

Rethinking Baptism

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Baptism

We take a look at the role of baptism in salvation. Some claim that baptism is a necessary step in salvation, with the implication being that those who are not baptized are not going to enter heaven. Sins are washed away in the physical going under water. Without this process, sins are not forgiven.

Main Anchor Points

The main anchor points for this argument are as follows:

John 3:5

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

The 'born of water' is a reference to the physical water baptism. Water baptism is then required to enter the kingdom of God.

Romans 6:3

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ...

Baptism is the means by which we become part of Christ. Without water baptism, we are not in Christ, are not part of His death, and therefore will not be part of His resurrection.

Colossians 2:12

Colossians 2:12 Having been buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

We can only expect to be raised with him if we are buried with him via a literal physical baptism. Without baptism, we will not be raised from the dead.

1 Peter 3:21

Baptism saves per the Apostle Peter.

1 Peter 3:21 And this (Noah's salvation through the flood) prefigured baptism, which now saves you ...

Water baptism saves us.

Galatians 3:27

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Without having been water baptized, we have not put on Christ. Without baptism, we have not put on Christ.

Titus 3:5

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

We are saved by water baptism. Without baptism, we cannot be saved.

The Book of Acts is the Authority on the Full Gospel

The Pattern in Acts is that whenever salvation was in view, baptism was (always) preached and performed. This is the full Gospel. These preachers knew Jesus personally and certainly knew how to present the Gospel. Discussions of the Gospel outside of the book of Acts do not reflect the full Gospel.

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one 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.

The full Gospel was not preached in the Gospel books. Since Christ had not died and risen, there was nothing to be baptized into. There is then no need for baptisms.

The discussions of the Gospel in the Epistles do not present the full Gospel as these letters were written to believers, and as such, had already been baptized. Since baptism is done once, there was no need to discuss it again.

Mark 16:16

Jesus' final command incorporated baptism and associated it with being saved.

Mark 16:16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved, but the one who does not believe will be condemned.

Summary

We will investigate these anchor points, and other verses, pertaining to baptism in this document.

Discussions of Salvation in Acts 15

Acts 15:1 Now some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers, “**Unless** you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, **you cannot be saved.**” ... 5 But some from the religious party of the Pharisees who had believed stood up and said, “**It is necessary to circumcise** the Gentiles and to order them to observe the law of Moses.”

The ritual of circumcision is required for salvation.

The men from Judea were adding extras to the Gospel. A discussion ensued:

Acts 15:2 When Paul and Barnabas had **a major argument and debate** with them, the church appointed Paul and Barnabas and some others from among them to go up to meet with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this point of disagreement.

Acts 15:6 Both the apostles and the elders met together **to deliberate about this matter.** 7a After there had been **much debate**, ...

We don't know what the men from Judea presented as evidence, but we know they presented some clever theological argument, otherwise there would not have been a huge discussion. We also give the benefit of the doubt that the men from Judea were not on purpose being clever, but rather likely truly believed they had a valid point in the debate.

What might the men of Judea have cleverly argued? We have no record, but being reasonably intelligent, if I were arguing the losing side of the case, I would say:

- God commanded the ritual of the circumcision
- The Levites & Elders taught the ritual of the circumcision
- Highly respected people went through the ritual of the circumcision: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob to name a few
- The pattern was that all (without exception) males Jews obeyed the ritual of the circumcision
- The ritual was a physical sign that the promise to Abraham (the covenant) was passed on to the next generation as sons of Abraham. If the son was not circumcised, then the son was excommunicated from the folk, and from the covenant.
- Abraham received that promise in faith (had faith in God's promise)
- The promise of Jesus and his work is a new covenant, and also received in faith
- Christians are spiritual sons of Abraham
- Therefore, Christians must be circumcised, otherwise they are not saved and excluded from the covenant

Without knowledge of how the Peter, Paul and Simon handled the situation, it is clear that some would agree with the argument above for the debate drew in the leaders of the Church. Was the mock argument from the men of Judea clever theology? Clever in the sense that it is (seemingly) logical and (seemingly) based on obedience to scripture. It was not clever in the sense that it was wrong.

On purpose I used the same arguments to 'prove' that circumcision is required for salvation that some use to 'prove' that baptism is required for salvation (command, pattern, obey, taught). If one can use the baptism arguments to 'prove' a false circumcision conclusion, maybe one do the same for baptism? As things are, the story of the clever theologians of Judea adding something extra to the Gospel has implications for our discussion of baptism.

Types of Baptisms

Before we jump head first into the details, let us get a broad overview to get our feet wet.. There are different types of baptisms.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore we must progress beyond¹ the elementary instructions about Christ and move on to maturity, not laying this foundation again: repentance from dead works and faith in God, teaching about **baptisms**, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

There are two broad categories of baptism: spiritual and physical. The physical baptisms are not to be understood as not having a spiritual component.

We also note the definition of the Greek term for baptism. it means 'to immerse', 'to wash' and its derivative means 'to dye'.

To better understand the topic, let us look at many of the baptisms to uncover the common elements.

Spiritual Baptisms

Baptism of the Spirit into the body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:12 For just as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body—though many—are **one body**, so too is Christ. 13 **For by¹ one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**. Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, we were all made to drink of the **one Spirit**.

Some might argue that the physical baptism is in view. We will look at this verse in detail in 'Galatians 3, John 4, 1 Corinthians 12' on page 47.

Baptism by Jesus with the Holy Spirit and Fire

Matthew 3:11 He (Jesus) will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire.”

Some interpret the Holy Spirit and fire as the same event, some as separate. This is not important for our discussion. Understandably, one can easily associate this baptism to this occurrence:

Acts 2:1 Now when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like a violent wind blowing came from heaven and filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And tongues spreading out **like a fire** appeared to them and came to rest on each one of them. 4 All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit**, and they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

This is obviously a spiritual baptism, not a physical one.

Mark 1:8 I baptize you with water, but he will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit.”

This, using our baptism definition, simply means that he will immerse/flood you with the Holy Spirit.

1. sometimes translated as 'in'

Physical Baptisms

Baptism of Noah in the Flood

1 Peter 3:20 after they were disobedient long ago when God patiently waited in the days of Noah as an ark was being constructed. In the ark a few, that is eight souls, were delivered through water. 21 And this prefigured **baptism**,

Baptism of Moses in the Cloud and in the Sea

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that all our ancestors who left Egypt were **under the cloud**, and they all went **through the sea**. They were all united with Moses by **baptism in the cloud and in the sea**.

The Israelites were immersed in the cloud and the sea.

Baptism by John the Baptist with Repentance

Mark 1:4 In the wilderness John the baptizer began preaching a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**. 5 People from the whole Judean countryside and all of Jerusalem were going out to him, and he was baptizing them in the Jordan River **as they confessed their sins**.

Matthew 3:6 and he (John the Baptist) was **baptizing** them in the Jordan River **as they confessed their sins**.

This is a physical immersion in water.

Baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3:16 After Jesus was **baptized**

This is a physical immersion in water.

Baptism of Jesus' Disciples

John 4:1 Now when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was winning and baptizing more disciples than John (although **Jesus himself was not baptizing**, but **his disciples were**),

This is a physical immersion in water.

Baptism of the Cross

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup I drink or be **baptized** with the **baptism** I experience?"

Jesus is not being 'immersed' in the cross. It is, however, a change from one situation to another.

The Baptism of the Believer/Disciple

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

This is a physical immersion in water.

Baptism of Cups (from the Pharisees)

Mark 7:4 And when they (Pharisees and the experts in the law from verse 5) come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they **baptism/wash**. They hold fast to many other traditions: the **baptism/washing** of cups, pots, kettles, and dining couches.

Mark 7:5 The Pharisees and the experts in the law asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashed hands?"

The baptism here is an immersion/washing of cups, etc. for cleansing (from dirty to clean).

The Commonality of the Baptisms

A common thread that stands out for the baptisms is that it *signifies a transfer from one state/situation to another*. Baptism is also a means of uniting one's self to a group: see 'united with Moses' above, the John the Baptist baptism, and the baptism by Jesus' disciples (pre and post-cross).

The Testimony of the Baptism

A few words should be written about the baptism by John the Baptist: those who were baptized by him were those who were publicly testifying that they considered John the Baptist has their teacher and that they would adhere to his teachings. His teaching in a nutshell is as such: repent, turn from wicked ways, show fruits of repentance. The previous stance was living a life of sin regardless of what God thought about it. The new stance was wanting to live a life of righteousness because God wanted and enabled them to. This turning point of decision by the individual made a way for the Savior of the World to work in his life.

Following that model, the disciples of Jesus baptized those who had decided to be a part of their group. Those who decided to believe in Jesus and his teachings made a public testimony to that fact by allowing themselves to be baptized by Jesus' disciples. After the cross, it is only natural that the disciples would continue to baptize those who pledged their allegiance to Jesus the resurrected one as a declaration of their willingness to follow His teachings.

At the risk of getting ahead of ourselves this early in the analysis, we can presume this: the baptism of the believer allows the believer to (a) act out his faith in Jesus, (b) act out his dedication to Jesus, (c) associate himself with Jesus, and (d) associate himself along with the other baptisms listed. As the believer allows himself to be baptized (in the 1 Corinthians 12:13-3 and/or Matthew 28:19 sense) *in faith*, the Lord responds and moves the believer from one state to the next. That is to say, we expect an practical, concrete expression of a transfer from one state to the next, post-baptism.

Summary

There are more references to baptism than are listed above. We will cover those going forward.

One can split the baptisms into various categories different that what I have listed. The point is not to come to an agreement as to what the categories are, but to make a rough categorization, and more importantly, show clearly that there are multiple types of baptisms.

When we read the term 'baptism' or 'baptized', it is critical to ascertain which 'baptism' is being discussed in a passage of scripture. A lot of confusion is created by not correctly identifying the version of baptism in view. This is absolute paramount in understanding the topic.

Some of the baptisms are obvious to categorize: Noah, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, Jesus' Disciples, Cups.

Other baptisms have been confused. Often, commentaries assume without analysis a particular baptism. We will be careful to analyze the context for clues as to which baptism is in view. Usually this confusion has to do with attributing a baptism as an analogy to explain a spiritual truth to be a physical water baptism. Please see the example of an obvious situation at John 6:50-56. Jesus most assuredly does not expect us to literally eat His flesh and drink His blood even though a 'mechanical', 'literal' reading of the text forces us to think so.

We have to keep in mind that the terms 'the baptism' and 'to baptize' mean 'the washing'/'the immersion' and 'to wash'/'to immerse'. Note that 'water' is not part of the definition of baptism. The Reader is encouraged to peruse the appendix where we provide not only the Strong's Dictionary definitions for these terms, but also the locations where those terms are located in scripture.

Another way to define the confusion mentioned above is to see this: some commentaries place an undue emphasis on the *ritual* (the term 'baptism' regarded as a physical dunking under water) as opposed to the straight forward spiritual washing (the term 'baptism' regarded as the spiritual *washing* of the soul). We have to pay attention to the context to discern wisely.

And this discernment is very important. Many read the text wearing colored glasses (bias). The glasses lead them to 'see' what is not there. When considering the passages, it is advisable to ask yourself: 'What conclusion would an atheist² literature instructor³ make in terms of which baptism is in view?' If you can put yourself in the atheist literature instructor's shoes, you will effectively remove the religious bias glasses so that you can discern objectively.

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2. having no interest in the outcome
 3. skilled in discerning intent of author

General Observations

One, there is not a single Bible verse that *explicitly declares* that the water baptism is a requirement for salvation. It would be convenient if there were a verse like this: 'In order to have eternal life and see the Kingdom of God, you must be baptized.' There isn't one: not in the English, German or French Bibles.

That is not to say there are no Bible verses that may *imply* that baptism is a requirement for salvation. *Implications*, however, are not *explicit declarations*. We will look at these 'implication' scriptures in this document.

Two, there is not a single Bible verse that either *explicitly declares* or even *vaguely implies* that one who is not baptized is not saved. This is true in spite of the fact that scripture gives us many examples of what it takes to not be saved: baptism does not show up on any of those "you are not getting into heaven if you do XYZ" lists.

Strange indeed: one of the supposed necessary keys for getting into heaven never shows up on a 'do not do' list: 'liars, adulterers, those who did not get baptized, idol worshipers, thieves, etc.' Claiming doctrine not found in scripture should make any scripture respecting Christian weary.

Considering the gravity of the situation - identifying the requirement for salvation -, it strikes as odd that God would hide such an important aspect of salvation behind the veil of shrouded implication as opposed to a straightforward declarative statement.

The apostles often reminded the Churches about what they taught and what they first preached in terms of how they started their salvation. Never once did the apostles remind the Churches of 'the baptism that saved them'. For those who may be thinking of Romans 6:3-4, we will handle that passage in detail.

Limiting the Full Gospel to the Book of Acts

Here we carefully dissect the arguments that attempt to limit the Bible passages concerning the full Gospel to the Book of Acts. This is a cornerstone of the Water Baptism Gospel, without which, the doctrine cannot stand.

Full Gospel Preached only Post-Cross

One of the anchors of the baptism requirement is that the Gospel could not be preached prior to the cross. Therefore, all the teachings of Jesus about entering heaven, being right with God, being perfect, and the other similar expressions do not incorporate the full Gospel. Only after the cross could the full Gospel be presented.

The argument is that one could not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead until after the fact. Also, one could not baptize into Christ for that is an act paralleling Christ's burial and resurrection.

Furthermore, the full Gospel was first preached in Acts. If we want to know what the Gospel is, we have to look there.

For our discussion, we define the "Full Gospel" as everything that is required to get on the road to the life.

Matthew 7:13 Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the way is spacious that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 But the gate is narrow and the way is difficult that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

And this is the driver of the discussion; we certainly don't want to get someone to miss the narrow gate, or otherwise hinder the passage of the gate with unnecessary barriers.

The practical implication of this is that, once someone gets through the gate, and dies immediately, the person enters life. The implication is also that the person, who dies at some later time, must stay on the path; for if the person wanders from the narrow path, he does not enter life.

The Half-Gospel in the Gospel Books

Inherent in the baptism requirement teaching is that Jesus' sayings and the Gospel Book writings about seeing the Kingdom - and other like analogies - comprise either only part of the Gospel, or no part of the Gospel. The baptism requirement teaching runs aground rather quickly if it is conceded that the Gospel Books present the Full Gospel, for baptism is routinely absent from discussion. The argument runs like this:

- 1) One cannot believe/trust in something that has not happened yet.
- 2) Pre-cross, Jesus had not yet risen.
- 3) If one cannot believe that Jesus had been raised prior to the cross,
- 4) then there is no reason to preach for others to believe that Jesus had been raised pre-cross.
- 5) Therefore, the Gospel is not preached in the Gospel Books (or before), which is pre-cross.

There are many problems with the this argument.

Faith believes the Unseen

There are many examples showing that people believe in what has not happened yet. Moreover, this is exactly the very core of faith!

Romans 4:20 He (Abraham) did not waver in unbelief about the promise of God but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. 21 He was fully convinced that what God promised he was also able to do. 22 So indeed it was credited to Abraham as righteousness.

Abraham believed that God would do something in the future.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see. 2 For by it the people of old received God's commendation.

Everyone on the Faith Heroes list believed and trusted God to fulfill some promise for them. By definition, the promise had not yet happened. It is unclear why every promise of God (not yet seen by the recipient of the promise) can be presented to a person and believed by a person except for the promise of God's work in Jesus.

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went out without understanding where he was going.

Abraham was not sure where this trek was leading. It is not a requirement to even really understand where the promise is going, or how it works. To a degree, faith necessitates that we do not know how God will get it done, or even what He will do; at least this is the pattern. Abraham had no idea as to the magnitude of the promise, how it work work, or when. He just believed and acted on it.

Not only is it possible, but it is demanded, that we believe in things not yet occurred (or seen). There is nothing about baptism that would make it an exception to the rule.

Declaration of Gospel prior to Jesus' Birth

Was the promise of the Gospel declared prior to the birth of Jesus? Certainly!

Acts 10:43: ... **About him (Jesus) all the prophets testify**, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Acts 17:2 Paul went to the Jews in the synagogue, as he customarily did, and on three Sabbath days **he addressed them from the scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and to rise from the dead**, saying, "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

A discussion that literally directly defines the Gospel is found here:

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Now I want to make clear for you ... the gospel that I preached to you ... that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures**, ...

1 Corinthians 15 defines the Gospel as directly as any verse. But, according to these three texts above, the scriptures bare witness to Jesus' death and resurrection. The scriptures in this sense are in the Original Covenant. These scriptures are making a promise, a promise made pre-cross, a promise that those living pre-cross had the option to believe.

More detailed discussion of pre-cross Gospel are given here:

Acts 2:29 "Brothers, I can speak confidently to you about our forefather David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 So then, because he was a prophet and

knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, 31 **David by foreseeing this spoke about the resurrection of the Christ**, that he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his body experience decay⁴.

David understood and believed in the Gospel pre-cross.

Acts 3:18 But the things **God foretold long ago through all the prophets—that his Christ would suffer**—he has fulfilled in this way. 19 Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out, 20 so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he may send the Messiah appointed for you—that is, Jesus. 21 This one heaven must receive until the time all things are restored, which **God declared from times long ago through his holy prophets**. 22 Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must obey him in everything he tells you. 23 Every person who does not obey that prophet will be destroyed and thus removed from the people.’ 24 And **all the prophets**, from Samuel and those who followed him, **have spoken about and announced these days**. 25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.’ 26 God raised up his servant and sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each one of you from your iniquities.”

Conclusion: the prophets knew of the Gospel pre-cross. The apostles were aware of this fact.

John 8:56 Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **proclaimed the gospel to Abraham ahead of time**, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.”

Abraham knew the Gospel pre-cross. Note well ... the Gospel was preached pre-cross by God himself. Do the baptizers claim that God did not proclaim the Gospel in full?

The Gospel was not only proclaimed, but also believed pre-cross.

Since we have contrary examples of the argument (if the cross did not happen, one cannot believe in it), we can conclude that the argument is invalid.

Declaration of Gospel in Gospel Books

We just considered 'pre-Gospel Books'. What about the 'Gospel Books'?

Mark 8:31 Then Jesus began to teach them that **the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and after three days rise again**.

Mark 9:31 for he was teaching his disciples and telling them, “**The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.**”

Matthew 12:38 Then some of the experts in the law along with some Pharisees answered him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” 39 But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights, so the **Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights**.”

4. From Psalms 16:8–11.

Jesus clearly states the Gospel (the Gospel as defined in 1 Corinthians 15) in these three verses. These verses are in the 'Gospel Books', do not reference baptism, and therefore directly contradict the baptism argument. The hearers of this word had a chance to believe it. By all appearances they did not at that time.

The Death and Resurrection in the Gospel Book of John

John 11:24 Martha said, "I know that he will come back to life again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** The one who believes in me will live even if he dies, 27 She replied, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who comes into the world."

Built into 'I am the resurrection' is the presumption that Jesus would die. One cannot rise again without first being dead. Also note that Martha knew of these things prior to the discussion, via the scriptures as everyone else.

One cannot get more direct than this. One could ask this question today post-cross and be completely in the realm of the Gospel. Jesus, pre-cross, has encapsulated the entire chapter 15 from the book of 1 Corinthians, which directly lays out the Gospel. Chapter 15 covers Jesus' post-cross resurrection, and our rapture/resurrection.

Martha responded positively to Jesus asking to believe that He is 'the resurrection and the life.' She believed in the Gospel in one of the Gospel Books. Notice, there is no discussion of, 'This has not happened yet, I am not allowed to tell you yet, don't believe it yet, but believe it after it happens.' Why should Jesus make the Gospel complicated by putting some time limitation on it considering that faith is hoping for that which is not yet seen?

We have another splendid contrarian example for the argument in one reference. It gets better ...

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me (Jesus), because he has anointed me to **proclaim good news** to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,

The 'Good News' is another term for the 'Gospel'; they are one and the same. Are we to believe that Jesus was sent to proclaim the 'Good News', and then He did not do it? This being the case, the authors of the Gospel books most definitely recorded Jesus proclaiming the gospel during his ministry.

Matthew 9:35 Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, **preaching the good news** of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness.

I believe that the authors of the Gospel Books wrote the Gospel in the Gospel Books. How could they not? Is this not why they are called the 'Gospel' books? How reasonable is it to claim that the Gospel Books do not include the Gospel while at the same time the Gospel Books state that Jesus proclaimed the Gospel? The most important message in the universe, and the authors heard it, and then simply left it out? Because they wanted to hide it from us?

The argument (The Gospel could not and was not preached pre-cross) is again shown to be invalid.

With that thought in mind, those claiming the Gospel is not to be found in the Gospel books have a different definition of the Gospel; that is why they cannot find it! If they would get the right definition, they would see it.

The Past Tense in the Argument

The strength of the baptism argument is the 'past tense' form. In a sense, it is logical.

If I am called to testify in court about a car accident, where the listeners are asked to hear my testimony to determine who is at fault, a prerequisite is that the car accident had occurred, past tense. When the judge finds out that I did not see the accident, he will not want to hear what I think about it!

But while it is true that one cannot believe that something happened until after it happened in the physical, that is not a requirement for God in the spiritual.

God credits to us as righteousness when we believe in something that has not happened yet, just as Abraham did, Moses did, David did, the other Prophets did, Martha did, and certainly others. As a matter of fact, God *demand*s of us to believe in what we do not yet see. We believe that as we run the race we will be raptured in the future (Philippians 3:10-16).

Matthew 8:8 But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. Instead, just say the word and my servant will be healed."

The centurion was clearly believing Jesus for something Jesus had not yet done. He was looking towards a future event.

Faith is not about 'when' something happened, but rather do we put our trust in God's promises. The argument places a foreign requirement on faith that God does not. This forces the errors that occur in the argument, and all the statements built on it. Besides:

Jesus is the one who was, and is, and is continually coming:

Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God—the one who is, and who was, and who is still to come—the All-Powerful!

We are dealing with God, who overreaches time and space. Christ *was* the resurrection, *is* the resurrection, *will always be* the resurrection. Whether pre-cross or post cross, Christ is the resurrection.

Martha believed in The Resurrection, as did the writers of the Original Covenant referred to in Acts 2, 3 and 17.

The question is not so much 'who believes that the Christ *was* the resurrection?', but rather 'Who believes He *is* the resurrection?'.

Revelation 13:8b Everyone living on earth will worship it except those whose names are written in the Book of Life belonging to the **Lamb slaughtered before the world was founded**. - CJB

From God's perspective, Jesus was slain prior to Adam and Eve. Therefore, the past tense portion in the argument is invalid, for technically, all lived post-cross. The situation statement 'pre-cross, Jesus had not yet risen' is meaningless from the viewpoint of faith and God's timelessness.

Conclusion

We have shown via contra examples in the Bible that the argument for the 'baptism cannot be preached till post-cross' are all invalid.

Furthermore, there is nothing about water baptism that would preclude Jesus telling us, 'In the future, to be saved, you must be water baptized.' He told us about the coming of the Holy Spirit; he told us what to do at the end of the age; why not tell us about water baptism? Certainly, if water baptism is a

requirement for salvation, that would be motivation enough for Jesus to at least mention it in passing during one of the many times He explained about how to get saved.

How is the Full Gospel presented to whom?

That the Gospel is not present in the Gospel books is not self-evident. Self-evident would be to assume when Jesus answers the question, "What should I do to obtain everlasting life?", Jesus gives a proper and full answer for that person, not a partial answer.

Let us take one of Jesus' teachings on getting saved, or in this case, getting unsaved. Jesus taught that those who do not forgive others will themselves not be forgiven.

Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you your sins.

The baptizers will agree that this is true for those who lived pre-cross. The baptizers now have two options for those living post-cross: either it holds true, or it does not.

If it is not true for those who live post-cross, then the baptism requirement teaching can stand. This standpoint would create a host of other untenable problems (and I don't know of anyone who would propose such a doctrine), but they could keep their baptism teaching. If Jesus' teaching on un-forgiveness holds true post-cross, the baptism requirement teaching has problems. Bear with me as I explain.

If un-forgiveness renders the regenerative work of baptism ineffective, then part and parcel to the Gospel is that the forgiven must also forgive. If that is true, then the preachers in Acts failed to present this truth. In turn, Peter also failed to present the whole Gospel, which then makes the whole discussion moot; for if Peter did not present the whole Gospel in Acts 2:28, then we cannot claim that Peter presented the full Gospel.

Once we come to that conclusion, the discussion comes to a close for those promoting the baptism requirement teaching, for they cannot claim Peter's presentation (or any of the other presentations in Acts) to be the 'Full Gospel' in the all encompassing sense.

What I am pointing out is the silliness in claiming that there is one tightly defined full Gospel such that only that set phrase or story could ever bring someone to salvation. This one-size-fits-all simply does not work.

Note that we *do* believe what Peter stated (Acts 2:14-41) was the 'Full Gospel' *to that group*. Please note that Peter said a lot of things in this passage, not just 'get baptized'.

The Practical Full Gospel

And the fact that Jesus spoke to different people about different things in view of eternal life highlights a practical issue.

If we were to document every single instance in the Gospel Books and all the New Testament Books showing a clear-cut reference to (a) what it takes to enter the kingdom, (b) why some are sent to hell, (c) who is righteous, (d) who takes part in the resurrection, (e) etc., we could put together quite a list of what Peter left out in Acts chapter 2. The exercise about a lack of forgiveness above could be repeated at least 20 times.

That being said, it is clear that the Gospel was presented to different people in different ways, highlighting different aspects of it for the individual or corporate hearer. Thus, the hearer passed through the narrow gate in his own individual way.

Does the new believer have to understand every single aspect of the Gospel as presented in its variant forms (which is then defined as the 'Full Gospel')? Is there a single believer on the planet who came to Christ knowing everything there is to know about what it means to be saved, how and why, the mechanics of it, and after that juncture, received not one iota of revelation on the subject? And God never showed this new believer one more insight from then till death? Or ... are we all a little bit smarter on the subject now than when we first began?

The point is this: God gives the hearer what he can accept and carry at the time. Whatever other issues that need to be covered going forward will be covered going forward. It is unrealistic and impractical to work through every single aspect of the 'Full Gospel' and have the new believer sign a 20 page document committing to it. Such an approach destroys the power of the Gospel.

In contrast, after Peter explains the Gospel story to the crowd ...

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this (the Gospel), they were acutely distressed and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What should we do, brothers?"

Just like Cornelius in Acts 10, the people began believing upon hearing Gospel. Peter gives them the next steps in the following verse.

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one 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."

By all appearances, the hearers were saved when they were pierced in their hearts in verse 37. They understood the truth and knew they needed salvation.

People come to Christ because the Father draws them, and because the Spirit pierces their hearts, not because they have a 100% complete doctrinal understanding of what is happening. Babies, before they are born, do not take a course on how to be born. The drowning man does not consider the different elements (shape of the hull of the boat, search lights, motor, rope, wrench, navigation systems, training for the hands on deck, etc.) that had to be in place for the life ring to be placed within grabbing distance; all the drowning man needs to know is to grab it and not let go. The salvation team him can debrief him in on the details later. This is the spirit of Paul's approach, as we shall investigate.

Finally we note that no where do we read in Acts, 'This is the full gospel we are now preaching'. The force of this statement will become further apparent in the next section, Getting through the narrow Gate.

Getting through the narrow Gate

Likely, a more precise definition of the "Full Gospel" leading to "Getting Saved" is the point at which one passes through the narrow gate. Note that there is also a 'narrow way' between the 'narrow gate' and Life; passing through the narrow gate alone is not sufficient to obtain Life.

As we consider the different 'colors' of the Gospel as presented throughout the Bible, it is reasonable to say the following: for every person, their narrow gate, and their personal 'Full Gospel', may look a different. What is important is that they start the journey.

Case in point: have you asked different people, "How did you come to follow Jesus?" How many different salvation testimonies did you receive as a reply? Does every single testimony occur in the same

manner? Did they hear the exact same phrase? Did they pray the exact same prayer? Did every one's narrow gate have the exact same width, height, color?

The rich young ruler had to give up his riches, the adulterer had to give up adultery, the soldiers had to be content with their wages, the tax collectors had to stop taking more than was just; we could go on. To tell the prostitute to be content with her wages would have been the wrong approach ... There were specific issues to be dealt with to start the journey onto the narrow road.

I believe it dangerous to reduce the 'Full Gospel' to a codified set up steps or a repeatable phrase. That method ultimately ends up becoming dead religion, will be used as a means to cause division, and will be used to persecute others who do things a little different.

For some people, baptism may very well be one of the posts of the narrow gate. For the next person, maybe not, but rather shows up on the narrow road.

The Reader is welcome to read the verses in the appendix which reference the Bible verses that have to do with Eternal Life and the Kingdom. The Reader will note how the message of the Gospel is delivered to different people, and how many different aspects there are of it. Again, it is not practical to preach every aspect to any given hearer. It is important that we are sensitive to focus on what the Lord would have us say as opposed to following a set pre-determined pattern.

Closing this thought out, just because Peter said what he did in Acts 2:28 does not require that every single person has to hear the exact same message, or that this preaching is *the* Full Gospel.

If baptism is a requirement for salvation ...

After questioning the statement that the Full Gospel is not presented in the Gospel Books, we return to this part of the argument ...

- If baptism is a requirement for salvation,
- then baptism could not be presented as part of the Gospel in the Gospel Books.

It simply does not follow that if baptism is a requirement for salvation then the full Gospel is not presented in the Gospel Books. Such a claim requires much deeper development.

Nonetheless, we present two counter examples.

Believe in Me

Jesus said over and over that the people should 'believe in him', pre-cross. The epistles state over and over to 'believe in him', post-cross. In both instances, the Gospel is in view.

How is it that one can 'believe in him' pre-cross, but cannot 'be baptized into him' pre-cross? Surely if one can 'believe in him' to eternal life pre-cross, one could also 'be baptized into him' pre-cross.

It is not clear why baptism was impossible pre-cross. As a matter of fact, 'being baptized into him' would be an act of faith looking forward to the cross just as 'believing in him' would be.

But that baptism was not preached & practiced pre-cross is false. We know that the disciples baptized according to John 4. Baptism in that day was a public declaration that the baptized was being initiated into a particular group and assigning his lot with the leader of said group. Those baptized by Jesus' disciples were publicly acknowledging Jesus as their Teacher.

It is clear that somewhere in the disciple's teaching and preaching they said, "Now that you want to go along with our way and teaching, let's get you baptized." Interestingly, we have no references in the

Gospel books indicating that baptism was a requirement for salvation, although they preached and practiced it.

Those 'believing in him' pre-cross likely did not have the understanding we have after living post-cross. Regardless of this lack of intellectual understanding, the result of 'believing in him' is the same pre and post-cross: eternal life.

Not one single time did Jesus answer the question, "What does it take to enter the Kingdom?" with, "You must be baptized." Nothing hindered Jesus from saying, 'believe in me' pre-cross, just like nothing hindered him from saying, 'be baptized' pre-cross.

The baptism argument here is a non sequitur.

Repent

The same argument can be repeated for 'repent'. Jesus routinely preached repentance for salvation pre-cross, as did the apostles post-cross. In the same way nothing kept Jesus from preaching baptism for salvation pre-cross.

Patterns in Acts

One of the other main anchors of the baptism requirement is that there is a *pattern* of people getting baptized. This pattern shows that baptism was understood by the Apostles as being a requirement, otherwise they would not have emphasized it.

There are a few issues with this thought.

Inductive Reasoning: Patterns can lead to false Conclusions

The Egyptians and Babylonians noticed that upon measuring circles, there is a constant ratio between the circumference of a circle and the diameter of a circle. This is our constant π : circumference equals the diameter multiplied by π . Based on this pattern, they concluded that every circle, even the ones they had not measured yet, followed this pattern. This conclusion is reasonable, for we have untold examples of this pattern.

The scientific method is based upon this thought process (inductive reasoning) as well: if an experiment can be documented and repeated by anyone, a pattern is established and the associated theory is considered true. If the pattern cannot be repeated, the theory is questioned, altered or abandoned.

However, one issue is that - as any person having studied Geometry or basic logic will quickly point out - patterns do not always lead to truth. Clearly, the confidence we have in a pattern is proportional to the number of examples of that pattern. This is the basics of statistical analysis: the more data points one has, the more confidence we have that the analysis is correct.

If we ask a million people who will win the next election, our confidence is high that we can predict the outcome of the election. If we ask 10 people, we have no confidence that we can predict the outcome of the election; for this small sample set is not representative of the total. The point is, a conclusion based on a very small sample set is useless.

No rigorous study using inductive reasoning would be satisfied with a total of four samples in establishing a truth, certainly not a truth as important as eternal life.

Consider a situation where I am to advise the CEO of a company what the marketing message should be told in a million dollar campaign. And I revealed the CEO that my proposed marketing message, on

which he is betting one million dollars, is based upon my having spoken with four customers. That CEO will either throw me out, or tell me to go talk to 200 customers to verify.

If a handful of samples is not good enough for investing one million dollars, it is also not good enough for determining the means to eternal life!

Our sample set of baptisms is very small (counting the 3,000 as one occurrence, for they were all done in accordance with the same preaching). A solid, rigorous study requires a much larger sample set - plain and simple. Unfortunately, this data will never be available to us.

Therefore, we cannot use a pattern argument with a minuscule data set to determine that baptism is a requirement of salvation.

Correlation and Causation

There is a vast difference between correlation and causation. This is a classical mistake made by beginning scientists and researchers.

An example is in order. Let us look at the correlation between umbrellas and rain. We see few umbrellas when it is raining lightly and more umbrellas when it is raining heavily. I can correctly conclude that there is a *correlation* between the number of umbrellas in use and the amount of rain falling. However, I cannot conclude that umbrellas *caused* the rain.

Just because we can identify a *correlation* between water baptisms and people coming to Christ does not allow one to claim that baptism *causes* (or is otherwise a partial cause of) salvation. However, one could just as well claim the exact inverse; baptism is *caused by* salvation; that is, now that one is saved, let him be baptized. And perhaps, just perhaps, the umbrellas were *caused by* the rain; now that it is raining, let him carry his umbrella.

Or ...

If I drop something out of my hand, it will accelerate towards the center of the earth. The dropping of an object *correlates* with the object's acceleration, for it happens repeatedly. However, the dropping does not *cause* the acceleration, gravity does.

We know that baptisms are associated with people getting saved in the Book of Acts. But, correlations do not show cause and effect.

The serious student requires a specific biblical teaching by one of the authors of the New Testament to make a justified claim that water baptism is a requirement for salvation.

Speculation without dedicated Teaching

Even if every single preaching incorporated baptism, that is not in and of itself proof that baptism is a requirement. There may very well be another reason the apostles inserted baptism into their activities. The straight forward understanding of this phenomenon is that the first disciples simply continued doing post-cross what they did pre-cross, and that they learned from John the Baptist.

In contrast to an extremely weak inductive reasoning argument, we would like to see dedicated teaching on the subject in the Bible. Until an apostle writes, "The soul that is not baptized shall not be saved.", we are left to speculations and assumptions.

Logical Leaps

Taking the above further, there is a large logical jump from 'The Apostles preached baptism.' and 'Without baptism the soul will be sent to hell.' Jesus spoke and the apostles wrote a lot about what it takes to go to hell: not having been baptized was never on any of those lists.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: **Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!**

Ephesians 5:5 For you can be confident of this one thing: **that no person** who is immoral, impure, or greedy (such a person is an idolater) **has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**

1 Corinthians 6:9 **Don't you know that unrighteous people will have no share in the Kingdom of God?** Don't delude yourselves — people who engage in sex before marriage, who worship idols, who engage in sex after marriage with someone other than their spouse, who engage in active or passive homosexuality, 10 who steal, who are greedy, who get drunk, who assail people with contemptuous language, who rob — **none of them will share in the Kingdom of God.**

There are issues noted in Revelations two through three about Churches on the edge of throwing their eternal salvation away. In no instance is the lack of water baptism a case leveled against a sinning Church. Certainly, if water baptism is such an important rite for salvation, the Churches would have been led astray here as well on the other issues. To keep people from entering the kingdom, the devil need only to keep the almost saved from going under water.

Granted, the lists above may not be exhaustive, but 'not getting baptized' doesn't fit very well, does it? As a matter of fact, we cannot find a single scripture indicating, directly or indirectly, that not being baptized is a means of being rejected out of the kingdom.

Anti-Patterns

We have a pattern in the Gospel Books that people were healed at the laying on of hands. Until this time, healing happened according to a certain pattern ...

Acts 5:15 Thus they even carried the sick out into the streets, and put them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow would fall on some of them. 16 A crowd of people from the towns around Jerusalem also came together, bringing the sick and those troubled by unclean spirits. They were all being healed.

The sick were expecting healing and demonic deliverance by Peter's shadow. Should we discredit Peter because he is not following the orthodox teaching based on previously established patterns?

Not only that, Peter went against straightforward teaching on how to heal. Next to one of the baptizer's favorite verses (Mark 16:16), we read this:

Mark 16:18b they will place their hands on the sick and they will be well.

Peter is not only breaking pattern, he is also breaking clear teaching on the subject. Peter was not alone.

Acts 19:11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands, 12 so that when even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body were brought to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

Breaking the pattern again, Paul is healing people with handkerchiefs. Maybe we should tell Paul that he does not know what he is doing and the people are not being healed correctly, because ... he is not holding to established pattern and teaching?

We are highlighting the problematic of holding on to a pattern. Just because something is done in a certain way in one instance does not *require* that it *must* be done in another. This is presumptuous.

In conclusion we note that the pattern in the Bible is that for some things there is no pattern. We cannot put God in a box by *assuming* that God has to work in a certain way.

The problematic of codified patterns is two-fold: (1) they limit God in how He does things with the result that some are not set free, and (2) they cause unnecessary division in the Church (they don't do it like us, and they are wrong), false accusations, slander, internal bickering and the like.

Other Patterns

The listeners of the Gospel were often miraculously healed and/or set free from demons. Are those two things also *requirements* for salvation, because they occurred in patterns in and around people coming to Christ?

Patterns without Baptism

Another issue is that the epistles provide historical records as to what the believers did when they first began their journey with Christ. 'Water baptism' is conspicuously missing. The pattern here is that baptism is then not a requirement. If one argues that pattern reveals truth, then they must conclude that water baptism is not a requirement for salvation. We will point these out as we progress. Certainly, if a pattern is good for the goose, it is also good for the gander.

Epistle Salvation Scriptures are for Believers only

The epistles are full of descriptions and discussions of the gospel in various flavors. The baptism is almost never to be found in these discussions. And when mentioned, typically the baptism referred to is not in reference to the literal physical baptism, but to teach a spiritual lesson: we shall expound on that thought.

Like the issue with the discussions of eternal life in the Gospel Books, proponents of the baptism requirement need to explain why baptism, while a requirement for salvation, is not found here.

The answer they provide is that these epistles are written to believers that have already been baptized. Baptism is experienced once, and therefore the letters do not talk about it. Furthermore, any references to baptism are reminders of the baptism they experienced when they first believed. There are three weaknesses in this.

One is that the apostles clearly write concerning the gospel they brought and the message they preached when the apostle first came to town. If baptism is a requirement, and the apostles always preached about baptism, then we should find a recording about it. On the contrary, it is not there. We will show examples of this.

Second is that the apostles, although they are writing to believers, also write about what they preach to non-believers. Again, baptism is missing. This to be shown later as well.

Along with that, it can be safely assumed that to whichever Church the apostle is writing, new converts are coming in. It would be a disservice to these new converts to neglect baptism according to the baptizers. Something along the lines of, 'And as a final admonition, don't forget baptism for the new

believers! Peace and grace to you all!" would be necessary provided baptism is as important as the proponents of the baptism requirement say it is. The proponents of the baptism requirement don't forget to tell us about the necessity of baptism to salvation, but Peter, Paul, James and John apparently have!

Logically, this is the classic 'the lack of proof demonstrates proof' argument. 'I know my lost wedding ring is in the bathroom, because I looked for it and did not find it.' 'Because the believers had to be baptized to be believers, they were already baptized, they did not need to be baptized, therefore it was not mentioned'. These arguments are inherently weak and have no place in a rigorous study of scripture.

The weakness of this argument is made more clear when we note that there were many topics discussed in the epistles concerning what the church should be doing, but unfortunately was not doing, and had been taught, but unfortunately forgot. This fact is to point out that just because something was preached or commanded or necessary does not mean that everyone did it. The assumption that because baptism is necessary means that everyone did it is demonstrably false.

Reiterating, the apostles clearly laid out in the epistles what they preached when they first entered a city to start evangelizing. 'Baptism' is *never* mentioned in these discussions. Therefore, the claim that the Gospel is not recorded in the epistles as it was presented to unbelievers is shown to be in error. These will be detailed in this document. Good examples are Romans 9-10, 1 Corinthians, 1 Peter 1. The complete list is under 'Gospel Preaching as Recorded in Epistles' on page 79.

History and Teaching

Finally, there are two general methods, by which the Bible teaches. And these two methods, by the way, are not specific to the Bible as "learning material". Educational material of all stripes use these two methods.

These two methods are *historical accounts* and *instruction*. The historical accounts are stories of what people did and said. The instruction tells us what we should be doing or not doing, and gives a teaching on a given topic.

For the most part, the Original Testament, the Gospel books and the Acts of the Apostles are historical accounts. The Epistles are for the most part instructional teachings.

The Water Baptism Gospel preachers have stated that the book of Acts is the only historical record of preaching we have post-cross; therefore, that is the only location we will find examples of the Full Gospel being preached.

This is a clever argument, because there is truth in it. But, while it is true by the very nature of the Bible as described above, Acts being the only post-cross book focussing on *historical accounts*, this does not mean there are no post-cross *instructional* writings about the Gospel from which we can learn about the Gospel. As a matter of fact, the most talked about item in the Epistles is the Gospel. Built into their argument is that the Full Gospel is not discussed in the *instructional writings*.

It is in no way self-evident that the Full Gospel would not be recorded in the Gospel or the Epistle books. We would, indeed, fully expect the Full Gospel to be there; it is completely absurd to think otherwise. The onus is then on the Water Baptism Gospel preachers to show how and why the Full Gospel is not discussed in the Gospel Books and Epistles.

We have previously handled the reasons provided by Water Baptizers for why the Gospel books should not contain the full Gospel. See "Full Gospel Preached only Post-Cross" on page 13.

We have already indicated in "Patterns without Baptism" on page 24 that there are historical accounts in the Epistles with regard to the preaching of the Gospel where the Water Baptism is conspicuously missing. On this point, their argument that we have no historical accounts of the Gospel in the Epistle books is factually incorrect.

Furthermore, we have previously handled the reasons provided by the Water Baptizers as to why the Epistles do not contain the Full Gospel. See "Epistle Salvation Scriptures are for Believers only" on page 24.

Why not simply assume the reasonable and obvious that the Full Gospel is indeed found in the Gospel and Epistle books? Because then the acute student points out that the physical water baptism is entirely absent in those passages, and therefore water baptism, on account of its complete absence, cannot be a prerequisite for salvation; for how can such an important aspect of salvation be utterly ignored?

Certainly, if water baptism was a true prerequisite to obtain eternal life, Jesus - or at least one of his Apostles - would have *directly and clearly* stated it. Is it remotely possible that in *every single* discussions of the Gospel in the Gospel and Epistle books, this one requirement would be *repeatedly and consistently left out*? Of course not!

And this the reason the water baptizers make this thoroughly unreasonable and unfounded assumption: to limit the data set concerning (or evidence pertaining to) the Full Gospel. In this way, they conveniently avoid the rhetorical questions in the previous two paragraphs.

Reality and Symbols

A major anchor in the baptism requirement teaching is often the presentation that baptism is not a symbol, but a real factor in the regeneration of the spirit into new life, or into Christ.

First, there are clear examples where the term 'baptism' is used as a literary device as an analogy or symbol. See 'Baptism' Verses starting at page 82 in the Appendix. Very clearly, baptism can be an analogy (symbol, figure, allegory) for other things. This fact has two meanings:

- 1) The term 'baptism' in any given verse could be the religious ritual or a literary analogy. To know if the term in any given reference text is literal or literary, we must look at the reference text in detail and in context.
- 2) Since the term 'baptism' is specifically used as an analogy/symbol to show spiritual truths, it certainly is not a stretch that the religious rite is also an analogy/symbol for something else. This thought shall be expanded later.

Finally, some present the baptism issue as a false dichotomy: either as an empty symbol or a spiritual unlocking. We are presented with two choices, whereas one choice, as presented, is self-evidently wrong, leading us to believe that the opposing choice must be correct.

I believe baptism is neither an empty symbol nor a regenerative power (in and of itself) resulting in a new spiritual birth, but something else.

Foreshadowing of Baptism in Leviticus

Under the Original Covenant, if a house was infected with mold, and then physically cleaned, there was a dove ritual to perform to spiritual clean the house.

Leviticus 14:48 If, however, the priest enters and examines it, and the infection has not spread in the house after the house has been replastered, then the priest is to **pronounce the house clean** because **the infection has been healed**. 49 Then he is to take two birds, a piece of cedar wood, a scrap of crimson fabric, and some twigs of hyssop to decontaminate the house, 50 and he is to slaughter one bird into a clay vessel over fresh water. 51 He must then **take** the piece of cedar wood, the twigs of hyssop, the scrap of crimson fabric, and **the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and in the fresh water**, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52 So he is to decontaminate the house with the blood of the bird, the fresh water, the live bird, the piece of cedar wood, the twigs of hyssop, and the scrap of crimson fabric, 53 and he is to **send the live bird away outside the city into the open countryside**. So he is to make atonement for the house and it will be clean.

The ritual with the doves is a clear picture of Christ's work, our being set free, with baptism mixed in. In terms of our discussion (is baptism required for salvation?) we must note that the ritual *is not* for the washing away of sins and the washing away our sins *is* the core of salvation. This baptism was a ritual to celebrate and a house that had *already* been cleaned.

This foreshadowing of baptism is evidence that baptism is *not* a requirement for salvation. It is a foreshadowing of cleaning house. Let us investigate ...

Matthew 12:44 Then it (the demon) says to itself, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the **house** standing empty, swept clean and put in order.

Is it any wonder that baptisms are often accompanied by the driving out of demons.

With that, baptism is one of the tools we can use to clean a body from demonic oppression. But note that it is one tool. Demons can be cast out by ridding ourselves of occult objects (to which demons are attached), by authority of the spoken word, by renouncing and ceasing sinful practice, even by handkerchiefs or shadows, or possibly a combination of the above.

Chronology of Baptism in Matthew 28

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

As we begin this short, but very prominent verse we wish to establish that the term 'disciple' is used only for those who are 'saved' in the New Testament. 'Disciples' are not 'not saved', 'almost saved' or 'not quite saved'⁵. Feel free to do a word search for 'disciple' in the New Testament to convince yourself of this.

The verse of interest has two parts:

- 1) go and **make disciples** ...
- 2) **baptizing them** ...

The verse also uses the pronoun 'them'. The pronoun 'them' in the second part is referencing the 'disciples' in the first part. One can then rewrite second part of the verse as:

Matthew 28:19b **baptizing the disciples** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Jesus establishes the chronology. From the point of view of the baptized:

- 1) First you become a disciple
- 2) Then you get baptized

Is it possible to have the later cause the former? Of course not. How does baptism, which occurs after the person is a disciple make the person a disciple?

This is the chronology Jesus has established. To be sure we understand the *proper* chronology, we show the opposite chronology.

- 1) First you get baptized
- 2) Then you become a disciple

But, the 'baptism requirement for salvation' teaching demands this opposite chronology! The teaching claims it is impossible to be a disciple unless one is baptized!

This truth has huge ramifications for understanding the preaching recorded in the book of Acts. One of the core elements of the 'baptism is a requirement for salvation' argument is noting that in many locations in the book of Acts, baptism is commanded in the framework of people getting saved. Some use this fact to argue that baptism is a requirement for salvation - in spite of the fact there is nothing in the text that demands this interpretation.

Nonetheless, when we interpret the salvation preaching accounts in Acts through the lens of Jesus' command, we find that all of the 'proofs for the baptism requirement' collapse. In those accounts, the proper understanding of the stories is:

- 1) First, the apostles made a disciple
- 2) Then, the apostles baptized the new disciple

The apostles were baptizing people *not to make* disciples, but rather they were baptizing them *after and because* the people were disciples - in accordance with Jesus command in Matthew 28. There is nothing

5. We are disregarding the fact that one is not finally saved till resurrected. We use the term 'saved' to mean, through the narrow gate and on the narrow way.

in the book of Acts, or any other book for that matter, that speaks against this interpretational approach.

With that, one should *never, ever* baptize anyone unless that person is already a disciple / is saved.

This does not mean that baptism is not important, has no spiritual power or that we should not do it. We simply cannot attribute, at our whim and for our convenience, more prominence to baptism than is appropriate. That will lead to serious, serious problems downstream.

Matthew 28:20 ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Note 1: If we cannot get the order of the simple two-step right (blind chance gives us a 50/50 chance), we are going to have a hard time obeying anything else. Setting up the unbeliever with an example of disobeying Jesus' command and then telling that new believer to obey Jesus is a poor way to start someone with the new birth.

Note 2: The responsibility for driving the baptism is on the one making the disciple, not the disciple. If the disciple is not invited for a baptism, the disciple has not 'sinned'. This is important as the baptizer's claim that the 'to-be-baptized' person is disobeying Jesus if he has not been baptized, and therefore is not a follower of Jesus. This is not necessarily the case since the duty is on the disciple maker.

However, if one refuses to be baptized upon being invited, we are justified in questioning if the person is a true disciple, for the person is refusing to publicly testify to being a follower of Jesus. Keep in mind this view has nothing to do with the view that 'water baptism saves'.

Note 3: There is no time limit provided between the making of the disciple and the baptism. It does stand to reason that the baptism should be done relatively quickly.

John's Baptism

Baptism was established as being connected with repentance for the forgiveness of sins per John.

Mark 1:4 In the wilderness John the baptizer began preaching a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**. 5 People from the whole Judean countryside and all of Jerusalem were going out to him, and he was baptizing them in the Jordan River **as they confessed their sins**.

First we note that the baptizers have gotten themselves in a knot. They say baptism is a requirement for salvation, but that this requirement could not be preached pre-cross. Here we have John the Baptist preaching the very same thing that Peter did in Acts 2:38, which baptizers consider the smoking gun proof of the baptism requirement. So what is it? Was baptism for forgiveness of sins (such that the sins are removed on account of going under water) preached, or not preached, pre-cross? There is no difference between what John the Baptist preached in Mark 1 and what Peter preached in Acts 2.

In this activity, the people came forward, repented of their sins and answered God's call for a clean conscience. The physical going under water did not clean their conscience, but rather it was a public declaration that they repented; the washing by the physical water stood for the washing by the spiritual water (that was to be made into legal effect later after the death and resurrection). The physical act helped the observer and the partaker understand that the sins committed were being washed away.

Any observer - even the most religiously ignorant, or even antagonistic - would immediately see the symbolism. Something has clouded our judgement when one has to argue and prove the symbolism of the physical baptism standing for the spiritual baptism. The symbolism is self-evident to the most casual observer.

This last statement is not to be understood that the physical baptism is devoid of meaning or power. Provided there is a repentant heart, the baptized can be saved right then and there during the physical baptism. But we must understand it is not the dunking under water that performs the spiritual cleansing. As stated elsewhere, some demons have to vacate the premises during the physical dunking under water; this indicates that power to free men is unleashed during the physical water baptism.

The next thing the objective observer would easily recognize, even if he did not agree with it, is that the dunking under water did not cleanse the baptized from their sin against God almighty, creator of heaven and earth, the Holiest of Holies, etc. The ignorant observer would understand that the heart must be taken into consideration.

If a man proposes to a woman for marriage, we would hope that she is more interested in the man's heart than any physical thing he could do.

Only one who is very colored in his thinking could deny these two self-evident truths. The entire set of offering rituals associated with the temple is a symbol and foreshadowing of the work of Jesus. The rituals did not in themselves cleanse the people; it was a symbol for Jesus who did the true cleansing.

What is the core issue? What is the real sign of change? A water baptism?

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Therefore produce fruit that proves your repentance,

We see that true repentance and forgiveness is associated with the proper fruit. We add that fruit is a symbol of the spiritual, not physical bananas and apples. The most ignorant but objective observer would understand that the fruit spoken of is not a basket of bananas and apples.

Even though the spirit had not been given as it has been given today, the repenters were expected to bring fruits of repentance. This shows the claim that 'Jesus' work at the cross is a prerequisite for getting free from sin is incorrect. Those who were baptized pre-cross were set free from the slavery to the works of the flesh, sickness and even demonic oppression causing the same. There was no cross to look back to, no speaking in tongues; they were simply set free.

Remember, Jesus many times said, 'Go and sin no more.' He expected that to happen.

This requires that the claim 'The baptism that set people free from slavery to sin could only occur post-cross.' is incorrect.

Speaking to the religious leaders of the day, John the baptist says:

Matthew 3:9 and don't think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones! 10 Even now the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

John cuts to the heart of their false assurances of salvation in verse 9. In verse 10 he did *not* say, 'Those who have not been dunked under water will be cut down and thrown into the fire.' The test/sign for sincerity and true conversion was not a physical water baptism, but rather whether the fruits followed.

The baptized who went astray

Simon: Acts 8

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they began to be baptized, both men and women. 13 Even **Simon himself believed, and after he was baptized**, he stayed close to Philip constantly, and when he saw the signs and great miracles that were occurring, he was amazed.

Acts 8:18 Now Simon, when he saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power too, so that everyone I place my hands on may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire God's gift with money! 21 You have no share or part in this matter because your heart is not right before God! 22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that he may perhaps forgive you for the intent of your heart. 23 For I see that you are bitterly envious and **in bondage to sin.**" 24 But Simon replied, "You pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of what you have said may happen to me."

What is clear from this historical account is that Simon was *not* saved in spite of the fact that he was baptized. This shows that baptism is not *sufficient* for salvation. This does not show that it is not a *requirement* of salvation. The observers, until the issue was revealed in Acts 8:18, likely considered Simon a brother, even though in reality he was not.

Ananias and Sapphira: Acts 5

Acts 5:5 When Ananias heard these words he collapsed and died, and great fear gripped all who heard about it.

Acts 5:10 At once she (Sapphira) collapsed at his feet and died.

These two were near enough to the Apostle Peter to know him and work with him directly. We can safely assume that they understood the 'Full Gospel'. We could presume they were baptized too.

Nevertheless, baptism or no baptism, they had their issues and the story ended poorly.

Those who claim the baptism requirement will certainly argue they were baptized. This discussion does not show that baptism is not part and parcel to the 'Full Gospel', but it does show that it is not a magic bullet that removes all sin problems in one swoop.

False Elders: Acts 20

Acts 20:29 I know that after I am gone fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Even from among your own group (of the elders, per verse 17) men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth to draw the disciples away after them.

Presumably (we have no record of it, but assumed in the eyes of the baptism requirement proponents), these elders had been baptized. However, they turned into wolves. Again, baptism is not a 'do it once and be free of sin forever more' event.

Paul and the Baptism

Paul's Conversion Testimony: Acts 26

Acts 26:1 So Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul held out his hand and began his defense:

Paul explains the process of his conversion. Note that there is no mention of a baptism in terms of his becoming right with God although Paul was baptized in Acts 9:18.

Acts 26:17 I (Jesus) will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

Jesus gives his commission to Paul above. He is to help transfer people into the kingdom of God by faith in Jesus, a concept with is further detailed below:

Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I (Paul) was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but I declared to those in Damascus first, and then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that **they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance.**

Baptism was not part of his commissioning: the message he carried. This testimony of his commissioning and his message in Acts 26 parallels his statement of the same in 1 Corinthians 1:17.

Paul's Conversion: Acts 9

Acts 9:17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, placed his hands on Saul and said, "**Brother Saul**, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The term "brother" indicates that Ananias considered Paul part of God's Church, and that prior to any baptism.

The Jailer's Baptism: Acts 16

Acts 16:30 Then he (the jailer) brought them outside and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They (Paul & Silas) replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household."

Paul and Silas said 'believe in the Lord Jesus', not 'be water baptized'. That came later.

Acts 16:32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him, along with all those who were in his house. 33 At that hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and all his family were baptized right away ...

When we pay attention to the chronology, the baptism comes after the believing, not before.

Christ did not send Paul to Baptize: 1 Corinthians 1

1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ **did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel** - and not with clever speech, so that the cross of Christ would not become useless. 18 For the message about the cross (the gospel) is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Some argue that Paul did not baptize for then some would use that as an excuse to cause divisions. See verses starting at 13b as evidence presented for this argument. Furthermore it is speculated that Paul delegated the baptisms to others to mitigate the division issue. However:

- 1) There is no need to speculate as to why Paul did not baptize. The text clearly states Paul's reason for not being sent to baptize: God decided the matter. Paul did not state that due to how people might react to a baptism performed by him personally he felt it would be better that he not baptize. Paul also did not argue that he delegated that activity to others in his group and therefore there was not need for him to do it. The straight forward text says that Christ did not send Paul to baptize. Why not let the writer tell us himself why he did not come to baptize? Why should I lend more weight and credence to a speculation some 2000 years after the fact than to the author's plain stated reason?
- 2) Paul did not stop preaching the gospel and winning souls because someone might have used that as an excuse to cause divisions. See verses starting at verse 12. Paul could have delegated the preaching of the gospel to others to mitigate any problems of converts becoming 'followers of Paul', but he did not. Paul could have stopped preaching the gospel as well. If Paul neither ceased nor delegated gospel preaching on account of this problem, why would he cease or delegate performing baptisms on account of the exact same problem?
- 3) Did Paul or God change the plan on account of the people's response:
 - a. Did Paul have a habit of changing God's plan on account of mankind's responses to that plan? This comes across as a stretch.
 - b. Was God's original plan to send Paul to baptize, but some took it wrong, so God changed His mind, and now he does not send Paul to baptize, but does allow others to baptize in lieu of Paul? This comes across as a stretch as well.
 - c. If God's original plan were to baptize, surely it would be more natural for Paul to have have corrected them writting, 'God sent me to baptized, but you have used that as an excuse to cause division, and you need to stop.'
 - d. If God had sent Paul to baptize, Paul would have continued to baptize regardless of the reaction, and he would not have delegated his own mission to others.
- 4) We find that God specifically sent John the Baptist to baptize (in water). Surely, if the partakers of John's baptism twisted the meaning of his baptism, John would not have delegated his personal mission to others, or decided to stop baptizing, but would have continued to baptize.

The speculation about Paul's motivation appears unreasonable upon further consideration. The narrative does not match the stated text. It does not match what we know about Paul in his zeal to fulfill his mission in the face of distractions. It does not match God's way of getting a mission accomplished.

Moving past those speculations, the sentence structure demands that the baptism is not part of the gospel. To verify this, let us use the same sentence structure for a different topic so that we can look at the baptism issue objectively. Let us stipulate that to make a pizza, we need dough, tomato sauce and cheese. Does it make sense for one to suggest, 'We don't have any dough, we should make a pizza.'?

Taking this thought further, now we assume the the gospel incorporates repentance and baptism. Does it make sense to say, 'Christ did not send me to baptize, but to bring people to repentance and to baptize them.'? Therefore, explicit in Paul's text is that Paul does not consider baptism as part and parcel to the (full) gospel.

Let us take a look at the text again ...

I Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did **not send me to baptize**, but to preach the gospel - **and not with**

clever speech, so that the cross of Christ would not become useless. 18 For the message about the cross (the gospel) is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Did you notice the parallel construction? They are very important to notice and understand. Just like Paul was not sent with clever speech, he was not sent to baptize. We highlighting the force of 'not send me to baptize' noting 'and not with clever speech'. Just like Paul provides a reason for 'For Christ did not send me to baptize', so he does likewise with 'not with clever speech so that the cross of Christ would not become useless.'

I cannot imagine anyone arguing that Paul did not come with clever speech for any other reason than the plain stated reason he gave: so that the cross of Christ would not become useless. Certainly any reasoning like, 'There would be an excuse to cause divisions otherwise' while hypothetical and speculative, would contradict the stated text.

The reason one does not argue against the plain stated text on the 'clever speech' part is because showing a different explanation differing from the plain stated text is not critical to keeping the baptism requirement teaching intact. Since that is the case, on what grounds does anyone argue that what Paul meant in 'God did not send me to baptize ...' is not 'God did not send me to baptize ...'?

We confirm our 'sanity check' approach above with the literary structure of the text. Here are the facts:

- God sent Paul to the Gentiles to save them by the preaching of the Gospel
- Paul was not sent by God to baptize

Baptism is clearly not an integral part of the Gospel. Only wearing heavily colored glasses could get us to believe something different.

Others sent to Baptize

Be that as it may, implicit in Paul's text is that others may be sent to baptize; if Paul is not sent, perhaps others are sent. For example, we see the message that Peter brought in Acts 2:38 & 10:48 specifically incorporated baptism. Philip was specifically sent to baptize in Acts 8:38 in a divine appointment. Ananias told Paul to be baptized in Acts 22:16. In summary, Peter, Philip & Ananias were sent to baptize, at least in these instances; whether there was a general calling on these three to baptize is unknown.

John 1:31 I (John the Baptist) didn't know him (Jesus), but **for this reason I came baptizing in water:** that he would be revealed to Israel." 32 John testified, saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on him. 33a I didn't recognize him, **but he (God) who sent me to baptize in water, he (God) said to me,** '

As noted above, John the Baptist was specifically called to baptize.

Nonetheless, Paul was not against baptism. Not only was Paul baptized, but Paul's group baptized believers in Acts 16:15 (Lydia of Thyatira in Philippi, with her household), Acts 16:33 (jailer and household) Acts 18:8 (Crispus, president of the synagogue, his family, and many other Corinthians) and Acts 19:3-5 (unnamed disciples in Ephesus).

The disciples of Jesus baptized in John 3 and 4, but were not sent specifically to baptize in Luke 10, but were commanded to do so in Mark 16:16 (It appears that Mark 16:16 was added by an editor in the Greek version (used as basis for our Bible), not by the original author in the Hebrew version.).

Historical Account of Peter, Apollos and Paul's Preaching: 1 Corinthians 15

After working through the issues the Corinthians brought to his attention, Paul further defines the preaching message introduced in chapter 1 verses 2 & 17.

1 Corinthians 1:2 to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints, with all those in every place **who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, their Lord and ours.

'Calling on the name of our Lord' is a reflection of the same concept written in Romans 10. These 'callers' are sanctified in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the **gospel** that I preached to you, **that you received** and on which you stand, 2 and **by which you are being saved**, if you hold firmly to the message I preached to you - **unless you believed in vain**. 3 For I passed on to you as **of first importance** what I also received - that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures**, 4 and **that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures**, ... Whether **then** it was I or they (Peter and Apollos), **this is the way we preach and this is the way you believed**.

Paul picks up where he left off in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 when he mentioned that God sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Implicit in 1 Corinthians 1 is that Apollos and Peter preached the same. This is explicitly confirmed in 1 Corinthians 15:11.

The context of his discourse is that he is reiterating, and reminding them of, the gospel brought to them - whether by Paul, Apollos or Peter - when they *first* believed, so that they continue believing, so that they will not have believed in vain. This gospel that Paul, Peter and Apollos brought did not highlight any baptism in Corinth or where ever they preached.

Historical Account of Paul's Preaching to Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 2s

1 Corinthians 2:1 **When I came to you**, brothers and sisters, I did not come with superior eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed the testimony of God. 2 For **I decided to be concerned about nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified**. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and with much trembling. 4 **My conversation and my preaching** were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not be based on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Paul is again reminding the Corinthians of the gospel that he preached. He unmistakably specifies that his preaching was Jesus Christ and him crucified. There is no hint of baptism.

The Sincere and Pure Devotion to Christ: 2 Corinthians 11

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds may be **led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ**. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus different from the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit than the one you received, **or a different gospel than the one you accepted**, you put up with it well enough! 5 For I consider myself not at all inferior to those "super-apostles."

The "Full Gospel" here is a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Some might express a sincere and pure devotion to Christ through the physical baptism; some might not. Should the one condemn the other, or use baptism as a litmus test of sincerity?

There is a danger in applying a Step 1, 2, 3 approach to bringing someone to Christ. Identifying a pattern is called inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning is from the Egyptians and the Babylonians. Do we really want to base our theology on a logic invented by the Egyptians and the Babylonians, both of which are symbols of captivity? The additional problem is, inductive reasoning is not foolproof, even in physical matters.

Every real move of God has seen people saved, baptized, healed, demon's cast out, etc. These moves are attacked by the previous generation of leaders. The leaders of these new movements look back, see a pattern, codify it and repeat it. But once codified, it becomes dead, and then when the next move of God comes that follows steps A, B, C, the 1, 2, 3ers attack and condemn the A, B, Cers. And the cycle of attacking, codifying, dying and attacking continues.

We find the "official" teaching on healing to be "Lay the hands on the sick". But some were healed at the shadow of Peter, others by the handkerchief of Paul. Today, some are healed by being pointed at, or even over internet streaming. Although these do not fall into the "official" teaching of healing, God did it anyway.

Receiving the Holy Spirit also has come in different ways: praying in the upper room, during a baptism, hearing the word, the laying on of hands, not laying on of hands, watching a streamed video, etc.

There are many verses describing coming to Christ. Call out to God, believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus rose from the dead, allowing Christ to enter the door, coming to Christ for a lighter yoke, receiving the gift of eternal life, drinking from His water, eating of His bread, believing on Him, etc. Then we have Cornelius, who did not do or say anything. Presumably, he just believed.

Some were baptized right away, some later, some probably never.

Paul mentions Baptism in Romans 6

Although Baptism was not the crucial part of Paul's gospel message or his mission, he did mention it.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? ***Are we to remain in sin*** so that grace may increase? 2 Absolutely not! ***How can we who died to sin still live in it?*** 3 Or do you not know that ***as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*** 4 Therefore ***we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.***

If one is not 'in Christ', he is not saved. Those who believe that baptism is a requirement for salvation typically interpret this text to mean that the literal physical dunking of a person brings a person into Christ.

The baptizer narrative is that the Romans were all believers, all believers are baptized, all Romans were then baptized; Paul is reminding the Romans that they were once baptized with 'were baptized'.

The implication, as some may argue, is that if one has not been physically dunked under water he is not in Christ and is enslaved to sin. He can also not take part in the resurrection. We will now present evidence that this interpretation is invalid.

First we must point out that this mention of baptism is in a discourse about the believer's relationship to sin under grace. The point of the discourse (Romans 6:1-23) is that believers shall not, and cannot, use grace as an excuse to continue sinning. Paul is not giving an all-encompassing teaching on baptism. The

baptism was mentioned to support his discussion of our relationship with sin, or better said, lack thereof.

That being the case, it is not clear that the terms 'baptized' and 'baptism' refer to dunking under water. I am not aware of any evidence presented that would indicate Paul is referring to a physical dunking under water. Therefore, the baptism requirement then simply assumes Paul is referring to a physical dunking under water. Let us look at the context for evidence as to whether Paul is writing *literally* or *figuratively*.

Romans 6:6 We know that **our old man was crucified with him** so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Were we *literally* crucified with Christ, or *figuratively*? Had all the Roman believers, to whom Paul is writing, been put up on a cross? And because they were crucified on a cross, sin no longer dominates them? Is this not clearly the literary device known as the analogy or symbol?

Romans 6:8 Now if we **died with Christ**, we believe that we will also live with him.

Likewise, have we *literally* died with Christ? Had all the Romans, to whom Paul is writing, passed away? And because they had literally died, now they live with Him? Really?

Romans 6:9 We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead, he is never going to die again; **death no longer has mastery over him**.

Romans 6:10 For the death he died, **he died to sin once for all**, but the life he lives, **he lives to God**.

Romans 6:11 So you too **consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus**.

The discussions about being baptized into Christ, being baptized into His death, being crucified with Christ, having died with Christ are all leading to this point: **consider** yourselves dead to sin and alive to God just as Christ already died to sin and is alive to God.

Of note is what Paul does not write: Paul does not write, 'This is why you were (water) baptized.', or 'This is why you ought to be (water) baptized.'

Truth be told, the baptism terms are used, just like the the crucifixion and death ones, to indicate our death from the spiritual standpoint.

Let us read the text again with that understanding.

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized **into his death**? 4 Therefore **we have been buried with him** through baptism **into death**, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.

Romans 6 is a teaching about why we can **consider** our relationship with sin in view of our state of being dead from the spiritual standpoint (grace vs. sin dynamic), not about the power of 'water' baptism supposedly has to bring us into Christ.

Paul repeats himself here:

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires, 13 and do not present your members to sin as instruments to be used for unrighteousness, but **present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead** and your members to God as

instruments to be used for righteousness.

Jesus died to sin. Jesus is alive to God. Jesus is our role model. Follow him. Don't sin.

Paul begins his discussion with dying to sin:

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase? 2 Absolutely not! How can **we** who **died to sin** still live in it?

Again, beating an old drum, Paul is not referring to a literal, physical death in this passage.

Paul is quite obviously using a literary parallel: 'baptized into Christ', 'baptized into His death', 'died to sin', 'crucified with Him', 'died with Christ'. In the interest of interpretation consistency we can say that since 'crucified with Him' and 'died with Christ' can in no way be interpreted as physical, in no way shall 'baptized into Christ' or 'baptized into His death' be interpreted as physical. All the phrases listed above are used figuratively as having the same meaning: we have experienced 'death' which leads to 'being alive'.

Summary: we are to **consider** ourselves as baptized, crucified and dead (as having happened past tense). *We do not read these verses to mean we shall dunk ourselves under water, crucify ourselves on a cross and then die.*

Paul is *not* stating that a physical dunking under water leads to being 'in Christ'. Paul is pointing out a spiritual reality. The summary of Paul's discourse listed in bullet form:

- If we were baptized in Christ, we have died, have been buried and have been given new life
- If we were crucified with Christ, sin no longer dominates us
- If we have died with Christ, we will also live with him
- Christ is dead to sin, but alive to God
- Conclusion: we shall **consider** ourselves dead to sin, and alive unto God just as Christ is dead to sin and alive unto God

The Apostle Peter makes the same comment here:

1 Peter 2:24a He himself bore our sins in his body on the stake, so that we might **die (apoginomai) to sins and live for righteousness ...**

'Dying to sins' is metaphoric, not literal.

To be interpretational consistent in Romans 6, if someone - such as those who say baptism is a requirement for salvation - demands to dunk the believer in water so that the believer may be 'in Christ', then he must also demand the believer 'to be crucified with Christ' and 'to die with Christ' (presumably on a cross) so that the believer is dead to sin; only then is the person freed from sin; only then is the person a new creature.

In the following verses we read:

Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God that though you were **slaves to sin**, you **obeyed** from the heart that pattern of teaching you were entrusted to, 18 and having been **freed from sin**, you became **enslaved to righteousness**. 19 (I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.) For just as you once presented your members as **slaves to impurity and lawlessness** leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as **slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification**. 20 For when you were **slaves of sin**, you were free with regard to righteousness. 21 So what benefit did you then reap from those things that you are now ashamed of? For the end of

those things is death. 22 But now, **freed from sin** and **enslaved to God**, you have your benefit leading to sanctification, and the end is eternal life.

Paul is addressing the same sin versus grace issue, but this time he is using as literary analogy device 'slavery' and 'freedom' instead of 'death' and 'being alive'. The references to 'slavery' are not to be understood as literal.

Starting in Chapter 7, Paul continues with a third literary analogy: the husband and wife situation, where the wife is free to remarry after the husband dies (yet another reference to 'death').

Jesus himself uses the exact same literary analogy device for baptism as a literary symbol for death. Paul likely got his inspiration for Romans 6:3-4 from Jesus.

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup I drink or be **baptized** with the **baptism** I experience?

Is Jesus asking his the hearers if they can be dunked under water like Jesus is about to be dunked underwater? Those who believe that Romans 6:3-4 is a physical dunking would have to think so in order to be consistent in interpretation. In spite of that, Jesus is asking if they are willing to die for the Lord as He is. Jesus equates baptism with his crucifixion and death. Paul does the same in Romans 6:3-4.

Romans 6 through the beginning of 7 can be summarized as such:

- We were dead to sin, but now we are alive to God
- We were slaves to sin, but now we are slaves to righteousness
- The law - our past guardian who enforces death on those who break the law - has died (we have been widowed), allowing us to marry Christ who sets us free from the law and the death it brings, so that we can live to God

Paul uses 'baptized', 'crucified', 'died', 'enslaved' and 'widowed' as literary devices (the analogy) to explain that we are dead to sin, and no longer obliged to obey it.

An objective reading of chapter 6 forces one to conclude that 'baptized into ...' is not indicating the literal dunking of a person, but rather is a literary device to describe a spiritual truth so that the Reader can understand.

For clarity we indicate that we are not arguing that the physical dunking of a person under water is an empty symbol devoid of meaning or power. We are arguing that the terms 'baptized' and 'baptism' in Romans 6 are used figuratively.

Colossians 3

A parallel text is found in the entire chapter of Colossians 3. The topic is, again, overcoming the fleshly nature. Specifically, we point out the tense of the verbs in these lines:

Colossians 3:1 Therefore, **if you have been raised with Christ**, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, 3 **for you have died** and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Have we physically, literally be raised with Christ (some say this phrase at a baptism, believing erroneously that the 'being raised' occurs at that point)? have we physically, literally died?

The answer to these questions are straight forward.

Paul is in no way equating the physical water baptism with any power to save. He is referring to a spiritual baptism, which of course, can certainly take place with a physical baptism; however we note that the physical water baptism is decidedly *not* a requirement for the spiritual baptism.

Reminders of Baptisms

It is sometimes proposed that Paul is reminding the Romans that they 'have been physically dunked under water'. However, there is no textual marker for this. That no marker exists is important because the apostles used markers to remind the Churches as to what was preached when they first believed. Here are examples with the marker set in bold:

- Ephesians 1:13 And **when you heard the word of truth** (the gospel of your salvation) – **when you believed in Christ ...**
- 1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, **the gospel that I preached to you, that you received** and on which you stand, ... 11 **Whether then** it was I or they (Peter and Apollos), **this is the way we preach and this is the way you believed.**
- 2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray **from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ** (from which the Church started)
- ...
- 1 Peter 1:24b And **this is the word that was proclaimed to you.**

In all these verses, the author is reminding the Church about the Gospel message they heard when they first believed. There are very clear markers to that effect; we are not left to speculation. We have *no* such marker in Romans 6 showing that Paul might be reminding the Romans about their physical dunking under water when they first believed.

If a reminder about a physical dunking is not in view, what is in view?

Romans 15:14 But I myself am fully convinced about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. 15 But I **have written more boldly to you on some points so as to remind you**, because of the grace given to me by God ...

Romans 6 is not a reminder about physical rituals they have done, but a reminder of spiritual instruction that apply to the believer.

The very fact that Paul spends so much time on the freedom from sin issue in Romans completely obliterates the 'baptism sets people free of sin based on Romans 6' teaching. Paul was writing to the Romans on account of the reports he heard from them. They therefore had described to Paul their struggle with sinning, whereas Paul is answering them.

The believers in Romans were having struggles with sin and what it means to be 'in Christ'. According to the baptizers, these same Romans were dunked under water. The dunking under water did not free them from sin (an expression of being 'in Christ'), as testified by the fact that Paul is working through this issue with them⁶. Paul is explaining what they need to do to get out of the struggle: **consider** yourselves dead to sin and alive for works of righteousness.

Here are other verses where the author is clearly reminding the reader of teachings.

6. Paul used a lot of words to explain this issue. Keep in mind that Paul did not have a laptop. Writing then was a real hassle compared to today. That Paul spent so much time on the issues shows how large the issue of sin vs. grace was at the Church in Rome.

1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason, I have sent Timothy to you, who is my dear and faithful son in the Lord. He will **remind** you of my ways in Christ, **as I teach them everywhere in every church.** (teaching)

2 Timothy 1:6 Because of this I **remind** you to rekindle **God's gift** that you possess **through the laying on of my hands.** (physical act)

2 Timothy 2:14 **Remind people of these things** and solemnly charge them before the Lord not to wrangle over words. This is of no benefit; it just brings ruin on those who listen. (teaching)

Titus 3:1 **Remind them** to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work. (teaching)

2 Peter 1:12 Therefore, I **intend to remind you constantly of these things** even though you know them and are well established in the truth that you now have. 13 Indeed, as long as I am in this tabernacle, I consider it right to stir you up **by way of a reminder,** (teaching)

2 Peter 3:1 Dear friends, this is already the second letter I have written I you, in which I am trying to stir up your pure mind **by way of reminder:** (teaching)

It is clear that the apostles remind the readers of things they have done, and also of instruction. Romans 6, as all of Romans per Romans 15:14, is clearly a refresher of instruction.

'In Christ' Fruit

Is being 'in Christ' proven by having experienced baptism, or by fruit?

2 Corinthians 5:17 So then, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away – look, what is new has come!

Galatians 2:17 But if while seeking to be justified **in Christ** we ourselves have also been found to be sinners, is Christ then one who encourages sin? Absolutely not!

1 Peter 3:16 Yet do it with courtesy and respect, keeping a good conscience, so that those who slander your good conduct **in Christ** may be put to shame when they accuse you.

Is there evidence of becoming a new creature, refraining from sin, showing good conduct, being slandered for good conduct? If yes, then he 'in Christ'.

2 Timothy 3:12 Now in fact all who want to live godly lives **in Christ** Jesus will be persecuted.

A mark of being 'in Christ' is being persecuted.

Colossians 1:28 We proclaim him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person **mature in Christ.**

Becoming mature in Christ requires instruction and teaching.

A longer passage that fits this discussion is here.

John 15:1 I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. 2 He takes away every branch that does not bear fruit in me. He prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it will bear more fruit. 3 You are clean already because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me — and I in him — bears

much fruit, because apart from me you can accomplish nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown out like a branch, and dries up; and such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, and are burned up. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is honored by this, that you bear much fruit and show that you are my disciples.

Are there any out there who are not showing themselves to be new creatures (good fruit), who are not persecuted in the least and are not mature but have been dunked under water? I am sure we can find a few. Simon in Acts 8 is a Biblical example. These 'dunked under water' individuals lacking fruit are decidedly not 'in Christ'.

Could we find individuals who have not been 'dunked under water', but do show the fruit above? Certainly. These are truly 'in Christ'.

It would be a shame to convince someone who is not truly 'in Christ' on account of his fruit that he is 'in Christ' on account of having been 'dunked under water'. It would likewise be a shame to convince someone he is not 'in Christ' even though he shows the true fruit of being in the vine on account of not having been 'dunked under water'.

The true Circumcision & Baptism of Colossians 2

There were some who claimed that to be saved, one had to be circumcised.

Acts 15:1 Now some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers, “**Unless you are circumcised** according to the custom of Moses, **you cannot be saved.**”

These from Judea were adding to the pure Gospel. Here are Paul's thoughts on the subject. We should be aware that the men from Judea came with clever arguments. Although not stated, but knowing that culture and the history in the Gospel Books of discussions with the keepers of the law, we strongly suspect their arguments would be:

- Moses commanded it
- The levites preached it
- There is a pattern where it was done by highly respected individuals: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- The Abraham's covenant, received by faith, with God is sealed by it. The new covenant is like Abraham's covenant because it is also received by faith.

Have I made a strong argument for adding circumcision to salvation? But ...

Galatians 6:15 For neither **circumcision** nor **uncircumcision** counts for anything; **the only thing that matters is a new creation!**

Paul repeats what we read in the verses about the new creation and being 'in Christ'.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Continuing with circumcision, we find:

Ephesians 2:11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh - who are called “**uncircumcision**” by the so-called “**circumcision**” that is performed on the body by human hands – 12 that you were at that time without the Messiah, alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now **in Christ Jesus** you who used to be far away have been **brought near by the blood of Christ**. 14

For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into one and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility, 15 when he nullified in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself **one new man** out of two, thus making peace, 16 and to reconcile them both **in one body** to God **through the cross**, by which the hostility has been killed.

Paul demotes the literal, physical circumcision, mentions that being 'in Christ' is 'by the blood of Christ'.

Philippians 3:3 For we are the **circumcision**, the ones **who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials** ...

Above, Paul highlights the characteristics of those who have undergone true, spiritual circumcision.

Colossians 2:11 In him **you also were circumcised - not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but** by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision done **by Christ**. 12 **Having been buried with him in baptism**, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

Paul indicates how this true circumcision takes place: by Christ. From the context, this is not a literal, physical circumcision. In the same way, the true, everlasting baptism into Christ is not literal, but spiritual; a literal, physical dunking under water is meaningless without the spiritual washing. It is clear in this verse that we are not literally, physically buried with Christ, nor have we literally, physically been raised with Him (yet).

Colossians 2:13 And even though **you were dead** in your transgressions and **in the uncircumcision of your flesh**, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. 14 He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by **nauling it to the cross**. 15 Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

It is quite clear that circumcision is a metaphor, just the certificate of indebtedness being nailed to the cross is, and as baptism is. The sentence structure and the discussion (struggle against sin) in Colossians 2:11-14 are parallel to the structure and discussion in Romans 6:3-4. The analysis of Romans 6 and 7 holds true here.

If someone from Judea had claimed that those who have not been *literally* baptized cannot be saved, what do you think Paul might say?

Washing (baptism) of the new Birth in Titus 3:5

Titus 3:5 he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing [Strong's 3067, loutron, from 3068; a bath, baptism, washing] of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, ...

Titus 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that **they which have believed in God** might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

For completeness: Strong's 3068, louo, is a primary verb and means to bathe (the whole person), wash. This is *not* the same term as 'baptism'.

The discussion in Titus, as in other texts, compares the works of iniquity and the works of righteousness. In the spirit of this text, the 'baptism' is spiritual, not a physical washing. The spiritual washing occurs when they first believe, not when they are dunked under water.

Galatians 3, John 4, I Corinthians 12

In Galatians 3, Paul is discussing the difference between living under the guardianship of the law, and living under faith. As before, Paul is not giving a teaching on baptism. Baptism is mentioned to aid in the listeners' understanding of guardianship and faith. This is not to say we cannot learn something about baptism.

Galatians 3:23 Now before faith came **we were held in custody** under the law, being **kept as prisoners** until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 Thus the law had become **our guardian** until Christ, so that we could be declared righteous by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer **under a guardian**. 26 For in Christ Jesus you are all **sons of God** through faith. For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have **put on Christ**. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer **under a guardian**. 26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith.

Paul is offering a comparison between being 'held in custody', being 'kept as prisoners', being 'under a guardian' and being a 'son of God', being 'baptized into Christ', having 'put on Christ'. It is difficult to understand these phrases as being used literally.

- Am I a literal, physical 'son of God'?
- Have I literally, physically 'put on Christ' such that I am carrying Him around on my shoulders?
- Am I a literal, physical prisoner?
- Am I literally, physically 'in Christ'?
- Am I am literally, physically dunked under water as a prerequisite for these spiritual truths to be valid?

Paul is using literary analogies to bring across spiritual truths.

Galatians 3:23-26 are associated with Galatians 3:26-28, but those are tied to a few other verses, which we reference here:

There is a veiled reference to baptism by Jesus in the Gospel of John.

John 4:14 But whoever **drinks some of the water** that I will give him **will never be thirsty again**, but the water that I will give him **will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.**"

This expression of drinking water is parallel to these words from Paul:

I Corinthians 12:12 For just as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body—though many—are one body, so too is Christ. 13 **For by⁷ one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**. Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, **we were all made to drink of the one Spirit**.

This verse is in turn parallel to the ones just after Galatians 3:23-25.

Galatians 3:26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. 27 For all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female – **for all of you are one in Christ Jesus**.

7. sometimes translated as 'in'

All these verses are tied to each other. Going back to John 4, In typical Hebrew fashion, Jesus is saying the same thing twice:

- 1) But whoever drinks some of **the water that I will give him will** never be thirsty again,
- 2) but **the water that I will give him will** become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.”

It is beyond discussion that Jesus is not talking about a physical H₂O that we drink or springs up out of us. Jesus is speaking of spiritual water.

In typical Hebrew fashion, Pauls says two thing twice in 1 Corinthians 12:12

- 1) For just as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body—though many—are **one body, so to is Christ**.
- 2) For by⁸ **one Spirit** we **were all baptized** into **one body**.
- 3) Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, we **were all made to drink** of the **one Spirit**.

Twice we read 'one body', twice we read 'one spirit'. 'body' appears first in the first appearance, then second in the second. 'Spirit' appears first in the first appearance, then second in the second. In the structure of the sentence, it is clear the verb phrase 'were baptized' is equated with the verb phrase 'made to drink' (both verb phrases are in the past tense).

Again, it is beyond discussion that we are not drinking physical water, but rather spiritual water. The *spiritual* drink is then the *spiritual* baptism, not a *physical* baptism.

In the 1 Corinthians 12 discussion about the gifts of the Spirit (not about dunking people under water), Paul uses the metaphor of the body and its members and the allegory about drinking of one Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit flow when we are baptized (immersed, fully covered) by the Holy Spirit. We state emphatically that these are not to be understood as *literal, physical*.

Paul is certainly not stating that the gifts of the Spirit are only available to those who have been physically dunked in water (Peter's experience with Cornelius in Acts 10 proves this. See Spiritual Gifts and Salvation in Acts 10 on page 54).

There is nothing here that would speak of a physical dunking of a person under water. With all the evidence, it is reasonable to refer to the baptism in all these scriptures only as metaphors. Paul is clearly talking about a *spiritual* baptism (immersion, washing), not a *physical* one.

Paul's Gospel to Unbelievers: Romans 9 - 10

Romans 10:8b that is, the word of faith that we preach, 9 because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. 11 For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

The question is, is this statement true only for the Romans who are already believers? The baptizers claim that the full gospel is not shown in the epistles, for the recipients of the epistles are already saved, and therefore already baptized; therefore, there is no need to mention baptism, as it is only done once. However ...

8. sometimes translated as 'in'

Romans 9:1 I am telling the truth in Christ (I am not lying!), for my conscience assures me in the Holy Spirit – 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed - cut off from Christ - for the sake of my people, my fellow countrymen, 4 who are Israelites.

The discourse begins in Romans 9:1 where Paul specifically points out that he is now talking about *unbelievers*, not the Roman believers. He goes on to lament the state of the lost Israelites. After this, Paul returns to his beginning point, the lost Israelites ...

Romans 10:1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God on behalf of my fellow Israelites is for their **salvation**. 2 For I can testify that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not in line with the truth. 3 For ignoring the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking instead to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law, with the result that there is righteousness for everyone who believes.

The Israelites want to be righteous, but are going about it in the wrong way. Paul then begins to discuss what it takes for these unbelievers to become righteous. Skipping over Romans 10:8a, we find

Romans 10:14 How are they to call on one they have not believed in? And how are they to believe in one they have not heard of? And how are they to hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

It is self-evident that Paul is talking about reaching those who are *not believers*: these cannot be saved without ever having heard the message. Furthermore, they have never heard the *word of faith* before. Skipping back a few verses.

Romans 10:12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. 13 For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Paul writes that “Jews” and “Greeks” (anyone) who call upon the Lord shall be saved. But to call on the Lord, they must first hear the preaching, and these are not believers per verses 14 & 15.

Conclusively, Paul then is giving a lesson about how unbelievers get saved. He is not giving a lesson to the already believing Romans about how to stay saved.

Romans 10:8b that is, the word of faith that we preach, 9 because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. 11 For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Romans 9:1 through 10:15 is a discourse that cannot be split up. One cannot argue that part one and part three concern unbelievers, and part two concerns believers. That would be a overt convolution of the plain context. The “someone preaching” [verse 14] preaches to the unbelievers. The unbelievers are the “Jews and the Greeks” [verse 12] and the “fellow Israelites” [verse 1]. The preaching [verse 14] is the “word of faith” [verse 8], while the “word of faith” is defined in verse 9: “confess with your ...”

Therefore, the way to get saved described in Romans 10:9 is *specifically for unbelievers* (those who have not yet heard). Notice that baptism is not listed as part of the plan for salvation by Paul. The baptizer's claim that the Gospel discussed in the epistles is only associated with believers is demonstrated to be false. Their claim that the Gospel is not shown as presented to unbelievers is demonstrated to be false.

Furthermore, it can be safely assumed that new believers were being added to the group in Rome. Certainly, if baptism was a requirement for salvation, Paul would have reminded them in Romans 10.

In any case, arguing that baptism was not stated because all the Romans were baptized does not hold water; explicitly assumed in this argument is that every single one of the believers had already been baptized. And we know this how?

Certainly Paul would have injected, "And for the new believers, don't forget to baptize them; for their salvation is not complete without it." If baptism is absolutely necessary for the Gospel, how is it that Paul fails to mention it here?

Paul's Gospel to the Ephesians

Paul documents how the Ephesians first believed.

Ephesians 1:13 And **when** you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation) – **when** you believed in Christ – **you were marked with the seal** of the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory.

Paul is giving a historical account of how it came to be that they received the seal of the promised Holy Spirit: they believed. There is no mention of baptism.

Ephesians 4:20 But you did not learn about Christ like this, 21 if indeed you heard about him and were taught in him, just as the truth is in Jesus. 22 You were taught with reference to your former way of life to lay aside the old man who is being corrupted in accordance with deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and to put on the new man who has been created in God's image – in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth.

Paul details his message to the Ephesians as the first learned about Jesus. Note that this is a condensed discussion of John 3:1-21 and also mirrors Romans 6 - 7.

Pauls declaration of the Gospel to Timothy

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David; such is my **gospel**,

Paul clearly defines his gospel. Baptism is not mentioned.

Baptism of John

John's baptism was somewhat radical for his time.

Mark 1:4 In the wilderness John the baptizer began preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Until this time, according to the law, one could only receive forgiveness of sins via the tithe-levite-sacrifice rites. One had to bring the tithe to the Levite priest to be sacrificed so that the wrath of God would not fall on the assembly (see Numbers 18, especially verses 5, 19, 21 and 23). To a degree, John was stepping on the Levite Priest's toes by usurping their job of cleansing Israel from sin.

Question: Did John's baptism truly forgive sins?

Matthew 3:6 and he was baptizing them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

Matthew 3:11 "I baptize you with water, for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am - I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Mark 1:4 In the wilderness John the baptizer began preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 People from the whole Judean countryside and all of Jerusalem were going out to him, and he was baptizing them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

Mark 1:8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Luke 3:7 So John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

Luke 3:12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

Luke 3:16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water, but one more powerful than I am is coming—I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Acts 13:24 Before Jesus arrived, John had proclaimed a baptism for repentance to all the people of Israel.

If the baptizers are to be consistent with interpreting the text 'baptism for the forgiveness of sin', they have to use the verses about John the Baptist to mean that baptism is required for the forgiveness of sins, and this in the Gospel Books. However, that causes problems for their cause. One, they can no longer claim that it is impossible to preach baptism as a requirement for salvation pre-cross. Two, they have to note that there is no recording of Jesus or the disciples every preaching that baptism is a requirement for the forgiveness of sin. Three, our analysis of the above and below scriptures remain untouched.

When one is intellectually honest, one admits that 'now that you have repented, you will now be baptized as a public testimony thereof.' is a perfectly honest interpretation of what is meant. Taking into account the rest of what we know about baptism, we consider this the preferred interpretation.

Furthermore ...

Matthew 9:3 Then some of the experts in the law said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming!" 4 When Jesus saw their reaction he said, "Why do you respond with evil in your hearts? 5 Which is

easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?

The experts of the law became irritated for Jesus claiming to forgive sins. Going back to John, the experts of the law were well aware of the fact that only the Levite priest making offerings and performing rituals on behalf of the sinner had the power to forgive sin. But the experts at the law never became irritated with John the Baptist for usurping the job of the Levite. This means they never understood John's baptism (immersion under water) as having true sin forgiving properties.

John 4:1 Now when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was winning and baptizing more disciples than John 2 (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were), 3 he left Judea and set out once more for Galilee.

Baptism was a sign that he/she was a follower of the group doing the baptism, not for literal forgiveness of sins. When Jesus discovered that the Pharisees knew that He was attracting quite a following, He moved on. He knew that the Pharisees would become jealous and begin plotting to kill Him prior to the appointed time.

Baptism of Jesus' Disciples

John 3:22 After this, Jesus and his disciples came into Judean territory, and there he spent time with them and was baptizing. 23 John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming to him and being baptized.

John 3:26 So they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the one who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River, about whom you testified — see, he is baptizing, and everyone is flocking to him!”

John 4:1 Now when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was winning and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were),

We find yet another verse in John 3:26 that indicates baptism is a sign of being a follower of a group. John's own people were becoming jealous that Jesus was baptizing more people (gaining a larger audience).

We find the disciples were baptizing pre-cross. There is nothing hindering them from declaring baptism as a pre-requisite for entering the kingdom of God. The baptism they did was simply a public acknowledgement that the baptized now followed Jesus as their teacher.

There is neither need nor justification to add anything else to the meaning of the baptism.

Peter and Baptism

Speaking to the 'men of Israel' (from verse 12) Peter says ...

Acts 3:19 **Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out**, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord

No baptism was preached as a means of salvation in this text.

Spiritual Gifts and Salvation in Acts 10

Acts 10:43 About him all the prophets testify, that **everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.**" 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the message 45 The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were greatly astonished that the **gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles**,

The Holy Spirit is only going to fall on those who are in Christ.

Romans 12:5 so we who are many are one body **in Christ**, and individually we are members who belong to one another. 6a And we have different gifts according to the grace given to us.

The gifts are specifically only given to those who are 'in Christ'.

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us (written to believers) grace was given according to the measure of the gift **of Christ**. ... 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up **the body of Christ**, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God - a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature.

Again, only saints get the gifts of the spirit.

This next verse is not regarding spiritual gifts, but is relevant.

John 14:15 If you love me, you will obey my commandments. 16 Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever – 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you.

Cornelius loved and obeyed by verse Acts 10:43: ... About him all the prophets testify, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

And we shall not forget this one ...

1 Corinthians 12:1 With regard to spiritual gifts, **brothers and sisters** (in Christ), I do not want you to be uninformed.

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are different ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are different results, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. 7 **To each person** (who is in Christ) the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all.

Paul informs us that all believers have received some gift. Paul does not include people who are not 'in Christ' as those who can expect to receive a gift of the Spirit. Now, back to Acts 10.

The gift of the Spirit fell on the house of Cornelius at the exact time when Peter was explaining the way for the forgiveness of sins: believe in Him. Peter's message is very similar to Paul's message as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15. At this point, they are 'in Christ', have had their sins forgiven (per verse 43) and have started their salvation journey.

The 'dunking under' baptism occurred after the forgiveness of sins and after the believers were 'in Christ'. Therefore, the baptism was/is not a requirement for the forgiveness of sins or for being in Christ.

Furthermore, we have more information about the conversion from Cornelius.

Acts 11:13 He (Cornelius through the three messengers) informed us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, 14 **who will speak a message to you by which you and your entire household will be saved.**'

Acts 11:15 Then as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as he did on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, as he used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 Therefore if God gave them the same gift as he also gave us after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to hinder God?"

Acts 11:18 When they heard this, they ceased their objections and praised God, saying, "So then, **God has granted the repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles.**"

The facts are here: Peter was to bring the message that would bring salvation. Salvation was made evident for Peter's group and the hearers of the occurrence in Acts 11 when the house of Cornelius began to speak in tongues just as Peter and the others did in the beginning. Baptism came after. Again, baptism is not a requirement for salvation according to the chronology of the events. Neither Peter, nor his companions would have understood baptism as a requirement for salvation.

Discussions of Requirements of Salvation in Acts 15

Acts 15:5 But some from the religious party of the Pharisees who had believed stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise the Gentiles and to order them to observe the law of Moses."

The religious party of the Pharisees inserted circumcision into salvation. In the ensuing discussion whether circumcision is required for salvation, Peter responds with his reciting of the happenings in Acts 10.

Acts 15:7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that some time ago God chose me to preach to the Gentiles so they would hear the message of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, has testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, 9 and he made no distinction between them and us, **cleansing their hearts by faith.** 10 So now why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they are."

Peter reiterates that the cleansing occurs by faith. If baptism were required for salvation, it seems odd that Peter would fail to mention it here. Remember, they are discussing what it takes to be saved.

The Baptism that saves in I Peter 3

Peter 3:21 And this prefigured baptism⁹, which now saves you - not the washing off of physical dirt¹⁰, but the pledge¹¹ of a good conscience to God - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

This verse is a little tricky. Peter, in discussing the salvation of Noah, likens the salvation through the flood to our salvation. He mentions the term baptism. He says we are saved by baptism.

We must pay close attention:

- In Noah's case, the waters were the danger, not the salvation; the arc was the salvation.
- Noah never went under water or was cleansed of his sin.
- Noah was saved in that he was not 'dunked' under water.
- Those who were 'dunked' under water were sinful and died in their sin.

In a very real sense, this is an anti-analogy for the 'baptism that saves'.

Colossians 2

In the beginning of this study, we mentioned the clever theologians from Judea on page 7. Here we bring to light why the men from Judea were mistaken.

Peter's argument against circumcision as a requirement for salvation is that it is testing the Lord and adding an unnecessary yoke (Acts 15:10), that salvation comes through faith in the Gospel (Acts 15:7), cleansing their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8) and grace (Acts 15:11). Peter highlights the condition of the heart as a key component on whether one is saved or not. Peter does not believe that physical circumcision has anything to do with the condition of the heart.

Paul and Barnabas mention that God did miraculous signs and wonders among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12). Admittedly, there is not much to work with in understanding why they were against circumcision as a requirement for salvation. Oddly enough, Paul circumcises Timothy in Acts 16:3.

Simeon's argument against circumcision quotes a scripture about God calling Gentiles and concludes that no additional difficulty is set (Acts 15:19). Not a lot to work with here.

What is telling is that although the group is discussing what it takes to be saved, no one mentions water baptism as a requirement. If there is a discussion with the top leaders of the Christian movement about what is not required, they must, to have a complete discussion, mention what is required. The only details the apostles mention in terms of salvation are 'faith in the Gospel' (defined in I Corinthians 15), a theme which is repeated throughout the epistles.

Although Paul does not give us much material to work with in Acts 15:12 in determining why circumcision is not a requirement for salvation, he does give us material to work with in Colossians 2.

9. Remember, this term was originally not a 'religious' term, but literally means 'washing'.

10. From the NET note 41: the Greek "the removal of the dirt of the flesh," where flesh refers to the physical make-up of the body with no moral connotations.

11. 'pledge' is rendered as 'answer' in the KJV, which is the direct translation from the Greek.

But before we go there, we wish to bring your attention to this.

1 Peter 3:21 **baptism**, which now saves you, **not the washing off of physical dirt, but**

Peter's structure above is the same as Paul's structure below.

Colossians 2:11 **In him** you also were **circumcised - not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but** by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, **through the circumcision done by Christ**.

Is anyone going to argue that what Paul means is that we are circumcised with human hands, and this religious ritual is what counts toward salvation? In the same way, one should not argue that the physical baptism alluded to by Peter saves us. While we are looking at Colossians 2 ...

Colossians 2:11 **In him** you also were **circumcised - not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but** by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, **through the circumcision done by Christ**. 12 **Having been buried with him in baptism**, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

In Colossians 2, Paul discusses two rituals: (1) circumcision and (2) baptism. Paul is straightforward in stating that 'In Him' we (Christians) were circumcised 'without hands ...' It is abundantly clear Paul is not talking about a physical circumcision, but rather a spiritual one. I believe this is the point the men from Judea missed. Peter and Paul are much more interested in the state of the heart than physical rituals.

It is uncontroversial Paul is indicating that there is a physical circumcision and a spiritual circumcision. It is also uncontroversial that the physical circumcision by a human act is meaningless compared to the spiritual performed by Christ. In the interest of consistent interpretation, the baptism (washing) is also not physical, but spiritual.

Colossians 2:13 And even though you were **dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh**, he nevertheless **made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions**. 14 He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

In verse 13 the metaphors of 'uncircumcision' and being 'dead' is defined here as dead in transgressions. This is pointing back to the 'uncircumcision' and 'buried with him in baptism' in verse 12a. In verse 13, the metaphor of being 'alive' is defined here as being forgiven of our transgressions, pointing back to 'having been raised' (from the washing/baptism) in verse 12b. Paul is using physical metaphors to teach about spiritual reality.

Colossians 2:16 **Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to** food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days – 17 **these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ!**

All the things that Paul lists out in verse 16 are religious rules and rituals; the list is certainly not exhaustive. This list incorporates physical activities. He specifically says that we should not allow ourselves to be judged by these activities, for they are only a shadow of reality.

The men from Judea were very focused on a physical connection with the spiritual, thinking the physical would save them. Instead of working on the heart, they were working in the flesh.

Baptism Rituals in Mark 7

Jesus also had something to say about the focus on performed rituals.

Mark 7:4 And when they (Pharisees and the experts in the law from verse 5) come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they **wash**. They hold fast to many other traditions: the **washing** of cups, pots, kettles, and dining couches.

The term 'wash' is: Strong's Key Word 0907 is a derivative of Strong's 0911. For thoroughness, we provide this definition as well.

Strong's Key Word 0911: baptō; a primary verb; to overwhelm, i.e. cover wholly with a fluid; (literally) to moisten (a part of one's person), or (by implication) to stain (as with dye); dip.

The term 'washing' is: 909, baptisimos, from 907; ablution (ceremonial or Christian): — baptism, washing.

Mark 7:5 The Pharisees and the experts in the law asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashed [Strong's 449, aniptos, from (as a negative particle) and a presumed derivative of 3538; without ablution: — unwashed] hands?"

In the tradition of baptism, handed down by the Pharisees and experts of the law, these Pharisees believed that if those who did not perform baptism, were not clean. Jesus answers them:

Mark 7:6 He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, **but their heart is far from me. 7 They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men.**'

Mark 7:8 **Having no regard for the command of God, you hold fast to human tradition.**" 9 He also said to them, "**You neatly reject the commandment of God in order to set up your tradition.** 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.' 11 But you say that if anyone tells his father or mother, 'Whatever help you would have received from me is corban' (that is, a gift for God), 12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother. 13 **Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this.**"

Specifically, we have Jesus on record saying that the baptism ritual of washing cups is meaningless. I don't think Jesus had anything against the physical washing of cups per se. The problem highlighted in verses 6 & 7 is that 'a heart that is far from him' eventually leads to 'worshiping in vain', 'teaching as doctrine commandments of me' & 'nullifying the word of God'. Jesus gives an example of the general trend, and states that this heart problem does not lead to only one tradition, but many.

And this underscores the issue: once we have a single problem, it procreates.

Mark 7:20 He said, "What comes out of a person defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the human **heart**, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly. 23 All these evils come from within and defile a person."

The point is, neglecting the baptizing of cups does not make one unclean, but rather the list of activities above. Jesus puts the focus on the heart. The clever religious leaders and teachers of the law put the focus on rituals, claiming that the physical rituals have some positive spiritual effect, although they don't.

To be clear, the problem started with the heart. If the Pharisees had a heart toward God, I suspect God would honor the washing of cups as their outward declaration of wanting to be clean. However, the

Pharisees put the ritual as more important than the heart. *The Pharisees put their faith into the ritual, instead of into God's work.* People are clean in the heart, not in their outward appearance.

Colossians 2 reflects Romans 6: both discuss baptism in the spiritual sense and the effect this has in cutting off the old, bringing in the new.

Nothing in Colossians 2 would indicate Paul believed the physical baptism is a requirement for salvation. The contextual evidence suggests that Paul does not believe physical water baptism is a requirement for salvation, anymore than he believes physical circumcision is a requirement for salvation. In contrast, Paul certainly believes that spiritual baptism, and spiritual circumcision, is necessary for salvation.

Jesus also did not believe that any physical baptism could make anyone clean. We take His word as the ultimate authority.

Back to the Baptism that Saves in I Peter 3

Remember, the term 'baptism' means 'to immerse', 'to wash' and is a derivative of 'to dye'. Also remember that 'baptism' is in view in the verses of interest.

Peter's sentence is 'the baptism that saves is not A, but rather B'. 'not A' is 'not the washing off of physical dirt'. Considering the dictionary version of baptism, what is Peter referring to? If it is not the literal, physical immersion/washing under water, I'll eat my hat. The baptizers can never accept this straight forward interpretation. But at this point, they must come up with something, well anything, such that 'not A' is not the water baptism.

And this is the highlight in Peter's text: Peter refers to the literal, physical 'dunking under water' baptism where he says, 'not the washing off of physical dirt'. Peter explicitly says that the physical dunking under water does not save! Peter does not leave us without hope, but goes on to explain what does save us where he defines the true, spiritual baptism, '(is) the pledge [answer] of a good conscience to God.' God is calling each one of us to have a clean conscience. We put our faith in God washing us, not a water baptism ritual. The conscience has been stained by sin. God wants us to be cleansed of that. The spiritual cleansing (washing, baptism) takes care of that, not a physical cleansing (washing, baptism).

To make this text easy to understand, we breaking down Peter's teaching on salvation and baptism's place in it:

- 1) Noah was saved through the flood water
- 2) This salvation event is a type of baptism
- 3) Baptism saves us; and for clarification so that no one misunderstands ...
 - a. Not the physical dunking under water
 - b. But rather our answer to God's call to us to have a cleansed conscience, free of the effects of sin

Feel free to review the verse. I believe you will find the verse makes a lot more sense.

The baptizers, to keep their teaching, must not only show that 'not the washing off of physical dirt' is not the water baptism, but also that 'but the pledge of a good conscience to God - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ' is in fact the water baptism. It is clear to the objective and honest analyzer of this text that this is a very tall order.

Summary: The washing (baptism) of our conscience occurs when we answer his call to us. This is very similar to Paul's preaching about calling to God to save us as discussed under 'Paul's Gospel to Unbelievers: Romans 9 - 10' on page 48. This leads us to suppose that the literal, physical baptism is then

a physical act declaring that the baptized has called to God to cleanse his conscience. Notice also, that John's baptism was associated with the confessing of sins. Everything ties together.

And just like the cleaning of the house as discussed in 'Foreshadowing of Baptism in Leviticus' on page 28, the 'dunking under water' is a physical act declaring the house as having been made clean.

As this is the case, it only makes sense to do the baptism right after one has 'answered the call', and certainly not before.

The baptizers, to save their doctrine, would have to show that 'the washing off of physical dirt' does not reference water baptism, but 'the pledge of a good conscience to God - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ' does. This is very difficult.

Purifying the Soul: I Peter 1

Two chapters prior Peter writes ...

I Peter 1:22 You have **purified your souls by obeying the truth** in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

How does one purify the soul? Baptizing/washing it! Does the soul have a body that can be physically baptized? No! The soul is purified by obeying the truth. The baptism that saves is not the physical baptism washing away physical filth, but the baptism of obeying the truth!

Peter's call to baptism in Acts 2

The baptizers claim that Peter made water baptism a requirement for the hearers in Acts 2 to be saved. But is this true?

We already know from 'Chronology of Baptism in Matthew 28' on page 29 that this is certainly not the case. We baptize because someone is a disciple, not to make someone a disciple. But let us continue:

John 4:1 Now when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was winning and baptizing more disciples than John (although **Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were**),

Presumably, Peter baptized according to the same model (with repentance) as John the Baptist, for Jesus' message was the same as John's message. It would be odd for Peter to leave repentance out. Furthermore, how does one get a clean conscience without repenting? Repenting is answering God's call for a clean conscience by saying, 'My conscience is nagging me about my sins, forgive me, I'll put my evil deeds away.' This was discussed in 'The Baptism that saves in I Peter 3' on 56.

In Acts 2, Peter follows the pattern of what he had been doing for approximately three years.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were acutely distressed and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What should we do, brothers?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one 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.

The baptizer interpretation for this text is the following:

repentance + water baptism = salvation

Understanding Peter's history, we know it would only be natural for Peter to tie repentance to baptism. This being the case, we are certainly not required to understand Peter's call for baptism as an essential

ingredient for salvation. We can interpret Peter's call to baptism as, 'We've always done it this way, let us keep the tradition.' The new issue was the gift of the Holy Spirit. This interpretation is as follows:

repentance = salvation

baptism = open testimony of belonging to the Jesus group

Acts 2:41 So **those who accepted his message** were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added.

Only those who accepted the message were baptized. According to 1 Peter 1, accepting the message leads to the new birth, not water baptism. Those who accepted the message were disciples, disciples who were then baptized, just as Jesus commanded in Matthew 28.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make **disciples** of all nations, baptizing **them** (the disciples) in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

First we *make the disciple*, then we *baptism the disciple*. The person does *not* become a disciple at baptism.

Considering the facts we have learned about Peter's and Paul's thoughts on baptism shown throughout this document, we can know that Peter never considered the dunking under water as an essential ingredient for salvation. The dunking under water was a physical act that declared what one believed in his heart and was an initiation into the group of believers. This is similar to ...

Romans 10:9 because if you **confess with your mouth** that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. 11 For the scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."12 12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. 13 **For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

I do not believe God is too particular as to whether one confesses¹² or calls with the mouth, or otherwise confesses or calls with the physical act of dunking under water. Some how or another, we have to call out to the Lord. The very act of dunking under water is two symbols in one: (1) Jesus going to the grave and rising again (found in Romans 10:9) and (2) becoming inwardly clean.

Notwithstanding the fact that Cornelius showed no outward confession, there may be no physical sign.

Bottom line: let us not make a reformation movement out of water baptism!

Both the confession and the dunking under water are a witness of the decision and condition of the heart. Therefore, the physical dunking under water has the same effect as the oral confession. Therefore, it is not the physical dunking or the confession per se that saves, but that the heart is expressed and calling on the Lord.

Romans 10:14 How are they to call on one they have not believed in?

Believing comes first (as we saw with Cornelius), then the outward expression.

We look at the Greek language in Acts 2:38 in detail under 'Acts 2:38 (Greek)' on page 65.

12. What do we do with someone who cannot speak? Is he hopelessly lost?

Mechanical scripture interpretation

The mechanical interpretation of scripture comes when one reads the scripture as if it were a 'how-to manual'. An instruction sheet is an example: the sheet that may come with a shelf you bought in a big box and wish to put it together.

2 Timothy 4:13 When you come, bring with you the cloak I left in Troas with Carpas and the scrolls, especially the parchments.

The above verse is a very good example of this. The pure mechanical interpretation method ignores the context of this verse: this is not a 'law' for you the reader to follow, but rather for the recipient of the letter, namely Timothy. In no way does God to expect all who read this to head over to Troas with Carpas, search for Paul's cloak and scrolls, and when found, bring them to Paul.

The mechanical 'God said, I believe it, that settles it' approach is admirable, and in some places legitimate, but this approach is simply not applicable in all situations. We must take a 'sanity check'.

Romans 15:6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I've had well-meaning leaders in Churches explain to me that since only the voice is indicated here, the voice, and the voice only, is allowed in praising God in worship. This Church used no instruments of any kind ... Is Paul really giving us an all encompassing how-to instruction on proper worship? Did Paul really say, 'No instruments are allowed in glorifying God.'?

1 Timothy 2:8 So I want the men to pray in every place, *lifting up holy hands* without anger or dispute.

Is Paul giving us a how-to instruction set on the proper use of hands during prayer: if the hands are not lifted, the prayer is null and void?

What about this verse?

1 Timothy 2:15 But she (speaking of women) will be saved through childbearing, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

The mechanical interpretation is that women are saved *via* childbearing; the implication is that women who have not had children cannot be saved. Is Paul advocating a new Gospel? Is Paul requiring that women have children in order to be saved?

For Women

Child Birth + Faith + Love + Holiness + Self-Control = Salvation

Obviously not. All we have to do is a 'sanity check' by reading other Pauline texts. Never is there any indication that only women who have had children are candidates for salvation.

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one 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."

Is Peter advocating that a person is saved *via* water baptism? And those who are not water baptized are not saved? Considering the fact that Peter in his discussions of the Gospel never mentions this requirement, and he explicitly states that the water baptism does *not* save in 1 Peter 3:21, we know this mechanical interpretation approach leads to invalid doctrine.

Note: the two verses from I Timothy noted above literally surround one of the most 'mechanically' interpreted verses in scripture leading to invalid doctrine: namely, that women are not allowed to speak or teach in Church. See my document 'Rethinking Women's Role in the Assembly and in the Family' where I we research this topic by analyzing 'the acts of the women' as recorded from Genesis to Revelations.

The result of this teaching is that half the Church is paralyzed. A half-paralyzed Church is a half-effective Church. If we cannot get God's order right on this, the Church has no chance to fulfill this:

Ephesians 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God—a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature.

Peter's call without Baptism in Acts 3

Acts 3:19-20 Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he may send the Messiah appointed for you—that is, Jesus.

We duly note that the propagators of the water baptism Gospel strongly lean on the Apostle Peter's preaching in Acts 2. Why do they ignore this same Apostle's Gospel preaching in Acts 3? Peter did not mention water baptism as a prerequisite for 'sins being wiped out', 'times of refreshing' or 'God sending the Messiah appointed for you'. The lack of mentioning water baptism in association with the Gospel reveals that water baptism is not a prerequisite for salvation in the mind of Peter.

How many times must we read - from scripture no less - about the Gospel being preached without water baptism to understand that water baptism is not a prerequisite for entering the narrow gate?

Mark 16:16

Mark 16:16 The one who **believes** and is **baptized** will be saved, but the one **who does not believe** will be condemned.

Some claim this provides evidence that baptism is required for salvation. But is that the case? That may be implied, but that is certainly not forced.

It must be pointed out that the 'saved' may only be pointing to 'believes'. The second part of the verse is a replica of John 3:18.

John 3:18 The one who believes in him is not condemned. The one **who does not believe has been condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.

The fact that it does not say, 'but the one who is not baptized shall be condemned.' is telling.

Furthermore, the last section of Mark 16 is questionable on its authenticity. It is likely one of the most questionable scriptures in all of the Bible. Some translations leave it out. It is not wise to build a reformation movement on the most questioned text in the Bible.

Finally, this phrase as a command is found no where else. We need to be careful about building a doctrine on a single verse.

Acts 2:38 (Greek)

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were acutely distressed and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What should we do, brothers?"

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one 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.

The baptism here is undoubtedly the physical baptism. Some read this to mean that repenting, and being baptized results in getting the forgiveness of sins.

But, there are four problems with this.

The word 'for'

First, we need to zero in on the preposition 'for'. 'for' as multiple meanings. It can either mean 'in order to get'¹³ or 'in support of'¹⁴.

I am going to the store *for* milk.

I am going to the store *in order to obtain* milk

I am going to the store *for* mother.

I am going to the store *in support of* mother.

Well, which one is? The doctrine of salvation is left to the chance of a flip of the coin?

As in English, the Greek term *eis*, from which one reads the rendering of 'for', has many meanings.

Strong's 1519, *eis*, a primary preposition; to or into (indicating the point reached or entered), of place, time, or (figuratively) purpose (result, etc.); also in adverbial phrases: — (abundant-)ly, against, among, as, at, (back-)ward, before, by, concerning, + continual, + far more exceeding, for (intent, purpose), fore, + forth, in (among, at, unto, -so much that, -to), to the intent that, + of one mind, + never, of, (up-)on, + perish, + set at one again, (so) that, therefore(-unto), throughout, til, to (be, the end, -ward), (here-)until(-to), ...ward, (where-)fore, with. Often used in composition with the same general import, but only with verbs (etc.) expressing motion (literally or figuratively).

Looking at the Greek does not help much.

In the Elberfelder 1905 version (German) we find:

Apostelgeschichte 2:37 Tut Buße, und ein jeder von euch werde getauft auf den Namen Jesu Christi **zur** Vergebung der Sünden

'zur' has the meaning of 'into' or 'towards'. There is a feeling of movement towards something. Note that *eis* primarily means 'to' or 'into'.

Let us see what the Edition de Genève 1979 (French) has to say:

Actes des Apôtres 2:37 Repentez-vous, et que chacun de vous soit baptisé au nom de Jésus-Christ, **à cause du** pardon de vos péchés

'à cause du' means 'because of', 'due to', 'for the sake of'.

At the end of the day, we cannot decipher what is ment by 'for' in this text.

13. Joe is going to the store 'for' milk. Joe is going to the store 'in order to get' milk.

14. Joe is getting milk 'for' his mother. Joe is certainly not getting milk 'in order to get' his mother,

Salvation is referring to either 'believing' or both 'believing' and 'be baptized'?

Second, if 'repenting' is all that is required for salvation, then the baptism is an add-on. The 'in order to get salvation', if that is the meaning, would refer only to the 'repenting', and not the 'baptism'. This is similar to the discussion for Mark 16:16.

The intent of the verse is then, 'Repent to be saved and now that you have begun your walk with Christ, get baptized.' This rendition reflects what the disciples and John the Baptist had been doing since the beginning of their ministries. 'repentance' leads to salvation, 'baptism' is declaring one's dedication to a person/group.

The absence of faith

Second, it is widely conceded that faith is required for salvation. However, faith is not explicitly mentioned in the preaching. Therefore, this verse cannot be considered a complete treatise on the literal process steps to salvation.

The Context

Third, the discussion starts in Acts 2:14.

Acts 2:21 And then **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

This is an exact replica of the Gospel as presented in Romans 10; Romans 10 is void of any water baptism.

Acts 2:23 this man, who was handed over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you **executed** by nailing him to a cross at the hands of Gentiles. 24 But **God raised him up**, having **released him from the pains of death**, because it was not possible for him to be held in its power.

This is an exactly replica of the Gospel as represented in I Corinthians 15:3-4 and I Peter 1:21. The central theme of Acts 2:25-36 is that Jesus rose.

The 'Gospel' according to Peter did not start at Acts 2:38, but rather at Acts 2:14. The baptizers overlook the fact that the Gospel as defined above in Romans 10, I Corinthians 15 and I Peter 2 is found in Peter's discourse starting in Acts 2:14. There it is for all to read. The term 'baptism' comes after this.

After the Gospel message, the people ask:

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were acutely distressed and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What should we do, brothers?"

The King James Version renders 'pricked in their heart'. The two Greek words are:

- Strong's 2588, kardia, heart, feelings, emotions
- Strong's 2660, katanusso, from 2596 and 3572; to pierce thoroughly, i.e. (figuratively) to agitate violently ("sting to the quick"): — prick.

By all accounts, these men were already believers at this point, just like Cornelius. They were ready for action.

I Corinthians 3:7 So neither the one who plants counts for anything, nor the one who waters, but God who causes the growth. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters work as one, but each will receive his reward according to his work.

Sometimes the planting and the watering and the harvesting come at different times. Sometimes it can happen all at once. The audience saw people speaking in foreign languages they had not learned. They saw something spectacular.

Not every preaching session will happen like this. We would like it to be as such, and we can aim for it, but as any evangelist will tell you, this does not happen every time we talk to someone on the street. Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, is more than likely going to focus on major/exciting occurrences, not where nothing of note happened.

In every case, we are not forced by this text to say that water baptism is required for salvation. One may *imply* it, but it is not a force conclusion. There is nothing in the text that disallows the following interpretation: the audience was transferred from death into life, were then saved, and therefore got baptized thereafter as a testimony that they were now part of the Jesus group.

Fourth and finally, when we take into account what Peter wrote about the water baptism in 1 Peter 3 (and by extension 1 Peter 1:23), we know that Peter does not believe that water baptism saves. Therefore, he did not mean it as such in Acts 2:38. He simply followed through with what he had been doing for 3 years.

Be Baptized: Acts 22:16

Acts 22:16 (spoken by Ananias to Paul) And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.'

Some read this to mean that the physical baptism washes away sins. There is no doubt that the physical baptism is in view. But, 'having your sins washed away' can easily be associated with 'calling on his name' as opposed to the baptism, which is the key theme in Paul's Chapter 10 of the letter to the Romans.

In contrast, we never read Paul (or any other apostle) making a long dissertation about the merits of being saved via physical baptism, even though all the apostles made it a habit to remind their respective congregations what they taught.

And we remind the reader as we noted in 'Paul's Conversion: Acts 9' on page 34:

Acts 9:17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, placed his hands on Saul and said, "**Brother Saul**, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Saul, the previous oppressor and murderer of the saints, was labelled 'brother' prior to the baptism. It was clear to Ananias was not just a brother in the Jewish ancestry since, but also in the spiritual sense. Disciple first, then baptism. This is the pattern we find in the Gospel books and in the Book of Acts.

And specifically, never one time does Paul indicate that he, or anyone else, was saved via water baptism.

Born of Water and Spirit: John 3:5

An educated man by the name of Nicodemus approaches Jesus. Jesus begins telling him about how to obtain eternal life. In that discussion, Jesus mentions 'water'. Some claim that the reference to 'water' in Jesus 3:5 is the physical dunking under water. If true, this lends evidence that baptism (dunking under water) is a requirement for salvation.

Internal Conflicts with Baptism Requirement Narrative

The first problem is that this claim violates the baptizer's own narrative. Was baptism for the cleansing of sin preached outside of the Book of Acts, or was it not? If baptism as a necessity for salvation was not preached outside of the Book of Acts, they cannot use this scripture as evidence of their dogma.

But, if Jesus was telling Nicodemus that one *must* be water baptized to be saved pre-cross, then the thief on the cross *must* have also been baptized to be saved. If a crowbar is *required* to remove lug nuts from a car wheel, and oops, I don't have a crowbar, the lug nuts are not coming off. If water baptism is *required* by Jesus pre-cross to be saved, then Jesus was breaking His own teaching by promising that the repentant, believing thief would be with Him in paradise. We also wonder ... why did Jesus never mention 'water baptism' as a required ritual for entering life/the kingdom/etc. at any other time in the Gospels if in fact 'water baptism' is? Odd, is it not?

Furthermore, Jesus asks Nicodemus why he does not know about this new birth. This means that Jesus would expect someone versed in the Torah to know. Does the Torah in any way mention a water baptism as a means to obtain eternal life (or otherwise having a right standing with God)? Nothing comes to mind. The tithe-priest-sacrifice system (see my "Rethinking the Tithe" document) made Israel right with God, but not a physical water baptism.

Internal conflicts within a doctrine is evidence that the doctrine is error. We continue with our analysis of this passage as the baptizer claim fails on more points than just internal conflicts, and because this verse is one of their anchor arguments. We wish to be able to defend the truth from multiple directions.

John 3:3-6

Let us move to the scripture at hand:

John 3:3 Jesus replied, "I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is **born from above**, he cannot **see the kingdom of God**." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time, can he?" 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be **born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot **enter into the kingdom of God**. 6 What is **born of the flesh is flesh**, and what is **born of the Spirit is spirit**.

The sole proof of this argument I am aware of is that (1) water baptism requires water, (2) every mention of water in the Gospel of John means literal water, and (3) Jesus mentions water in this verse about becoming born again. We look at the issue in full context.

Uses for the term 'water' in the Gospel of John

Here are other locations where the term 'water' appears in the Gospel of John.

- John says three times that he baptizes in water (1:26, 31, 33)
- Jesus turns water into wine (2:1-10)
- Jesus says we must be born of water and the spirit (3:5)
- John baptizes at Aenon near Salim because "there was much water there." (3:23)
- Jesus promises the woman by the well living water (4:4-28)
- The lame man wants to get healed in the troubled waters of Bethesda (5:7)
- Jesus walks on water (6:19)
- Jesus invites the thirsty to come to him and drink (7:37-39)
- Jesus heals blind man in pool of Siloam (9:6-7)
- Jesus washes his disciples feet (13:4-5)
- Water flows from Jesus' side (19:34)

As one can plainly see, 'water' obviously does not automatically refer to 'water baptism'. In the vast majority of cases, 'water baptism' is *not* in view. The baptizer argument is a patent example of the non sequitur fallacy.

Baptism cannot be identified in the Context

As we peruse the context we cannot find any hint that 'born of water' is baptism. Also, we find what 'born of water' really means right under our noses if we would simply read the full discourse noting standard Hebrew sentence structure.

The full discussion starts in verse 1 and ends in verse 21. We should read it all to determine what Jesus may mean with 'water'.

John writes ...

John 3:14 Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
15 **so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.**"

The 'being born from above' mentioned in John 3:3 is explained further in John 3:13-15 without any comment that could be understood as water baptism.

Reading further ...

John 3:16 For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that **everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.** 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. 18 The one **who believes in him is not condemned.** The one **who does not believe has been condemned** already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.

John continues the discourse about being born again and seeing the kingdom. There is no comment that could be interpreted as representing baptism in the framework of who is, or is not, condemned.

Still working through who sees the kingdom and who does not ...

John 3:19 **Now this is the basis for judging:** that the **light** has come into the world and **people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.** 20 For **everyone who does evil deeds hates the light** and does not come to the light, so that their deeds will not be exposed. 21 But the one **who practices the truth comes to the light**, so that it may be plainly

evident that his deeds have been done in God.

John details how every soul is judged. Those who are in the light do good, those who do evil remain in darkness. One could reference the first book of John for more insight. There is nothing in John 3:19-21 (or in 1 John) that could remotely be considered a 'dunking under water' baptism. The 'baptism' association is literally invented out of the text; it simply is not there.

Is John mysteriously alluding to baptism as a requirement for salvation in John 3:5, but failing to note it plainly when he details how to know if one is truly born again? This seems highly unlikely.

'Born of Water' references what?

I believe we have successfully, from context, shown what that the water reference in John 3:5 is *not* baptism. If that is the case, what is 'born of water' referring to?

To untangle the riddle, we must understand a typical Hebrew communication structure: dualism and analogy. Pick a verse out of either Proverbs or Psalms. You will find that the writer (often) explains the same thing twice (or makes an opposite comparison); there will be an analogy, and a specific life example.

I have randomly picked out the following verse from Psalm 24:3-4:

- 1) Who is allowed to ascend the mountain of the Lord?
- 2) Who may go up to his holy dwelling place?
- 3) The one whose deeds are blameless
- 4) and whose motives are pure,
- 5) who does not lie,
- 6) or make promises with no intention of keeping them.

Lines 1 & 2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6 are repetitions of the same thought.

Now look at Proverbs 7:26-27:

- 1) for she (the prostitute) has brought down many fatally wounded,
- 2) and all those she has slain are many.
- 3) Her (the prostitute's) house is the way to the grave,
- 4) going down to the chambers of death.

Lines 1 & 2, 3 & 4 are repetitions. Lines 1 & 2 explain in practical terms the metaphors in lines 3 & 4.

Considering that the speaker and the listener are Hebrew, let us look for parallelisms.

The context of John 3:5 is here:

John 3:3 Jesus replied, "I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is **born from above**¹⁵, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be **born** when he is old? He cannot **enter his mother's womb and be born a second time**, can he?"

Nicodemus is clearly thinking of the natural birth in verse 4.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is **born of water and spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 What is **born of the flesh is flesh**, and what is **born of the Spirit is spirit**. 7 Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must all be **born from above**.' 8 The

15. Some translations render 'above' as 'again', which is by implication. Strong's 0509 literally means 'above'.

wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Keep in mind that the term 'wind' and 'spirit' is the same Greek word *pneuma* [Strong's 4151], from which we have the English word 'pneumatic.' Here we have another example of dualism, analogy and word play wrapped up in one discourse. But back to the story ...

Nicodemus is getting more than he bargained for. Nicodemus praises Jesus as being a great teacher from God in verse 2. Jesus, changing the subject and disregarding the praises, tells Nicodemus that one must be 'born from above'. Nicodemus notes that we are born once, and cannot crawl back into the womb to be born a second time in verse 4. Jesus answers Nicodemus in verse 5.

Now is a good time to ask ourselves, what would Nicodemus have understood? Is there any way for Nicodemus to have understood 'born of water' as 'water baptism'? From the text ... obviously not. And from the baptizer's own narrative, water baptism was *not* preached as a requirement for salvation. Taking their own narrative, it would then be impossible to Nicodemus to have understood 'born of water' as 'water baptism'.

In the context of the story, two births are discussed: the natural birth Nicodemus is aware of, and the spiritual birth, which is new revelation. Considering that Hebrews speak in dualisms and analogies, and that the speaker is a Hebrew and the hearer is a Hebrew, and the first birth aligns with 'water' while the second birth aligns with 'spirit'. Take a look at the parallel verses:

- 'born of spirit' of verse 5 equates to 'what is born of the spirit is spirit' of verse 6
- 'born of water' of verse 5 equates to 'what is born of the flesh is flesh' of verse 6

The typical Hebrew dualism is difficult to miss.

In John 3:19-21 we see the same parallel dualism:

- those who are born of the flesh live according to the flesh/darkness
- those who live according to the spirit live according to the spirit/light
- those who live avoid the light, do so to avoid having their deeds shown for what they are
- those who live in the light, show the deeds for what they are

Another parallel is found in John 3:12-13:

If I have told you people about earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven—the Son of Man.

- (although unstated, it is understood) those who are from the earth are of the first birth
- those who are from heaven are of the second birth

Let us show in table form the parallel dualism of the entire passage:

Reference	Flesh	Spirit
John 3:5	Born of Water, i.e the Physical Birth	Born of Spirit, i.e. the Spiritual Birth
John 3:6	Born of Flesh	Born of Spirit
John 3:12	Earthly Things	Heavenly Things
John 3:13	Descended from Heaven	Ascended into Heaven
John 3:19	Love of the Darkness	Love of the Light
John 3:19	Evil Deeds	Good Deeds
John 3:20-21	Not coming to the Light	Coming to the Light
John 3:20-21	Hiding Evil Deeds	Showing Good Deeds

No doctorate degree in biblical interpretation methods is required: the dualism between Flesh and Spirit throughout the entire passage is unmistakable. Inserting 'water baptism' into verse 5 does not fit. Inserting the earthly, physical, fleshly birth does fit.

Everyone is born of the flesh; there is nothing we can do to erase that experience. It keeps us in the darkness and bound to evil works. But we can be born of the spirit to overcome the birth of the flesh. This dualism is found countless times in Bible. Baptism is closely related to this dualism in Romans 6 and Colossians 2. However, those baptisms are, from context, clearly a reference to a spiritual baptism, not a water baptism.

With that said, in what substance is the baby when born for the first time? You guessed it. Water. When the water breaks we know that the baby is 'on the way'. The baby is born 'out of water'; this is the first birth. Now the baby has to be born from above; this is the birth of the spirit. For completeness, the 'born from above' is also 'born of the spirit'.

The 'born of water' then is simply the first normal human birth. Yes, we agree: 'water' in the Gospel of John means 'water'.

Jesus answers Nicodemus' question as to how one is born again: 'No Nicodemus, one is not born a second time fleshly, but rather spiritually.' This is what Nicodemus would have understood.

We submit that interpreting the text with standard Hebrew parallelism is a stronger approach than making a suspicious, casual link between 'water' and 'water baptism.'

The 'new birth' is described in two other locations in the New Testament. We look at those now.

Giving Birth in James 1

James 1:17 All generous giving and every perfect gift is **from above**, coming down from the Father of **lights**, with whom there is no variation or the slightest hint of change. By his sovereign plan he **gave us birth** through the **message of truth**, that we would be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

The 'message of truth' gives us a 'new birth'. This gift is 'from above', from the 'lights'. Jesus refers to himself as having come from above in John 3:13. That new birth results in first fruits (the deeds practiced 'in the truth to the light' noted in John 3:21). No baptism is mentioned.

Being Born Again in 1 Peter 1

The Apostle Peter also speaks of being 'born anew'.

1 Peter 1:21 Through him you now **trust in God, who raised him from the dead** and gave him glory, **so that your faith and hope are in God**. 22 You have **purified your souls by obeying the truth** in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart. 23 You have been **born anew**, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring **word of God**. 24 For all **flesh** is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass; the grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And **this is the word that was proclaimed to you**.

Notice that the purification process is from obeying the truth, similar to James 1. The connection between 'word' and 'seed' is made here:

Matthew 13:1 On that day after Jesus went out of the house, he sat by the lake. 2 And such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat to sit while the whole crowd stood on the shore. 3 He told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground where they did not have much soil. They sprang up quickly because the soil was not deep. 6 But when the sun came up, they were scorched, and because they did not have sufficient root, they withered. 7 Other seeds fell among the thorns, and they grew up and choked them. 8 But other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. 9 The one who has ears had better listen!"

... with explanation ...

Matthew 13:18 "So listen to the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the **word about the kingdom** and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches what was sown in his heart; this is the seed sown along the path. 20 The seed sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. 21 But he has no root in himself and does not endure; when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 The seed sown among thorns is the person who hears the word, but worldly cares and the seductiveness of wealth choke the word, so it produces nothing. 23 But as for the seed sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word and understands. He bears fruit, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown."

The 'word about the Kingdom' is the 'seed' that brings the 'new birth' for the new tree that shall bear much fruit. Even though 'watering the seed' would fit in the parable, it is not used. There is nothing in the Matthew 13 that would indicate that a 'water baptism' is required to make the seed grow. Hearing the word, and then getting through the birds, persecution and seduction of riches, results in fruit.

As a review from 'The Baptism that saves in 1 Peter 3' on page 56, Peter writes that salvation comes *not* from physical water baptism, but rather from our answer to God's call to have a clean conscience.

Tying 1 Peter 1 back into John 3, Peter believes in being born anew (otherwise known as 'born again' or 'born from above'). From the text, this is a result of 'trusting in God, who raised him from the dead', not from water baptism. This trust then results in having our souls purified because they obeyed the

truth. From the text, this purification comes from hearing the 'word of God', not the water baptism, in spite of the fact that water does purify. This 'word of God' is the same as the 'message of truth' in James 1:18. Neither includes or remotely implies water baptism.

Furthermore, and don't miss this, 'this is the word that *was* proclaimed to you'. Peter is reminding them of what he *preached* to them past tense when he first came to them. Peter did *not* preach that physical baptism is a requirement of salvation; he taught the exact opposite as described in 1 Peter 3! This is the exact same teaching we see from Paul in Romans 10 and 1 Corinthians 15.

To whom did Peter preach *this* Gospel leading to the new birth sans baptism? We read about it here:

1 Peter 1:1 From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those temporarily residing abroad (in **Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia**, the **province of Asia**, and **Bithynia**)

The claim that 'water baptism as a requirement for salvation was preached everywhere by the apostles' is demonstrably incorrect.

God's Children in John 3

The author of John 3 gives us a hint about being born again in John 1:

John 1:12 But to all who have received him – those who believe in his name – he has given the right to become God's children 13 – children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband's decision, but by God.

Children begin childhood by being born. To be a child of God, one has to 'believe in his name'; no water baptism can be identified in this text, as per usual. And again, we have the dualism between being born fleshly (by human parents) and being born spiritually (of God).

John's Gospel: 1 John 1

1 John 1:5 Now this is the gospel message we have heard from him and announce to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

This is the message John heard from Him (Jesus), this was the message recorded in John 3, this was the message that was given pre-cross. Notice the lack of anything concerning water baptism. Notice also that the condition (see 'if' statement) for the blood of Jesus cleansing us of sin is walking in the light (performing works of righteousness as opposed to walking in the dark performing works of wickedness).

Being Born of God: 1 John 5

1 John 5:1-3 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God, and everyone who loves the father loves the child fathered by him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God: whenever we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments.

Speaking of being born, here is an opportune time for the author of John 3 to explain about the necessity of water baptism in 1 John 5. Notably, he does not write, 'Everyone who is water baptized ...'. There is nothing here in his discussion about the process of being born of God that could remotely be associated with water baptism.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing in any of John's writings (Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Revelations) that could, without a very strong imagination, associated water baptism as a necessity for being a child of God.

Eternal Life: John 5:13

1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

The phrase 'eternal life' is reused from John 3. The author is talking about the same 'eternal life'. What things did John write about in 1 John? Did he write about the believer undergoing water baptism? No!

John repeats the phrase, 'By this we know ...'. He is giving us a way to test ourselves and others to see who of the 'talkers' are also the 'walkers'. A key verse is here:

1 John 5:1 **Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God**, and everyone who loves the father loves the child fathered by him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God: whenever we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments. And his commandments do not weigh us down, 4 because **everyone who has been fathered by God conquers the world**. ... 19 We know that we are from God, and the **whole** world lies in the power of the evil one.

Those who believe in Jesus conquer the world, that is, the world's evil desires; those who do not believe in Jesus do not conquer the world, but rather give themselves to it. And ... those who give themselves to the world prove - by their actions - that they do not believe in Jesus, and have no part in him, and do not have eternal life.

The point is that 'Believing in Jesus' is not simply an intellectual confession, but rather it *necessarily* leads to conquering the world's wicked desires.

But ... getting back to the water baptism discussion, we note that there is not one hint of water baptism being discussed by John 'so that you may know that you have eternal life'. We can say with confidence then that water baptism has nothing to do with obtaining or having eternal life.

As a side note, John also did not refer to a 'prayer of salvation' as the key to knowing we have eternal life. if you really want to know if you have eternal life, spend time camping in the full book of I John and John 3:1-21. These are parallel texts and are best understood in tandem.

As a final note, it is self-evident that the entire book of I John concerns the Gospel, that is, how to be born of God (a concept repeated in I John). The water baptizers must agree with my claim, for they contend that John 3 is the Gospel for it discusses how to be born again (be born from above). Therefore, the argument that the full Gospel is solely found in the Book of Acts is false.

Jesus' Gospel: John 5:24

John 5:24 "I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears my message and believes the one who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life.

The text above and below this parallel the discussion in John 3, and define 'my message' referenced above. There is not the hint of water baptism to be found here.

Lifted Up: John 3:14-15

One last comment that buries the Water Baptism Gospel claim:

John 3:14-15 Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

Jesus is giving instruction for those who live post-cross, for those who are able to see him lifted up. He says quite clearly that those who *believe* in him may have eternal life. There is *no* mention - or even hint - of water baptism as instruction for those who live post-cross.

The Water Baptism Gospel claim is odd in that there exists not a single instance where Jesus instructs his disciples that after his death and resurrection, they must baptize people under water to start the new birth.

Conclusion

Just like the 'born of water' birth requires that a seed find an egg, the 'spiritual birth' requires that the message find good ground. The word is a seed, that when sprouts, is a new birth.

All throughout the scriptures we read about receiving the message and that believing that message results in new life. We read in no location in scripture that the spiritual seed requires physical water to sprout. And here we lean on common sense: claiming that spiritual seed requires physical water to sprout is preposterous.

There is nothing in John 3 or in any other discussions of being 'born again' or 'born from above' that could be rationally linked to water baptism.

The Blood Cleanses

Ephesians 1:7 In him **we have redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace

1 Peter 1:18-19 You know that from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors *you were ransomed* — not by perishable things like silver or gold, but **by precious blood** like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, namely Christ.

1 John 1: But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and **the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Ephesians 2: But now in Christ Jesus you who used to be far away **have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

Colossians 1:20 and through him to **reconcile all things to himself by making peace through the blood** of his cross—through him, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Acts 20:28 Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that **he obtained with the blood of his own Son.**

Hebrews 9:12 and **he entered once for all into the most holy place** not by the blood of goats and calves but *by his own blood*, and so he himself secured eternal redemption.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since **we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,**

Revelation 5:9b and **at the cost of your own blood you have purchased for God persons** from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

Revelation 12:11 But **they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony,

We have many scriptural references specifically stating that the the blood cleansing us from sin. We note that we do not have one single verse stating that "The immersion into dihydrogen monoxide cleanses us from sin." This lack of scriptural backing will make any serious student pause to think.

We cannot pull out our pencils, erase the term 'blood', write in 'water baptism' and correctly believe we are doing ourselves favors. Try reading the above, replacing 'blood' with 'water baptism' to get a feel for how silly it is.

We point out that lifting water to a place of equivalence to the blood is an insult to Jesus and His cross.

Gospel Preaching as Recorded in Epistles

Crucial to the baptism argument is that the only record of what was preached to unbelievers is limited to the Book of Acts. The reason for this is that the epistles, when discussing the gospel, do not mention water baptism as part of the Gospel.

However, the above references in the epistles record what the first preachers presented as the Gospel to unbelievers. While this is not a record of the preaching in action, as we find in acts, it does record, from the Apostles own recollection, what they did preach.

- 1) Romans 9 - 10: Paul details what he preached to unbelievers
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:17 Paul states that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel
- 3) 1 Corinthians 2:2 Paul generalizes what he preached to the Corinthians
- 4) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul states what he, Peter and Apollos preach every where they go
- 5) Ephesians 4:20-24 Paul reminds the Ephesians what they first learned about Jesus
- 6) 2 Timothy 2:8 Paul reminds Timothy of the essence of the Gospel
- 7) 1 Peter 1:22 Peter describes the Gospel he preached in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia
- 8) 1 John 1:5-7 John tells us what he preached as the Gospel

The authors of these references did not give water baptism any weight whatsoever as an essential ingredient in - or even an ancillary portion of - the Gospel message. The only rational conclusion one should make is that water baptism is not a part of the Gospel.

Using the 'pattern' argument, we can know from the list of incidences above that the first apostles neither thought that water baptism cleaned anyone of sin, nor was it essential to the Gospel.

Conclusion

I have altered the text to make it fit the baptizer narrative:

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven—only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons and do many powerful deeds?' 23 Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Go away from me, you who were *never baptized!*'

Ephesians 5: For you can be confident of this one thing: that no person who is immoral, impure, greedy, or *unbaptized* has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Seen in this light, the baptizer claim becomes ludicrous. This is a case of 'losing the plot' and 'missing the big picture'.

Did you realize that there is no concept in the epistle writings about what it takes to be saved that Jesus did not teach. If Jesus or the writers of the epistles thought that water baptism was a requirement for salvation, don't you think they would have told us so?

We hope that this in-depth study on the baptism has helped you discern between fact and fiction. The verses and arguments purposed to show that baptism is a requirement for salvation have no merit.

Once we step back from our studies, we can simply say that the literal, physical baptism is an outward declaration of the declaration to be a disciple of Jesus.

Nothing stands in the way of being saved, having sins forgiven, being set free of demons, healed of diseases, etc. during the water baptism ritual. However, those events are not tied to water baptism. If a police man saves me from a mugger at night, I should not claim that the night saved me, and salvation can only come by night.

There is no need to perform a gymnastics version of Biblical interpretation to learn which type of baptism saves. Indeed, the form of baptism that truly saves is most directly stated here:

I Peter 3:21 ... the pledge of a good conscience to God - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ ...

Feel free to peruse the appendix for a quick overview of verses associated with baptism and salvation.

The Simple and Pure Devotion to Christ

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ

Ending our discussion of the baptism's role in salvation, we can simply say that salvation grows out of with having a simple and pure devotion to Christ, and nothing more. Don't add anything to it!

Appendix

In the following, we show the various verses associated with baptism, eternal life, and the kingdom.

'Baptism' Verses

To help us understand what the word 'baptism' means, we list the locations where the associated words appears in the Greek.

In some verses, it is clear in which way the term 'baptism' is used. In others, it is not so clear; one has to think about it.

Perusing the hits, we note that 'baptism' is used in three ways:

- 1) The religious ritual of dunking a person under water
- 2) The washing of an object; the term was not a 'religious' term only used in religious settings; in that time, it was used to denote washing & cleaning
- 3) A literary symbol or analogy standing for a drastic conversion from one state to another; note that these are not 'empty' or 'meaningless' symbols

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it. This is my body." 23 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many.

It should be self-evident that the bread was not his body and the wine was not his blood. These were analogies (and references to the tithe law as described in Numbers 18:30).

John 6:50 (Jesus, speaking of himself) This is the bread that has come down from heaven, so that a person may eat from it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats from this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Again, it is self-evident that no one has literally eaten Jesus' flesh as a cannibal. Also clear is that Jesus did not come down as a loaf of bread.

We have to be careful not to attribute verses written to mean something different than the author's intent (assign literal meaning where it does not belong; or an analogy meaning, where it does not belong). That can change the story drastically.

Some guidelines:

- When we have a historical account of a person is being baptized (dunked under water), we can be very certain that the *religious ritual* is in view. See Matthew 3:6.
- When a baptism of the Holy Spirit is in view, we are reading about a *literary symbol or analogy* of what happens spiritually. See Matthew 3:11.
- The washing of cups is clearly the *washing of an object*. See Mark 7:4.

- In speaking about the baptism of Moses or of the Flood, the religious ritual is not in view, but rather the author is using a literary analogy or symbol to teach a spiritual point. See 1 Corinthians 10:2 & 1 Peter 3:20.
- Baptism is used as an analogy or symbol in reference to Jesus' death and resurrection. See Mark 10:38.

When we are reading text, and it is a teaching that incorporates baptism, then we have to be careful. It could be either the dunking of a believer or a literary symbol/analogy used to bring across a spiritual truth. And this is where we have to pay very close attention to rule out as much speculation and personal assumption as possible.

Two highly contentious verses are ...

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many as were **baptized** into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with him through **baptism** into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were **baptized** into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

It would be unscholarly to simply assume without thought that the term 'baptized' is the religious ritual, or a literary analogy. It is one or the other. But which one is it? One has to investigate the context, and the author's other writings on the subject for clues. Mark 10:38 would be strong evidence that Paul us using 'baptism' as a literary symbol or an analogy.

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup I drink or be **baptized** with the **baptism** I experience?

The terms 'baptised' and 'baptism' are references to the death and resurrection, not Jesus being dunked under water. Since that is the case, why should we assume that the term 'baptized' in Romans 6:3-4 - noting that Jesus' death and resurrection is in view - refers to dunking under water?

baptizo (verb form)

These are all the scriptures where Strong's Key Word 0907 [baptizo, from a derivative of 0911; to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet); baptize; wash] appears in the new testament.

Strong's Key Word 0907 is a derivative of Strong's 0911. For thoroughness, we provide this definition as well.

Strong's Key Word 0911: bapto; a primary verb; to whelm, i.e. cover wholly with a fluid; (literally) to moisten (a part of one's person), or (by implication) to stain (as with dye); dip.

New English Translation

Matthew 3:6 and he was **baptizing** them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

Matthew 3:11 "I **baptize** you with water, for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am—I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John to be **baptized** by him in the Jordan River. 14 But John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be **baptized** by you, and yet you come to me?"

Matthew 3:16 After Jesus was **baptized**, just as he was coming up out of the water, the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming on him.

Matthew 20:22 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

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Mark 1:4 In the wilderness John the baptizer began preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 People I I from the whole Judean countryside and all of Jerusalem were going out to him, and he was **baptizing** them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

Mark 1:8 I baptize you with water, but he will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1:9 Now in those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was **baptized** by John in the Jordan River.

Mark 6:14 Now King Herod heard this, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the **baptizer** has been raised from the dead, and because of this, miraculous powers are at work in him."

Mark 7:4 And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they **wash**. They hold fast to many other traditions: the **washing** of cups, pots, kettles, and dining couches.

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup I drink or be **baptized** with the **baptism** I experience?" 39 They said to him, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be **baptized** with the **baptism** I experience,

Mark 16:16 The one who believes and is **baptized** will be saved, but the one who does not believe will be condemned.

Luke 3:7 So John said to the crowds that came out to be **baptized** by him, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

Luke 3:12 Tax collectors also came to be **baptized**, and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

Luke 3:16 John answered them all, "I **baptize** you with water, but one more powerful than I am is coming—I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will **baptize** you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were **baptized**, Jesus also was **baptized**. And while he was praying, the heavens opened,

Luke 7:29 Now all the people who heard this, even the tax collectors, acknowledged God's justice, because they had been **baptized** with John's baptism. 30 However, the Pharisees and the experts in religious law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been **baptized** by John.

Luke 11:38 The Pharisee was astonished when he saw that Jesus did not first **wash** his hands before the meal.

Luke 12:50 I have a **baptism** to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is finished!

John 1:25 So they asked John, “Why then are you **baptizing** if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

John 1:26 John answered them, “I **baptize** with water. Among you stands one whom you do not recognize,

John 1:28 These things happened in Bethany across the Jordan River where John was **baptizing**.

John 1:31 I did not recognize him, but I came **baptizing** with water so that he could be revealed to Israel.”

John 1:33 And I did not recognize him, but the one who sent me to **baptize** with water said to me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining—this is the one who **baptizes** with the Holy Spirit.’

John 3:22 After this, Jesus and his disciples came into Judean territory, and there he spent time with them and was **baptizing**. 23 John was also **baptizing** at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming to him and being **baptized**.

John 3:26 So they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the one who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River, about whom you testified—see, he is **baptizing**, and everyone is flocking to him!”

John 4:1 Now when Jesus I knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was winning and **baptizing** more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not **baptizing**, but his disciples were),

John 10:40 Jesus went back across the Jordan River again to the place where John had been **baptizing** at an earlier time, and he stayed there.

Acts 1:5 For John **baptized** with water, but you will be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 2:38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each one 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.

Acts 2:41 So those who accepted his message were **baptized**, and that day about three thousand people were added.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they began to be baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after he was **baptized**, he stayed close to Philip constantly, and when he saw the signs and great miracles that were occurring, he was amazed.

Acts 8:16 For the Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, but they had only been **baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:36 Now as they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is water! What is to stop me from being **baptized**?”

Acts 8:38 So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip **baptized** him.

Acts 9:18 Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was **baptized**,

Acts 10:47 “No one can withhold the water for these people to be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” 48 So he gave orders to have them **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for several days.

Acts 11:16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, as he used to say, ‘John **baptized** with water, but you will be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit.’

Acts 16:15 After she and her household were **baptized**, she urged us, “If you consider me to be a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house.” And she persuaded us.

Acts 16:33 At that hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and all his family were **baptized** right away.

Acts 18:8 Crispus, the president of the synagogue, believed in the Lord together with his entire household, and many of the Corinthians who heard about it believed and were **baptized**.

Acts 19:3 So Paul said, “Into what then were you **baptized**?” “Into John’s baptism,” they replied. I Paul said, “John **baptized** with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, they were **baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus,

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be **baptized**, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.’

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many as were **baptized** into Christ Jesus were **baptized** into his death?

I Corinthians 1:13 Is Christ divided? Paul wasn’t crucified for you, was he? Or were you in fact baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I did not **baptize** any of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name! 16 (I also **baptized** the household of Stephanus. Otherwise, I do not remember whether I **baptized** anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to **baptize**, but to preach the gospel—and not with clever speech, so that the cross of Christ would not become useless.

I Corinthians 10:2 and all were **baptized** into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

I Corinthians 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all **baptized** into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, we were all made to drink of the one Spirit.

I Corinthians 15:29 Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are they **baptized** for them?

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were **baptized** into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

baptisma (noun form)

Strong's Key Number 0908, baptisma: from 0907; baptism (technically or figuratively): — baptism.

Strong's Key Number 0907, baptizo, from a derivative of 0911; to immerse, submerge; to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet), ordinance of Christian baptism: — Baptist, baptize, wash.

Strong's Key Word 0911: baptō; a primary verb; to overwhelm, i.e. cover wholly with a fluid; (literally) to moisten (a part of one's person), or (by implication) to stain (as with dye); dip.

New English Translation

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his **baptism**, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

Matthew 20:22 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

Matthew 21:25 Where did John's **baptism** come from? From heaven or from people?" They discussed this among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?'"

Mark 1:4 In the wilderness John the **baptizer** began preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the **baptism** I experience?" 39 They said to him, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the **baptism** I experience,

Mark 11:30 John's **baptism**—was it from heaven or from people? Answer me."

Luke 3:3 He went into all the region around the Jordan River, preaching a **baptism** of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 7:29 Now all the people who heard this, even the tax collectors, acknowledged God's justice, because they had been baptized with John's **baptism**.

Luke 12:50 I have a **baptism** to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is finished!

Luke 20:4 John's **baptism**—was it from heaven or from people?"

Acts 1:22 beginning from his **baptism** by John until the day he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness of his resurrection together with us."

Acts 10:37 you know what happened throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee after the **baptism** that John announced:

Acts 13:24 Before Jesus arrived, John had proclaimed a **baptism** for repentance to all the people of Israel.

Acts 18:25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm he spoke and taught accurately the facts about Jesus, although he knew only the **baptism** of John.

Acts 19:3 So Paul said, "Into what then were you baptized?" "Into John's **baptism**," they replied. 14 Paul said, "John baptized with a **baptism** of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus."

Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with him through **baptism** into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.

Ephesians 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one **baptism**,

Colossians 2:12 Having been buried with him in **baptism**, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.

I Peter 3:21 And this prefigured **baptism**, which now saves you – not the washing off of physical dirt but the pledge of a good conscience to God - through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

'Eternal Life' Verses

These verses are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible.

Psalms 133:3 It is like the dew of Hermon that settles on the mountains of Tziyon. For it was there that ADONAI ordained the blessing of **everlasting life**.

Matthew 18:8 "So if your hand or foot becomes a snare for you, cut it off and throw it away! Better that you should be maimed or crippled and obtain **eternal life** than keep both hands or both feet and be thrown into everlasting fire! 9 And if your eye is a snare for you, gouge it out and fling it away! Better that you should be one-eyed and obtain **eternal life** than keep both eyes and be thrown into the fire of Gei-Hinnom.

Matthew 19:16 A man approached Yeshua and said, "Rabbi, what good thing should I do in order to have **eternal life**?" He said to him, 17 "Why are you asking me about good? There is One who is good! But if you want to obtain eternal life, observe the mitzvot."

Matthew 19:29 Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times more, and he will obtain **eternal life**.

Matthew 25:46 They will go off to eternal punishment, but those who have done what God wants will go to **eternal life**."

Mark 9:43 If your hand makes you sin, cut it off! Better that you should be maimed but obtain **eternal life**, rather than keep both hands and go to Gei-Hinnom, to unquenchable fire!

Mark 9:45 And if your foot makes you sin, cut it off! Better that you should be lame but obtain **eternal life**, rather than keep both feet and be thrown into Gei-Hinnom!

Mark 10:17 As he was starting on his way, a man ran up, kneeled down in front of him and asked, "Good rabbi, what should I do to obtain **eternal life**?"

Mark 10:30 who will not receive a hundred times over, now, in the 'olam hazeh, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and lands with persecutions! — and in the 'olam haba, **eternal life**.

Luke 10:25 An expert in Torah stood up to try and trap him by asking, "Rabbi, what should I do to obtain **eternal life**?"

Luke 18:18 One of the leaders asked him, "Good rabbi, what should I do to obtain **eternal life**?"

Luke 18:30 will receive many times as much in the 'olam hazeh, and in the 'olam haba **eternal life**."

John 3:15 so that everyone who trusts in him may have **eternal life**.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only and unique Son, so that everyone who trusts in him may have **eternal life**, instead of being utterly destroyed.

John 3:36 Whoever trusts in the Son has **eternal life**. But whoever disobeys the Son will not see that life but remains subject to God's wrath."

John 4:14 but whoever drinks the water I will give him will never be thirsty again! On the contrary, the water I give him will become a spring of water inside him, welling up into **eternal life**!"

John 4:36 The one who reaps receives his wages and gathers fruit for **eternal life**, so that the reaper and the sower may be glad together —

John 5:24 Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever hears what I am saying and trusts the one who sent me has **eternal life** — that is, he will not come up for judgment but has already crossed over from death to life!

John 5:39 You keep examining the Tanakh because you think that in it you have **eternal life**. Those very Scriptures bear witness to me,

John 6:27 Don't work for the food which passes away but for the food that stays on into **eternal life**, which the Son of Man will give you. For this is the one on whom God the Father has put his seal."

John 6:40 Yes, this is the will of my Father: that all who see the Son and trust in him should have **eternal life**, and that I should raise them up on the Last Day."

John 6:47 Yes, indeed! I tell you, whoever trusts has **eternal life**:

John 6:54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has **eternal life** — that is, I will raise him up on the Last Day.

John 6:68 Shim'on Kefa answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the word of **eternal life**.

John 10:28 and I give them **eternal life**. They will absolutely never be destroyed, and no one will snatch them from my hands.

John 12:25 He who loves his life loses it, but he who hates his life in this world will keep it safe right on into **eternal life**!

John 12:50 And I know that his command is **eternal life**. So what I say is simply what the Father has told me to say."

John 17:2 just as you gave him authority over all mankind, so that he might give eternal life to all those whom you have given him. 3 And **eternal life** is this: to know you, the one true God, and him whom you sent, Yeshua the Messiah.

Acts 13:46 However, Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba answered boldly: "It was necessary that God's word be spoken first to you. But since you are rejecting it and are judging yourselves unworthy of **eternal life** — why, we're turning to the Goyim!

Acts 13:48 The Gentiles were very happy to hear this. They honored the message about the Lord, and as many as had been appointed to **eternal life** came to trust.

Romans 2:7 To those who seek glory, honor and immortality by perseverance in doing good, he will pay back **eternal life**.

Romans 5:21 All this happened so that just as sin ruled by means of death, so also grace might rule through causing people to be considered righteous, so that they might have **eternal life**, through Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord.

Romans 6:22 However, now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you do get the benefit — it consists in being made holy, set apart for God, and its end result is **eternal life**. 23 For what one earns from sin

is death; but **eternal life** is what one receives as a free gift from God, in union with the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.

I Timothy 1:16 But this is precisely why I received mercy — so that in me, as the number one sinner, Yeshua the Messiah might demonstrate how very patient he is, as an example to those who would later come to trust in him and thereby have **eternal life**.

I Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith, take hold of the **eternal life** to which you were called when you testified so well to your faith before many witnesses.

Titus 1:2 and which are based on the certain hope of **eternal life**. God, who does not lie, promised that life before the beginning of time

Titus 3:7 He did it so that by his grace we might come to be considered righteous by God and become heirs, with the certain hope of **eternal life**.

I John 1:2 The life appeared, and we have seen it. We are testifying to it and announcing it to you — **eternal life!** He was with the Father, and he appeared to us.

I John 2:25 And this is what he has promised us: **eternal life**.

I John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has **eternal life** in him.

I John 5:11 And this is the witness: God has given us **eternal life**, and this life is in his Son.

I John 5:13 I have written you these things so that you may know that you have **eternal life** — you who keep trusting in the person and power of the Son of God.

I John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us discernment, so that we may know who is genuine; moreover, we are united with the One who is genuine, united with his Son Yeshua the Messiah. He is the genuine God and **eternal life**.

Jude 21 Thus keep yourselves in God's love, as you wait for our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to give you the mercy that leads to **eternal life**.

'The Kingdom' Verses

Again, we use verses as rendered in the Complete Jewish Bible. Verses not pertaining to salvation have been removed.

Note that the CJB renders the term 'gospel' as 'good news'. Notice how the 'good news' is closely associated with the Kingdom.

Matthew 3:2 "Turn from your sins to God, for **the Kingdom of Heaven is near!**"

Matthew 4:17 From that time on, Yeshua began proclaiming, "Turn from your sins to God, for **the Kingdom of Heaven is near!**"

Matthew 4:23 Yeshua went all over the Galil teaching in their synagogues, **proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom**, and healing people from every kind of disease and sickness.

Matthew 5:3 "How blessed are the poor in spirit! for **the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.**

Matthew 5:10 "How blessed are those who are persecuted because they pursue righteousness! for **the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.**

Matthew 5:19 So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called **the least in the Kingdom of Heaven**. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called **great in the Kingdom of Heaven**. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, **you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!**

Matthew 6:10 **May your Kingdom come**, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Matthew 6:33 But **seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 7:21 "**Not everyone** who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' **will enter the Kingdom of Heaven**, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants.

Matthew 8:11 Moreover, I tell you that many will come from the east and from the west to take their places **at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven** with Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov. 12 But **those born for the Kingdom** will be thrown outside in the dark, where people will wail and grind their teeth!"

Matthew 9:35 Yeshua went about all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, **proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom**, and healing every kind of disease and weakness.

Matthew 10:7 As you go, proclaim, '**The Kingdom of Heaven is near,**'

Matthew 11:11 Yes! I tell you that among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than Yochanan the Immerser! Yet the one who is **least in the Kingdom of Heaven** is greater than he! 12 From the time of Yochanan the Immerser until now, **the Kingdom of Heaven has been suffering violence**; yes, violent ones are trying to snatch it away.

Matthew 12:25 However, knowing what they were thinking, Yeshua said to them, "**Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined**, and every city or household divided against itself will not survive. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself; so how can his kingdom survive?

Matthew 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then **the Kingdom of God has come** upon you!

Matthew 13:11 He answered, "Because it has been given to you to know **the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven**, but it has not been given to them.

Matthew 13:19 Whoever hears **the message about the Kingdom**, but doesn't understand it, is like the seed sown along the path — the Evil One comes and seizes what was sown in his heart.

Matthew 13:24 Yeshua put before them another parable. "**The Kingdom of Heaven** is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

Matthew 13:31 Yeshua put before them another parable. "**The Kingdom of Heaven** is like a mustard seed which a man takes and sows in his field.

Matthew 13:33 And he told them yet another parable. "**The Kingdom of Heaven** is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with a bushel of flour, then waited until the whole batch of dough rose."

Matthew 13:38 the field is the world. As for the good seed, these are the **people who belong to the Kingdom**; and the weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One.

Matthew 13:41 The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will collect **out of his Kingdom** all the things that cause people to sin and all the people who are far from Torah;

Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun **in the Kingdom of their Father**. Whoever has ears, let him hear!

Matthew 13:44 "**The Kingdom of Heaven** is like a treasure hidden in a field. A man found it, hid it again, then in great joy went and sold everything he owned, and bought that field.

Matthew 13:45 "Again, **the Kingdom of Heaven** is like a merchant on the lookout for fine pearls.

Matthew 13:47 "Once more, **the Kingdom of Heaven** is like a net thrown into the lake, that caught all kinds of fish.

Matthew 13:52 He said to them, "So then, every Torah-teacher who has been made into a talmid for **the Kingdom of Heaven** is like the owner of a home who brings out of his storage room both new things and old."

Matthew 16:19 I will give you the keys of **the Kingdom of Heaven**. Whatever you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

Matthew 16:28 Yes! I tell you that there are some people standing here who will not experience death until they see the Son of Man coming **in his Kingdom**!"

Matthew 18:1 At that moment the talmidim came to Yeshua and asked, "Who is **the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven**?"

Matthew 18:3 and said, "Yes! I tell you that unless you change and become like little children, you **won't even enter the Kingdom of Heaven**! 4 So **the greatest in the Kingdom** is whoever makes himself as humble as this child.

Matthew 18:23 Because of this, **the Kingdom of Heaven** may be compared with a king who decided to settle accounts with his deputies.

Matthew 19:12 For there are different reasons why men do not marry — some because they were born without the desire, some because they have been castrated, and some because they have renounced marriage **for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven**. Whoever can grasp this, let him do so."

Matthew 19:14 However, Yeshua said, "Let the children come to me, don't stop them, for the **Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these**."

Matthew 19:23 Then Yeshua said to his talmidim, "Yes. I tell you that it will be very hard for a rich man **to enter the Kingdom of Heaven**. 24 Furthermore, I tell you that it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man **to enter the Kingdom of God**."

Matthew 20:1 "**The Kingdom of Heaven** is like a farmer who went out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard.

Matthew 21:31 Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they replied. "That's right!" Yeshua said to them. "I tell you that the tax-collectors and prostitutes are **going into the Kingdom of God** ahead of you!

Matthew 21:43 Therefore, I tell you that **the Kingdom of God** will be taken away from you and given to the kind of people that will produce its fruit!"

Matthew 22:2 "**The Kingdom of Heaven** is like a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son,

Matthew 23:13 "But woe to you hypocritical Torah-teachers and P'rushim! For you are **shutting the Kingdom of Heaven** in people's faces, neither entering yourselves nor allowing those who wish to enter to do so.

Matthew 24:14 And **this Good News about the Kingdom** will be announced throughout the whole world as a witness to all the Goyim. It is then that the end will come.

Matthew 25:1 "**The Kingdom of Heaven** at that time will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom.

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take your inheritance, **the Kingdom** prepared for you from the founding of the world.

Matthew 26:29 I tell you, I will not drink this 'fruit of the vine' again until the day I drink new wine with you **in my Father's Kingdom**."

Mark 1:15 "The time has come, **God's Kingdom is near!** Turn to God from your sins and believe the **Good News!**"

Mark 4:11 He answered them, "To you the secret of the Kingdom of God has been given; but to those outside, everything is in parables,

Mark 4:26 And he said, "**The Kingdom of God** is like a man who scatters seed on the ground.

Mark 4:30 Yeshua also said, "**With what can we compare the Kingdom of God?** What illustration should we use to describe it?

Mark 9:1 "Yes!" he went on, "I tell you that there are some people standing here who will not experience death until they **see the Kingdom of God** come in a powerful way!"

Mark 9:47 And if your eye makes you sin, pluck it out! Better that you should be one-eyed but **enter the Kingdom of God**, rather than keep both eyes and be thrown into Gei-Hinnom,

Mark 10:14 However, when Yeshua saw it, he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me, don't stop them; **for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these**. 15 Yes! I tell you, whoever does not **receive the Kingdom of God like a child** will not enter it!"

Mark 10:23 Yeshua looked around and said to his talmidim, "How hard it is going to be for people with wealth **to enter the Kingdom of God!**" 24 The talmidim were astounded at these words; but Yeshua said to them again, "My friends, how hard it is **to enter the Kingdom of God!** 25 It's easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man **to enter the Kingdom of God.**"

Mark 11:10 "**Blessed is the coming Kingdom** of our father David!" and, "You in the highest heaven! Please! Deliver us!"

Mark 12:34 When Yeshua saw that he responded sensibly, he said to him, "You are **not far from the Kingdom of God.**" And after that, no one dared put to him another sh'eilah.

Mark 14:25 Yes! I tell you, I will not drink this 'fruit of the vine' again until the day I drink new wine **in the Kingdom of God.**"

Mark 15:43 Yosef of Ramatayim, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin who himself was also **looking forward to the Kingdom of God**, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Yeshua's body.

Luke 1:33 and he will rule the House of Ya'akov forever — **there will be no end to his Kingdom.**"

Luke 4:43 But he said to them, "I must announce **the Good News of the Kingdom of God** to the other towns too — this is why I was sent."

Luke 6:20 He looked at his talmidim and said: "How blessed are you poor! **for the Kingdom of God is yours.**

Luke 7:28 I tell you that among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than Yochanan the Immerser! Yet the one who is **least in the Kingdom of Heaven** is greater than he!"

Luke 8:1 After this, Yeshua traveled about from town to town and village to village, proclaiming the **Good News of the Kingdom of God**. With him were the Twelve,

Luke 8:10 and he said, "To you it has been given to know **the secrets of the Kingdom of God**; but the rest are taught in parables, so that they may look but not see, and listen but not understand.

Luke 9:2 and he sent them out to **proclaim the Kingdom of God** and to heal.

Luke 9:11 But the crowds found out and followed him. Welcoming them, he went on to speak to them **about the Kingdom of God** and to heal those who needed to be healed.

Luke 9:27 I tell you the truth, there are some people standing here who will not experience death **until they see the Kingdom of God.**"

Luke 9:60 Yeshua said, "Let the dead bury their own dead; you, **go and proclaim the Kingdom of God!**"

Luke 9:62 To him Yeshua said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and keeps looking back **is fit to serve in the Kingdom of God.**"

Luke 10:9 Heal the sick there, and tell them, '**The Kingdom of God is near you.**'

Luke 10:11 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off as a sign against you! But understand this: **the Kingdom of God is near!**'

Luke 11:2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, May your name be kept holy. **May your Kingdom come.**

Luke 11:17 But he, knowing what they were thinking, said to them, "**Every kingdom divided** against itself will be ruined, with one house collapsing on another. 18 So if the Adversary too is divided against himself, how can his kingdom survive? I'm asking because you claim it is by Ba'al-Zibbul that I drive out the demons.

Luke 11:20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then **the Kingdom of God has come** upon you!

Luke 12:31 Rather, **seek his Kingdom**; and these things will be given to you as well. 32 Have no fear, little flock, for your Father has resolved **to give you the Kingdom!**

Luke 13:18 So he went on to say, "**What is the Kingdom of God like?** With what will we compare it?

Luke 13:20 Again he said, "**With what will I compare the Kingdom of God?**

Luke 13:28 You will cry and grind your teeth when you see Avraham, Yitz'chak, Ya'akov and all the prophets **inside the Kingdom of God**, but yourselves thrown outside. 29 Moreover, people will come from the east, the west, the north and the south **to sit at table in the Kingdom of God.**

Luke 14:15 On hearing this, one of the people at the table with Yeshua said to him, "How blessed are those **who eat bread in the Kingdom of God!**"

Luke 16:16 Up to the time of Yochanan there were the Torah and the Prophets. Since then **the Good News of the Kingdom of God** has been proclaimed, and everyone is pushing to get in.

Luke 17:20 The P'rushim asked Yeshua when **the Kingdom of God** would come. "**The Kingdom of God**," he answered, "does not come with visible signs; 21 nor will people be able to say, 'Look! Here it is!' or, 'Over there!' Because, you see, **the Kingdom of God is among you.**"

Luke 18:16 However, Yeshua called the children to him and said, "Let the children come to me and stop hindering them, because **the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.** 17 Yes! I tell you that whoever does not **receive the Kingdom of God like a little child** will not enter it at all!"

Luke 18:24 Yeshua looked at him and said, "How hard it is for people with wealth **to enter the Kingdom of God!** 25 It's easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man **to enter the Kingdom of God!**"

Luke 18:29 Yeshua answered them, "Yes! I tell you that everyone who has left house, wife, brothers, parents or children, **for the sake of the kingdom of God**,

Luke 19:11 While they were listening to this, Yeshua went on to tell a parable, because he was near Yerushalayim, and the people supposed that **the Kingdom of God** was about to appear at any moment.

Luke 21:31 In the same way, when you see these things taking place, you are to know that **the Kingdom of God is near!**

Luke 22:16 For I tell you, it is certain that I will not celebrate it again until it is given its full meaning in **the Kingdom of God.**"

Luke 22:18 For I tell you that from now on, I will not drink the 'fruit of the vine' **until the Kingdom of God comes.**"

Luke 22:30 namely, **to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom** and to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Isra'el.

Luke 23:51 and he had not been in agreement with either the Sanhedrin's motivation or their action. He came from the town of Ramatayim, a town of the Judeans; and **he looked forward to the Kingdom of God.**

John 3:3 "Yes, indeed," Yeshua answered him, "I tell you that unless a person is born again from above, he cannot **see the Kingdom of God.**"

John 3:5 Yeshua answered, "Yes, indeed, I tell you that unless a person is born from water and the Spirit, he cannot **enter the Kingdom of God.**

Acts 1:3 After his death he showed himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. During a period of forty days they saw him, and he spoke with them **about the Kingdom of God.**

Acts 8:12 But when they came to believe Philip, as he announced **the Good News concerning the Kingdom of God** and the name of Yeshua the Messiah, they were immersed, both men and women.

Acts 14:22 strengthening the talmidim, encouraging them to remain true to the faith, and reminding them that it is through many hardships that **we must enter the Kingdom of God.**

Acts 19:8 Sha'ul went into the synagogue; and for three months he spoke out boldly, engaging in dialogue and trying to persuade people about **the Kingdom of God.**

Acts 20:25 "Now, listen! I know that none of you people among whom I have gone about **proclaiming the Kingdom** will ever see me again.

Acts 28:23 So they arranged a day with him and came to his quarters in large numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, giving a thorough **witness about the Kingdom of God** and making use of both the Torah of Moshe and the Prophets to persuade them about Yeshua.

Acts 28:31 openly and without hindrance proclaiming **the Kingdom of God** and teaching about the Lord Yeshua the Messiah.

Romans 14:17 for the **Kingdom of God** is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, shalom and joy in the Ruach HaKodesh.

I Corinthians 4:20 For **the Kingdom of God** is not a matter of words but of power.

I Corinthians 6:9 Don't you know that **unrighteous people will have no share in the Kingdom of God?** Don't delude yourselves — people who engage in sex before marriage, who worship idols, who engage in sex after marriage with someone other than their spouse, who engage in active or passive homosexuality, 10 who steal, who are greedy, who get drunk, who assail people with contemptuous language, who rob — **none of them will share in the Kingdom of God.**

I Corinthians 15:24 then the culmination, when he **hands over the Kingdom to God the Father**, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Let me say this, brothers: **flesh and blood cannot share in the Kingdom of God**, nor can something that decays share in what does not decay.

Galatians 5:21 and envy; in drunkenness, orgies and things like these. I warn you now as I have warned you before: **those who do such things will have no share in the Kingdom of God!**

Ephesians 5:5 For of this you can be sure: every sexually immoral, impure or greedy person — that is, every idol-worshiper — **has no share in the Kingdom of the Messiah and of God.**

Colossians 1:13 He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and **transferred us into the Kingdom** of his dear Son.

Colossians 4:11 Yeshua, the one called Justus, also sends greetings. These three are among the Circumcised; and among my **fellow workers for the Kingdom of God**, only they have turned out to be a comfort to me.

1 Thessalonians 2:12 and appealed to you to lead lives worthy of God, **who calls you into his Kingdom** and glory.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 This is clear evidence that God's judgment is just; and as a result, you will **be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God for which you are suffering.**

2 Timothy 4:1 I solemnly charge you before God and the Messiah Yeshua, **who will judge the living and the dead when he appears and establishes his Kingdom:**

2 Timothy 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and **bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom.** To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 1:8 but to the Son, he says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; **you rule your Kingdom** with a scepter of equity;

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since **we have received an unshakeable Kingdom**, let us have grace, through which we may offer service that will please God, with reverence and fear.

James 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers, hasn't God chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith and to **receive the Kingdom** which he promised to those who love him?

James 2:8 If you truly **attain the goal of Kingdom** Torah, in conformity with the passage that says, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

2 Peter 1:11 Thus you will be generously supplied with everything you need **to enter the eternal Kingdom** of our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah.

Revelation 1:6 who has caused us to be a **kingdom**, that is, cohanim for God, his Father — to him be the glory and the rulership forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 5:10 You made them into a **kingdom** for God to rule, cohanim to serve him; and they will rule over the earth."

'The Gospel' Verses

Strong's 2098, euaggelion, from the same as 2097 a good message, i.e. the gospel: — gospel.

Strong's 2097, euaggelizo, from 2095 and 32; to announce good news ("evangelize") especially the gospel: — declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel).

The reader should notice: we find in the Gospel books that the Gospel was indeed preached during Jesus' ministry. It is unreasonable to assume that the authors of the Gospel books would fail to record it. Therefore, without arguing about what it is, we know that the Gospel is there for the reading. The claim that the Gospel is not found in the Gospel Books is error.

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the **gospel** of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 9:35 Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the **good news** of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness.

Matthew 11:5 The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have **good news** proclaimed to them.

Matthew 24:14 And this **gospel** of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 26:13 I tell you the truth, wherever this **gospel** is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark 1:14 Now after John was imprisoned, Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed the **gospel** of God. 15 He said, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the **gospel**!"

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the **gospel** will save it.

Mark 10:29 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, there is no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the **gospel**

Mark 13:10 First the **gospel** must be preached to all nations.

Mark 14:9 I tell you the truth, wherever the **gospel** is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the **gospel** to every creature.

Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim **good news** to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,

Luke 7:22 So he answered them, "Go tell John what you have seen and heard: The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have **good news** proclaimed to them.

Luke 9:6 Then they departed and went throughout the villages, proclaiming the **good new** and healing people everywhere.

Luke 20:1 Now one day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the **gospel**, the chief priests and the experts in the law with the elders came up

Acts 8:25 So after Peter and John had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, proclaiming the **good news** to many Samaritan villages as they went.

Acts 14:7 There they continued to proclaim the **good news**.

Acts 14:21 After they had proclaimed the **good news** in that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch.

Acts 15:7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that some time ago God chose me to preach to the Gentiles so they would hear the message of the **gospel** and believe.

Acts 16:10 After Paul saw the vision, we attempted immediately to go over to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the **good news** to them.

Acts 20:24 But I do not consider my life worth anything to myself, so that I may finish my task and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the **good news** of God's grace.

Romans 1:1 From Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the **gospel** of God.

Romans 1:9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit by preaching the **gospel** of his Son, is my witness that I continually remember you

Romans 1:15 Thus I am eager also to preach the **gospel** to you who are in Rome.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 2:16 on the day when God will judge the secrets of human hearts, according to my **gospel** through Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How timely is the arrival of those who proclaim the good news." 16 But not all have obeyed the **good news**, for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

Romans 11:28 In regard to the **gospel** they are enemies for your sake, but in regard to election they are dearly loved for the sake of the fathers.

Romans 15:16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. I serve the **gospel** of God like a priest, so that the Gentiles may become an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem even as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the **gospel** of Christ. 20 And in this way I desire to preach where Christ has not been named, so as not to build on another person's foundation,

Romans 15:29 and I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of Christ's blessing (of the **Gospel** of Christ - KJV).

Romans 16:25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my **gospel** and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages,

1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the **gospel**—and not with clever speech, so that the cross of Christ would not become useless.²⁰

1 Corinthians 4:15 For though you may have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, because I became your father in Christ Jesus through the **gospel**.

1 Corinthians 9:12 If others receive this right from you, are we not more deserving? But we have not made use of this right. Instead we endure everything so that we may not be a hindrance to the **gospel** of Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:14 In the same way the Lord commanded those who proclaim the **gospel** to receive their living by the **gospel**.

1 Corinthians 9:16 For if I preach the **gospel**, I have no reason for boasting, because I am compelled to do this. Woe to me if I do not preach the **gospel**! 17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward. But if I do it unwillingly, I am entrusted with a responsibility. 18 What then is my reward? That when I preach the **gospel** I may offer the **gospel** free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights in the **gospel**.

1 Corinthians 9:23 I do all these things because of the **gospel**, so that I can be a participant in it.

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I want to make clear for you, I brothers and sisters, the **gospel** that I preached to you, that you received and on which you stand,

2 Corinthians 2:12 Now when I arrived in Troas to proclaim the **gospel** of Christ, even though the Lord had opened a door of opportunity for me,

2 Corinthians 4:3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing, 4 among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe so they would not see the light of the glorious **gospel** of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 8:18 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his work in spreading the **gospel**.

2 Corinthians 9:13 Through the evidence of this service they will glorify God because of your obedience to your confession in the **gospel** of Christ and the generosity of your sharing with them and with everyone.

2 Corinthians 10:14 For we were not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach as far as you, because we were the first to reach as far as you with the **gospel** about Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:16 so that we may preach the **gospel** in the regions that lie beyond you, and not boast of work already done in another person's area.

2 Corinthians 11:4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus different from the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit than the one you received, or a different **gospel** than the one you accepted, you put up with it well enough!

2 Corinthians 11:7 Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you could be exalted, because I proclaimed the **gospel** of God to you free of charge?

Galatians 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are following a different **gospel** – 7 not that there really is another **gospel**, but there are some who are disturbing you and wanting to distort the **gospel** of Christ. 8 But even if we (or an angel from heaven) should preach a **gospel** contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be condemned to hell! 9 As we have said before, and now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a **gospel** contrary to what you received, let him be condemned to hell!

Galatians 1:11 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the **gospel** I preached is not of human origin.

Galatians 2:2 I went there because of a revelation and presented to them the **gospel** that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did so only in a private meeting with the influential people, to make sure that I was not running—or had not run—in vain.

Galatians 2:5 But we did not surrender to them even for a moment, in order that the truth of the **gospel** would remain with you.

Galatians 2:7 On the contrary, when they saw that I was entrusted with the **gospel** to the uncircumcised just as Peter was to the circumcised

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not behaving consistently with the truth of the **gospel**, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “If you, although you are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you try to force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the **gospel** to Abraham ahead of time, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.”

Galatians 4:13 But you know it was because of a physical illness that I first proclaimed the **gospel** to you,

Ephesians 1:13 And when you heard the word of truth (the **gospel** of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 3:6 namely, that through the **gospel** the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 6:15 by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the **good news** of peace,

Ephesians 6:19 Pray for me also, that I may be given the message when I begin to speak—that I may confidently make known the mystery of the **gospel**,

Philippians 1:5 because of your participation in the **gospel** from the first day until now.

Philippians 1:7 For I3 it is right for me to think this about all of you, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the **gospel** all of you became partners in God’s grace together with me.

Philippians 1:12 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that my situation has actually turned out to advance the **gospel**:

Philippians 1:16 The latter do so from love because they know that I am placed here for the defense of the **gospel**.

Philippians 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the **gospel** of Christ so that—whether I come and see you or whether I remain absent—I should hear that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, by contending side by side for the faith of the **gospel**,

Philippians 2:22 But you know his qualifications, that like a son working with his father, he served with me in advancing the **gospel**.

Philippians 4:3 Yes, I say also to you, true companion, help them. They have struggled together in the **gospel** ministry along with me and Clement and my other coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.

Philippians 4:15 And as you Philippians know, at the beginning of my **gospel** ministry, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in this matter of giving and receiving except you alone.

Colossians 1:5 Your faith and love have arisen from the hope laid up for you in heaven, which you have heard about in the message of truth, the **gospel**

Colossians 1:23 if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm, without shifting from the hope of the **gospel** that you heard. This **gospel** has also been preached in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 in that our **gospel** did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you).

1 Thessalonians 2:2 But although we suffered earlier and were mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the courage in our God to declare to you the **gospel** of God in spite of much opposition.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the **gospel**, so we declare it, not to please people but God, who examines our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 with such affection for you we were happy to share with you not only the **gospel** of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you recall, brothers and sisters, our toil and drudgery: By working night and day so as not to impose a burden on any of you, we preached to you the **gospel** of God.

1 Thessalonians 3:2 We sent Timothy, our brother and fellow worker for God in the **gospel** of Christ, to strengthen you and encourage you about your faith,

2 Thessalonians 1:8 With flaming fire he will mete out punishment on those who do not know God and do not obey the **gospel** of our Lord Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 He called you to this salvation through our **gospel**, so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:11 This accords with the glorious **gospel** of the blessed God that was entrusted to me.

2 Timothy 1:8 So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord I I or of me, a prisoner for his sake, but by God's power accept your share of suffering for the **gospel**.

2 Timothy 1:10 but now made visible through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus. He has broken the power of death and brought life and immortality to light through the **gospel**!

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David; such is my **gospel**,

Philemon 13 I wanted to keep him so that he could serve me in your place during my imprisonment for the sake of the **gospel**.

Hebrews 4:2 For we had **good news** proclaimed to us just as they did. But the message they heard did them no good, since they did not join in with those who heard it in faith.

1 Peter 1:12 They were shown that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things now announced to you through those who proclaimed the **gospel** to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things angels long to catch a glimpse of.

1 Peter 1:25 but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word that was **proclaimed** to you.

1 Peter 4:6 Now it was for this very purpose that the **gospel** was preached to those who are now dead, so that though they were judged in the flesh by human standards they may live spiritually by God's standards.

1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin, starting with the house of God. And if it starts with us, what will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the **gospel** of God?

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, and he had an eternal **gospel** to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people.