

Baptism Study

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So here shall I begin to attempt to somewhat clarify our position on baptism as in the Holy Scriptures. I must say that I am sure I will miss vital points that will no doubt occur to me after the fact, and they may sprout up in later contact as an addendum, so bare with me. As well, it is important for me to also state that, just as I had to do, one must remove himself from all learned ritual and presuppositions concerning water being used as the medium of NT baptism. This is necessary in order for one to start to see the spiritual ONE baptism as mentioned by Paul in Eph 4:5.

Also important before delving deeper is that statement that the cessation of Jewish rituals was a gradual process, as the Jews were doing them until 70AD when they were left without a temple and officiating priesthood in that temple. Much like the old rotary telephones of our parents and grandparents, as the use of the modern keypad phones increased, there was a point when the old was gradually replaced by the new, with the old being completely phased out. I hope to show that this was the same with the OT ritual washings, of which John the Baptist and Phillip (Acts 8) were performing. Only John was proclaiming that his washing had to cease in order for the true baptism to take effect on the NT believers, but more on that later.

Col 2:14 - Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (KJV)

Eph 4:5 - One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (KJV)

O.k., first may I address the very word 'baptize'? According to R.B. Girdlestone, there was no exact English equivalent for the Greek word 'baptizo' (and it's variant forms) available to the translator's of the English bible (even predating the KJV of 1611). He contends that 'baptizo' was a dyer's term and signifies so as to dip and change colour or to stain. Thus out of necessity, they took a portion of the word, bapt, and added for convenience and English suffix, ize, thus rendering a very generic and inaccurate word – baptize. This was far removed from the intricacies of the original Greek words and their meanings, genders, etc. So they left us with a very ambiguous word that we have adopted into our vernacular and almost always equate it with water.

Baptize comes from the root 'bapto' which means to stain as with a dye. Kittle's states that bapto is more accurate in it's application of going under and perishing (i.e.; not coming out of) in it's general usage. And as McClintock and Strong states concerning baptizo -

*The word baptism is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek **Baptismos** (**Baptismws**), a verbal noun (infinitive) from **Baptizo** (likewise Anglicized "baptize"), and this, again, is a derivative from **Bapto** (**Baptw**), the predominant signification of which latter is to whelm or "dye," Lat. tingo. Not being a verb implying motion, **Baptizo** (**Baptizw**) is properly followed in Greek by the preposition **en**, denoting the means or method (with the "instrumental dative"), which has unfortunately, in the Auth. Engl. Vers. often been rendered by the ambiguous particle "in," whereas it really (in this connection) signifies only with or by, or at most merely designates the locality where the act is performed.*

Greek literature offers many examples of baptizo, baptizomai, etc., concerning the state of something changed by an outer source, and they use water in very few of them. One may see great many examples of the Greeks using baptizo outside of water association in James Dale's fine book 'Judaic Baptism'.

"And stretching out his right hand, so as to escape notice by none, he mersed (baptizo) the entire sword into his throat" Josephus, Jewish War ii, 18

"I know some, who, when they become slightly intoxicated, before they become thoroughly drunk (baptizomai)" Philo, ii, 478 On Contemp. Life

"And mersed (baptizo) by drunkenness into insensibility and sleep" Jewish Antiquities., x, 9

These are only three of hundreds of examples in Greek of the use of baptizo to convey a 'state of change' of an object. This means that to the Greek ear hearing baptizo (and it's various derivatives), it had a greater and broader meaning than just water immersion. However western thought has adopted it to be only immersion because our language is not as capable at showing nuance as the classical Attic and Koine Greek languages of 2,000 years ago.

So I would have to say that concerning the use of baptizo and baptisma in the NT, we have to define what was actually being accomplished at every given example.

If we were a Greek living 2,000 years ago, to hear the acts of baptizing a human in water would, by the force of it's terms, convey the idea of death by drowning (J.W. Dale Christic Baptism). Baptizo, when used with epi, eis, or en, always denotes

not an act done, but rather a result reached, or a state or condition accomplished (see: Luke 12:50). Baptism has to do not with immersion, but a change affected to the state of the object from an outer source. A good example is the pickle. As a cucumber it is immersed in the brine and left there. Its character is changed from that of a cucumber to that of a pickle. The cucumber was baptized, or its state changed permanently. It can never again be an ordinary cucumber. However, just washing a cucumber in water does not change (baptize) the cucumber. It merely leaves you with a really clean cucumber!

We are dealing with three totally independent and different baptisms in scripture – the baptism of Moses, the baptism of John, and the baptism of Jesus. And in the language of scripture, these three baptisms necessitate a definition of difference. In like manner, the baptism of Moses is a baptism into ceremonial purification. The baptism of John is a baptism into repentance (not water) for sin. And the baptism of Jesus is a more glorious baptism into all the fruits of incarnation - obedience, faith, suffering for righteousness, atoning death, resurrection, and communion with God. Do these three baptisms sound at all alike? I should say not. Yet they all had their form and function in the time and purpose they were administered, with the baptism of Christ continuing onward.

The ONE baptism of Christ now is that of by which a soul is purged of sin and a change of condition totally into the authority (onoma – name) of Jesus Christ. As our High Priest He alone is baptizing us by His shed blood.

It can be said in this manner: ‘At the baptism of repentance men confessed their sins, and at the baptism of Christ men confess (homologeo) Christ as His witnesses (Acts 1:8).

Finding our way through such a huge subject (the likes of which I will fall short herein), we need at the very least, a starting point, a guide rule by which we can begin with. We need a cornerstone of sorts by which we can start this designation of what is actually going on in the NT, and that all starts with John the Baptist.

The Baptism of John

Every King needs a forerunner to announce His coming, and for our Lord, this man was John the Baptist. He was ‘preparing the way for the Lord’ (Mt 3:3, Mk 1:3, Lk 3:4) as spoken of by Isaiah-

Isa 40:3-5 - 3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. KJV

John was qualified to act in this capacity as he was from the course of Abijah (Luke 1:5). No doubt he was seen as one preparing the way (hodos) for the Messiah to come, and he was preparing literal Israel for His arrival. His method was ‘preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins’ (Luke 3:3). That is to say, it was repentance that possessed the baptism, not the water. Yet the water had some purpose, right? Yes, of course. It was an integral part of the Pharisees’ ‘green card’ of Proselyte Baptism.

Now, nowhere in the OT scripture is there ever a command from God to immerse a human – ever. Yet the priests were washed daily at the brazen sea (Ex 29:4, Lev 8:6. Ex 40:12 concerning Aaron and his sons). The Jews were peculiar about washings of various kinds for a myriad of ritual cleansings, both of themselves and of their utensils, bedmats, etc. However, you will not find a single instance where God commanded a human to be immersed in water for the sake of ceremonial cleanliness.

After the scattering of No. Israel in 722 BC under the Assyrians and So. Judah under Babylon in 586 BC, the religious order of Israel had changed somewhat. The order of the Pharisees and Sadducees were established, the synagogue was developed in Babylon (as they had no temple), and the Pharisees developed the Hallakkah and Haggaddah – the written and oral commentaries to the Law of Moses, which was never commanded by the Lord either (Deut 4:12, 12:32).

Now due to the scattering of the Jews into the gentile regions, there necessitated a method by which the (self-righteous) Pharisees could control the influx of dispersed Jews into the temple for worship, as well as the regulating of gentile worshipers who come to Jerusalem to partake of the worship of Jehovah God, however rare that might be. And it was said amongst the Pharisees that any Jew (much less a gentile) born outside the gates of Jerusalem proper was considered unclean. Therefore the Pharisees created a standardized method, a ‘green card’ of sorts, by which a Jew outside of Jerusalem or a gentile may enter in and worship. This was called Proselyte Baptism, and it consisted of 3 things:

- 1) circumcision
- 2) washed in water (also called a new birth by the Jews)

3) offering of 2 turtledoves

Although these three elements were in the Law of Moses, God never commanded them for the use the Pharisees had in mind. Concerning John the Baptist, he would have been familiar with this, and even used it to execute his baptism for the remission of sins. This is not out of context with John's preparing the way for the Messiah. John knew his purpose well concerning Messiah, and it is safe to say that he was more concerned about doing that than proselyte washing of unclean Jews. Nevertheless, it was a common ritual for a man such as John considering his lineage. Spiritually he was the high priest of Israel preparing to wash the King of Israel. John states this purpose clearly -

(John 1:31) - And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. KJV

John knows full well that his water washing is for one reason only concerning Messiah. Jesus is the true High priest and true King of Israel. John prefaces that statement with - John 1:30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. KJV

It must be understood that John did not preach a baptism of water, but that of a baptism of repentance (Mk 1:4, Lk 3:3, Acts 13:24, Acts 19:4). The water was nothing more than an outward sign that they were repenting, however many people in the OT repented without any water at all and it was just as valid before God (see Jer 31:19 as example). Over and over John made sure that those hearing him would know that he baptized with water but the one Who comes after me will baptize you with Holy Ghost and fire. (I must repeat this over and over because I feel it to be central to the position that water baptism is done away with).

John's water washing simply represented a shadow of better things to come by the more excellent ministry of the Lord established on better promises (Heb 8:6). And of necessity the shadow of John's water must give way to the very image of Christ's baptism by sanctification, obedience, and the sprinkling of blood (1Pet 1:2) in the house of God, which we are (Heb 3:6).

The Jews were a peculiar people in that they acted out their contracts publicly. Also they were in the practice of using washings to symbolize a purification of a particular object. John's baptism is no different in both respects. He is acting out the contract of 1) washing people into the literal kingdom of God and 2) making manifest the Messiah to Israel. John executed his contract for these reasons. And Jesus executed the contract of 'partaking of the bread (body)' and 'drinking the cup' (both in idiomatic and metaphoric language) at the Passover as well as by dying on the cross. It was said that when the Jews wanted to do away with one contract and introduce another, both parties would go in public with an appointed witness (picture of 2 witnesses and the Holy Spirit). Then they would disannul the terms of the first contract and then when both parties had agreed fully, they would drive a nail through the contract into a tree or post. And in the same manner John executed his contract of repentance through water baptism while proclaiming the coming baptism of the Messiah. And Jesus acted out publicly His nailing of ordinances to His cross (Col 2:14), thus 'legally' beginning the promise of His Holy Ghost and fire / blood baptism to His elect.

Why was Jesus baptized?

I have heard no one yet offer a reasonable explanation for this in light of scripture and events that were unfolding in 1st century Israel. The answer is in Jn 1:31 (see above). John was to turn the hearts of many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God (Luke 1:16) But didn't John come preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins? Yes, but that could not have applied to Jesus for there was no sin to repent of. Jesus was pedigree to be both a High Priest and King, concerning His fleshly lineage. John was preparing the way of the Lord via repentance, and he knew his ministry was to be short-lived once the true Messiah had come -John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease. KJV

John was the forerunner of Jesus no doubt. He was the acting high spiritual priest who will wash the coming King. Only two were anointed with oil in the OT – the priest and the king. The prophet was anointed by God himself, and as such the prophet received the instruction and word from God and spoke it to the people.

Jesus qualified John as the prophet Elias (Elijah) also. When the disciples asked him why the scribes say that Elias must come first, Jesus responded that Elias must truly come first and restore all things. Jesus continues, and speaking of John the Baptist, says "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." And Jesus said that just as they killed John the Baptist, likewise must He suffer of them as well. In Mat 17:12, Jesus is foretelling of the baptism that He will undertake on the cross.

John truly prepared the way for the Lord in His ministry. Just as literal Israel had to make a way out of Babylon to come back to the Temple, so too we are, by the baptism of Christ's blood, preparing a way (hodos) out of our spiritual Babylon,

our idolatry. John made no pretense that his specific ministry and baptism would soon cease so that the ministry and baptism of Jesus would take its rightful order and function. Both could not co-exist after the Messiah's death and resurrection. Two covenants cannot be lived under at the same time, nor can we serve two masters at any one time. How are we then to believe that both the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus can equally exist in form and practice in the life of the Christian today?

Now Jesus was not from Jerusalem proper but from Bethlehem (concerning His birth) and was identified as a Nazarene - (Matt 2:23) And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene. KJV

And it was from Nazareth that Jesus came to be washed of John - (Mark 1:9) And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. KJV

So why does Jesus desire to be washed of John when John's 'baptism of repentance' cannot apply to the Lamb Who taketh away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29)? As a Jewish male, Jesus would have been circumcised on the eighth day of His life (Luke 1:59) and His mother had offered the proper offering of two turtledoves (Luke 2:22-24). Joseph and Mary have completed 2 of the 3 ordinances of proselyte baptism as set forth by the Pharisees. Yet the washing still remained to be done. That was to be done by John the Baptist, as the spiritual high priest preparing to wash the spiritual King of Israel, Who was preferred before John and Who John must make manifest to Israel by washing Him in the Jordan!

As a young man Jesus would have been to the Temple escorted by His father Joseph, but as an adult Jewish male, the washing was a necessity to enter the Temple. Jesus knew it was His Father's house and He had every right to enter therein. Yet He was obeying the Pharisee ordinances. That is why Jesus makes the statement to John - (Matt 3:15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. KJV

I believe Jesus to be speaking of the 'false' righteousness of the Pharisees, for once John washes Him, they could not exclude Him from confronting the Pharisees for changing the Word of His Father and adding to it via the Hallakah and Haggadah. Also, Jesus' washing of John began the termination of John's ministry and ushered in Jesus' ministry, which is eternal to His elect.

Therefore the baptism of Jesus was a ritual of the Pharisees executed by John that accomplished 4 things: 1) it washed Jesus as the King of Israel 2) it gave Him access to the Temple, 3) it made Jesus manifest to Israel, and 4) it marked the death of John's ministry and the start of Jesus', by which He would make His way to the cross by which He would then fulfill the promise spoken by John (the last

OT prophet)- that of baptizing in Holy Ghost and Fire (hagios pneuma and pur). For us to use the reasoning that John washed Jesus, Who had no sin, as an 'example' for us, is to say to some degree that we, like Jesus have no sin. For what value is His example if there is nothing such as sin purged from Him?

Holy Ghost & Fire

We must believe that John is telling the truth when he speaks as he is full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15), therefore everything which he speaks concerning the Messiah and His office should be the Holy truth of God, right? Of course. And it is here in the words of John, who is preparing the highway out of the wilderness (a spiritual picture of Babylon) for the Messiah, that everyone dismisses John's prophecy concerning the coming baptism of Jesus. I will list all of the verses for the sake of effect. Notice that there is a constant use of a specific conjunction, 'but'. This is the key to these verses:

*Matt 3:11 - I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: **but** he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. KJV*

*Mark 1:8 - I indeed have baptized you with water: **but** he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. KJV*

*Luke 3:16 - John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; **but** one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. KJV*

*John 1:33 - And I knew him not: **but** he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. KJV*

*Acts 1:5 - (spoken by Jesus) For John truly baptized with water; **but** ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. KJV*

*Acts 11:16 – (Spoken of by Peter) Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; **but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.** KJV*

Could there be any plainer use of the conjunction ‘but’ in scripture? As a conjunction the force of ‘but’ necessitates a change or switching. John did X BUT Jesus will do Y. Nowhere does John vacillate on this point, nor does he ever qualify his water baptism to be included in the reign of Messiah. To the contrary, John emphatically defines and sets forth both the purpose and termination of his washing (by the use of ‘but’), and simultaneously declares unabashedly the true baptism that Messiah will administer in His role as the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world.

Over and over John makes the clear statement that he washes in water (unto repentance) BUT Jesus will baptize with Holy Ghost and fire (unto repentance). The end result is the same for both baptisms – repentance. John’s method was water, Jesus’ was Holy Ghost (Truth – 14:17, 15:26, 16:13, 1 Jn 5:6) and fire. In the end, both baptisms are repentance for the forgiveness of sins – Mk 1:4, Lk 3:3, Acts 13:24, Acts 19:4, Acts 5:31, Acts 13:38, Acts 26:18, Eph 1:7, Col 1:14.

It seems that everybody reads Mat 3:11, Mk 1:8, Luke 3:16, Jn 1:33, & Acts 1:5 (see above) and then goes on their merry way to the water hole! We cannot discredit nor discard what John said, which was he did a particular washing BUT that would be replaced by Jesus. Both brought about the same result, repentance / forgiveness of sins. One would fade away (John’s baptism) and one would be put into effect (Jesus’ baptism).

I think that the primary reason men overlook the urgency of John’s statement concerning what Jesus would do (baptize in Holy Ghost and Fire), is that they THINK they see water in other scriptures. I will address Acts 8 in a coming section, and yes that was water, but the reason why Phillip washed the eunuch is simple, so bare with me. I want to stay in order here, as this is a big task for me to complete.

300 years before Christ, Zeno (founder of Stoicism) said that the cosmos was given life by something-called *hagios pneuma* and *pur* (holy spirit and fire). So when John proclaimed that Jesus would baptize with (en – with or by, not into and out of) Holy Spirit (*hagios* – holy, clean & *pneuma* – breath) & fire, this was something that the people would understand, especially and gentiles in hearing distance. Stoicism would be a common subject in that Hellenized occupation of Israel.

All throughout scripture, fire is equated to purification, and the same could be said especially in the baptism of fire (purification). Consider these verses:

Luke 12:49 - I am come to send fire (refine, purify) on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled? KJV

1 Cor 3:15 - If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. KJV

Heb 12:29 - For our God is a consuming fire. KJV

1 Peter 1:7 - That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

KJV

Mal 3:2 – (speaking of Christ) But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: KJV

As believers we are in a baptism of fire or purification. This is sanctification, which is the continual work of God in us (Phil 2:13), as we are His workmanship (Eph 2:10), that we may be conformed into the image of Jesus (Rom 8:29). Under the fiery baptism of Jesus, He is burning the sin out of us through being conformed to His image. (conform – *summorphos*, from *sum* – fellowship, and *morphe* – to shape). We are shaped in the fellowship of His suffering which is certainly a part of the baptism of Jesus. No such requirement was necessitated under John’s baptism, therefore further abolishing John’s washing for NT believers.

So was John lying about Jesus’ baptism? No! But when we dip people in water we call John and Jesus a liar. John also states that he is the issuer of his water washing, and that without question Jesus is the issuer of His baptism. If a preacher dips us, it is no longer Jesus Who is issuing the baptism but the corruptible flesh of a man. And what does that profit the believer? Nothing! Man cannot take credit for a spiritual imperative of God. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing – not one! (Job14: 4) For it to truly be the baptism of Jesus it must be issued and executed by the One Who’s name (onoma – authority) we are under. Any less than that is the equivalent to a man trying to take credit for his birth from his mother’s womb...

So how do we rectify this? First, we must take John at his word about the coming baptism of Jesus on the believers, and throwing aside our presuppositions, opinions, ritual, and most importantly, pride, we must examine every scripture mentioning baptism. And this must be done knowing that scripture is always correct and we are not.

Having given a thumbnail sketch of the purpose and reason for John's baptism as well as the reason Jesus was washed by John, it is now time to address verses concerning baptism in the gospels and epistles. John's literal water washing will continue in mode until the resurrection of Jesus, although no doubt many were still doing the washing rituals of John until the time had come that Peter and Paul and the others proclaimed the one true baptism of Jesus, which they did. John certainly had disciple doing his baptism even after the ministry of Jesus had began and possibly even after His death and resurrection. Yet God knows how to correct the hearts of men by His word and by His Holy Spirit.

John 3:23 - And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. KJV

John is doing nothing more than carrying out his earthly limited ministry of baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

John 4:1-2 - When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) KJV

John 4:1-2 is an answer to Jn 3:22, a clarification of sorts. Scripture plainly states that Jesus did not baptize Himself, but only His disciples. Why? Because His time was not yet come to execute His true Holy Spirit and fire baptism. That was to commence once He had been the Lamb slain on the cross and resurrected, thereby qualifying Him to fulfill all John had said as well as what Luke records in Acts 1:5 (spoken by the Lord) "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence". (KJV) However, this did not prevent Jesus from making more disciples in His spiritual ministry of the kingdom of God, as He is assuredly doing in Jn 4:1. There is a duality here – 1) the disciples of Jesus are doing John's baptism of repentance and 2) Jesus is making disciples and whether known or not, He is immersing (baptizing) them in (epi, eis, en) His doctrines, thus they are His disciples!

If Christ had washed in the manner of John (with water) it would have totally discredited John as proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah as well as putting (in a physical sense) John and Jesus on the same level. John could not have decreased so He might increase (Jn 3:30) if Jesus washed in the manner of John. It would be redundant for John to herald Jesus as the Messiah and proclaim a great coming baptism of Holy Spirit and fire at the hand and authority of Jesus if Jesus, for whatever the reason, followed in administering the water washing of John. There could be no administering of the Holy Ghost and fire baptism of Christ until He was resurrected, thus the state of affairs in Jn 4:1,2. As for the disciples of Jesus, they were merely carrying out the baptism of John, which was bringing proselytes into the literal kingdom of Israel. The coming King of Israel gathered disciples, allowing them to wash in accordance with the rituals He would soon nail to the cross (Col 2:14).

Matt 20:22-23 - But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. KJV

Here, Jesus uses metaphor of that day to convey His point. To 'drink of a cup' was a common idiom in that region of the world and is used in various forms throughout scripture – Ps 116:13 'cup of salvation', Isa 51:22 / Zech 12:2 'cup of trembling', Jer 16:17 'cup of consolation. Jesus uses the idiom of drinking or partaking of a 'cup' to describe His suffering on the cross (see: Mt 26:39, Luke 22:42, Jn 18:11). Thus in Mat 29:22-23, He is giving the cup of His suffering to James and John as martyrs-to-be.

And so it is with the baptism He gives them. Jesus says 'Can you BE (future) baptized with the baptism I am baptized WITH (present tense). He is not saying for them to go back and be dipped in the Jordan River. He is equating the baptism of blood (an idiom that means to undergo a martyr's death) to His cross. In Luke 9:23 Jesus gives His disciples their daily cross before He takes up His to Calvary. (As a side note, Jesus shows predestination in His response when He says "but to sit on my left or right hand is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. Comp Acts 13:48).

Luke 12:50 - But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

KJV

John in the Jordan has already washed Jesus three years earlier. Yet He uses future tense (to be) to describe a coming baptism, speaking of His death on the cross. Once again, use of baptizo not conveying use of water.

So far we have covered proselyte baptism, the baptism of Jesus by John (it's method and purpose), as well as a few verses in the gospels concerning baptism, both of water and in figurative language. The end being the legitimate use of baptizo in both cases, the clarification being made in context of usage. Now I will cover perhaps the one verse that people use to validate water baptism, thinking that the Lord has commanded it. However after some explanation of the great commission in Mat 28, I hope you can see that it does not validate John's water washing, but on the contrary abolishes it and ushers in the true blood baptism.

Mat 28:19 - Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: KJV

By necessity we will have to cover the related verses: Mk 16:15-16 and Luke 24:47, as they have the same context as the great commission but from another vantagepoint.

In Mat 28:19 we have the risen Jesus giving instruction to the disciples to preach the gospel, or more accurately, teach all nations (ethnos – non-Jew). And at first it seems He is commanding them to do John's water washing that He was Himself a recipient of. However as we have covered earlier, the method and reason of John's baptism were to be done away with by John's own admission and replaced with the Holy Ghost and fire baptism of Jesus. That is what we will see in Mat 28:19.

The baptism of the apostles at Pentecost is still some 50 days away (Acts 1:5). Even Acts 1:5 is Jesus assuring them of His true baptism coming as opposed to John, His forerunner. So in Mat 28:19 how are the disciples to baptize? Simply by preaching the gospel. Here is how:

Let's first consider some key words that will help us navigate this verse properly. First is the word 'teach'. It is the Greek word 'matheteuo' and it means to be a pupil or a disciple. It comes from 'mathetes' which means to be a learner. We learn by a daily cross (Luke 9:23). God gives the ability to hear (Prov 20:12) and to receive His instruction of spiritual things, which the spiritually dead man cannot do (1 Cor 2:14). Jesus said that His sheep know His voice (Jn 10:27), and that He will seek His sheep out (Ezek 34:11,12). So if the disciples are teaching, they are saying what Jesus said, in essence being His 'voice'. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom 10:17), therefore when the disciples spake the word of the Lord, faith was given to those who had an ear to hear, and they became the end product of the 'teaching' commanded by the Lord through the disciples.

Next is the word 'in'. This little word makes all the difference in this verse and disproves water immersion / baptism. You may see statements such as 'baptized in', 'baptized with', or 'baptized by', etc. in scripture. The English words in, with, by will usually be one of three Greek particles – epi, eis, and en. Not one of these means to go into or come out of any substance. Some brief definitions are below:

Epi – has the meaning of going into but not coming out of. Also has the idea of 'sinking into clothing'. It may also mean to denote union or communion with in a certain sense.

Eis- to superimpose or cover with, indicating a point reached

En – with or by (the method or direction)

I have asked people well versed in Greek as well and consulted many Greek lexicons and dictionaries, as well as Greek biblical commentaries as to the definition and nature of epi, eis, and en. I have yet to find a single source to agree that any one of these three words ever mean to go into and come out of! There is no possible way that baptizo, when used with any of these three, can ever mean to dip or submerge and then remove from.

Next is the word 'name'. It is the Greek word 'onoma' and it means authority or character. In bible times, a man's name was his authority and it described his character. When we are baptized into the name of Jesus, we are immersed into His authority (onoma), never to be removed. And it is His authority that continues to endue us with power through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, the temple of God.

So to tie this all together, what Jesus is saying to His disciples is to teach and cover (eis, go into but not come out of, or sink into) them with the onoma (authority, name) of the Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Jesus will do the baptizing (as it is His baptism alone to give) by giving them the hearing ear (Prov 20:12) and circumcising their hearts (Col 2:11) when they believe (pisteu, the verb of pistis/faith), and giving them the gift of repentance (Romans 2:4). The use of 'eis' grammatically cancels out the use of water here, because to properly apply eis

using water as a solution, it would mean to hold the person being submerged under the water and never let them up (!), sinking into the fluid. Let's compare the sister verses I mentioned above, starting with Mk 16:15-16.

Mark 16:15-16 - And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. KJV

In Mark's account, Jesus is addressing the apostles as in Mat 28. Mark's account says to 'preach' (kerruso – to herald or proclaim), and Matthew's it is to 'teach' (matheteuo). They are to preach the good news (euaggelion – a good message, gospel), which according to 1 Cor 15:1-4 is the resurrection. Then in verse 16 Jesus tells us how they will be baptized – by believing! Consequently by believing they will be saved. We see this same idea expressed in Acts 2:41, Acts 8:12-13 -

Acts 2:41 - Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. KJV

Acts 8:12-13 - But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. KJV

It must be considered that in Mk 16:16 ("He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved") does not necessarily constitute two separate actions, that is 1) believing 2) baptized. In This verse, the Greek word for 'and' is 'kai', and it can mean 'even', 'also', 'so then', 'yet'. If taken in the sense of copulating the two actions to be the same result, then it would read as this: "He that believeth, even baptized, shall be saved". It would be the same as us saying (albeit archaic) 'The soda, even the Pepsi'. We would understand that as the soda and Pepsi being the same thing.

Thus arises the question: Is believing equal to (Jesus' baptism? I say yes, absolutely. Here is why: Man cannot believe on his own, as it takes divine gracing from God to even do so. Acts 13:48 - And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (KJV) It does not say 'as many believed were ordained to eternal life'. No, the ones who God ordained to eternal life (the sheep, the flock, or the elect) believed (pisteuo). Therefore at the point of truly believing (which would include repentance as an act of belief), they were baptized by Christ into His authority. That is to say, the true ONE baptism of Jesus occurs upon the believer when he is quickened in his Spirit (Jn 5:21, Rom 4:17) and is circumcised. If you have a spiritual circumcision, then the baptism must also be spiritual.

*Sidenote to Acts 2:41, it is impossible that Roman-occupied Jerusalem would turn over the only water system large enough to wash 3,000 people – the public bathing system! The Pharisees and Romans were already poised against anything or anyone to do with proclaiming Jesus as Lord (God to the Jews, an opposing Caesar to the Romans), so to think that Peter and the 11 would just walk down to the public baths and wash these folks is ridiculous. Plus the math of it is crazy – there are 3,000 people and 12 apostles. That comes out to 250 people for each apostle to baptize, meaning if they did one person every minute, it would take each apostle 4 hours to wash their 250 people. Multiplied by 11 other apostles, there would not be enough baths to accomplish this without resulting in severe backlash from the Pharisees and Romans.

Back to Mk 16:16. "He that believeth and is baptized (in Holy Ghost and fire) shall be saved". Jesus says this another way in Jn 3:18 - "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. KJV

Now Luke's account: *Luke 24:47 - And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. KJV*

Repentance and remission of sins by the resurrection of Jesus is the gospel message, to those who believe. This can be seen in Acts 5:31, 13:24, 19:4, 20:21, and 26:20. Luke seems to realize that repentance and remission of sins are the result of the baptism of Christ, there is therefore no need to say 'baptized' in the text. The causes (repentance and remission of sins) are explanatory of the effect (baptism).

Mat 28:19, Mk 16:15-16, and Luke 24:47 are saying exactly the same thing only in different terms. Matthew and Mark would have directly known the words of John the Baptist concerning the coming Holy Ghost and fire baptism Jesus would perform, even if they would not have fully understood it until Pentecost at Acts 2. And Luke would have learned of it via communication with the apostles and Paul in due season.

In conclusion of Mat 28:19, Jesus, as the risen Savior, is commanding His disciples to preach the gospel, and by that preaching He will baptize them in His authority unto repentance and remission of sins by His shed blood. Such a ministry shadows John's temporal water baptism indeed. And no wonder it had to pass in order that a more glorious and eternal baptism would come into effect.

Baptism In The Epistles

Acts 1:4-5 – (Jesus speaking) And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. KJV

The Lord is speaking here. He is commanding for his disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father, which we see actualized in Acts 2. The Lord Jesus Himself confirms that John's water baptism is over! And that they will receive His baptism is with Holy Ghost and fire. How any man can not agree with the words of the Lord and go against them while holding to the cancelled ritual of OT washings is beyond reason. And is not the promise to the disciples any less than to we as believers? I do not believe so. Therefore Jesus stands as the High Priest (Heb 3:1), Who washes us in His own blood (Rev 1:5).

Note: I will say that due to the confusion and biblical ignorance of some denominations of the Pentecostal and Charismatic persuasion, the term Holy Ghost baptism has come to take on a horrific definition, both theologically and in actualization in those churches. And they themselves adhere to 2 baptisms: 1) in water (usually saying 'In Jesus' name' when they plunge the person believing they are in accordance with Peter in Acts 2:4), and 2) a 'spirit' baptism where the speaking of tongues is 'evidence' of having the Holy Ghost. This position is unscriptural on many levels, too many for this treatise, but may be addressed at a later time.

Acts 2:38 - 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. KJV

This is a favorite verse for Church of Christ and Oneness Pentecostal denominations to try to prove water baptism. I shall attempt to show that Acts 2:38 cannot possibly be water.

As a true and faithful disciple of the Lord, Peter confirms His Master's command and promise as spoken in Acts 1:4-5. First the context; Peter and the 11 are at the feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem, as required by God according to Exodus 23:14-17. There are 'devout men, Jews from every nation (ethnos – non-Jew) dwelling in Jerusalem, who were also there as commanded by God. Peter is proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, as Lord and Christ (2:36). Verse 37 shows that these men were pricked (katanusso – pierce thoroughly, agitate) to the heart, meaning they were convicted of this Jesus being Lord and Christ. And as the men were under the Law of Moses, the next verse is Peter's response to their question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:38 is Peter's response-

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in (epi) the name (onoma) of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. KJV

The word 'in' is the Greek word 'epi' and as stated earlier, it means to superimpose or cover with. Peter is commanding them to repent (thus showing belief in Jesus) and be superimposed with the authority (name – onoma) of Jesus as Lord and Christ. Again, the use of 'epi' cancels out the possible use of water as the outer source. It is the authority of Jesus that they are baptized with, thus fulfilling what John the Baptist said Jesus would do!

Just as John the Baptist preached a 'baptism of repentance for the remission of sin', so too does Jesus' baptism come about by repentance for the remission of sins. John used water, Jesus uses His blood as 'He has washed us from our sins in His own blood' (Rev 1:5). There is absolutely no contradiction between the command of Peter in Acts 2:38 and every instance John said that Jesus would baptize with Holy Ghost and fire. Indeed, Acts 2:38 and the great commission of Mat 28 are the very same thing! To that end, if Peter is baptizing in water in Acts 2:38 then he is blatantly going against the Holy Spirit-inspired command that Jesus will baptize in Holy Ghost and fire, as well as contradicting the authority of His very Lord and Savior. I doubt that this is hardly the case though.

Acts 2:41 - Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. KJV

I gave comment in a brief manner on this verse earlier, but will elaborate here some. Peter tells them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), and that the only ones baptized were the ones that gladly (asmenos – with pleasure) received his word. Yet where is the water? There is no mention of it in any context, though one would think that if it were water washing of 3,000 people that would be an event of enough magnitude to be commented on in scripture. Yet nothing. (See the above sidenote to Acts 2:41 for further reasoning).

We see no water in the text, but in verse 42 we see what the natural reaction to the Holy Ghost and fire baptism by Jesus produces -

Acts 2:42 - And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. KJV

These Jewish believers in Messiah were now disciples themselves as a result of the preaching of the gospel. And aside from the apostles, these were the first to have been covered with the One baptism of Jesus after His resurrection, fulfilling both John's prophecy and the command of Jesus as per Mat 28:19.

They were steadfast (proskartereo - to be earnest towards, i.e. (to a thing) to persevere, be constantly diligent, or (in a place) to attend assiduously all the exercises, or (to a person) to adhere closely to (as a servitor) in the doctrine of the apostles, as well as the fellowship. This brings to mind Paul's words in Phil 3:10 - "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (KJV)".

No doubt that these Jews in Acts 2 who had come to Jerusalem to fulfill the law, were to suffer severe persecution and reprimand from their Jewish brethren because of their sudden turn (baptism if you like) into confessing this same Jesus which they (the Jews) crucified 53 days earlier. Dipping them in water would hardly fix their hearts to Christ, yet the blood of the High Priest, sprinkled on the hearts of men would bring them to sanctification of the Spirit (1 Pet 1:2), and as such they would be able to suffer for Christ to the death.

Acts 8:12 - But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women. (KJV)

In Acts 8, we see Philip preaching in the city of Samaria, where there is a certain Simon the Sorcerer. The people of Samaria received the gospel message that Philip was preaching, as he was preaching things concerning the kingdom of God and the name (onoma – authority) of Jesus Christ. And once again we see a baptism resulting from believing. They believed in the authority of Christ as Messiah and the message of His resurrection from the dead. Yet as in Acts 2:41 we see no water but a believing / receiving of the word into their hearts. The baptism of the Lord Jesus came upon them at their believing the gospel message. Or to say it another way, their hearts were immediately circumcised with the circumcision made without hands (Col 2:11), and 'buried' (sunthapto – to inter in company with) with him in that Spirit baptism. There can be no other explanation for this in light of other verses of the same familiar context of belief and baptism. Being connected.

We have the same example of believing in Acts 16 with Paul and Silas and the Philippian jailer. In response to the jailer's question "What must I do to be saved?" Paul replies 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.'" I shall address the seeming water baptism there soon enough, but my point is that there was a receiving of the words of Paul and the jailer's belief upon those words saved him.

In Acts 8:12 there is no time difference mentioned in scripture between their believing and baptism. They did not believe and then at some later time go to the water to be dipped. NO, it is a simultaneous occurrence, which is exactly how the Lord Jesus executes His baptism and circumcision of the heart.

Acts 8:13 - Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. KJV

Here the sorcerer believes and continues with Philip when he is baptized. Once again, there is no mention of water at all. In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John there is always a distinction between John or the disciples of Jesus washing in literal water. Likewise, there is always a clear distinction when baptism is used as idiom and metaphor (no water). Why is it so hard to see that this is the effectual work of Christ baptizing His elect believing sheep into His fold?

Acts 8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? KJV

Without hesitation I agree that this is water baptism because the text directly makes mention of the water, whereas in every other example in the epistles we have covered so far there is no mention of water as the element of baptism. This is very important in light of the uses of baptizo with epi, eis, and en we have examined so far. And in Acts 8:37 there is no use of the particle epi, eis, or en in conjunction with baptizo.

There is no statement that the eunuch has been under the influence of epi (to go into but not come out of, to 'sink into clothing', nor eis (to be superimposed or covered with), nor en (with or by) in conjunction with his baptism. The Greek text merely says he was baptized or washed with water.

This leads to us examining the text closer. First of all the Eunuch was a gentile and had come into Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel at the Temple in the gentile court. And as a gentile he would have been the prior recipient of the Pharisees' ritual of proselyte baptism – 1) circumcision 2) washed in water and 3) offered two turtledoves. By this he could come into the Temple grounds and worship. Therefore he would be accustomed to the diverse washings (Heb 9:10) as required by the Jews.

Secondly, it is the Eunuch, not Philip that requests to be washed! And no doubt as in accordance with Jewish rituals, it was not a immersion in water but more akin to a sprinkling of sorts, because the Mosaic law never commanded any human to be fully submerged for ritual cleansing. One would have to assume that if Jesus and the apostles required literal washings after the resurrection of the Lord, surely Philip would have been the one requiring the baptism of the Eunuch in water, but this is not what the text says. It was the Eunuch alone that requests the washing.

I contend that what we see in Acts 8:36 is the performance of Jewish ritual proselyte baptism as requested by a gentile proselyte Eunuch, and carried out by Philip, nothing more. As to why Philip allowed it, nobody can say. However, it can be said that it does stand in direct opposition to the promise from the mouth of John and Jesus of the baptism in Holy Ghost and fire. And we cannot take a single isolated incident of water washing and say that it stands as the end-all proof that water baptism is the correct command. Especially when we have so many examples that prove otherwise.

Acts 9:18 - And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. KJV

Here is the account of Paul being brought out of blindness as Ananias lays hands on him. Paul receives his sight forthwith (parachrema – instantly). Paul then arises and is baptized. But again we must ask, where is the water? And again we must say that there is no mention of it anywhere. However, the prior verse gives us the key to this baptism –

Acts 9:17 - And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. KJV

It does not take much logic to see that when Ananias put hands on Paul (Saul) that it was at that point that Paul was 'baptized' in the One baptism of Holy Ghost and fire as promised by Jesus. Yet if one is looking for water to dip Paul in there is none to be found. But these verses once again show the effectual baptism of Christ on His elect servants.

Acts 10:47-48 - Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. KJV

Besides Acts 2:38, these verses stand as possibly the most used to support water baptism. They do not though. It will be seen that this verse also cannot mean water immersion in any sense. This will be shown both by the grammatical construction of the sentence and the context of the scripture. And finally, we will see Peter, by his own mouth, excluding water baptism in chapter 11, which is an exact detail of chapter 10 accounts.

First the context of the chapter: Peter is at the house of Cornelius, a gentile (vs. 25), and God has shown to Peter in a vision that the gentiles are now called clean by God (vs. 9-16). Cornelius says that he and his household are ready to 'hear all the things that are commanded thee by God' (vs. 33). Peter proclaims in verse 34 that God is no respecter of persons (prosopoleptes) – to respect the face), that is, God has extended His grace to the gentiles as well as the Jews. Peter goes on

to say that Cornelius knows the message preached throughout all Judea which began in Galilee ‘after the baptism which John preached’ (vs. 37).

Then in verses 38 – 43 Peter preaches Jesus and His resurrection (the gospel). And the Jews that were with Peter (see 11:12) are astonished that God had poured out the Holy Spirit to the gentiles also. Then to verse 47 -

Acts 10:47-48 - Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

‘Forbid’, in this use, is an infinitive (verbal noun), not a verb, so it cannot mean in the sense of forbid as an action. Actually, the Textus Receptus (received Greek text) words this verse as such:

Not the water forbid is able anyone not to be baptized these who the Spirit Holy received even as also we? This may read confusing to an English hearing ear, awkward at best. However, this is the context – Peter is saying that the gentiles have also been given the gift of the Holy Spirit (Truth) by God in the same manner as they received it at Pentecost, that is, by the baptism of Christ, not water. Peter is saying for the water to be stopped according to the Jewish rituals and John’s baptism (remember verse 37). Because now God is ‘washing’ (‘poured out’ -ekcheo - to pour forth; figuratively, to bestow) or bestowing the Truth on the gentiles in the same manner as God gave it to them at Acts 2!

Then Peter goes on in verse 48 by commanding them to be baptized in (en – with or by) the name (onoma –authority) of the Lord. They are to be mersed with / by the authority of Jesus, not by the OT ritual washings.

And this is confirmed even clearer in chapter 11, which is Peter’s account of what happened as he tells it to the brethren in Jerusalem. In verse 15 of chapter 11, Peter says –

Acts 11:15 - And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. KJV (beginning speaking of Pentecost in Acts 2).

Then without hesitation Peter does not repeat what he said in verse 47 of chapter 10 (‘Can any man forbid water...’), but instead makes a remarkable statement –

Acts 11:16-17 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? KJV

Verse 16 is Peter remembering what the Lord Jesus spoke to him and the others as stated in Acts 5! Jesus had said that “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” And at the household of Cornelius Peter tells his 6 brethren who came with him to stop the literal washings which they were accustomed to!

If Peter had commanded water baptism of Cornelius and his household then there would be no reason for him to make his statements in 10:47 and 11:16. And Peter verifies by his own mouth what the Lord Jesus said the new baptism would be (Holy Spirit and fire) as spoken by John the Baptist. Therefore Acts 10:47 and Acts 11:16 cannot be water, no matter how we want it to be. It just does not fit the context of scripture or the statements of John the Baptist or Jesus.

Peter’s command of Acts 2:38 is exactly what has happened in Acts 10 and 11. No water.

Acts 16:14-15 - And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. KJV

Lydia is a gentile proselyte as verse 14 concedes (‘who worshiped God’). And God sovereignly opened her heart (Ps 10:17) that she attended (prosecho – to pay attention to, to hold the mind) unto the things which were spoken by Paul. Now

as God opened her heart, that would also mean that He executed the baptism of Christ's blood (same as Holy Ghost and fire) at that very minute. As has been seen in Acts 2:41 and Acts 8:12, believing / receiving the word are in exact connection with the baptism.

And it must be asked once again, where is the water that Lydia and her household were supposedly dipped in? It is nowhere to be found at all, yet the elements of a sovereign God opening a believing heart and His baptism are plainly evident. And what of her household? They must have also received the word of the Lord with gladness and received the very same baptism of the Lord as Lydia did.

Acts 16:30-33 - And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. KJV

This is the story of the conversion of the Philippian jailer. Once again we see the command to believe in order to be saved (Rom 10:13). Then we see the jailer taking Paul and Silas to wash (louo – to wet a part only) their stripes. There is no indication that they were outside the jail at all near a body of water, and to that end, why would the jailer take two men under his guard out into the night after such a traumatic event as told in the narrative of Acts 16:25 – 27?

No doubt during the washing of the stripes of Paul and Silas these men were preaching to the jailer and his household, as it seems the jailer was in residence with his family at the jail property. The key to the verse is the word 'straightway'. It is the Greek word 'parachrema' and it means instantly. Now, if there were a number of people there, it is impossible to wash them 'instantly' as a group! However, God can baptize them instantly spiritually if they believe the word of God spoken by Paul and Silas. I contend that this is exactly what happened. To that end, if Paul were doing OT ritual washings, then he would have to have circumcised the jailer to be in exact accordance with the Mosaic Law, as well as the Pharisees' proselyte baptism rites (mentioned earlier in paper).

Acts 18:8 - And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. KJV

Crispus is a Jew; therefore he is only acquainted with the ritual washing of the Jews for purification and the sprinkling of blood on the altar for the pardon of the sins of the people. No doubt that when he believed on the Lord Jesus through the words of Paul he was baptized in the name of the Lord (again, no water mentioned). And as would be consistent with the baptism being accomplished by believing / hearing, the Corinthians were baptized in the selfsame Holy Ghost and fire baptism promised and accomplished throughout the book of Acts.

Acts 19:3-5 - And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. KJV

This is the story of Paul coming across some disciples in Ephesus, so we may agree that they are gentile. Paul must have been speaking to them in some manner before his question he asks them in verse 2 – Acts 19:2 - *He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. KJV*

Actually, the Greek text words it as such: "Ghost the Holy have ye received since ye believed". A clearer way of saying it is – believing did you receive the Holy Ghost? And these men were under the water baptism (proselyte) of John, and as such they would be unaware of any Holy Spirit being issued to believers of Christ. Up to the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of God dwelt only in the Temple and upon particular prophets. Not to every person as in the NT church.

Then Paul says – "*John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus*". Then consistent with other verse in Acts, when they heard the gospel of Christ (preached to them by Paul) and believed and were baptized in (eis – to sink into) the name (onoma – authority) of the Lord Jesus.

Again, where is the water? It is nowhere to be found at all. Once again, the effectual working of Jesus upon His elect sheep.

Acts 22:16 - And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. KJV

This is Paul retelling of his encounter with Ananias (see: Acts 9 for original account). Paul words it a bit differently in Acts 22, however the context is still the same. Ananias commands Paul to arise, and wash away (apolouo - to remit, wash) thy sins. Then Ananias tells him how this 'washing' will be done – 'calling on the name of the Lord (Jesus).

If the bible says Christ has washed us from our sins in His own blood (Rev 1:5), then what more are we to elaborate on this by adding water? We cannot! Consider the following verses:

1 Cor 6:11 - And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and (kai – 'even') by the Spirit of our God. KJV

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. KJV

The Jews called blood 'pure water' in the 1st century. Also, they called the sperm of a man 'living water' as well. Notice Heb 10:19 – "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus..". And if we are to have our hearts sprinkled (see 1 Pet 1:2) from an evil conscience, then we must conclude that Christ as the true High Priest over the house of God, which is us (Heb 3:6), has washed our bodies with His pure water, His blood. Besides, where is there ever any 'pure water' anywhere? Not in a river, creek, or lake, or anywhere else, for all water possesses a certain level of impurity.

Rev 7:14 - And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. KJV

Rom 6:3-4 - Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

This is to say, as many of us that are mersed into (eis – superimposed with, into but not out of) Jesus Christ were immersed into (eis, once again) His death? Meaning that we are 'crucified with Christ' (Gal 2:20) and are made partakers of His sufferings (2 Cor 1:7, Heb 3:14, Heb 12:8, 1 Pet 4:13), as we are dying daily to the flesh (1 Cor 15:31). Many people equate this to water baptism as representing His death. However Jesus met death on a cross, not in any water! Crosses are for dying on, and we have a daily cross to bare as well, given to us by the Lord (Luke 9:23).

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into(eis)death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. KJV

Simply defining the word 'buried' helps clear up this verse. 'Buried' is the Greek word 'sunthapto' and it means to enter in company with or to assimilate spiritually. Not to bury as we think in our 20th century thought process. Besides, Jews in the 1st century did not bury a body in the ground if they could help it. They buried in caves and sepulchers. So if we are to really baptize people in water as the Jews buried their dead, we would have to create a wall of water and place then in it sideways! How ridiculous is that. No, this verse is saying that we are superimposed (eis, into) His death by His blood baptism, thereby entering into company with (buried – sunthapto).

1 Cor 1:13-16 - Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul is dealing with the contention in the household of Chloe in Corinth. Paul reprimands them by their comments "I am of Paul", "I am of Apollo", "I am of Cephas", or "I am of Christ". They were claiming to be under these different men's ministering and saying they belonged to the various messengers instead of all to Christ, with the messengers being just the conduit of information by which they believed.

Then Paul asks the questions “Is Christ divided?” The answer is absolutely not, He is Lord of all His flock equally. “Was Paul crucified for you?” No! Paul did not pay the price for your salvation. “Or were ye baptized in the name (authority) of Paul? Paul knows that there is one baptism (as he will write in Eph 4:5).

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

Crispus was the chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. And he was baptized by believing the gospel from Paul in Acts 18:8 (see comments on this verse above). Gaius was from Macedonia Acts 19:29) thus he was a gentile. Paul would not have performed a water baptism on either man knowing the baptism of the Lord he himself experienced in the house of Ananias. The only possibility that Paul used water (sprinkled not immersed), on these men is to perform the proselyte washings common to the Jews at Corinth. By which these men would then be in accordance with Synagogue protocol, thereby being allowed to aid Paul in his dealings in the synagogue to preach Christ. Very similar to Philip washing the Eunuch under ritual washings requested by the Eunuch in Acts 8. It would have been an adherence to the OT washings so that “I am made all things to all men , that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor 9:22). It would have been a means to the end to preach in the Synagogue. This WOULD NOT, and DOES NOT rule out the one baptism of Eph 4:5, the Holy Ghost and fire baptism Christ promised and John foretold.

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

That is to say, unless any should say that I baptized in (eis – superimposed) my own authority. Paul’s authority was Christ alone, for by himself he had none except for what God had given him.

16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. KJV

Stephanas (a Gentile) was a fellow minister of Paul’s (1 Cor 16:15,17), and as such if he were to accompany Paul into the various synagogues, it would have been proper for Stephanas and his household to have been under proselyte washings. Again a means to and end, not a commandment unto salvation, sanctification, or anything else holy under the Lord Jesus’ ministry to His saints. Merely a socio-religious observance.

1 Cor 1:17 - For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. KJV

And here is where Paul makes the definitive statement on the OT proselyte washings. Paul is saying that Christ did not send him to wash people under any OT ritual (that had to die out), but to preach the gospel. Why? Because as has been seen numerous times in this paper, scripture bares out a connection between hearing / believing the gospel and the true baptism of Jesus. Paul would confirm this in his letter to the Ephesians (4:5) as well as declaring that Christ alone blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that were against us were nailed to the cross with Christ (Col 2:14).

If Paul was to continue the ritual washings for the sake of socio-religious reasons, then the cross of Christ would be made of no effect. That is to say, it was by the cross the rituals were blotted out (OT washings and circumcision) and the true baptism could be ushered in. Paul was in essence saying that they could not be under two covenants at any one time.

1 Cor 10:2 - And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; KJV

Rather INTO Moses-into the covenant of which Moses was the mediator; and by this typical baptism they were brought under the obligation of acting according to the Mosaic precepts (Adam Clarke). The representative of the Old Testament covenant, as Jesus, the Son of God, is of the Gospel covenant (John 1:17; Heb 3:5-6). The people were led to believe in Moses as God’s servant by the miracle of the cloud, and by their being conducted safely through the Red Sea. "Baptized unto" him (Ex 14:31) is thus equivalent to 'initiated into the Mosaic covenant:' introduced into relationship with him as the God-appointed leader. Paul’s argument is, The Corinthians, it is true, have been "baptized," but so also were the Israelites; if the virtual baptism of the latter availed not to save them from the doom of lust, neither will the actual baptism of the former save them. (Excerpt from Jamieson, Faussett, Brown Commentary)

1 Cor 12:13 - For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. KJV

One Spirit will do the baptizing, as spoken of by John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, and Paul. If there were more than one baptism by which men are baptized (water vs. Spirit), that would mean that there is another method by which God immerses His elect into the narrow way and fiery trials which conform them to the image of Christ. This one baptism is a permanent work, not a temporal, repeatable ritual as the water dipping is. Paul here deduces that whether Jew or Greek, it is one Spirit that baptizes us all. There is not the OT washings for the Jews and then the Holy Ghost and fire for the Gentiles. This verse resonates with the fourth chapter of Ephesians.

1 Cor 15:29 - Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? KJV

This verse is a favorite among the cultic Mormon faith, which believes that one may baptize a living person as a substitute for a dead person, thus ‘baptism for the dead’. Of course this is a ludicrous statement which is nowhere supported in Holy Scripture.

This is the meaning of this verse: We are, as the elect of God, under the baptism of blood (a 1st century idiom used to describe a martyrdom, which is equal to the Holy Spirit & fire). And as such, we preach the gospel, not knowing who will hear the truth and be quickened alive in the Spirit by God (Jn 1:13, James 1:18, Eph 2:1). Those who have yet to hear the gospel and be quickened to life are ‘dead in trespasses and sins’ (Eph 2:1), that is, they are spiritually dead until God gives them a new birth in opposition to the flesh (born again - another). We are under a martyr’s baptism for the benefit of the dead elect who are still appointed (by God’s sovereignty – Acts 13:48) to hear the gospel, thus we are baptized for the dead (elect). We will preach and suffer persecution at the hands of ‘wild beasts’ (verse 32) who will hate us for His names sake. This is a baptism indeed.

Paul is saying, ‘what good is it for us to be baptized for the dead (elect) and suffer persecutions if they rise not at all’? Paul makes this statement in verse 20: “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” He is using the metaphor ‘slept’ to describe those who are yet to be quickened by God throughout the church age by the resurrection of Jesus. Therefore our baptism is not in vain for God will surely awake the dead by the preaching of the gospel.

Gal 3:26-27 - For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. KJV

The Greek word for ‘into’ is eis (to superimpose, a point reached). And by being superimposed with the baptism (Holy Ghost and fire), we have ‘put on’ Christ. ‘Put on’ is the word ‘enduo’ and it means to sink into clothing or invest with clothing. And what is our clothing? It is this:

*Rev 7:14 - And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their **robes**, **and made them white in the blood of the Lamb**. KJV*

Tribulation is a necessity to the sons and daughters of God. Jesus promised it (Jn 16:33, Luke 6:22). Paul also said it in Acts 14:22, Romans 5:3, 2 Tim 3:12 and many other verses.

So as many of us that have been baptized (by the Spirit of God) have sank into our clothing, our robes which are made white (pure) by the blood of the Lamb. Being dipped in water does absolutely nothing for the benefit of our spiritual garments. It is only something God can, and will do, by the blood of the Lamb.

*Eph 4:4-6 - There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. KJV*

How we can dispute this is irreconcilable to my mind. That the great Apostle would be so deceptive and undecided as to allow for both water and Holy Ghost and fire is impossible. As a learned and devout Jew and Pharisee he was all too familiar with the ritual washings included in proselyte baptism. Yet as a convert by the Lord Jesus, he was also familiar with

the foretelling of John the Baptist that Jesus would baptize in Holy Spirit and fire. And having been a recipient of that most glorious baptism, as well as witness to it many times in others, how could he still allow for the ceremonial washings of the Law when Christ gave a better promise?

Yet men today make the argument that water baptism is an outward sign. Yet Jesus said that there would be no sign given except the resurrection (of Christ in us), by which we would speak His words and suffer persecution. And some men say that water baptism is a public confession of your faith. Nonsense! The only public confession is our preaching the word to everyone so that the dead elect will hear! Confess is the word 'homologeō'. It comes from 'homo' (to be the same as) and 'logos' (word). Homologeō means to be the same word as Christ or to say with your mouth what He said with His. It is being a witness (martureō). We get the word 'martyr' from martureō, and are we not martyrs for our Lord? Certainly we are.

The One hope of our calling is by the One Lord, Who embodies us with the One faith, through the One baptism of the Lord Jesus – Holy Ghost and fire. Woe to any man who tries to add his defiled fleshly water dipping to the Lord's work! You cannot have it both ways my friend. It is either water baptism or it is Christ's Holy Spirit and fire baptism. And you cannot use an external watery ritual as a 'confession' of what God does within a man. That is 2 baptisms, and one by necessity cancel out the water. There can be no other way.

Col 2:12 - Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. KJV

Paul is comforting the gentile Colossian church as they have had Jews come in and try to lead them off into captivity by adhering to the Jewish rituals of water baptism (washings) and literal circumcision. This was a constant battle for Paul against Jews who were trying to corrupt the faith of the Gentiles. Therefore Paul warns them –

Col 2:8 - Beware lest any man spoil (sulagogeō – to lead into captivity) you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition (paradosis -transmission, i.e. (concretely) a precept; specifically, the Jewish traditionary law) of men, after the rudiments (stoicheon – arrangement, ritual) of the world, and not after Christ. KJV

In the 1st century, the Jews called their rituals a stoicheon. Paul goes on to tell the Colossians that –

Col 2:9-10 - For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. KJV

Paul is telling them that they are complete in Christ, as opposed to being under the rudiments and traditions of the Jews – their divers baptisms and circumcision. Then Paul settles the issue by telling the Colossian believers that they are now under the spiritual circumcision and spiritual baptism in Christ -

*Col 2:11-12 - In whom also ye are **circumcised with the circumcision made without hands**, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 **Buried with him in baptism**, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. KJV*

In the church today everyone is quick to baptize in water, but why isn't circumcision enforced as well? By necessity it would have to be if we are to be under the Law in any respect. Yet we are glad to accept a spiritual circumcision and then a physical water baptism. To have even one of those ordinances performed in a physical manner is to be INCOMPLETE in Him. Yet Paul told the Colossians they were complete in Him, with a spiritual baptism and spiritual circumcision.

*Col 2:14 - Blotting out the **handwriting of ordinances** that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; KJV*

Paul said that water washings (baptism) and circumcision were part of the handwriting of ordinances that Christ nailed to His cross, ending them forever. As I have said earlier, when two Jewish parties wanted to dissolve a contract and institute a new one, they would act it out in public. That is to say, they would go out in public with an official witness (a picture of 2 witnesses and the Holy Spirit), and announce the terms of the contract to be annulled. Then when they would be in agreement they would drive a nail through the parchment to a tree or post, thereby dissolving it.

Christ did the very same thing to the handwriting of ordinances of the Law. No more circumcision, as God has done it in our hearts. And no more water baptism, as He also is doing that in our hearts as well.

1 Peter 3:19-21 - By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: KJV

The ‘spirits in prison’ are the Gentiles who were in darkness for 2,600 years until the resurrection of Christ. Jesus did not go to hell and preach to anyone. It was by His being quickened by the Spirit (resurrection) of the Father that He made possible salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27, 22:21, 28:28, Rom 11:11, 1 Tim 3:16). The prophet Isaiah had much to say about the Gentiles coming to God – Isa 11:10, Isa 42:1, Isa 42:6, Isa 49:6, Isa 49:22, Isa 54:3, Isa 60, Isa 62, Isa 66:19.

Now to the subject of baptism herein. “*Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*” (vs. 20).

The word for ‘by’ is actually the Greek word ‘dia’, which means through or a channel. The water was not the baptism; it was the judgement of God. So they were saved through (dia) the water, the judgement of God upon the earth.

“*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*” (vs. 21)

The word ‘like figure’ is ‘antitupon’ and it means a corresponding antitype, a representative. The negative of a film picture is the ‘antitupon’ to the actual picture you look at. The negative is a representation of the very image. And there is quite a picture of baptism in Noah’s ark indeed.

Gen 6:14 - Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. KJV

This seemingly simple verse is God commanding Noah to ‘pitch it (the ark) within and without with pitch’. Little did Noah know but God was painting a beautiful picture of the NT blood baptism.

Even though the English word ‘pitch’ is mentioned twice, it is actually two different Hebrew words in the verse. The first word ‘pitch’ is ‘kaphar’ and it means to make atonement, cleanse, purge, reconcile, or pardon. The second word ‘pitch’ is ‘kopher’ and it means to cover thoroughly, or a redemption price. God is telling Noah to ‘kaphar’ the ark within and without with ‘kopher’. Or, to make an atonement within and without covering thoroughly.

Now isn’t that what Christ did with His blood on our behalf? Yes! Jesus made an atonement for us within (our inner man, the Holy Spirit) and without (on His actual cross). We are bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20), and we are sealed, just as the ark was, until the day of redemption (Eph 4:30). And just as the ark was sealed by God (as He alone sealed the door of the ark, a picture of sovereign redemption), the bible says –

Eph 1:13 - In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, KJV

It is the baptism of Christ in Holy Ghost and fire that seals us until our day of redemption!

Now back to 1 Peter 21 – “*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*”.

Peter said – “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 11:16)”, and it is Peter writing this epistle (1 Peter). So he has no need to make change from water baptism to Spirit baptism and back again. No, he stays always with what the words His Master imparted to him.

Peter is saying in essence, that just as the ark was ‘pitched within and without with pitch’ and by which eight souls were saved through the judgement of God, in the same like manner (antitupon, likefigure) does the baptism of Christ save us (from God’s judgement upon this earth, which is continually going on (Eccl 3:14, Isa 45:7, Isa 46:10, Eph 1:11) until our day of redemption when He returns.

Peter even clarifies his position even more – *“(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”*

‘Putting away of the filth of the flesh’ is a reference to the Jewish water baptisms / washings, which Christ nailed to His cross (Col 2:14). This statement could be omitted for clarity here. Then it would read – *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, by the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”*.

It was by the resurrection of Jesus that we are baptized into Christ spiritually. Does baptism save us? You bet. But it is not water. It is by a good conscience (suneidesis – to be aware of, coperception) toward God by (dia – through) the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yes, His resurrection in us, the baptism of Holy Spirit and fire, is what makes us be aware of (suneidesis) God and causes us to do truth (Jn 3:21).

Therefore 1 Pet 3:19-21 cannot be water. It has to be the baptism of Holy Ghost and fire.

I hope this paper on the True baptism of Jesus Christ, as promised by Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, and Paul, will be of help to start you to see that there truly is ONE baptism (Eph 4:5). Yes, it is hard to break from the tradition of water dipping, as we have all gone through it in a sincere manner. But we were lied to by men who did not know any better, and did not study their bibles. I pray that God convicts your heart to see this beautiful picture of the baptism of Holy Ghost and fire as administered by our Lord Jesus Christ. I can accept nothing less in my life and I pray that He impresses upon you the same.

Bob Minner (huperetes) 1-12-06

