Well, how do you get into that room?” So I opened the door, he went up the dark stairs, and when he got to the top, he actually yelled and said, “Whoa, there’s a lot of water up here!” And when he got over the shock of seeing 800 gallons of water in a church building, he clarified his surprise by saying, “I grew up Lutheran, so I guess that explains it!” And so I think that this is simply another reminder that when it comes to baptism, we are the ones who are actually quite strange. In fact, it is almost impossible to have a basic discussion with someone on the subject of baptism without first backing up and defining the most basic of terms.

With this in mind, I’d like for us to focus this morning on what is commonly referred to as the “mode” of baptism—in other words, the action itself. And our study is especially important, because if we were to ask several different religious leaders to describe and define the action of baptism, we would get a number of different responses. Those responses would fall into one of four basic categories. Some would define baptism as sprinkling, others would describe it as pouring water on a person’s head, others would define it as immersion, and others would even give you a choice—any of the above. So as we study, I’d like for us to ask ourselves the question: How do we know whether baptism is sprinkling, pouring, or immersion? And as we answer that question from the Scriptures, I’d like to briefly look at four basic areas.

I. First of all, we need to start by looking at THE WORD BAPTISM ITSELF.

Unfortunately, the religious world thrives on confusion. In fact, if religious leaders can keep us away from the Bible, then it may be possible for them to convince their people of whatever they want for us to believe. As I was growing up, I went through a time when I really wanted to be sure of my faith. Since I had grown up in the church, I wanted to make sure that my faith was my own and not just what I had been told, and so I went through a time of testing. And during that time of testing, I made every effort to visit every denominational church that I could think of. And when I went to each group, I tried to talk to a leader, and I tried to ask some questions. And this took several months, but I managed to visit nearly every major denomination that was represented down in Crystal Lake, Illinois. I went to the Catholics, I went to the Episcopalians, I talked to the Mormons, I talked to the Jehovah’s Witnesses, I went to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, I went to the Baptists, and one Thursday night I went to the Lutheran Church.

I sat in the back and observed the entire service, and when it was all over, I talked to the minister. Among other things, I asked him about baptism and why they used sprinkling instead of immersion. This man looked me in the eye and told me that the Greek word for baptism originally meant “sprinkling.” What he didn’t know was that I already knew that Greek word, and I knew that there was not a single authority in the Greek language to define it in that way. In fact, the scholars (from all denominational backgrounds—including Martin Luther himself) are almost completely unanimous in their conclusion that the word originally referred to an immersion in water. In other words, this minister, standing there in his fancy robes in the back of a beautiful facility, straight out lied to a young man asking an honest question about the Bible! At that point I realized that some people are out to actively deceive by abusing their religious authority. I had always wondered whether certain leaders in the denominational world were just honestly mistaken or whether they were evil. But this man answered that question for me. And

so I asked him a follow-up question: Could you please show me a Greek lexicon that defines baptizo as sprinkling? He stuttered, he stammered, he paused, he shifted his weight around, and he finally admitted that it couldn't be done. As far as I can tell, there is not a single lexicon that defines baptizo as sprinkling.

When we look at the definition of baptism in a modern dictionary, we get the modern definition—basically, as the term is now used, baptism does refer to any kind of religious initiation that is done by either sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. And yet we need to understand that words change over time. The word “gay,” for example, means something much different now than it meant less than a hundred years ago. And so if I'm reading Shakespeare and run across the word “gay,” I cannot define that word by looking in the latest edition of Merriam Webster's dictionary. I have to go back further than that. We can think about the word “church.” If we were to look it up in a modern dictionary, it would be defined as a religious building, and yet we know from the Scriptures when Jesus purchased the church with His blood ([Acts 20:28](#)), he was not purchasing a building. And so we don't even need to imagine, then, that the word baptize has changed as well, and in many cases it has been actively redefined.

But when we look to the standard reference works (none of which, by the way, have been written by members of the Lord's church), we find that the word we commonly translate as baptize originally (and unanimously) referred to dipping something. According to Thayer, a well-respected Greek scholar, the Greek word baptizo, means, “**...to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge, to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make oneself clean with water.**” The Greek scholars Lidell and Scott define the word in this way, “**to dip in or under water; [used] of ships to sink or disable them.; to dip oneself.**” We could go on and on, but I have not been able to find one Greek lexicographer to define baptizo as “sprinkle” or “pour.” Not one! There are Greek words that can be translated as “sprinkle” or “pour” (words that the Bible authors could have used), but baptizo is not one of them!

In fact, almost all modern translations correctly translate the root of this word in [Luke 16:24](#), where the rich man is in the flames and asks Abraham to send Lazarus to “*dip*” (or baptize) the tip of his finger in water to cool off his tongue. There is no dispute that the rich man wanted Lazarus to “*dip*” (or immerse) his finger in the water.

Even outside of the Scriptures, other ancient writings from roughly the same period also show us how the word was commonly used. In the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus, for example, Josephus was describing the murder of a boy who was drowned by his companions (at Herod's command) in a swimming pool. According to Josephus, “**Continually pressing down and immersing (baptizing) him while swimming, as if in sport, they did not desist till they had entirely suffocated him.**” The young man's companions did not drown him by sprinkling him with water, but they immersed him in the pool.

We have another account from a historian who lived between 30 and 60 years before Christ, and wrote about the defeat of an army on the bank of a river in Sicily. He said, “**The river, rushing down with the current, increased in violence, submerged (baptized) many, and destroyed them attempting to swim through with their armor.**” The soldiers were drowned, not by sprinkling a few drops of water on their heads, but by being immersed in the river. The word that is commonly translated as baptism, then, was used in the ancient world to refer to an immersion in water.

Why is it, then, that the word is not consistently translated throughout the Scriptures? Part of the history goes back to the work of John Wycliffe (in 1384) when he translated the Bible into English for the very first time. Wycliffe was working from a Latin manuscript, and instead of translating the Latin word “baptisma,” he simply turned it into an English word by dropping the “a” off of the end. In other words, he basically left it untranslated. By this time, sprinkling was already quite common and was known as baptism by the leaders of the church at that time. Wycliffe, therefore, instead of translating the Latin word baptisma as immersion, avoided the controversy by simply leaving it untranslated. Several years later, in 1525, William Tyndale made the first English translation directly from the Greek language. Tyndale did translate the word baptizo. He translated it properly as “immersion,” and in response, the leading church of the time actually paid people to burn any copies of Tyndale’s translation.

A number of years later, as people were preparing to create the King James Bible, the king ordered his 54 scholars not to translate the word baptize, but to use the word “baptism,” and avoid the controversy created by Tyndale’s Bible several years earlier. And ever since then, the Greek word baptizo has basically been left untranslated as “baptism.” When we use the word baptism, then, we are basically using a Greek word. And the word itself is properly defined as immersion. Most modern translations have continued to avoid the controversy by refusing to translate it. By leaving it as “baptism,” they can allow various groups to define it on their own. And so, as I mentioned earlier, there are religious leaders out there who are telling their people that baptism is whatever they want it to be.

Can you imagine a Bible publisher to publish a translation where baptizo is actually translated? It would be immediately rejected and would never pay for the ink and paper it was printed on. Would the Lutheran minister I referred to earlier ever tell his people to go out and buy a translation that said, “*Change your hearts, and let each one of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ*”? That, by the way, is an accurate translation of **Acts 2:38**. Would he ever tell his people to read a proper translation of **Acts 22:16**, “*Now, why do you delay? Arise, be immersed, and wash away your sins, having called on the Lord’s name*”? Could a Catholic priest, who sprinkles babies, ever read from **Romans 6:3**, “*Do you not know that as many of us as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into His death*”? Could a priest, who sprinkles babies, ever read an accurate translation of **Mark 16:16**, “*He who believes and is immersed shall be saved...*”? It is a little hard to flick water on a baby and read an accurate translation of the Greek word baptizo. It is much easier to keep the word untranslated and then just tell people whatever you want them to believe.

I have a suggestion that is based on experience, and that is, when we study with people, and if this is their hang up, if they insist that baptism can be done by sprinkling, and if they don’t trust our Greek lexicons and reference books, then I would suggest just going to the dictionary. I don’t know about you guys, but I love looking stuff up in the dictionary. Several years ago, I discovered that my grandfather has a habit of reading one page of the dictionary every night after dinner. That is a beautiful habit that more people should have. But for those who insist on looking at an unbiased source, we can learn a lot from a dictionary.

When we look up the word baptism, all dictionaries will give its modern definition, and this definition will include almost everything. It may refer to sprinkling or pouring. There might be anything there. But most good dictionaries will also have at least a brief statement about the origin of the word and its original meaning. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the word baptism comes from a Greek word that originally meant, “**to dip.**” Very interesting! Thank God—we do not have to know Greek to go to heaven! All we need is an English Bible

and good dictionary, and we can figure out that baptism refers to immersion.

According to the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, they list sprinkling and pouring in the definition of how the word was being used when this dictionary was copyrighted, in 2006. But again, at the end of the definition, there is a section on the history of this word. The actual word “baptize” goes back to 1250-1300 AD. Remember what I said about Wycliffe back in the 1300’s? He took a Latin word and basically made it look English. And here we find that Random House traces the history of the word to roughly the same period. But even more interesting is what comes next. The “LL” indicates that it came from Latin, and the “Gk” means that Latin got it from the Greek. And there at the very end, not in a “religion book,” but in a modern dictionary, we find that the original word meant either to “**immerse**” or “**bathe**.”

We could also look at the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, a dictionary that specializes in the history of words. They claim that the English word baptize goes back to 1297, from an Old French word, which came from Latin, which came from Greek, and they give the definition of the Greek word as, “**to immerse.**” And then they say, “**in ecclesiastical (or, church) language,**” it goes back to the Greek word meaning, “**to dip, steep, dye, color.**” And then, “**Christian baptism originally consisted in full immersion.**” And so we have it from a secular source—the Greek word that we translate as baptize, originally referred to immersion, and was even used to refer to the coloring of fabric. If you wanted to change a garment from one color to another, you would not sprinkle it with dye, but you would dip it or soak it or steep it in the dye.

Several years ago, a man came into my office to study this issue, and I pulled out all of the big books. But this man did not trust my books, so I took him to the latest dictionary at that time, which was the *Merriam Webster’s 9th Collegiate Dictionary*. We went to the entry on “baptize,” which listed the original meaning of the root word as, “to dip.” He read the entry for himself and decided to be baptized immediately. There was a man who was converted by the Bible and Merriam Webster!

So first of all, then, we can learn something about the “mode” of baptism by simply looking at the Greek word itself.

II. Secondly, even if we did not have any clue about the Greek language, we could also determine the mode of baptism simply by studying THE DEFINITION OF THE GOSPEL.

In **1 Corinthians 15**, the apostle Paul gives us a definition of the gospel, and in **verses 3-4**, Paul says, “***For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.***” The gospel (or the good news) is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We understand the importance of the death, and we understand the importance of the resurrection, but what is the big deal about the burial? Why is the burial of Christ considered such an important part of the good news?

As we think about the importance of the burial, consider for just a moment what would have happened without it. Imagine Jesus being crucified, dying, and then immediately waking up. Do we see a problem with that scenario? What if Jesus died on the cross and then ten minutes later decided to jump off the cross and proclaim Himself alive?

I think we start to see that the burial confirms His death! Not only that, but the open tomb three days later confirms His resurrection! The burial confirms both the death and the resurrection!

And so the death, the burial, and the resurrection are all three vital parts of the good news. Take one of these away, and the good news is no longer good news.

And just like the death and the resurrection, the burial is also prophesied in the Old Testament. The burial was important to God. In fact, in **Psalm 16**, David makes a prophecy that is quoted and applied by the apostle Peter on the first day of the church in **Acts 2**. In **Acts 2:31**, Peter referred to David and said that, *“...he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.”* That last phrase is a reference to the time that Jesus’ body spent in the tomb.

The most direct Old Testament prophecy concerning the burial of Christ is found in **Isaiah 53**, the famous passage about the “Suffering Servant.” In **Isaiah 53:9**, the prophet Isaiah said that, *“His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.”* The fulfillment is found in **Matthew 27:57-60**, as we find that, *“When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.”* And so even though Jesus died between two thieves, he was placed in the tomb of a rich man, just as the prophet Isaiah had predicted.

When we start looking into the importance of the burial, we realize how important it is. We realize why the burial of Jesus was predicted by David and Isaiah. And in a practical sense, as we look at the importance of the burial, we realize that the miracle of the resurrection took place in the tomb!

Several years earlier, a good friend of Jesus had passed away—a man named Lazarus in **John 11**. We learn from **John 11** that Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days. In fact, his body had already started to decay, and when Jesus told them to move the stone away from the entrance to the tomb, they gave Jesus a warning. According to **John 11:39**, *“Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, ‘Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.’”* But the Bible goes on to say that, *“He cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth.’”* And then, *“The man who had died came forth.”* That miracle happened in the tomb. And in a similar way, the good news about Jesus Christ is that Jesus died, He was buried, and then He was raised up from the dead.

As we start to compare this to the process of baptism, we start to understand that baptism is also a burial. Paul explains it so clearly in **Colossians 2:12-13**, where he referred to, *“...having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.”* We notice here that we were *“buried with Him in baptism.”* And we also notice that God *“made us alive.”* When were we made alive? When were our sins forgiven? According to **verse 13**, our sins were forgiven, *“when we were dead.”* The miracle of forgiveness takes place in the tomb of baptism! We were made alive in the tomb!

Paul paints a similar picture in **Romans 6**. He makes the comparison between baptism and the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and in **Romans 6:3-7**, Paul said...

³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

We are freed from sin in the tomb of baptism, when we are immersed into the death of Jesus Christ!

And yet there are millions of people in the world around us who practice what they call baptism by sprinkling water on a person's head. Sprinkling, though, completely ignores the significance of the Lord's burial in the tomb.

What I'm about to say is not the main point of this morning's lesson, but the most absurd denial of this whole process takes place when people say that you can be saved before baptism. There are many churches that teach that you accept Christ into your heart, your sins are forgiven, and then you are baptized a few days, weeks, or even months later...as a sign that you have already been saved. And so, unlike the diagram up here on the screen, they don't have a dead man being buried in baptism, but instead, the man has already been resurrected, his sins have already been forgiven (supposedly), and he is now being buried alive! And so at this point, going down into the water, being buried, and being raised up is actually a mockery of the gospel itself! And so the beautiful picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, mirrored in baptism, is literally stripped of its literal and symbolic meaning.

But back to the main point of this morning's lesson and the question of whether baptism is sprinkling, pouring, or immersion—there is no similarity; there is no comparison between sprinkling or pouring and the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Immersion is the only “mode” of baptism that perfectly (or even remotely) fits the analogy given in **Romans 6**. Our sins are forgiven in the “tomb” of baptism. Over the past several years, I have made a point of telling people to pause and think under the water before I lift them back up. Right now, you are in the tomb with Jesus. Right now, you are covered by His blood. Right now, your sins are being forgiven!

III. As we continue, WE SHOULD ALSO LOOK AT THE CONTEXT OF SOME OF THOSE PASSAGES THAT MENTION BAPTISM.

And again, we find that we do not need to know Greek in order to go to heaven. We have already looked at **Romans 6** and the fact that forgiveness takes place in the tomb, but not even considering the theological background, all of us know what it means to be buried. If your idea of a burial is being laid out in a field with some dirt sprinkled on your casket, then maybe baptism by sprinkling is for you. But most of us, when we think of being buried, we think of being completely covered over. We think of being in a hole, covered with dirt. And in the same way, baptism by burial is an immersion in water. Several years ago, I heard a story about a cat belonging to the son of a denominational minister. The cat died, and so the father told his son to bury the cat in the backyard. When the father went into the backyard some time later, he found the cat with just a little bit of dirt on it. He called his son and said, “I told you to bury the cat.”

The son replied by saying, “Well, don’t you sprinkle a little water on a person and call it a burial?” A very wise son!

Not only is the action of baptism described as a burial, but in **Colossians 3** and **Romans 6**, Paul also talks about being “*raised*” with Christ, and to be raised certainly implies coming up from something. A person would hardly need to be “raised up” from a sprinkling. And so, not even looking at the meaning of the Greek word, we can see from the context that baptism is an immersion.

There are several other passages that also give us some clues about the action of baptism. For example, we could look at the example of the Ethiopian Officer in **Acts 8**. In **Acts 8**, the Bible tells us that the treasurer of Ethiopia was heading back home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. On his way home, he is reading from the book of Isaiah when the preacher Phillip runs up and joins him in the chariot. At that point, we get to **Acts 8:35-39**, and the Bible says...

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

³⁶ As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"*

³⁷ And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

³⁸ And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.

³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

We find here that for the Ethiopian Officer to be baptized in this particular body of water, he actually had to go (according to **verse 38**), “...*down into the water.*” At the end of **verse 38**, we find that Phillip “*baptized him.*” And then, at the beginning of **verse 39**, we find that they then, “...*came up out of the water.*” And so we find again that even without knowing anything about the Greek language, we discover based on the context alone, that whatever the action of baptism was, it required going down into the water and coming up out of the water. Very interesting! We need to ask ourselves: If baptism could be done by sprinkling, why didn’t Phillip just baptize the man from Ethiopia right there in the chariot? Certainly a man smart enough to be the treasurer of Ethiopia was also smart enough to carry some kind of water with him in the chariot. He was on an 800 mile trip and was traveling on what the Bible describes in **Acts 8:26** as a “*desert road.*” If he could have been sprinkled in the chariot, why did he notice a body of water, why did he pull over to the side of the road, and why did both men go down into the water? They did these things because baptism is an immersion.

At this point, some people make the objection that since they were traveling through the desert, there would not have been enough water for an immersion. And normally, when we hear the word “desert” today, we think of miles and miles of nothing but sand and sun and camels. We think of the Sahara. And yet the word itself simply refers to an area that is deserted. It refers to the wilderness or to a desolate place. There is nothing about the word “desert” that would prohibit the Officer from finding some kind of water deep enough to go down into and come up out of by the side of the road.

Not only that, but even in what we think of as a desert, it is still possible to be immersed. Over the past few years, all of us have probably seen the pictures coming back from the Middle East—pictures of soldiers being immersed in the desert. Sometimes they dig a hole in the

ground, sometimes they build a pool out of boxes, and at least one other time, someone was baptized aboard an aircraft carrier by using the crate from one of the weapons. I'm not saying that this is how the Ethiopian Officer was baptized, but I'm saying that the process of baptism is not as impossible as some people would like for us to believe.

We can make another observation on the mode of baptism from the baptizing that John the Baptist was doing right around the time that Jesus started His ministry. The passage is found in **John 3:23**. The Bible says that, "*John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized.*" Some people would like for us to believe that the Jordan River is so small that it is impossible for anyone to ever be immersed in it, but that is not the case. I have never seen it in person, but I have seen the pictures. And when we go back to what the Bible actually says, we find something very interesting. Apparently there were parts of the Jordan River that were not deep enough for full immersion, but notice what the Bible says. John went to a certain spot, "*...because there was much water there.*" John couldn't do his baptizing just anywhere, but he had to go to the spots in the river that had "*much water.*" If baptism was sprinkling, John could have gone to any spot in the river, but as it was, he had to go to those places where there was "*much water.*"

One good test of a word's definition is to try swapping out the word with the definition. For just a moment, then, let's take the false assumption that baptism means sprinkling, and let's substitute "sprinkling" for baptism in **John 3:23**. If we do that, the verse then reads like this, "*John was sprinkling in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being sprinkled.*" It is almost ridiculous to think that John would go to some special spot in the river where he would have enough water to sprinkle it on people! It just does not make sense, based on the context, to define baptism as sprinkling.

Some time ago, I read a story about a denominational preacher who was giving a sermon on baptism, and he was making the argument, though, that baptism could be done by sprinkling. He said that when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, it did not mean in; it meant close to, round about, or nearby. And again, when it says that Philip baptized the Ethiopian Officer in the water, it did not mean in; it meant close to, round about, or nearby. Apparently after the service, a man came up to the minister and told him it was a great lesson, one of the best he had ever heard, and that it had cleared up a great many mysteries he had encountered in the Bible. "For example," he said, "the story about Jonah getting swallowed by the big fish has always bothered me. Now I know that Jonah wasn't really in the fish, but close to, round about, or nearby...swimming in the water. And the story about the three young Hebrew boys who were thrown into the furnace but were not burned. Now I know that they were not really in the fire, just close to, round about, or nearby...just staying warm. And Daniel in the lions' den? Now I see that he was not really in the lions' den, but close to, round about, or nearby...like at the zoo. The revealing of these mysteries have been a real comfort to me because I am a wicked man. I am thankful to know that I will not end up in hell, but close to, round about, or nearby. And next Sunday, I won't be in church, just close to round about or nearby. Thank you so much for putting my mind at ease."

Hopefully we have seen from the context, though, that baptism refers to an immersion in water.

IV. Finally, this morning, we should take just a few moments to consider SOME EVIDENCE FROM HISTORY.

How do we know what kind of baptism the early church practiced? One of the interesting

resources out there on the Internet is the Catholic Encyclopedia. It is an official document put out there by the Catholic Church and contains thousands of articles on subjects related to the Catholic Church and church history. The original was first published in 1907 and was placed online in 1997. In their article on baptism, please notice their own words concerning the “mode” of baptism...

The most ancient form usually employed was unquestionably immersion. This is not only evident from the writings of the Fathers and the early rituals of both the Latin and Oriental Churches, but it can also be gathered from the Epistles of St. Paul, who speaks of baptism as a bath (Ephes., v, 26; Rom., vi, 4; Tit., iii, 5). In the Latin Church, immersion seems to have prevailed until the twelfth century. After that time it is found in some places even as late as the sixteenth century. Infusion and aspersion, however, were growing common in the thirteenth century and gradually prevailed in the Western Church.

In other words, even the Catholic Church will officially admit that baptism was originally a burial in water. The official switch to pouring and sprinkling did not happen until 1200 years after the church was established, and even then it was not universally accepted. We learn from history, therefore, that baptism is an immersion, or a burial, into Jesus Christ.

Other church leaders from various denominations have also admitted the same thing. According to the famous Baptist minister, Charles Spurgeon, “Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ’s instruction, and the practice of the apostles, and not by sprinkling or pouring of water or dipping some part of the body, after the tradition of men.”

Martin Luther once said, “The term baptism is a Greek word; it may be rendered into Latin by *mersio*—when we immerse anything in water, that it may be entirely covered with water. And though this custom be quite abolished among the generality (for neither do they entirely dip children, but only sprinkle them with a little water), nevertheless they ought to be wholly immersed, and immediately to be drawn out again, for the etymology of the word seems to require it.” Martin Luther went on to say, “Baptism is a sign of both death and resurrection. Being moved by this reason, I would have those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped into the water, as the word doth express and the mystery doth signify.”

John Calvin once said, “The word baptize signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was practiced by the ancient church.”

Adam Clarke once said, “We are buried with him by baptism into death. It is probable that the apostle alluded to the mode of administering baptism by immersion, the whole body being put under water. Alluding to the immersion practiced in the case of adults, wherein the person appeared to be buried under water as Christ was buried in the heart of the earth.”

John Wesley once said, “Buried with him—alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.”

From history, we know that the first documented case of sprinkling involved a man by the name of Novatian, and it happened around 250 AD. Apparently, this man was at the point of death, so he was sprinkled on his death bed. But as a general practice, sprinkling was not allowed until the Council of Ravenna in 1311 AD.

CONCLUSION:

This morning, then, we have asked ourselves how we can know whether baptism is sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. We have looked at four basic lines of evidence.

- First of all, we can know that baptism refers to immersion by looking at the word itself. We can look it up in any standard Greek lexicon, we can look to how the word was used in ancient writing other than the Bible, we can look at this word in the history of the English Bible, and we can look up the origin of the word in any modern dictionary, and we will find that the word itself originally referred to immersion.
- Secondly, not only did we look at the word itself, but we considered the mode of baptism based on the definition of the gospel that was given by Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**. According to Paul, the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We obey the gospel through baptism, and according to **Romans 6**, we die to sin, we are buried with Christ in baptism, and we come up out of the water as new creatures ready to start a brand new life. Anything other than immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins actually makes a mockery of the process.
- Thirdly, we looked at the context of several passages, and we learned that not only is baptism a burial, but we also learned that John was baptizing at a certain part of the Jordan River, because there was “*much water*” there. We also found that the Ethiopian Officer went down into the water and came up out of the water.
- And then finally, we looked very briefly at some evidence from church history, and we found that in their own material, even the Catholic Church will admit that baptism was originally an immersion in water and that it stayed that way for more than a thousand years.

For this morning, all we really need to remember is that our sins are forgiven by the blood of Christ when we are immersed in water. Several years ago, I ran across a very touching poem that was written by a young woman who was about to be baptized at the Austin Avenue congregation in Brownwood, Texas. She wrote this poem, and then it was read as the preparations were being made for her immersion into Christ. The title is, “**An Awakening**,” and this morning I’d like to close with the words of Tana Simpson...

*I shiver nervously. I am timid and afraid. Yet, I have no fears and I cannot wait.
I hold my breath as I fall down deep, past life, past death, past time, past sleep.
I feel the cold blue water rippling upon my skin. Yet, the waves are pure red, not outside,
but within.
Straight from the heart, so special, so true. This blood was shed for me and for you.*



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ONE BAPTISM - LECTURE

The Psalmist said, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” Unity is good and pleasant, but it is also hard work.

- I. For the sake of unity, my task is to help us decide what is the “one Baptism” in Ephesians 4:5. Something like Baptism, which Paul says is a matter of unity, is something the church should strive to understand. The Apostle Paul had in mind a particular Baptism, and could expect that the church have the same understanding.
 - a. Text: Ephesians 4 is about unity. After Paul wrote, 3*“Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”, he then said, “4There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”* – Eph. 4:3-6
 - b. Question: Do you know what the “one Baptism” is? To arrive at the answer, we look at the following three questions assigned to me:
 - i. First, do all of the commands to be baptized concern water Baptism, or is some other Baptism being commanded?
 - ii. Second, what was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?
 - iii. Third, by the time Paul wrote the Ephesians letter, did only one Baptism exist?
 - c. It is a necessary question to answer since the church unity depends on it.
 - i. To the Apostle, church unity was and is rooted in doctrine. If we are to preserve unity, we must adhere to the truth of God’s Word.
 - ii. We believe the Bible is true, that it is understandable, and that God wants us to be clear on the things that unify.
 - iii. And so with diligent study, we prayerfully choose what the “one Baptism” of Ephesians 4 is.

- d. But does it really matter? Why should we spend time on this question?
 - i. Given the context, it is necessary that we must choose what is the “one Baptism” of Eph. 4:5.
 - ii. To get past bias and ignorance. Because people are confused on a subject doesn’t mean that it cannot be understood. No matter how central the doctrine, it will not be understood if bias enters the picture.
 - iii. Some people don’t want the hassle.
 - 1. To say it doesn’t matter which Baptism is the right one, is to speak against the facts. “One Baptism”
 - 2. Should someone says, “I don’t care if there is one or two. It doesn’t matter to me.” That person is challenging the Apostle. Some people may think it is an unimportant issue, but God cares about the specifics.
 - 3. But people today are not interested in doctrine in favor of getting along with others. This is wrong-headed.
 - iv. Because it is a matter of unity, we seek the truth on this matter. In the interest of unity we seek to know the answer to the question, “What is the ‘one Baptism’ of Ephesians 4:5?”
- e. With love and respect for our audience, we humbly proceed with this study.

II. Narrowing Down the Possibilities. By the process of elimination, we can narrow the field of possible Baptisms.

- a. The Bible refers to a number of Baptisms which are possibly the “one Baptism”. And man has added a few more which can be dismissed.
- b. Man-made baptisms are not the “one Baptism”.
 - i. Wrong mode of water Baptism. Because sprinkling or pouring does not fit the action of the verb *Baptidzo*, meaning “to immerse”, they are not the “one Baptism” (*Baptisma*).
 - ii. Wrong subject: Infant Baptism is not the “one Baptism” since children are not lost, not born in sin, because they cannot choose, cannot repent, and are not able to show obedient faith (Jas. 2).
 - iii. Baptism of the already saved. The Baptism that is only “an outward sign of an inward grace” is not the “one Baptism”. In the Bible, saved people do not get Baptized. By God’s grace at Baptism, man is saved by his obedient faith to get in the water and call on God for salvation, Acts 2:21,38; 22:16; 1 Pt. 3:21. In the Bible, the lost sinner entered the water and emerged a saved sinner.

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- iv. The modern teaching of "Holy Spirit Baptism" is not the "one Baptism". With its "slayed in the spirit" explanation and supposed "tongues", which do not conform to the pattern or the rules of the New Testament (see 1 Cor. 14), it is not like any Baptism in the Bible.
 - c. Some Bible Baptisms are clearly not the "one Baptism".
 - i. Noah's Baptism (1 Peter 3:20,21). This was a type of water Baptism. Interestingly, the water Noah was brought safely through was a type of water Baptism that "now saves you", 1 Pt 3:21.
 - ii. Moses' Baptism (1 Cor. 10:2). This was a type of water Baptism. Again, by the context it appears that Paul is signifying that "being baptized into Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea" was a type of New Testament Baptism in water.
 - iii. Baptism of John (Mt. 3:6). This was in the past, but a precursor to Jesus' Baptism as it must be preceded by repentance, and it was "for the remission of sins", Mk. 1:4. Acts 19 shows that John's Baptism had become obsolete before Paul wrote the Ephesians from prison.
 - iv. Baptism of suffering, (Lk. 12:50). This is pretty simple to understand, but hard to endure. But it wouldn't be something that all Christians could say they were united by their "baptism of suffering".
 - v. Baptism of fire (Mt. 3:11). "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Verse 10 and 12 shows that "fire" Baptism is the fire of eternal punishment. This is the fire of eternal punishment, and not one that would be unifying Christians.
 - vi. "Baptism for the dead" (1 Cor. 15:29). Again, Paul knew exactly what he meant. The words are clear enough that one of two things are in mind:
 - 1. An erroneous practice of proxy Baptism for the deceased as practiced by Mormons. Without sanctioning this Baptism, Paul would be saying, "Why do you do it if you don't believe in the resurrection?" It is not likely that the Corinthians practiced proxy Baptism.
 - 2. A metaphor for water Baptism for the spiritually dead: the dead are raised to walk in newness of life.
 - d. That leaves only two (2) Baptisms for consideration.
 - i. Baptism of Holy Spirit (Lk 3:11).
 - ii. Baptism of the Great Commission commanded for all new disciples (Mt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16)
 - iii. Which do you think it is?

III. What was the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit?" Could it be the "one Baptism"?

- a. We are examining the Holy Spirit Baptism of the New Testament and not the impotent version being practiced in some churches today. The modern version is powerless. It is sought by all who hold this view, but is practiced only in private services. Instead of coming with power (Lk.24:49) and a miraculous endowment of Biblical truth, it is a subjective experience offering only a unity of something not seen in the Bible.
- b. Prediction fulfilled. Joel prophesied it, Joel 2:28ff. It was promised by Christ, John 14-16; Acts 1:8. It was poured out at God's appointed time, Acts 2:1-4. Acts 2 fulfilled Joel's prophecy. Holy Spirit baptism could only be initiated or administered by Jesus Christ, Matt. 3:11-12. It came suddenly at a time of God's choosing.
- c. Holy Spirit Baptism of the New Testament was remarkable. It was a miraculous event, which by definition means that it would not be common.
- i. It gave the Apostles perfect recollection of Jesus' words and it guided them into all truth – it was supernatural knowledge, John 14:26; 16:13.
 - ii. Holy Spirit Baptism came with "power" (Lk.24:49) of visible signs: tongues of fire. And audible sounds: violent rushing wind and men speaking in foreign tongues.
 1. The Galileans became multi-lingual. Cretans, Arabs, and others were saying, "we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." - Acts 2:11
 2. The Gentiles in Acts 10:46: *"they were hearing them speaking with tongues (real languages) and exalting God."* - Acts 10:46
 - iii. It convinced the skeptics. Acts 11:17 and 15:8 shows that the greatest importance of the Holy Spirit Baptism was the effect it had on Peter and the Jews that accompanied him to the home of Cornelius. This effect is not seen today.
- d. The Holy Spirit baptism was for a specific purpose to equip the early church that had no written New Testament. It was necessary for establishing the church, but not for saving a soul. People in Acts, Corinth, and Rome, to name a few places, were saved without experiencing Holy Spirit Baptism, Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 14:16, Acts 8:16.
- e. Very limited period of time during the birth of the church. The Holy Spirit baptism was for a specific time — the infancy of the church. Since related to it were the gifts of tongues and prophecy, gifts which became less necessary as the inspired Word grew to completion, then the Baptism of the Holy Spirit became less necessary so that at some point it ceased.

"Nowhere in the Epistles do we find a repetition of the special baptism of the Spirit. This would be remarkable if it was understood by the writers of the Epistles that this baptism was frequently to be repeated. There is no evidence outside the book of Acts that the baptism of the Spirit ever occurred in later times" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia).

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- f. Few people experienced it. The Holy Spirit baptism was for a specific people, namely the apostles and the house of Cornelius (Acts 2; Acts 10). The instances of Holy Spirit Baptism are very few and the words of Peter in Acts 11 and 15 imply this was a fact.
 - g. If Holy Spirit Baptism was the “one Baptism” of Ephesians 4, then it would be visible today. But it is not seen today. That fact alone should disqualify it from being the “one Baptism” of Ephesians 4.
 - h. For these reasons, Holy Spirit Baptism cannot be the “one Baptism” of Ephesians 4.
 - i. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia notes: “Nowhere in the Epistles do we find a repetition of the special baptism of the Spirit. This would be remarkable if it was understood by the writers of the Epistles that this baptism was frequently to be repeated. There is no evidence outside the book of Acts that the baptism of the Spirit ever occurred in later times.” (Vol. 1, 428)
 - ii. The real Holy Spirit Baptism of the first century was too limited by location, time, people, and experience, to be the “one Baptism” of the Ephesians letter.
 - 1. And what is passed off in the modern era as Holy Spirit Baptism cannot possibly be the “one Baptism” since it doesn’t compare to anything we see in the Bible.
 - iii. Holy Spirit Baptism was never commanded and could not be commanded. But water Baptism was commanded of everyone who would be a disciple. It was universally commanded, universally received, universally enjoyed, by all disciples, Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27.
- IV. Holy Spirit Baptism would not be the “one Baptism” because it was not observed for twenty years. By the time that the Ephesians letter was written, Holy Spirit Baptism was a distant memory.
- a. When Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians from prison around the years 61,62, 63, about 30 years after Pentecost, was there only "one Baptism"? Yes. When Ephesians was written in the early 60’s, it was 20 years since the last mention of Holy Spirit Baptism in the Church.
 - b. Like the ISBE said, which was referenced earlier, if Baptism of the Holy Spirit was the “one Baptism”, it is remarkable that it is shown only twice in the New Testament.
- V. There Is Good Reason to Believe that Water Baptism is the “one Baptism” of Ephesians 4.
- a. Earlier Baptisms related to water (Noah’s, Moses’, and John’s Baptism) pointed to or gave way to the Baptism of the Great Commission.

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- b. The Baptism Jesus commanded in the Great Commission will be submitted to by new disciples until the very end, Mt. 28:19,20. It is unthinkable that anything but the Baptism of the Great Commission could be the “one Baptism”.
 - c. Only one Baptism was commanded.
 - i. The one Baptism of the Great Commission was water Baptism, Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16.
 - ii. The one Baptism that Peter commanded, along with repentance, was water Baptism, Acts 2:38-41.
 - iii. Philip the Evangelist ordered one water Baptism, Acts 8:12,36.
 - iv. Peter commanded one water Baptism to the household of Cornelius, Acts 10:48: “And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”
 - v. Paul called for one water Baptism, Acts 16:33; 19:5.
 - vi. Ananias commanded it in Acts 22:16, “*And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on His name.*” Note the sense of urgency.
 - vii. Therefore Baptism is universally commanded part and parcel to being a disciple of Jesus Christ.
 - d. There was “one Baptism” that has so much significance to every Believer.
 - i. One Baptism, the one that was commanded, marked the point of salvation, Acts 2:38; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21. It marked the new birth and new walk with Christ, Rom. 6:3-5. It signified the point of conversion, Col. 2:12. It identified every Christian with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - 1. There was a sense of urgency to be Baptized in water. There was the sense of urgency in Acts 2 so that 3,000 were Baptized that day. There was that sense of urgency in Acts 8:35,36 with the Ethiopian Eunuch. There was that sense of urgency in Acts 22:16 when Ananias asked Saul, “*now why do you delay? Arise, and be Baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on His name.*”
 - ii. One is associated with receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38.
 - iii. One is where the new Christian is added to the Church, Acts 2:47. Paul emphasizing unity, said to the Corinthians “in one Spirit, you were all baptized into one body”, 1 Cor. 12:13.
 - iv. It was the only Baptism that some knew. Philip the preacher administered water Baptism to the Eunuch after He preached Jesus, and Philip administered the same water Baptism to the Samaritans in Acts 8.

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- v. It was taught in conjunction with teaching Jesus Christ, Acts 8:35,36.
- e. What authors and prominent figures say about the “one Baptism”.
- i. Charles Spurgeon, champion of the Baptist, says, “Every record of baptisms in Holy Writ, and every reference to baptism, is a confirmation of believers' baptism as the "one baptism" for parents and children, for every generation, and for all alike, to the end of time” (“Baptism”. Accessed from: <http://www.gracesermons.com/robbeeee/spurgbaptism.html>).
- ii. Lange, John Peter. Speaking on 4:5, says, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism – this refers to the way and the means of salvation” He calls it “the objective seal of the subjective faith, by which, as a badge, the members of Christ are outwardly and visibly stamped with His name.” (Commentary on the Holy Scripture – Galatians to Hebrews. Vol. VII, p. 141. 1870?)
- iii. Hampton Keathley, Technical Director for Bible.org says, “The meaning of “one Baptism” in Ephesians 4:5 and whether it refers to water or Spirit baptism has been much debated through the years, and although there are exceptions, the scholarly consensus is that this refers to water baptism.” (Keathley, Hampton IV, Th.M. “One Baptism in Ephesians 4:5”. Accessed from: http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=332)
- iv. A. Oepke, under the discussion of “*baptismos, baptisma*”, says Eph. 4:5 points to the institution of water Baptism (Theological Dict. Of the New Testament. Abridged. p.94).
- v. Barnes Notes on the New Testament. A Presbyterian and unconcerned with the proper mode, said, “Whether by immersion, or by pouring, or by sprinkling, they have all been baptized with water;” (Fifth American reprint, p. 992)
- vi. JFB writes, “Baptism" is the one and only visible sacrament whereby we are once for all united to "one Lord" (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27) . . . Baptism by its single celebration and individual reference, symbolizes unity; . . .” (Fausset, Robert. A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical on the New Testament. Vol. 6, p.410. 1948)
- vii. Matthew Henry, "One Baptism, by which we profess our faith, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and so the same sacramental covenant, whereby we engage ourselves to the Lord Christ.”
- viii. Francis Foulkes, Tyndale NT Comm., “*The outward sign of this faith (whichever way we take it), and the ‘visible word’ expressing the work of Christ was baptism. Instituted by the Lord Himself, it was an experience that every Christian shared. All had passed through the same initiation. All had been ‘baptized into Christ’ (Gal. 3:27), not into a variety of leaders, as Paul, Peter and Apollos (1 Cor. 1:13), nor into a plurality of churches. ‘By one Spirit’, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13, ‘are we all baptized into one body.’ The sacrament is therefore a sacrament of unity.*”

It is often asked why no reference was made here to the other great sacrament of the gospel, expressing as it did, even more obviously, the unity and the sharing that there should be between all Christians. Perhaps it is that an argument such as that in 1 Corinthians 10:16f would be needed to demonstrate this, rather than just a single word; or perhaps, as Westcott suggests, 'the Apostle is speaking of the initial conditions of Christian life', whereas 'Holy Communion belongs to the support and development of it'. (Tyndale Commentaries. p.113)

- ix. Darby, John, Synopsis of the New Testament. "There is also one Lord. With Him were connected "one faith" and "one baptism." (Online at: Crosswalk.com
 - x. F.F.Bruce says, "If 'one Baptism' here had meant Spirit-Baptism to the exclusion of water Baptism, it would have been associated with 'one spirit', and not 'one Lord'."
 - xi. John Gill's Exposition of the Bible. "*there were divers baptisms under the law, but there is but one baptism under the Gospel; for John's and Christ's are the same: there are, besides, figurative or metaphorical ones, which are so in an improper sense, as the baptism of the Spirit, and the baptism of blood, or of sufferings; but there is but one baptism, literally and properly so called, which is water baptism; and which is to be administered in one and the same way, by immersion in water; and on one and the same subjects, believers in Christ; and in one and the same name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and to be performed but once, when rightly administered.*" (Vol. 6, p.438. 1853)
 - xii. Burton Coffman, "There cannot be any escape from the conclusion that this is the Baptism of the great commission, as given by both Mark and Matthew." (Commentary set, vol. 8, p. 185)
 1. Brother Coffman's point lays what I believe is the strongest case for making water Baptism the "one Baptism" of which Paul writes.
 - xiii. Peoples' New Testament, "All have been baptized into the "one Lord" upon the profession of the "one faith" by "one rite."
 - xiv. John Wesley's Explanatory Notes. "One outward Baptism".
 - xv. And all of those who weekly recite the Nicene Creed, say, "We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." It is recited by East Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists.
 - xvi. There is a great deal of unanimity that the Baptism referred to here is water Baptism. When there are exceptions, the reasoning for rejecting water Baptism is passionate without substance.
- f. Two Objections to "one Baptism" being water Baptism. .
- i. One objection is that there is no mention of the Lord's Supper. However, water Baptism, the "one Baptism" was and is a unifying act, whereas partaking of the Lord's Supper was and is shared in by those who

are unified. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are different, in this respect, as the day of one’s birth is different from the birthdays that follow. Baptism brings one into unity with God. The Lord’s Supper is a time of observing that unity. So the two are different and the latter does not fit the context of Ephesians 4.

- ii. Another objection says 1 Cor. 12:13 supports the view that the Holy Spirit Baptism was significant for placing people into the church. But that passage says the person is Baptized into the Church, not immersed into the Spirit (Pentecostals claim that Holy Spirit Baptism is the latter). Most resources like *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (p. 126) disagree with the charismatics, saying by the “sacramental rite” of Baptism, a person “is cleansed from his sins (1 Cor. 6:11), and incorporated into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).” So Paul was not speaking of Holy Spirit Baptism in 1 Cor. 12:13. He was speaking of the “washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” where one is added to the church, Tit. 3:5. Jesus too pointed to the influence of the Holy Spirit in water Baptism (John 3:3-5).
- iii. These objections to the water Baptism of the Great Commission being the “one Baptism” have been answered and dismissed.

VI. What Can We Conclude from our Study?

- a. When Ephesians was written, there was one unifying Baptism. There was no other kind of Baptism being practiced or experienced (the best we can tell from the Biblical record) at that time.
- b. Only one Baptism is the Baptism which Christ commanded in the Great Commission. It was the Baptism which would be in place until Jesus returns. It was integral to the making of disciples. It was hearkened to as being a life changing event for Christians. It had powerful meaning and purpose for each believer. The “one Baptism” that was a unifying event, was being administered daily as people were becoming Christians. That “one Baptism” was and continues to be a basis of unity. Sharing with the Lord, being united with the Lord in Baptism is something that all Christians look back to as a common experience, sharing the same salvation.
- c. The “one Baptism” of Ephesians 4:5 is water Baptism. By the time Paul was inspired to write the letter to the Ephesians, Holy Spirit Baptism was a distant memory, but water Baptism for the remission of sins was a common experience.
- d. The Psalmist was right. It is good and pleasant to have unity with the Brethren. I pray that this study has helped us to be more unified on an important subject in the Bible. Only one Baptism was in the mind of the inspired writer. It therefore behooves us to choose which Baptism is the “one Baptism”.



Rennie Frazier, 1029 Century Ave. North, St. Paul, MN 55119.

I have been blessed to preach to glorious gospel of Christ for twenty-four years. We have worked with the brethren meeting in Inver Gove (formerly Summit Ave.) for sixteen of those years.

I served my country for six years in the United States Marine Corps (Semper Fidelis). I am still in awe how the Lord could take a “jar head” and make a gospel preacher out of him. But I am thankful that He did.

I have been the privileged to travel to several countries - China, Israel, Philippines, Singapore, and Ethiopia – I’ve had the opportunity to share my faith and to learn and experience the faith of others.

Two of the greatest days of my life were times when I said, “Yes!” “Yes” to take Jesus as my Lord and “Yes” to take Laura (Tulley) as my wife. Both have blessed and enriched my life immensely and I can never repay their debt of love.

My wife Laura and I have been married twenty-five years and we have three children Karl, Vincent, and Andrea.

A mentor, Harold Trimble, a fellow gospel preacher, gave me some sage advice. I will attempt to follow it today. He said, “Stand-up to be seen, speak-up to be heard, and shut-up to be appreciated.

To God be the glory, both now and forever, Amen.

The Gospels & Epistles on Baptism

The importance of today’s lectureship cannot be overstated. It is an issue of *salvation and condemnation*. There use to be a time when brethren would say (i.e., complain) that “all” they heard were sermons on the church, repentance, faith, baptism, and such like. These were not uncommon cries. But during the last several decades, there has been a shift in the message preached. I believe, in a desire to go on to the “weightier matters,” some of the rudimental teachings of the Word of God have suffered. Namely baptism.

This growing tend towards “hydrophobia” is do in large measure to the lack of consistent, complete, and competent teaching on the subject. It also stems from an attitude of appeasement. Some have stopped fighting “the good fight,” and standing for the truth, because of the, “Can’t we just get along” attitude. However, we need to hear and heed the words of the apostles Paul and Peter, ***“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (Gal. 1: 10). “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen” (1Pet. 4:11).***

It is my fervent prayer and sincere hope that we will commit and dedicate ourselves to preaching the “whole council of God,” to “following the old paths.” Please God help us and bless us today.

From the causal reader to the most avid student of the Bible, the topic of baptism is not without significance and of course controversy. The word *Baptism* either the noun or verb form is used some 98 times and 127 times in the original Greek. Just the sheer number of times that it is used should give us pause to think about the importance of this Biblical topic.

The eloquent, inviting, and highly significant language of baptism in the gospels and epistles is everywhere and is very instrumental in aiding us in the understanding of the absolute beauty and indispensable role that baptism plays in God’s plan of redemption.

The act of baptism is the action of being:

- Born again
- Dying with Christ
- Raised with Christ
- United together with Christ
- Washed in His blood
- Clothed with Christ
- Washed to regeneration
- The figure which saves us
- Being alive together with Him
- The circumcision of Christ
- In Christ

The significance of baptism is witnessed early on in the New Testament. The synoptic gospels, along with the gospel of John, record the beginning of the dynamic purpose of God in baptism.

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John” (Jn.1: 6).

The work of John the Baptist was preparatory in nature, *“to make straight the way of the Lord”* (Jn.1: 23; cp.Isa.40: 3). John’s primary role was to point needy souls in the direction of the One who would be able to fulfill their greatest need, *“John answered them saying, “I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know,” “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, (Jn.1: 26).*

The baptism of John was foreign to the religious custom and practices of his day. The Jews were accustomed with the many ceremonial cleansing and washings, but John’s baptism was different, it was more than a formality or a religious rite. It was the demand of a contrite heart and a changed life. *“and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” “Therefore bear fruit worthy of repentance,” “Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins”* (Mt. 3:2,8; Mk. 1:5). This call to repentance; just as his baptism was preparatory. It was to ready them and all men for what was yet to come, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* (Jn.1: 29).

John’s baptism was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin, cp. Mk.1:4; Lk.3:3. John’s baptism was not sufficient, cp.Acts.19:1-9

However, it was John’s baptism that ultimately pointed to the sacrificial work the Christ, and it also pointed to its sanctifying efficiency. *“...I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”* (Lk. 3:16).

Topics for our consideration:

1. What are Christ’s teachings on baptism?
2. What are Paul’s teachings on baptism?
3. What are Peter’s teachings on baptism?

The Teachings of Christ On Baptism

Perhaps the most dynamic passage on spiritual life and Jesus is found in John 3:36, *“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (NASV)*

Jesus holds out the promise of life to those who are willing to BELIEVE in Him, and OBEY his commands. Paul T. Butler put it this way:

“John uses the present tense to denote that the one receiving eternal life is one who continually trusts and obeys. One who has abiding faith has also an ever-present assurance of eternal life...A faith that does not express itself in obedience is a dead and useless faith (cf. Jn.14: 21,23; 15:10; Jas.2: 26) The gospel of Christ is a gospel demanding obedience, and its commandments are plain enough that “they who run many read.” The law of the kingdom of Christ is love. But it is a love which leads to trust, repentance, confession, and baptism. These are the entrance requirements...”

The spiritual life that Jesus offers men is received only one way, by command, hearing what is said, and by compliance, obeying what is said.

The Sign You Won't See At A Football Game

We have all seen the placards at the sporting event that says, **“JOHN 3:16,”** the sentiment promoting the notion that all a person has to do to be saved is *“just believe.”* However, the sign that I have yet to see is **“JOHN 3:5,”** What Jesus stated in verse 5 gives understanding and clarity to verse 16, if the entire text is not considered, one of the most beautiful texts in scripture, is made to become a pretext to tragedy, rather than to salvation.

Perhaps one of the most beautiful treatise on baptism are the verses in John 3. These are some of the most perfect and meaningful passages on baptism.

When approached by Nicodemus, Jesus lead this would be devotee to the door of the kingdom, and told him that the key to entrance was to be had in a new and unequalled experience.

V.3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

V.5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

v.7 “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’

The words of Jesus were a shocking declaration and an unmistakable requirement placed upon all those who would gain entrance into the kingdom of God. Men **MUST** be *“Born again.”*

A better translation of *“born again”* is *“born from above”* the word *“again”* is found in verse 31 and is translated *“above.”* In Jn.1: 13 *Jesus said, “who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* This *“birth from above”* is God’s working and not man’s. It is the Spirit’s power of purification and sanctification, *“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,”* (Tit.3: 5).

Here are a number of passages that contain phrases and images of the *“birth from above”* and its absolute requirement for entering the kingdom of God. The *“birth from above”* is a dramatic

action of a wonderful sanctification, a transformation that God has accomplished.

- a. "Begotten again to a living hope" 1Pet.1: 13
- b. "Begotten again, of incorruptible seed" 1Pet.1: 22-23
- c. "Brought forth...by the Word of Truth" Jas.1: 18
- d. "Regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" Tit.3: 5
- e. "New man...being renewed in the spirit of our mind" Col.3: 10
- f. "Renewed in the Spirit...the new man...created in righteousness and holiness..." Eph.4: 22-24
- g. "... A new creature" Gal.6: 15
- h. "...In Christ...a new creation...have become new" 2Cor.5: 17
- i. "...In newness of life...alive to God" Rom.6: 4,11

In the Greek there is one preposition in Jn. 3:5, "of water and Spirit." There is one birth and it is distinctive. The Spirit by means of water accomplishes this new birth.

Baptism in the "Great Commission"

■ Mt. 28:18-20

In this passage we are learn several crucial lessons:

1. Baptism is based on the authority of Christ. *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on Earth."* Baptism is not something that has been conceived in the feeble minds of men. It has the Lord's sanction, and not the druthers of men, cp. Mt. 21:25; Col.3:17
2. Baptism is for disciple making. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..."* This divine imperative helps us see the importance of baptism. There is no other way given for disciple making, cp. Acts. 8:2,4; 11:20
3. Baptism is for the change of relationship. *"...in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"* This is more than some "magical" words spoken. It is an affirmation, a confession and a dramatic change of state and relationship, cp. Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; Gal.3:27
4. Baptism is compliance to a commandment. *"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age."* We can't be faithful disciples without teaching "all things" that Jesus taught. Bearing fruit is the responsibility and pleasure of the disciple, cp. 1Pet.4:11; 1Cor. 2:1-2

■ Mk. 16:15-16

The original Greek text reads: *"And He said to them, going into the world all, preach the gospel to all creation. The believing and being baptized will be saved; he but not believing will be condemned."*

Both the words *believing* and *baptized* are called aorist principles. This means that the main verb in the sentence (salvation) never indicates an action, which is subsequent to the action of the main verb.

In plain English, the aorist principles *believing* and *baptized* can only come before salvation and not after. Therefore in the words of Jesus salvation only comes to "The believing and being

baptized.” This is a very, very important point.

Also we know that the corresponding conjunction *and* inseparably links the commands “believes” and “baptized.” Like the cotter pin that holds together a locomotive and the rail car as they travel together to the desired destination. So to is belief and baptism, which leads to salvation.

Let me take you to the land of “*what if*” for a moment. “*What if*” you heard this announcement over the radio this afternoon (from a credible source), “Toyota Motor Company is offering a free car to everyone who “comes and is baptized in the river.” We all know what would happen. The Governor would have to call out the National Guard for crowd control. The throng would be massive and the expectations running high.

There would also be none of the mental gymnastic played which are so readily played with baptism. There would be no reasoning, “well, they didn’t say, he that comes and is not baptized will not get the car,” or “he who comes already received the car.”

Why then are so many arrayed in panoply against the magnificent offer of salvation given by the Lord? Tragically, many have a different agenda.

The Teachings of Paul On Baptism

More than any other inspired New Testament writer, the apostle Paul elucidates on the topic of baptism. In nearly all of his letters to the churches Paul says something about baptism and its significance in God’s scheme of redemption.

■ **Romans 6:3-4,11**

Romans 6, is one of the most poignant and rich passages on the subject of baptism. Its pageantry resounds with the meaning of redemption and hope of the believer. When someone says that baptism is unimportant they unwittingly rile against the significance of the death of Christ, the promise of his burial, and the power of his resurrection.

The three pictures of Romans 6

Immersion = Death

Submersion = Burial (the ratification of death)

Emergence = Resurrection

- *Baptized into his death* – The meaning of his death: 2Cor.5:14,15

- *Buried with him through baptism* –The effectiveness of his death: Heb. 2:17

- *We also should walk in newness of life* – The power of his resurrection: Col.2:13

■ **1Corinthians 1:14-16**

The letters to the Corinthians contain several references to baptism. In chapter one Paul uses baptism in a negative way. He does this to show the foolishness and absolute absurdity of their divisive attitude, “*I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I baptized in my own name.*”

In his use of baptism as a “negative,” Paul is not speaking to its unimportance, but rather its importance. Paul was careful not to baptized least he create a group of “Paulites,” rather than

Christians. Cp. 1:12,13; 3:4-7

Preaching the gospel means preaching Jesus, which includes preaching baptism for the remission of sins. *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”* (Acts 8:35-36). Cp. Mk.16:16

■ **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

The critical nature of repentance; the new hope and direction of the Corinthians lives is witnessed in their regeneration. *“But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God”* (v.11).

The Corinthians had been pronounced acceptable because they had been “washed” *apo* (from) and *louo* (washed). Can be translated, “you were washed clean.” Paul related to the Corinthians that same experience that he had at his conversion, *“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16).

The need for our washing and the result of our cleansing is in the blood of Christ. Sanctification, justification, and redemption are only received by the blood of Christ and affected by our washing (baptism).

Notice these passage that speak about our cleansing:

Rev. 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

Heb. 10:22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Eph. 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Col. 1:14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Heb. 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1Pet. 1:2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

Eph 5:26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

The force of Paul’s exhortation is compelling, since they have been “joined to the Lord” by being “washed clean” from their past living, now they are called to “glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” v.20

■ **1 Corinthians 10:2**

The deliverance of Israel through or by water happened many times. Here is such an instance. McGarvey said,

“The passage through the Red Sea by the Israelites was in many ways analogous to Christian baptism. 1. It stood at the beginning of a journey undertaken by a divine call, and which led from a life and kingdom of bondage to a land of promise, which should be a land of liberty and everlasting possession. 2. Baptism is a burial (Romans 6:4. With a wall of water on each side and a cloud over them, the Israelites were buried from the sight of the Egyptians, or any others who stood upon the shores...the baptism of the Red Sea to Israel [was] a death to Egypt, and a birth to a new covenant. 4. Baptism is the final seal of discipleship...The passage of the Red Sea led Israel to fully accept Moses as their leader [in baptism we accept Christ as our Lord and Leader].

■ 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Paul uses “Christ” in verse 12 as a metonymy for the church. Just as the body is a living, growing and functioning organism so is the body of Christ. How is a person enjoined to this special, living, relationship with Christ and others? It should not surprise to us that baptism is the means into this body. “*Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved*” (Acts 2:41,47).

■ Galatians 3:26-27

Like so many other passages of scripture, the proponents of the “faith only,” teachings leave the primary text and the remote text, “too soon.” There is a very interesting and quite telling phrase. Notice at the beginning of both passages, “for you are all” (v.26) and “for as many of you” (v.27) The word “for” is a primary participle, it is the introduction to the rest of the statement, now consider the phrases, “you are all” and “as many of you,” these carry the emphasis of the statement, the “all” and the “many” had received sonship by the same means.

The next connection is “through faith in Christ Jesus,” and “were baptized into Christ.” As McGarvey said, “having declared that faith, that is to say, the gospel, brings us into sonship to God. Paul describes the particular step by which this is accomplished. That step is baptism...”

The verb tense “baptized into Christ” is past, or a completed action. “The preposition here is that of motion. We have moved into Christ were there is no condemnation.” - Boles

There is something else particularly peculiar here; “faith in Christ” is not the same as “into Christ.” Faith in Christ is the act of believing in him. However, “into Christ” or “put on Christ” is the fact of our having been immersed and now having a relationship with him.

The term “put on” is used commonly to denote the dressing or clothing of oneself. It is also used metaphorically to emphasize a direct need; “put on the armor of light” (Rom.13:12) “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom.13:14) “put on the new man” (Eph.4:24) “put on the whole armor” (Eph.6:11) “put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph.6:14) “put on the new man” (Col.3:10) “put on tender mercies” (Col.3:12) “put on love” (Col.3:14).

Putting on Christ in baptism is to be raised from a fallen condition and clothed with all the splendor and glory that the divine nature offers.

■ Colossians 2:11-12

Those who oppose baptism often do it because of its supposed “meritorious work.” This discussion often reminds me of the conversation that Jesus had with the unbelieving Pharisees, when he asked the question, “*The baptism of John--where was it from? From heaven or from men?*” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “*If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’*” (Mt 21:25).

The baptism of Jesus—where is it from?

Why then do you not believe Him?

The Colossian text clearly states that baptism is the “working of God.”

The word *Energieia*, “working” simply means “operation” or “effectual action.” It is the action or power that brings something about. Baptism as well as other acts of obedience is the operation or action of God.

1. A "spiritual circumcision" in which sins are "cut away"- **2:11**
2. A burial with Christ, and also a resurrection with Him - **2:12**
3. Made effective "through faith in the working of God" - **2:12**
4. In which GOD makes us "alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" – **2:13**

Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” Jn. 6:29

“of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.” Eph. 3:7

Baptism does nothing to annul the grace of God, it is God’s offer of grace, it is the power of God that accomplish His end – salvation, “*But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you*” (Rom. 8:11).

■ Titus 3:5-8

Men will never be saved based upon human merit or means. We can never help enough little old ladies across the street or rescue enough damsels in distress to gain the King of Heaven’s favor. Thanks be to God we don’t have to. We are saved by His mercy.

Mercy is the action of grace, it is the kindness and goodness of God extended to man through the sacrifice of Christ, cp. Eph.2: 4,5

The word *dia*, “through” is a primary preposition denoting the channel of an act; the ground or reason by which something is or is not done. (Thayer)

It is by (through) the means of washing (baptism) that regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit that God displays His grace and extends His mercy.

The thought of regeneration and renewal are visions of the “new birth” Thayer’s explanation is very good, “the production of a new life consecrated to God, a radical change of mind for the better. The word often used to denote the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation, as a renewal or restoration of life after death.”

Renewal is spoken of as something that God initiates but man must seek after, cp. Rom.12:1,2; Eph.4:23-24; 2Cor.4:16; Col.3:10

■ **1 Peter 3:20-21**

Water has always played a prominent role in God's offer of His blessings to man, and man's obedience to the Lord's purpose. The role of water seems to be in helping the individual to see that his deliverance does not always come in ways that makes sense or is in keeping with human reasoning.

- Naaman, 2Kgs.5
- Israel and the Red Sea, Ex.14
- Israel and the Jordan, Jos.3
- The Blind man and the pool of Siloam, Jn.9

In 1 Peter 3:20 we are told of God using water as a means of destroying the world of sin and saving the righteous. Water became a "dividing line between the filthy and the cleansed."

The salvation of Noah was a type, a prefiguring example. The antitype, baptism, is the spiritual reality of the Christian's salvation.

Noah's Salvation

Agent - v. 20 Divine longsuffering

Vehicle - v. 20 the ark

Agency - v. 20 through water

The Christian's Salvation

Agent - v. 21 God

Vehicle - v. 21 the resurrection

Agency - v. 21 baptism

Noah's Salvation

Grace – Gen.6:8

Faith – Heb.11:7

Obedience – Gen.6:22

The Blessing Fulfilled – 1Pet.3:20

The Christian's Salvation

Grace – Eph.2:8

Faith – Heb.11:6

Obedience – Heb.5:9

The Promise Fulfilled – 1Pet.3:21

Conclusion: The purpose, beauty, and power of baptism as witnessed in the gospels and the epistles should not be ignored. Baptism has been likened to the "Believer's Wedding Ceremony." It is a marriage made in heaven and destined for glory.



David N. Shearer was born in Kansas raised and educated in Central Iowa. He preached his first Gospel sermon at 16 and began his business career before graduating high school. Though never privileged to attain a college education, Shearer has been a frequent speaker to college classes in the areas of motivation, public speaking, and his chosen careers.

At twenty-five, he was elected to public office in the Marshalltown community, overseeing budgets in excess of fifty-eight million dollars and assets numbering in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Mr. Shearer was one of the youngest ever elected to office in his area. He guided economic development that has led to the creation of many lasting jobs.

Mr. Shearer has served as president of various boards and government commissions and maintains an active roll in the community.

For over twenty-five years, he owned and operated a furniture restoration business that became nationally known. David was instrumental in the development of products that have become standard in the restoration industry, being one of the first to use, develop, and advocate environmentally friendly products. Over the years, he worked on furniture of national historic importance. In the early nineties he was nominated, through the small business administration, as Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Together with employees, his operation turned out several hundred pieces of furniture each year.

His career led him to a national speaking arena, making presentations to conventions, associations, and corporations from coast to coast. David Shearer has written numerous articles in trade publications, magazines, authored several booklets, and has been actively involved in radio and television work, as well as doing consulting.

Over the past five years, he has preached in eight different states to over thirty different congregations. He enjoys telling of the successful work of the Boone Street congregation, holding meetings, and promoting the importance of Iowa as a mission area. He has directed and worked in campaigns, not only locally, but in several states, and enjoys working with active evangelistic congregations. He is often called upon to preach the Gospel in meetings and all-day forums.

Today, Shearer is the minister of the Boone Street church of Christ in Marshalltown, Iowa and has been involved from the congregation's inception. In addition to his full time ministry he works with Fred Rhodes outreach evangelist with the Boone Street congregation. Together they have begun an effort to evangelize a six county area of Iowa. IVEE as it is know is the "Iowa Valley Evangelism Effort" and is currently planting another congregation in the central Iowa area. David devotes his full-time to these works which he is privileged to serve. Most of all, his earnest desire has been to soundly teach and preach the Truth of God's Word.

Baptism in the Book of Acts

Introduction

I've been assigned the topic of baptism as it relates to the book of Acts, specifically in three different areas.

- What role did baptism play in Peter's sermon on Pentecost?
- What was baptism's role in all the conversions in Acts.
- Does preaching Jesus include preaching baptism?

Now, let's back up and think about these for a minute. At first glance they seem to be pretty

simple ideas and they are. Yet, so many people in the world have taken these topics and convoluted them, turned them around and changed them in ways in which God did not intend. We know that God's word is our guide in command, example, and necessary inference. Today we will look into God's word to see how these three points apply to our lives as we examine them in a more in-depth way.

I. What role did baptism play in Peter's sermon on Pentecost?

Before we get into it, as a way of introduction to this point I want us to look at a few things common with all of the apostles.

First of all, Peter and John, in **Acts 4: 1-4** have been arrested, and brought before the Sanhedrin,

1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide. 4 But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Notice what they were doing. They were preaching Jesus. Because of this they arrested them and held them over till the next day the scripture teaches. Why was that? Because many of them believed and five thousand obeyed.

Drop down to **Acts 4: 18-20**,

18 And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: 20 for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.

You see, Peter and John were fulfilling and defining what their role was for the cause of Christ. What was that role? They were to be teachers and preachers of Christ.

In **Luke 4:42-44** What did Jesus have to say?

42 And when it was day, he came out and went into a desert place: and the multitudes sought after him, and came unto him, and would have stayed him, that he should not go from them. 43 But he said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent. 44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

In other words, those disciples, and Peter specifically was following through with what he'd seen and what he had heard. In other words, they must preach Jesus and Him crucified. In fact, you know Jesus told them to go preach.

In **Matthew 10:6-8** Jesus says this,

6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give.

An interesting note is found in **verses 2-4**. Of course, at first glance it is one of the lists of the apostles we find in the gospels.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

What is interesting is every time we read a list of the apostles Peter's name is given first. Even our kids sing the song and they start out with Peter, don't they. "Jesus called them one by one. Peter, Andrew, James and John." You see, Peter's name is mentioned first. Not that he had the pre-eminence above any of the others, but I think it was the fact that it was Peter that was given the keys to the kingdom. It was Peter who opened the gates. It is Peter who stood on the day of Pentecost with the eleven. Whose sermon is recorded for us in **Acts 2**?

Here's a memory tool sidelight or trick that I use. Have you ever wanted to know how to easily find a list of the apostles? Some are old enough to remember Doctor Pepper when they advertised. When do you drink Dr. Pepper? The answer: hot or cold, at ten, two, and four. Well, a list of the apostles is found in **Matthew 10:2-4**. So the next time you get a Dr. Pepper think about that.

That aside, we have seen here that the commission and the commands were given to all the disciples, not just Peter. However, my charge is to show how Peter's sermon on Pentecost relates to baptism. Specifically, what role did baptism play in Peter's sermon on Pentecost?

1. Characteristics of Peter pointing to Pentecost – Early on.

We can do this by looking a bit at the characteristics of Peter early on and how it pointed to his preaching that first gospel sermon and the role that baptism did play in Peter's life.

John 1:35-42

35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; **36** and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! **37** And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. **38** And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abideth thou? **39** He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour. **40** One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. **41** He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). **42** He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

There are several things that we know about Peter from this chapter and many other things, too.

John 1:42 Peter is the son of John, **John 1:40** He had a brother Andrew of whom he was in the fishing business with. He was most likely a follower of John the baptizer's teaching, at least his brother Andrew was most certainly a follower. When John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Christ Andrew immediately came for Peter **vs. 42**. Jesus knew the character of Peter and referred to him as Cephas (the rock).

This is pretty cool stuff. Jesus was a good judge of character and of course he had foreknowledge, too, but he could see the potential in a man.

Peter understood what baptism was all about. From the very beginning he began to follow that it was essential for salvation. Just as John was a witness of Christ so would Peter be at Pentecost and the rest of his life.

1 John 5:7-11 Jesus was a witness, so are we **v 10**.

2. Characteristics of Peter pointing to Pentecost – With Christ.

As we go on. Let's look at some of the early attributes or characteristics of Peter when he walked with Christ, shall we?

First of all, we know there are a lot of things that happened to him in his life that helped build faith. Just as our faith is built upon hearing, so was Peter's and seeing, too. "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.*" **Romans 10:17**

Peter's faith was built not only by hearing God's word, but being actively involved in Christ ministry and the things that were happening in his life.

Mother-in-law

First of all, we find that his mother-in-law was sick. What happened? Jesus healed her. You know that had to make an impression on his life. It sure would on me. There are a lot of people out there that claim to be faith healers. They proclaim, all you have to do is believe and you will be healed. But if you look in **Acts 3**, was there belief involved when that man was healed? No! Who was there? It was Peter and John. What were they doing? They were going into the temple and here is this man reaching out and saying "*Alms for the poor.*" In essence "Help, feed me." And what was Peter's response? "*Silver and gold have I none, but what I have in the name of Jesus Christ be healed.*" Was there faith involved in that lame man? Not on the lame man's part. He may have heard of Christ, but he didn't most likely know who He was and he certainly did not know who these two men were. You see, the Gospel is something that is freely received and freely given. **Matthew 10:6** I can guarantee you one thing. Jesus Christ made a difference in that man's life.

Draught of fishes

What else do we know about the early characteristics in Peter's early life? You remember in **Luke 5:1-11**. They had been out toiling and came in with no fish at all and Jesus said unto him, "Peter, go put out again." And he says, "we've toiled all night, but nevertheless because you've asked it, I'll do it." We find early on that he was faithful and obedient to Jesus and his teachings. Peter knew who He was. What happened? They came in with so many fish they couldn't handle it. What did Peter do? He fell down and he worshipped Christ. He had faith, but it was renewed and strengthened even more.

Total surrender to Christ.

Walking on the water

Let's look elsewhere shall we. In **Matthew 14:22-33** here comes Jesus walking on the water and the disciples were afraid, but Peter asks "Is that you?" "*If that's you Lord, you let me come unto you*" **v 28**.

Many of you have probably preached a sermon on this because there's a valuable lesson there.

Peter gets out. Because of his faith he walks upon that water, looking to Jesus to supply him with his needs. Then what happened? He saw the winds, he saw the waves, he saw the things in his life. Then he took his eyes off Jesus and he began to sink **v 30**. Many of us in the church today do this same thing. We let the cares of the world get involved in us and then we begin to sink. What happened though? Jesus stretched forth his hand **v 31**.

Peter knew firsthand who Jesus was and how His teachings would affect him through his life and especially on the day of Pentecost.

Peter's human side

You see, he did let his human side come through with the weakness of a man, didn't he? When Christ was betrayed, He chops off the ear of the high priest's servant and Jesus heals it back on. Can't you imagine the bewilderment in Peter's eyes? "I'm trying to protect you. What

are you doing?

He told Jesus, too, "I'll never deny you." We know what happened there.

We can see ourselves in Peter. When we are at our strongest or best and when we are at our worst or weakest, we realize that we are just men striving to do the best we can.

It's easy to relate to Peter and his life and who he was? Our frailties are his. There are times we're strong, but in other times we're weak.

When others left he stayed

When Jesus taught His discourse on being the bread of life it was a hard teaching that was not readily understood about eating His flesh and drinking His Blood. Many of His disciples left Him. **John 6:41-71**

I can just hear them and their thoughts they were probably thinking. How could they do that? This man's alive. And many of the disciples thought this man's crazy.

Those of us who have been immersed into Christ and have become a part of the body of Christ understand about that cleansing blood and the purpose of His instituting what we know as the Lord's Supper.

When Jesus saw many departing he asked the twelve if they were going to leave, too. What was Peter's response in **v 68**?

68 Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Sometimes in the life that we lead there are things that happen that we don't understand and we tend to blame God or turn away from Him. This is something that's happened from the very beginning. Do you remember in the garden when Adam was deceived? He had his eyes wide open in **Chapter 3 of Genesis**.

Eve gave to Adam of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He took it knowing full well where it had come from. Adam took it with his eyes wide open. Yet, he made an excuse for what he had done by ultimately blaming God. He says "The woman that you gave me God."

Look at **John 6:62,63** and see what Jesus is saying. What Peter heard prepared him to teach Baptism at Pentecost.

62 What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? **63** It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.

"Jesus the Son of the living God"

In **Matthew 16:13-19** and following.

13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? **14** And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. **15** He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? **16** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. **17** And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. **18** And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. **19** I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in *heaven*.

Peter was given a great and grand mission. To unlock the doors that opened salvation. This would be for everyone, "To the Jew and also the Greek." **Romans 1:16**.

He was giving Peter something powerful, the Holy Spirit, and with that the clear knowledge and understanding of the kingdom of heaven. Armed with that the gospel of Christ Peter used those keys when he preached, starting there at Pentecost.

3. Characteristics of Peter Pointing to Pentecost – After the ascension

There was confusion right after the ascension – what do we do?

What role did baptism play? You see, after Christ's ascension there was confusion.

Acts 1:1-5; 6-17

Act 1:1-5 They were told to stay in Jerusalem and Peter did. They left there and went back to Jerusalem where Jesus had ascended into heaven, but Peter understood. They and Peter were obedient.

Peter puts things together

Acts 1:6-17 He understood what was said and what his mission was.

V 15, 16

15 And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty), 16 Brethren, it was needful that the Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus.

Peter is beginning to put things together. He sees the prophecy has been fulfilled. So on that day of Pentecost Peter preaches with confidence and there he stands in the midst of them and he gives that great gospel sermon.

Although not everything is recorded of what he said. We can see that it was given in simplicity. If you look close you find out it's a pretty short sermon. Sometimes we preachers have preached hours and hours upon what Peter said in just a little bit.

We do know this. The people believed, and that they were moved.

As a gospel preacher, I've always wanted to know what it was that he said that moved them so. How can I make the invitations that I bring each Sunday be one that will move people to obedience?

In Acts 2:37 it says,

“Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, brethren what shall we do?”

Peter responded with what **V 38**.

38 And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The gospel in its most simple form.

Ask your friends sometime, “What is the gospel?” Quote them **Romans 1:16**.

It's a great way to lead into a conversation. You'll be surprised at the response you'll get. (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; Singing etc.)

Then just turn over to **1 Corinthians 15** and give them what the gospel is, at least according to what Paul said. “*Now I make known to you brethren the gospel...*” What is it? Something he preached; which was understood; which was received; where they stood; by which also they were saved.

It was conditionally given, they had to hold fast to the word which he preached unless they believed in vain. Paul preached just what Peter did. You see, Peter understood the same thing that Paul did and he preached to them Jesus.

II. What was baptism's role in all the conversions in Acts?

At first look it's a "Duh" statement

Now, the second point assigned to me is what was baptism's role in all the conversions in Acts?

Brother Fred Rhodes, whom I work with in Marshalltown (he's our outreach evangelist), has a saying that he says every now and then when something is so simple that you can't see it. He gets up and he out stretches his arms and he says, "Duh." Or we look at it and we say, "well it's simple."

Baptism was for salvation. Everyone knows that!

Acts 2:38 teaches baptism is for "*the remission of our sins.*"

Acts 22:16 says, "*Why tarryest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord.*"

I mean it's very simple. Baptism is for salvation so the role that it played was for salvation. Duh! But let's look at it a little more in depth. You will find that there are more things revealed than meets the eye.

It was the Implementation of the great commission of the church

In **Mark 16:15,16**. Jesus said,

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

In Acts, on the day of Pentecost began the implementation of this plan. You see, until Jesus had died there was no remission or washing away of sins.

Now it is for the remission of sins. So here these men began to fulfill the prophesy, yes, there was a prophesy.

John 16:13-17 keying in on v 13.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

You see, It was foretold. Not only was it for salvation, it's the implementation of prophesy.

It's a "save yourself plea"

It is something that must be done. It's a command. Sometimes we overlook **Acts 2: 40**.

40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

Peter has done this preaching and listen to what he says. He's imploring them and with many other words he testified and exhorted them saying

"*Save yourselves from this crooked generation.*" In other words he's saying you've got to do it. It's a must do.

In v 41.

"And then they that received the word were baptized and there were added that day about 3,000 souls."

It caused them to act, didn't it?

It's a must-do situation

Brother Wendell Winkler pointed this out when we read about Saul's conversion in **Acts 9:5,6**.

You remember Paul is on the road to Damascus and a great light shown about him.

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Notice it doesn't say what *thou may do, what thou can do*, but *it's what thou must do*. What was it? Baptism; it's essential.

Baptism is necessary for conversion

Now let's look at it. Baptism is essential for what? Well, it's necessary for conversion.

In **Acts 2:38** "*Repent and be baptized.*" Why? "*For the remission of your sins.*"

In **Acts 3:19** "*Repent and be converted*" or "*turn again.*" Why? "*So that your sins may be blotted out.*"

Open of Salvation to the Gentiles as well

It's interesting, too, in fulfillment of prophesy of who Peter was preaching to in Acts.

Acts 2:14, 22

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know;

Who was he speaking to? To the Jews, (his own people). It was the fulfillment of prophesy. Fulfillment to go to the "*Jews first,*" **Romans 1:16**, and "*then also to the Greek.*"

Peter didn't see that at first. Not until the conversion of Cornelius. In **Acts 10**, the whole chapter deals with Cornelius' conversion, how that he was a righteous man, a soldier. In other words he had a place in his government.

But notice what happens here with Peter. He sees salvation is open to the Gentile's as well.

Acts 10:44-48

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. 45 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. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Isn't that interesting? There the gospel door was opened to everyone that includes you and me. He used the keys once again.

The mystery that was so great to the Jew was made known in the gospel.

Ephesians 1:3-14 The fulfillment of the plan from the foundations of the world.

III. Does preaching Jesus include preaching baptism?

The third topic assigned was another, "Duh" statement. Does preaching Jesus include preaching baptism? However, when you delve into it deeper there are many truths we can learn.

I had an interesting conversation with a young man not long ago on the telephone. Maybe you've heard of the outfit. It's something called "Light the Fire." Some big youth rally for kids,

I don't know exactly what it is for sure. It doesn't really matter who or what.

When I have the time, I don't turn them away because there may be an opportunity to present the gospel plan of salvation to them. That was the case here.

I usually start off by saying, "We're not involved in ecumenical things." Most young people don't have a clue what ecumenicalism is, or adults for that matter. It usually gets the reply, "What is ecumenicalism?" Then I simply ask who this event is for? Well, it's not-denominational... Oh, so Methodists, Lutherans and everyone will be involved, right? "Yeah, that's right." I continue by saying each one of those teach a different way of salvation. Isn't that right? Yes, but we're not worried about salvation. We're worried about getting kids involved in Jesus and getting to know Him.

And as you talk to them you ask them, "Well, if each is teaching something different about salvation, who is right?"

John 4:24

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

They agree that we must worship God in spirit and truth. I ask then if we are to worship in spirit and truth don't we need to know what the truth is about salvation?

Ephesians 4:4-6

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

On the outset it may seem like a "Duh" question. Does Jesus being preached include baptism.

Two times after the death of Christ is the question is asked. What must I do to be saved? Both are found in the book of Acts.

Acts 2:37 Peter's sermon, "*Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.*"

The next is found with the jailer in **Acts 16:30**

There is a third time and that is found in **Mark 10:17** when the rich young ruler asks how he could gain eternal life. This was before Jesus' death and he was given the proper answer under the Mosaic Law.

The Jailer

Let's look at the jailer and what happened to him. The record is found in Acts **16:23-40**.

You remember what had happened. Paul and Silas are in prison and the jailer has been given orders to keep them securely. During the evening they are praying and singing hymns and the other prisoners are listening to them.

Then an earthquake comes along, the jailer had been sleeping, he awakes and sees the doors are open. Knowing the charge to keep them secure, if any escaped he knew his life would be required of him. He drew his sword. He was going to kill himself when what happened? Paul says, "Do thyself no harm. We're all here." And that kind of brings you up to speed.

Let's look at the scripture for the rest. **Acts 16:28-32**

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy

house. 32 And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house.

Pretty simple wasn't it? He said all you have to do is believe, right? That's what it says right here. All you have to do is believe. Baptism isn't mentioned in that verse at all. It was in Acts chapter 2. Peter must have got it wrong. Paul's got it right. Right? Now we pick and choose don't we?

Ok, so I have had a little fun. There is no contradiction here. Let me tell you Peter did not have to tell them to believe in **Acts 2**. Why? They'd already believed. **Acts 2:37**

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

That's where **Romans 10:17** comes into play doesn't it? "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.*"

Peter had already preached the word of God. Let's go on. **Acts 16:32**. Notice what it says.

32 "*And they spake the word of the Lord unto them with all that were in his house.*" Now, God's word was spoken to them wasn't it? What happened then? "*And he took them that same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized. He and all his immediately.*"

The word of the Lord was preached. They preached Jesus and when it was preached what happened? Baptism was the result. That included the babies too, didn't it? The entire household was baptized. Something interesting, some people will bring that up. And they'll say, hey, it's baptism for babies. Now we've always been taught you must hear, believe, confess, repent and be baptized. Receive the word with gladness and go on and preach and teach God's word, right? And we've always used the example; Babies can't hear, babies can't believe, repent, etc. And that's all true. However, here the whole household was saved. Hummmm.

Infant Baptism

Again I'm indebted to Brother Winkler for I learned a truth in studying for this presentation. In one of his writings it was pointed out something I never thought of before.

No, he's not saying that babies should be baptized. In each one of the examples of "household conversions" in the book of Acts and as far as that goes, anywhere, there's always an example and a reason why babies were not baptized.

With the jailer it said "they believed." A baby cannot believe. **Acts 16:31**. When it came to Cornelius and his household they "feared God." Can a baby fear God? **Acts 10:2**. Lydia and her household "received comfort" from the Apostles being there and teaching. Can a baby receive that kind of "spiritual comfort?" **Acts 16:40** Crispus, his household also "believed" the Bible says in **Acts 18:8**. You see, God in his infinite wisdom gave us examples of who it was that were the candidates for baptism in each of the household conversions.

Philip and the Eunuch

Perhaps the best one, the one I love the most, is Philip in **Acts 8** when he was speaking to the eunuch. I like it because there are a lot of good truths that can be taught here.

We find it begins in about **verse 26**

26 *But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert.*

God's word speaks to us today, and God's word says *go*. That's what we should do. Go! Many of us just don't go. What's amazing to me, we get up and we preach Sunday after Sunday

to go be evangelistic. Some are, but face it, most of us aren't. It's just a fact of life, isn't it?

Philip was told to go and you know what? He went. It's amazing to me.

In **v 27** he arose and he went and now he is on the road watching folks go by when a man of Ethiopia, "a eunuch" comes by. This must have been quite a sight because he was a high official. In fact, he was the queen's treasurer. Most likely he had a lot of people in company with him.

Now, can't you see in your mind's eye Philip watching this? In **v 29** he is told by the spirit to go to this man. **Verse 30** says he ran to him.

Philip was ready to teach. He ran to him. I believe that Philip was excited about wanting to teach and it caused him to run. Where is our excitement about preaching the Gospel of Jesus today? Have we lost it?

I have a lot of favorite scriptures, usually it is the one that I'm reading and studying at the time. The one that is my all time favorite is found in **Roman 1:15**

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.

Would it make any difference if it said "As much as in me is I'm ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Owatonna or in South Dakota or in Iowa or Minnesota? The point is wherever we happen to be we need to have that excitement, wanting, willing, and committed to teaching because it's important.

Ok, back on track. **Verses 30-39**

30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him....

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?

35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

Philip jumps up with him there and he says **v 30** "Do you understand what you're reading?." A lesson here is we often don't stop to find out where a person is spiritually when we study with them.

"How can I except one shall guide me?" **v 31**

Verse 35. "And Philip opened his mouth and beginning from this scripture preached unto him Jesus." So the question was asked: Does preaching Jesus include preaching baptism? We can easily conclude that preaching Jesus included baptism **v 36.**

It includes preaching the whole truth. In our court system, we've seen it on T.V. They stand before the bar or the judge. Raise your right hand, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"

The sad thing about it is when it comes to God's word sometimes men do not teach the truth, the whole truth.

Some take things out of context and say all you have to do is believe. After all, that's what the jailer was told to do. It's much more than that. It is repentance. It is confession. It is baptism, too.

Conclusion

Today we've looked at three different things. We looked at the role that baptism played in Peter's sermon on Pentecost and we studied how it was ingrained in him from the very beginning of John's baptism to his early times with Christ, on through Christ in his ministry and later in his life until his death.

We've also looked at the role that baptism played in the conversions, that it was an implementation of the commission to go and teach. That it's necessary for conversion, that it's a must do thing. Then we found out that preaching Jesus includes preaching baptism. There could be hours more spent on baptism as found in the book of Acts. We have only scratched the surface. I give you this lesson and I pray that you gleaned something that you can take with you. Apply it to your life and to your teaching so that many more may be won to Christ



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INTRODUCTION - It is a blessing to be here today! It is an honor to be able to present the word of God for all those in attendance.

Philosopher William Hamilton once wrote, “Truth, like a torch, the more its shook it shines” (Knowles 458). When looking at the topic of baptism, the best way for the truth to surface is to really examine the texts and, proverbially, shake the torch so the truth will shine. For years many have contended that baptism for the forgiveness of sins is an attempt to be saved by works and undermines the grace of God. Additionally, in order to harmonize this contention with all the passages in the Bible that teach on baptism, they attempt to provide explanations as to why baptism is not essential for salvation. However, through an examination of Scripture it will be evident that (CI) Baptism is a part of being saved by grace and attempts to refute this lack substance. There are two lines of analysis that will help us shake the torch so the truth about baptism is clear. The first line of analysis is to question whether baptism for the remission of sins is in conflict with the biblical teaching of being saved by grace through faith. The second line of analysis is to examine Scriptures where arguments are made against baptism for the remission of sins. After completing this analysis the truth, like a shaken torch will shine brightly.

I. The first line of analysis is to question whether baptism for the remission of sins is in conflict with the biblical teaching of being saved by grace through faith. Is baptism is a part of being saved by grace through faith?

A. Baptism in no way is a work that *earns* you salvation

1. Baptism is a being saved by Grace through the work of faith, not a work of merit, or earning.

a. Works of faith are indeed necessary. Obedience, another word for works of faith, are necessary.

1) Examine the following verses

a) Romans 4:1-4 (NKJV) *1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.*

b) James 2:20-24 (NKJV) *20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? (Or complete) 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for*

righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

- 2) The difference between these passages is that one speaks of a wage that is due and the other is about a work of faith. A work of faith that takes faith to its designed end. τελειόω- “to finish, to bring to an end” (Vine 8). Its completion. Every instance in the New Testament of this word it speaks of some type of fulfillment. Works of faith occur because they are a part of true obedience. Without works of faith, faith has not reached its designed end, it has not been fulfilled.
 - a) Hebrews 5:7-9 (NKJV) *7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,*
 - b) Through the obedience of Christ and his becoming High Priest he was “perfected,” again here is the word which literally means come to a designed end, or completed. He would not be the author of eternal salvation without having been perfected.
 - c) Christ became the author of eternal salvation for all who OBEY him. Again, obedience is how we can complete our faith.
 - d) Obedience is something that is required. It is essential not confuse the two concepts of works that earn and works that obey or make faith complete. You are not saved by works that earn. But works that obey are essential to complete faith.
- b. Having an obedience of faith is clearly not earning salvation. There is an obedience of faith which does not earn or merit eternal life.
 - 1) Romans 1:5 (NKJV) *5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,*
 - 2) Romans 16:25-26 (NKJV) *25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—*
 - 3) These passages show that “obedience to the faith” and salvation are used synonymously. We are saved by and obedience to the faith.
- c. Baptism is a work in the sense that it is an obedience of faith.
 - 1) Incidentally, belief is called a work. But it is a work of faith.
 - a) John 6:28-29 (NKJV) *28 Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”*
 - 2) Faith is always something that can be seen. It is more than a thought.
 - a) 1 Peter 1:7 (NKJV) *7 that the genuineness (or the NAS says proof) of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*
 - b) Faith has proof. It is tested by fire and FOUND to praise, honor and glory.
 - 3) It is God who does the “work” of salvation through our “obedience (work)” in baptism.

- a) Colossians 2:11-12 (NKJV) *11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

The working of God, the same working as belief.

- b) Titus 3:5 (NKJV) *5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

This is baptism. He saved us **through** the washing of regeneration.

B. Illustration – Lets picture salvation as a room. This room was built by God. It was prepared from the foundation of the world. All have an invitation to this room. You cannot see inside this room from the outside. There are walls built so that we cannot see inside this room. Two things have to happen in order to receive the salvation inside this room. First you have to believe that there is indeed salvation inside the room. You have to believe that it is there and God prepared it for you. You believe that there is nothing you could do to deserve what is inside. Nothing you did could have created this wondrous room. You cannot see it, but all signs point to salvation being in the room. What does that belief get you? You are still outside the room. Admission to the room is free. There is a sign outside the door that says “Free Admission, Enter the Door.” All you have to do is walk through the door. You have to obey the sign. Obeying the sign earns you nothing, but it gets you inside the room. But what happens if all you do is believe and not obey the sign outside? You are stuck outside the room. You will be outside the room until you obey the sign and enter the room. The room was built by the grace of God and it was the work of God. However, it takes the obedience of faith to step in the door and enter the room.

C. Apply

1. Salvation is by grace through faith.
2. Salvation is also entered by obedience.
3. The saving work is done all by God, the preparation is done by God. All it takes from us is an obedient faith. This obedience is baptism. It is the proverbial walking through the door. Within the illustration, in that work of salvation done by God, what was the point of salvation? It was walking through the door. Faith becomes alive and you make the move. Baptism is our door. This is the teaching in Colossians 2.

II. The second line of analysis is to examine Scriptures where arguments are made against baptism for the remission of sins. Many have attempted to explain away baptism for the remission of sins based on alleged “contradictory biblical passages” and by explaining away verses that teach baptism, but they always make destructive mistakes with the texts. There are many texts that I would like to cover that time will not allow. Some that I cover I will deal more extensively with than others. I will try to cover the verses most commonly abused.

A. Luke 23:39-43 (NKJV) *39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43 And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”*

1. Objection: People say, “look, here is a conversion in detail. The criminal on the cross was saved with nothing more than his faith.”
2. Refutation:

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- a. There are too many assumptions. We do not know that the thief was not converted before he died. All Christians are also sinners. Is it possible that the criminal was converted and baptized under John's baptism before he was on the cross? He certainly already knew who Jesus was and about the kingdom he was coming to establish.
 - b. He did not have to be baptized at this time.
 - 1) The thief was living under the Law of Moses.
 - 2) The church was not established until Acts 2. The command to be baptized into the kingdom not until this first sermon by Peter.
 - 3) Besides, who has the power to forgive sins? Christ does. Matthew 9:1-6 (NKJV) *1 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. 2 Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." 3 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" 4 But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? 5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? 6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."*
 - 4) It is not appropriate to make what might be an exception to the rule the rule.
 - B. There are numerous places in the Bible where being saved does not mention baptism
 - 1. Refutation:
 - a. This is true. But are people really ready to hold this as a standard? Must something be mentioned every time there is a conversion to be a part of it?
 - 1) Repentance? Where is the Ethiopian Eunuch commanded to repent in Acts 8?
 - 2) Confession? Where is confession in Acts 2 or in Acts 16 with the Philippian Jailer?
 - 3) Faith/belief? Where is belief in Paul's conversion in Acts chapter 9 or 22?
 - b. Are we really ready to say that simply because it is not mentioned in some instances, that means that it did not happen at all? If so, my question is, what is necessary? Not faith, not repentance? Who is Lost?
 - c. Words like "repent" and "baptize" imply more than just that. It is a part that represents the whole experience. If I tell you that I was feeling incredibly ill and went to the doctor's office and now I feel better, would you assume that all that was involved in me feeling better was me stepping foot into the office? Does that statement mean that I only stepped foot in there. Does this exclude an examination, a consultation, a prescription, a shot? No! Does it necessarily mean that I had all of those. NO, but if I give 5 accounts saying, 1) I had a shot and I feel better 2) I went to the doctor and feel better 3) I had an examination and I feel better 4) the doctor told me what to do and now I feel better 5) I had a prescription and now I feel better, can you draw the conclusion that I did all of those? Can you draw the conclusion that they were all part of the picture of me feeling better? Certainly. These things are not mutually exclusive. This means that all can be the case at the same time. They are not contradictory.
 - d. Baptism is the same. Believing resulting into salvation and baptism resulting in salvation are not mutually exclusive. Both can happen at the same time much like a visit to the doctor can result in me feeling better, and a shot.
 - 1) Acts 16:33-34 (NKJV) 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and

washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 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.

- a) When looking at verse 34 with 35, believing with his household includes the baptism.
 - b) A parallel with the illustration would be that Cornelius and his household were all afflicted with an infection. It was discovered and immediately he and his family were all given shots of penicillin. Then he rejoiced with his entire household having gone to the doctor. Would anyone look at this statement and say there is a contradiction?
- 2) Acts 2:38 (NKJV) *38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
- a) The people here were not told to believe. It is obvious that they already did. The Bible does not need to state it every time.
- 3) Acts 22:16 (NKJV) *16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'*
- a) Paul was not told to believe, repent or confess. This it is only logical to understand that he already did.
- 4) Acts 16:30-31 (NKJV) *30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*
- a) The jailor is not told to repent or be baptized. It is only logical to understand that he had to believe first.
- e. Clearly simply because baptism is not mentioned in every account, does not mean that it is not necessary. Besides in the vast majority of conversions it is there.
- C. Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV) *9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*
1. Objection: They say, "Here it is plain. Confess, and believe and you will be saved, period. Paragraph."
 2. Refutation:
 - a. Context - People who make this claim are forgetting something very important. The letter to the church at Rome is a LETTER. To isolate this text and stand on it dishonest. Every text without a context is a pretext.
 - 1) I went to Bethel College and there was a passage that some fellow students of mine would like to take out of context. This was Amos 4:4 (NKJV) *4 "Come to Bethel and transgress..."* Clearly the meaning of this verse changes when out of its context. Amos was not encouraging transgression. He was using sarcasm. The point was that they were offering sacrifices to false Gods. However, from this verse alone you would never know that.
 - 2) We must be careful not to make the same mistake.
 - 3) Looking at the letter as a whole, it is important to recognize a preceding section. We cannot properly understand Romans 10, if we ignore Romans 6:3-6 (NKJV) *3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall*

be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

- 4) Isolating Chapter 10 and saying only a belief and a confession is necessary would be no different than Isolating 6:3-6 and saying that only baptism and walking in newness of life is what saves. Both would be inappropriate.
 - 5) Nobody looks at a preview of a movie and says they saw a movie. Nor could one judge an entire movie on the basis of a preview. To do so would be to isolate about 30 seconds of film and make a complete judgment. There is a whole picture to view. Could you sing a complete song with only half of the lyrics? NO. It would defy all logic to take a movie preview, a half a song, a small passage of scripture isolate it and claim to have the whole picture.
 - 6) Psalm 119:160 (NKJV) *160 The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*
 - a) Are we going to call God a liar and say that Romans 6 is not truth, just an isolated Romans 10?
 - b) We need to view the whole picture.
 - 7) Heed the warning in 2 Peter 3:15-16 (NKJV) *15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*
 - a) Isolating scripture and making bold proclamation without understanding the context is a sure road to destruction involving much twisting.
 - 8) The real context of Chapter 9 is not a formula for salvation
 - a) The context around verse one indicates Paul is explaining why his Jewish brethren have not accepted Christ. They have tried to establish their own means of salvation, not trusting what God had sent.
 - b) They need to have righteousness based on faith. “Mouth” and “heart” are terms specifically used in this chapter. He is speaking to Jews. These specific words are the exact words used in an Old Testament lesson from Deuteronomy 30 that Jews would be familiar with. This would be clear to the Jewish mind. The heart and mouth indicated having a faith to be saved. But having the faith to be saved is not a formula. It is just part of the picture.
- b. Really this passage is more condemning to the “faith only” position
- 1) Is a confession necessary? Using this text the way they do, how can they say no? Confession fits their definition of a “work.” So why is it logical to make an exception for the “work” of confession, but not baptism? This passage gets a foot in the door to show the idea of works of obedience. The confession does not merit anything, but it is a work. I would use this verse to show a person who believes in “faith only” that more than faith is a part of the equation.
 - 2) The way the original language breaks down is the first instance of “confession” and “believes” is past. In verse 10 they are present tense or continual. The way I read this is that there is a reference to the initial saving faith. Then there is further emphasis is on how it is continual. We keep confessing and keep believing. There is a reference to the initial foundational elements and emphasis on how these same elements continue in the life of a

Christian.

- 3) If someone is foolish enough to call this a complete formulaic picture of salvation, where is repentance? It is not here. Yet every “faith only” person I have spoken with admits that a person must repent. If this is a complete picture, there is no need to repent. Just confess and believe. Clearly it is not. The point is not to give a detailed account. The point is about the characteristics of ones life. As Christians throughout our lives we must be believing and confessing. We have to be fair, honest, and complete with our view of the Bible.
- 4) Not only does this passage illustrate that there are works of obedience involved in a saving faith, the real kicker is that this passage illustrates how sometimes one word is used in place of a whole. Look at verse 11. Romans 10:11 (NKJV) *11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”*
 - a) Would anyone deny that confession is a part of what Paul is referencing here looking back to the previous verse? Believes is being used to summarize the belief and the confession.
 - b) Clearly this is a more damaging verse to the “faith only,” position that it is an argument for it, when carefully examined.

D. Mark 16:15-16 (NKJV) *15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

1. Objection:

- a. Mark 16:15-16 does not say those who are not baptized are lost.
- b. Also, the word for “and” is the Greek word “kai” which can just mean “even.” Therefore it says, “Those who believe, even baptized, shall be saved.”
- c. Besides, some manuscripts do not have verses after 16:9.

2. Refutation

- a. The verse does not have to mention that those who are not baptized are lost. If someone does not believe they will not be baptized. The way I see this is that if you don’t believe, you can get wet all you want, but it will not save you. Lets simply listen to this verse. Who is saved? If you asked any third grader to read Matthew 16:15-16 and said who will be saved according to this sentence. They would tell you those who believe and are baptized.
- b. There is no reputable scholar that would translate this verse as even. Check out the major translations. It is not done.
- c. Although it is true that some manuscripts do not contain these verses, most manuscripts do. That is why it is in the Bible. Some manuscripts that leave it out this passage also leave a space where these verses would be. It is almost as if they were going to insert it. This text is a disputed text. I believe it should be there. But even if we do not use this text the many other passages of Scripture prove the same point of this verse. A counterpart to this passage is Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV) *18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*
 - 1) V19 is literally having traveled or having gone. The command is not to go. The command is to make disciples.
 - 2) How are disciples made according to the passage? This passage shows us

clearly. Make disciples is an imperative, a command. The Participles that follow an imperative tell you how to accomplish the command. There are two participles that describe how to make disciples. Both are part of the command.

- a) Baptizing them into the name of the father, son, and holy spirit.
- b) Teaching them to keep all that Jesus commanded.
- c) Teaching, baptism and continued teaching are necessary to carry out the command to make disciples.

3) So even if you want to throw out Mark 16 just look over to Matthew 28.

E. Acts 2:38 (NKJV) 38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

1. Objection: Acts 2:38 does not really say "be baptized for the forgiveness of sins." The word for "for" is the Greek word "eis." This can mean "because of," therefore, they were told to be baptized because their sins were already forgiven.

2. Refutation

a. Scholars disagree. Lets look at a few of the major Bible translations to see what their scholarship has led to (for some of these I use the term "major" very loosely).

1) NKJV 38 *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

2) NASB 38 *Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

3) ASV 38 *And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

4) ESV 38 *And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

5) NIV 38 *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

6) KJV 38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

7) RSV 38 *And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

8) NRSV38 *Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

9) Holman Christian Standard Bible 38 *"Repent," Peter said to them, "and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

10) Good News Translation 38 *Peter said to them, "Each one of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit.*

11) New Century Version 38 *Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the*

forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

12) New Living Translation 38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

13) The Message 38 Peter said, “Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- a) Brothers and sisters, even the paraphrase the message got this right.
- b) What the scholars see in the language is evident. Rarely will I say “The Message got it right.” Here is one of those times. It is that obvious.

b. Use of “eis” in its context.

1) 302 times in the book of Acts

2) 10 times in 9 verses in Acts 2

a) Acts 2:5 (NKJV) 5 *And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.*

Definitely not because of. It is location.

b) Acts 2:20 (NKJV) 20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*

Again not because of, we are dealing with a result.

c) Acts 2:22 (NKJV) 22 *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—*

d) Again definitely not because of here.

e) Acts 2:25 (NKJV) 25 *For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.*

Once again not because of.

f) Acts 2:27 (NKJV) 27 *For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

Does because of make sense here?

g) Acts 2:31 (NKJV) 31 *he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.*

Not because of here?

h) Acts 2:34 (NKJV) 34 *“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand,*

i) Acts 2:39 (NKJV) 39 *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”*

Literally “in far”

Dealing again with location.

j) Acts 2:38 (NKJV) 38 *Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

So here in 2:38 what makes us think this is “because of?” It has been used mainly as location, or direction. Definitely never “because of”

It would not make sense that it would just change here.

- c. Matthew 26:28 (NKJV) *28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*
 - 1) This passage has a very similar phrase with “eis.” Was Christ’s blood shed for many because sins were already forgiven? No. It is clear that his blood was shed so that sins could be forgiven.
 - d. Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV) *9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*
 - 1) Would the faith only people be willing to say that “eis” here doesn’t mean “resulting in.”
 - 2) There is just as much logic in translating “eis” here as “because of” as there is in translating “eis” because of in Acts 2.
 - e. The attempt by some to claim that “eis” in Acts 2:38 is really “because of” is unmerited. It is a blatant attempt to twist scripture.
- F. 1 Peter 3:21 (NKJV) *21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*
- 1. Objection:
 - a. Here we find that the baptism there is not the type that could be confused with washing the dirt off the flesh, so it can’t be water baptism. The saving power is not in the physical act in water but in the appeal to God for a good conscience.
 - b. Additionally, baptism is just a “figure” of how someone is saved, not the actual way they are.
 - 2. Refutation
 - a. The baptism in this passage corresponds to how water saved the ark from destruction. Some translations say “like figure.” The NKJV sticks with a transliteration, “antitype.” This is a type antitype relationship. The flood is the type and the baptism is the anti-type. It is not just a “figure.” Types and antitypes have connections. The connection here is the water. The water destroyed all the evil in the world, while at the same time raising the ark above the destruction. Verse 20 said eight people were saved “by or through” water. The like figure is that the water saves us.
 - b. The appeal to God is a part of the saving power, but that is being equated with what is happening during the baptism. This is by far the logical and easy flowing thought that can come from the passage.

In conclusion looking back to the words of philosopher William Hamilton, “Truth, like a torch, the more its shook it shines” (Knowles 458). After thoroughly examining or “shaking” the objections to Scriptural baptism by, first, questioning whether baptism for the remission of sins is in conflict with the biblical teaching of being saved by grace through faith, and second, examining Scriptures where arguments are made against baptism for the remission of sins the truth clearly shines like a torch. It is beyond a doubt that (CI) Baptism is a part of being saved by grace and attempts to refute this lack substance. Let the Scriptures speak for themselves. Baptism is an essential part of a conversion to Christ. It is just as essential as repentance, confession, and believing. Let me put this as clearly as possible. If you are not baptized for the forgiveness of sins, you are lost. If you are never baptized for the forgiveness of sins, you will be lost for an eternity. Would you wait to believe that Jesus is the Christ? Would you wait to repent of your past sinful deeds? Would you wait to confess Jesus as your master? If the answer is no then why would you wait to be baptized? Without baptism, the rest is all in vain.



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I'm sure many parents here today can sympathize with this story. Soon after we moved here I heard my daughter Abigail crying in her bedroom. When approached she was revealing she had great guilt over something she had done and therefore wanted to be baptized. She said she believed in Jesus and wanted to be forgiven. Having grown up in the church she understood exactly what baptism was for, and I asked her what she had done which was so agonizing as to bring her to this moment. She said, "I have had evil thoughts today and I need to be forgiven for them." She genuinely had belief in Jesus, repentance, true godly sorrow, and understood what baptism was for. The issue we had to then struggle with was that she was seven years old. So what did we do? She was only a mere child, and not even close to at least a young adult.

She appeared to meet the prerequisites for baptism, but there was something to be sure of before she was baptized. What we all had to consider was, "*Is she really a sinner in God's mind? Are there sins to wash away?*" As we know, just because a child does something wrong, doesn't necessitate that God is holding them eternally responsible for that. The problem is that there is no set age given in Scripture as to this "age of accountability" we refer to. Therefore, how can any of us bind any age on anybody as long as they are old enough to confess? However, I'm sure we can all agree that we would draw the line somewhere. After all, how many here would baptize a five year old?

Today, I'm going to address the prerequisites to baptism. This addressing will help give us some solid guidelines to assist us in this problem. And I believe we can address this as a "problem." When I was at Bear Valley I noticed this problem creep up. Many of my classmates were getting rebaptized while at school. I didn't know what to think of it. When I was in Colorado, and then when I was in Owatonna, the same thing was happening. And it didn't even happen while studying baptism. It happened while we were addressing Jesus' command to count the cost before becoming a disciple. It's also unfortunate because we're not the only ones that have recognized a problem.

In a study made by Dr. Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr., a University of Tulsa professor and an elder at the Garnett Road Church of Christ in Tulsa, at least 80% of those baptized before age twelve had either become unfaithful or had been baptized again because of their dissatisfaction with their first baptism. The percentages ranged from 80% of those who were eleven years old to 100% of those who were eight years old. Of those twelve or older at the time of baptism, the percentages of dropouts and rebaptisms ranged from 56% at age twelve to 32% at age fifteen. While the "mortality rate" of those twelve or older is rather tragic, those who were younger than twelve had a much higher dropout and rebaptism rate. -Robert J. Murray

At what point do we consider this a problem to be dealt with? For example, how many here personally know of someone who has had cancer? Quite a few, I'm sure. It's called the plague of modern times. Now, how many here know of someone who was rebaptized? The results are probably not much different.

Therefore, let's examine some concepts concerning fulfilling the prerequisites to being baptized.

I. A PERSON MUST BE OLD ENOUGH FOR JESUS' DISCIPLESHIP REQUIREMENTS.

- A. The age of accountability has to be directly tied to the requirements of being a **disciple**.
- a. If God considers someone a sinner before they have the maturity to count the cost, then God has put someone in a position of being a sinner with no chance at redemption.
 - b. This cannot be, therefore Jesus' teachings are the true key.
- B. The mentality must first possess the **ability of language** so as to understand the requirements.
1. If God considers someone a lost sinner before they have the ability to understand they need to be a Christian, to have those sins forgiven, then God has put someone in a position of being a sinner with no chance of redemption.
 2. Therefore, infants must not be baptized..
 - a. They can't understand the good news preached to them to meet the "belief" requirement.
Acts 8:12 - But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.
 - b. Infants cannot repent or confess before baptism, either.
 - c. Baptism was for those who chose it. There is no record of someone forcing it.
 - d. Infants also have no sin.
Ezekiel 18:4 - ...the soul that sins shall die.
Ezekiel 18:19,20 - Yet you say, "Why should the son not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity?" When the son has practiced justice and righteousness, and has observed all My statutes and done them, he shall surely live. The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity; nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.
 1. A sin is something you do. Babies can't perform one.
2 Cor. 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
 2. If sin is passed down, then Jesus would have had sin from Mary.
 3. We are surely born into a sinful nature & environment but that does not mean we are sinful. God only creates that which is good. It can only BECOME bad.
1 Timothy 4:4 - For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude;
 4. Jesus seemed to have a very high esteem of children.
Matthew 18:1-4 - At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
 - a. There is no indication they were sinners.
 - b. He even tells people they need to become like children.
 - c. The kingdom already belonged to such as these.
- C. It also takes a prudent level of **maturity** to contemplate being a disciple.
1. It is a monumental decision since one must count the cost before giving an entire life to the Lord.
 - a. After all, it will cost them everything.
Luke 14:33 - So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.
 - b. What real possessions do most children have to give up for the Lord?
 - c. Obviously, this would be impossible for a baby.
 2. That person must love the Lord more than their family members, even more than their own life.
Luke 14:26 - "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and

children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

- a. There has to be enough maturity to be able to stand up and disregard the parents.
- b. Anyone can say, “No,” to their parents but can they do it out of being their own person and therefore can defy the parents for non selfish reasons (hate his own life)?
- c. Personally, I think a good indicator is finding out who is in control. Can the parents dictate whether they do or don’t get baptized?
 - (1. We must make sure that getting baptized is not a rite of passage, or something that just follows the crowd & traditions, but is truly dedicated to discipleship.
 - (2. The truth is that most kids are getting baptized early because people start to talk about them behind their backs if they are not at about twelve or thirteen.
 - (3. I think we’ve kind of created a self-fulfilling traditional expectation. If the churches had always baptized kids at 6 then that is what would be happening now.
 - (4. Could it be that they are just the products of their environment, that is, not their own will, but just their peers & adults around them?
 - (5. Let’s not forget that **Christianity is about first formulating your own will, LET ALONE then having the maturity to give it up to Christ and taking on His will.**
 - (6. If family members can talk them into or out of it, that should raise some questions.
 - (7. This is something very difficult to do for someone who is only and merely a child.
3. They also have to be mature enough to understand what they must hate.

1 John 2:15-16 - Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

 - a. Mere children are getting baptized every day that haven’t yet really encountered the true lusts of the flesh, and therefore can’t truly count the cost.
 - b. For one to repent, they must literally “change their mind.” Therefore, they have to have enough life experience to change their mind about a sinful life that has developed.
- D. Scripturally, it appears a true disciple can not be merely child-like in their thinking.
 1. *1 Co 14:20 - Brethren, do not be children in your thinking, yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking mature.* (It’s much easier for an adult to think like a child than for a child to truly think like an adult.)
 - a. One can spiritually be a babe/child in Christ, but they surely must already physically possess the ability to think maturely upon being taught.
 - b. This raises a problem. If we do indeed convert mere children we are putting them in the impossible position of not being able to follow a biblical command.
 - c. Let’s realize we are asking a child not to think as a child if we say they are old enough to be a Christian.
 2. *1 Co 13:11 - When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man I did away with childish things.*
 - a. The fact is that we cannot expect a child to put away childish things.
 - b. My kids have trouble with responsibility, give immature responses to their siblings, and need constant supervision. Don’t get me wrong, they’re decent kids. It’s just that too often I expect them to act like us, but, hey, they’re just kids! I am not going to baptize one of them and then ask them to be what they cannot be.
 - c. *Illustration* - One of our elders at STC has even seen a very young person, a baptized child at age eight, during the solemn service of the Lord Supper, actually pick his nose and act like he/she was going to put it on others. How can that

person possibly be mature enough for Christianity?

3. We need to compare the decision to be baptized with other big decisions they make.

- a. For example, are they mature enough to go out on a date?
- b. Haven't we heard today that baptism is really a type of "marriage ceremony" where one is united to Christ? Isn't that the reason for our call to purity?

1 Co 6:15-17 - ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be! ¹⁶Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

- c. ***I think it could be argued as inconsistent for a parent to believe a child is old enough to make a lifelong commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, but is not old enough to merely make the decision on whether they can date or not.***

II. HOW DOES PHYSICAL MATURITY AFFECT MENTAL MATURITY?

- A. Abstract thinking is essential to being a Christian.

The Age of Accountability - By Robert J. Murray

Faith in God requires abstract thinking; it requires the ability to comprehend matters that cannot be experienced with one of the five senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. A small child, however, is incapable of doing abstract thinking. As stated in one psychology text, "As a person progresses toward maturity, he develops and uses concepts at higher and higher levels of abstraction - concepts such as 'truth,' 'beauty,' 'right,' and 'wrong'."

A child can easily have faith in his parents because of his physical contact with them. God, however, is a spirit, and faith in a spiritual being whom one cannot see requires the ability to do abstract thinking at a relatively high level. In one study of human behavior between the ages of ten and sixteen, the following conclusions were reached: A ten-year-old is just beginning to think about moral issues in abstract terms. At age eleven, a child is often puzzled about moral and ethical problems and often approaches such problems experimentally. He is in need of careful guidance. A twelve-year-old is much more mature and level-headed in considering moral and ethical matters. He is capable of deliberately weighing the pros and cons of any specific issue.

Thus, he does not depend only on what his parents say, but his parents' teachings are blended together with his own ideas. Abstract concepts of God, like an understanding of moral and ethical issues, become increasingly complex between the ages of ten and twelve, continuing in complexity until about age sixteen.

1. Does it seem people need to be at the beginning of abstract thinking, or have full ability?

Early adolescents are just developing the ability to think in an abstract manner and therefore may not be able to fully understand that present actions have future consequences. During these years, your teen will have the opportunity to make many choices. Making choices and learning from successes and failures is one way teens gain knowledge about operating in the adult world . . . Recent research from the National Institute of Mental Health indicates that the brain goes through a period of rapid growth during puberty. Most of this growth is seen in the frontal lobe, an area thought to be responsible for advanced mental functions, called "executive functions," such as reasoning, judgment, and self-control. This research suggests that the teen brain is still immature and that experiences during the teen years are critical in developing these mental abilities

http://my.webmd.com/content/healthwise/170/53940?src=lnktomi&condition=Healthy_Parenting

- a. Of course, the age will depend upon the individual.
- b. People mature at different rates, and some are drastically outside the norm.
2. After all, Christians are told to believe incredible concepts.
 - a. God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent.
 - b. God became flesh and died for us.
 - c. Those who do not believe the gospel will spend eternity in hell.
3. We can't confuse accountability with the observation they can regurgitate facts.
 - a. They have to be truly contemplated and understood.
 - b. *Illustration* - I saw a two year old on TV that knew all the Presidents of the U.S.

- B. Puberty appears necessary for abstract thought.

How the Mechanics of Thought and Memory Structure Human Development - S.Vegors, Ph.D. Eastern Idaho Technical College

With the purpose of the intellect being to decide, it would function to control the flow of thoughts through the system. At puberty, children begin to try and consciously control their lives, and this reflects the underlying change that is occurring as the intellect tries to learn to control the internal thinking process. This brings with it a much greater power of thinking and precision, as well as a qualitative change in activity . . .

.One thing that tends to occur at the transition point between childhood and adulthood is that individuals extensively think about their place in the world (Miller, 1983). Such a transition seems to imply that the intellect is beginning to probe into mental functioning. The intense internal questing seems to imply that the intellect is also gaining control of the memory structure, and can probe it for specific details. Alexander mentions that at this point the intellect gains the capacity to "consciously reflect upon the contents of the mind" (pg. 28). However, like all of these transformations, this change isn't spontaneous or total. The intellect will gain mastery over some areas of the mind sooner than over others, and it will take time for all the different areas of the mind to fully gain this stage. However, by age 18 or 20, all of these areas have been developed, and the intellect has gained mastery . . . Adult cognition, beyond this point, then seems to entails expansions of domain specific knowledge.

- C. I think we have all seen this in our experience with our children who are pre-puberty.
Illustration - My daughter Grace when she was 11 was listening intently to an adult conversation. Her head swivelled as everyone spoke. One of the ladies was pouring her heart out with a very understandable adult problem with her family. To the rest of the adults it seemed very appropriate that she should cry when she talked about it. My daughter Grace only looked surprised and asked her, "What is wrong?"
- D. This is why our society does not put 9 year olds in prison.
1. We understand they are not yet fully accountable for their wrongdoings.
 2. And we also understand that age is flexible, depending on the individual's maturity level.
 3. ***I find it inconsistent that a parent can feel their child is not old enough to spend one night in prison, but is old enough to spend an eternity in a burning hell.***
- E. It could be that we sometimes allow these physically immature children to make this decision to the exclusion of other immense decisions because we only see it as something that is good.
1. Adults will instinctively protect children from decisions they think are potentially bad.
Illustration - Even if it were legal we would protect them from getting into a 30 year mortgage, driving a motorcycle, or being a nine year old skydiver.
 2. I think the key is for parents to then conclude this is something potentially very dangerous.
 - a. Isn't it dangerous for a person to be sprinkled as a baby if they're truly not saved until they are later immersed as disciple? How many years are they lost in-between? ***"Get'em while they're young!" doesn't work well with this!***
 - b. Therefore, if someone is baptized at age nine, but God doesn't consider them a sinner until a few years later, but they don't get rebaptized until age thirty when it dawns on them, how many years are they lost?
 3. Sometimes mere children are baptized because they're thinking, "It's better safe than sorry." But is it really safer?
 4. If someone is obviously physically immature then let's think twice about pushing them into something, or creating an environment of pressure to do so.
 5. If you believe God will spare them if they make a mistake by getting baptized too early then you can consistently believe God will spare them between the time they become accountable and the time they choose baptism. I don't believe either.

III. WHO DO WE SEE BECOMING CHRISTIANS IN THE NT CHURCH?

- A. What we know is that accountability included adults. Anything else is just pure guesswork.
1. The term we keep seeing is "Men and Women."
Acts 8:12 - But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.
Acts 5:14 - And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number;
Acts 22:4 - And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons
 2. It would have been very easy to say that children were, too.

Matthew 14:21 - And there were about five thousand men who ate, aside from women and children.

B. It's impossible to prove children were.

1. Some point out whole households were baptized. This is true.
2. Does that mean children were in the household? No, that would be a guess.

Hebrews 11:7 - By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Illustration - I have seven kids, but I don't have one under eleven. In a couple years I won't have one under driving age in the house.

3. When households were baptized it probably only referred to those who were eligible for baptism.

1 Corinthians 1:16 - Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

1 Corinthians 16:15-17 - Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints), that you also be in subjection to such men and to everyone who helps in the work and labors. And I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus; because they have supplied what was lacking on your part.

Illustration - If someone needed their house painted, I would say, "My household will be there." That doesn't mean Susanna and Joe are necessarily going to be doing it.

C. Isn't the burden of proof on those who want to baptize mere children to prove their position?

1. Aren't we to have Biblical authority for what we do?
2. If someone wants to add sprinkling to the type of water for cleansing, don't they have to prove it?
3. ***If they believe a person with only a child's mind, in only a child's body is a sinner, then I believe they will need to show that in order to be sure it is approved.***

IV. THEREFORE, WE MUST STAY AWAY FROM IMPROPER STANDARDS

A. Accountability is not:

1. Having knowledge. - 4 year olds can have that.
2. Knowing right and wrong. - Little kids can know that.
3. Having guilt - I did that at age 5.
4. Crying because they think they need to be baptized - Kids cry over many things they want.

B. Accountability is not the Jewish age for the Bar-mitzvah.

1. Why rely on Jewish tradition?
 - a. What did Jesus think about Jewish tradition? He condemned a lot of it.
 - b. Jewish tradition is not that applicable since it wasn't about choice. Our covenant is all about choice.

2. Jewish tradition doesn't seem to be close to what God gave them.

- a. The Mosaic system is far more concerned about twenty, than thirteen.

(1. When were they counted in the census?

Numbers 1:17-18 - So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name, and they assembled all the congregation together on the first of the second month. Then they registered by ancestry in their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, head by head,

(2. When were they allowed to fight in battle?

Numbers 1:3 - from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

(3. When were they obligated to give an offering?

Exodus 30:14 - Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the Lord.

(4. When were they allowed to work in the temple?

Ezra 3:8 - Now in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites, and all who came from the captivity to Jerusalem, began the work and appointed the Levites from twenty years and older to oversee the work of the house of the Lord.

- b. If you're going to use an old standard for being a sinner you're going to be stuck with 20, not 12.

- (1. The only example we have is found with those who died in the wilderness.

*Hebrews 3:16-18 - For who provoked {Him} when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt {led} by Moses? And with whom was He angry for forty years? **Was it not with those who sinned**, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?*

Numbers 32:11 - 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully,

- (2. From these verses we can make the following conclusions.

- (a. God only held those above nineteen responsible in this situation. Of course, there are too many variables to make the rule that one has to make it out of their teens to be a sinner. My guess is that God knew there were some at that age who were not accountable yet so he used that age guide to prevent the punishment of the innocent.
- (b. If God exempted **all teens** from accountability in this case, why are we being so aggressive as to look at **pre-teens** as those who are guilty today?

- C. We are left with a few facts.

1. There is no proof any children were sinners or baptized in the church.
2. We know for a fact at least young adults were.
3. We know the Christians were commanded to not think like children.
4. We know it is the most important decision in one's life and one must be mature enough.
5. We know someone has to be old enough to even disregard their parents.
6. We know that people mature at different rates in different cultures.
7. We can't consistently think them not accountable to the laws of the land yet accountable to God's laws.
8. We know it is impossible for someone to be an adult if they are only in a child's body.
9. We know we cannot confuse knowledge, sorrow, or ability with being accountable.

So what happened to Abigail at age seven? We told her that we believed the Bible taught she was still in a state of grace. Though it is true that she did things that were wrong, because she was purely a child they were not counted as sins against her. She decided to wait, and she continued her growing up and started thinking more independently. She then prudently examined her given faith and put it to the test to see whether she believed it for herself or not. We watched her become accountable in our own eyes, and we told her so. And we were afraid when she didn't get baptized as quickly as we wanted. But her faith surely became her own, and when she was seventeen she finally became a Christian. One thing we knew for sure. It certainly wasn't our will, but hers. It wasn't from the peer pressure around her, but from her own conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord and Master, and she confidently chose to make Him her king for her life.

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