

THERE IS

ONE BAPTISM

WHAT IS IT?

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“One Lord, one faith one baptism”

Eph. 4:5

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

John 4:23, 24

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SOME CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES ABOUT BAPTISM

The reason for this study on baptism is, because I don't know of a subject that is and has been more greatly confused and controversial than the subject of baptism. This subject has divided more churches and torn up more congregations than anything I know of. This ought not to be. The truth on this subject will not divide, but unite the people of God.

Some say when you get baptized by the Holy Spirit it makes you speak in an unknown tongue, and this is the evidence of having the Holy Spirit. Paul said in I Cor. 14:18, 19, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all. (19) Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Notice the word unknown is in italics in your Bible. It was added by the translators.

Paul also said in 1 Cor. 13:8-10, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be **tongues, they shall cease**, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. (9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. (10) But when that which is perfect is come, **then that which is in part shall be done away.**" When he speaks of that which is perfect is come, he is speaking of the completed cannon of scriptures. He was not speaking of Christ's coming again, as some say. When Paul spoke these words, they did not have the New Testament as we have today. When the Bible speaks of tongues it is usually referring to different 'kinds of languages. That's why Paul said, I speak with tongues more than you all. He was a well educated man.

Another thing that has been very controversial is, when do you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? When you get saved, or some later date? Rom. 8:9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. **Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**" Col. 2:9, 10, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is .the head of all principality and power." So we see from these verses that if you have Christ ye are complete in Him. We also see, if you don't have His Spirit you are none of His.

The main thing we want to deal with is one of the ordinances, which is water baptism. Some people believe you need to be baptized in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, according to Mat. 28:19. Some feel you need to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, according to Acts 2:38. Others feel you must be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, according to Acts 8:16.

Then some believe you must be baptized in the name of the Lord, according to Acts 10:48. Also there are those who believe you must be baptized once for the Father, once for the Son, and once for the Holy Ghost, which is known as triune immersion. There are also those who feel you need

to be baptized forward, then others feel it should be done backwards. Some feel that being sprinkled with water is enough; then some believe you must be totally immersed. There are also those who feel it should be done in a baptistry, others believe it should be done in a river, etc.

Also there is disagreement on how soon you should be baptised after you have been saved. Many people are in doubt as to whether or not the right person performed the ceremony.

Well I thank God, none of these questions bother me in the least; because through much studying the Word of God, and much prayer, I have found there is only one baptism. Ephesians 4:5, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." I have found this one baptism is not water but of the Spirit. The one that 1 Cor. 12:13 speaks of, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." Therefore all these questions about water baptism don't bother me, since the baptism that I have, is done by the Spirit of God. He is not like us; He doesn't make mistakes. He knows the right way, right place, and right time.

I certainly have nothing against any individual who believes or teaches these false teachings we have mentioned. But I am concerned about those people who were maybe just like I was, letting these various questions drag you down spiritually, and becoming more and more confused.

The Bible makes the truth on this subject very plain and simple, if we will only come with an honest heart, willing to accept the truth regardless of past teachings. I am sure, if you have been saved any length of time at all, you have found that there were some things that you thought were truth, but found out later, they were mostly tradition. This has happened to me on many different things. But the things that I've had to back up on are things I dreamed up or heard preached and just took for granted they were truth. But not once have I ever had to back up or change on something God showed me. The things God definitely shows us by His Spirit, you can mark it down, you'll never have to change on them. But if we're not careful we'll get to thinking God showed us something, when really we showed ourselves.

When we speak of changing on some doctrine, we are not meaning compromise as many have and are doing. Those things which are Bible truth and can be backed by the Word of God, I say hold fast to them.

The thing I want to get to is, let's not let traditions of men keep us from seeing the truth. No matter what men may think, we as the Church of God are not to be under bondage to men. The only headquarters we have is Heaven. It is very important to walk in the light we have. St. John 12:35, 36, "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while

ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. (36) While he have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.” After all, we will have to give an account to God and not men.

ONE BAPTISM

Now first of all, Eph. 4:4-6 says this, "There is one body, one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. (5) One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) One God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all."

Most everyone believes that there is one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father. But not very many people really believe there is just one baptism. Almost everyone believes there are at least two for us, in this day and time. You'll have to take your pick, it's either water baptism or the Holy Spirit baptism. I am satisfied to believe, that when He said there is one baptism, He was speaking of the spiritual baptism, since that is the one whereby we are placed into the one body. This is the same one body which Eph. 4:4 speaks of. Now remember, if you are going to say there is more than one baptism, you are also going to have to say there is more than one body, Spirit, hope of your calling, Lord, faith, God and Father.

Some people try to say that when He said there is one baptism, He was speaking of some certain way to be baptized. Then they will go about and try to prove what name it should be done in, how soon it should be done, or whether you should be sprinkled or totally immersed, etc. If He was trying to say what way you need to be baptized, that would not go along with the context. Paul wasn't telling us what way we get into this one body, or what way we get the Spirit, etc. He was simply saying there is one baptism for us today. That is the only thing this could mean without twisting the context of this scripture.

Another thing people will say about Eph. 4:5 is, you can only be baptized by the Holy Spirit one time. In other words once saved always saved. There are many scriptures to prove this doctrine false. For instance, in Rom. 11:20-23, "Well because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear. (21) For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. (22) Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. (23) And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: **for God is able to graft them in again.**" When he speaks of the natural branches he is speaking of the Jews, God's own chosen people. Certainly, if someone was a branch but got broken off, they are no longer saved, but lost. But in this context we find that after one has been broken off, God is able to graft them in again. This could only come to pass by the Holy Spirit baptism, because if you are not in Christ, there's only one way to get in Him, and that's to be baptized into Him by the Holy Spirit baptism.

Besides all of this, when a saved person really backslides and loses completely out with God, God forgets the fact that they were ever saved to begin with. He blots it out of His memory, never to be remembered again. Eze. 3:20, "Again when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

Eze. 18:24, "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." Eze. 33:13, "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."

Someone may say that these scriptures are in the old Bible and are no longer for us today. But we find in Rom. 4:16, that Abraham is the Father of our faith. Also in 11 Tim. 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." When Paul wrote these words he was talking about the Old Testament, because the New Testament had not been written at this time. These scriptures are just as good today as they were then.

SOME DIFFERENT KINDS OF BAPTISMS

Now, I realize that in the past there have been many different baptisms, which were all only the types, shadows, and figures of the one real baptism, that we have today in this dispensation.

First of all, we find the baptism of repentance that John preached. We also find in Acts 13:24, 25, that "John fulfilled his course." When John had first preached before Christ's coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, and he **fulfilled** his course, he said, "Whom think you that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose."

Also in I Cor. 10:1, 2 we find another type of baptism. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. (2) And were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Also in 1 Peter 3:20, 21, "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few that is, eight souls were saved by water. (21) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Here we find that in the days of Noah that there were eight souls saved by water. Then we find in the next verse that the like figure or type is the one that saves us today, which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Many people are so confused that every time they hear the word baptize all they can think of is water. But there are baptisms spoken of in the Bible that have nothing to do with water.

For instance in Luke 12:50, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Here Christ was talking about His being put to death and His resurrection. He was not talking about the time He was baptized by John, because the baptism He speaks of here in verse 50, had not been accomplished as of yet. Jesus was baptized in water in Luke 3 verse 21, sometime before the baptism He speaks of here in Luke 12:50.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Since Eph. 4:5 says there is only one baptism, let's examine some passages of scripture to find out exactly what this baptism of the Holy Spirit does for a person. If people could really realize what 1 Cor. 12:13 does for a person, and what all it consists of, water baptism would fade completely out of the picture. The things that people claim that water baptism does, is really done by the baptism of the Spirit. This is the reason I am against water baptism. God is not getting the glory and honor that He deserves, and this leads to a form of idolatry.

1 Cor. 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." Here we find this is the baptism that places us into this one body.

Then we find Rom. 6:3-6 is another beautiful passage of scripture, speaking of the baptism of the Spirit. (3) Know ye not that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ** were baptized into his death? (4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. (6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Most everyone believes that verse 3 is talking about the Spirit, but when they get down to verses 4, 5, and 6, they change from the Spirit to water. When they do this, it's certainly not being very consistent with the scriptures. In verse 4 he said, "Therefore," referring to verse 3. In verse 5 he said, "For," referring to verse 4; then in verse 6 he said, "Knowing this," referring to verses 3, 4, and 5. Paul is talking about the baptism of the Spirit in all four verses.

In Col. 2:12, Paul says primarily the same thing again. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." If this was talking about water baptism, he would have said through the operation of men.

1 Peter 3:20, 21, "Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (21) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" Many people take these scriptures to try to prove water baptism. There are two things Peter says this baptism he is speaking of,

will do for a person. First, he said, baptism saves us. Secondly he said it is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Friend, if this is talking about water baptism, he would be advocating water regeneration. If this is water, salvation is no longer by grace through faith, but by works.

Notice Rom. 3:24, 25, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." He did not say through faith in water baptism, but through faith in His blood.

When you claimed an experience of salvation, if you didn't get your conscience cleared, you didn't get salvation. When you get saved the condemnation leaves that very moment. You don't have to wait a day, a week, or a month. God doesn't do half way jobs. Heb. 9:13, 14, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: (14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Notice, he didn't say water baptism would purge your conscience, but the blood of Christ would purge your conscience.

There are those who try to say that St. John 3:5 is teaching water baptism, "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." Well, first of all, Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43. This man never saw a water hole. Another thing we need to consider is, when we get saved we get placed into the Kingdom of God right then. The Kingdom is not something out in the future. We're in it right now if we're saved. Col. 1:13, "Who **hath** delivered us from the power of darkness, and **hath** translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son."

Water is a word that symbolizes many different things in the Bible. For instance in 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." Also in Eph. 5:26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Heb. 10:22, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." When he talks about pure water, he's talking about the same kind of water that Tit. 3:5 and Eph. 5:26 speaks of. That's the only kind of pure water that there is. You won't find pure water in a baptistry, river, etc.

DID JESUS OR HIS DISCIPLES COMMAND WATER BAPTISM?

One of the scriptures that has been used a lot is in Acts 10:47, 48, "Can any man forbid water, that **these** should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we. (48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." From reading these two verses it does seem to teach water baptism. When Peter asked the question, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized," he was only referring to those who were at Cornelius's house.

One thing we need to keep in mind is, that the actual manuscripts that our King James version came from, were not broken up into chapters and verses. This was only done for reference forms.

In chapter 11, Peter is rehearsing what had already happened in chapter 10. Then in verses 16 and 17, he clarifies the state he had made in verses 47 and 48 of the 10th chapter. "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. (17) Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God." Peter remembered the words of John in Mat. 3:11, Mark 1:8, and Luke 3:16, "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:" Not in one scripture did he say ye shall be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost. Then in verse 17, Peter, said, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" In other words what he was saying was, what was I to say you need to be baptized in the name of the Lord, when God had inspired John to say, I indeed baptize you with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. When he said ye, he was speaking of us today. After Peter saw this truth, he never baptized another person in his entire ministry, nor did he ever teach or instruct anyone to be baptized again.

The passage in Mat. 28:19, is the one used most of all to teach water baptism, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The first thing someone will think is, this has to be talking about water, because we can't baptize people with the Holy Ghost; but people fail to realize the power that the apostles had with God. Although they had no power in themselves, it was the power of God manifested through them. According to Acts 8:13-20, the Holy Ghost was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

(13) "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which

were done. (14) Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God; they sent unto them Peter and John: (15) Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (16) For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they that were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (17) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (18) **And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given**, he offered them money. (19) Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. (20) But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that **the gift of God** may be purchased with money." Peter did not rebuke Simon for saying that the Holy Ghost was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands. He rebuked him for thinking it could be bought with money. Now according to Heb. 6:1, 2, we no longer have this power that the apostles had. (1) "Therefore **leaving**, the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. (2) **Of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands**, and resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment." He not only commands us to leave the doctrine of laying on of the hands, but also the doctrine of baptisms.

Another thing we need to consider is, we have no scripture whatsoever, that anyone ever got baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. So if Jesus was giving a command there in Mat. 28:19 to go baptize people in water, the disciples were living in disobedience to Christ's own words. When they did baptize, it was usually done in the name of the Lord.

Something else we need to consider about Mat. 28:19 is, Jesus was speaking to the eleven disciples when He spoke those words. One of them would have been Peter. Then if we will go back to Acts 10:47, Peter asked the question, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized." He didn't even know whether or not he should be baptizing these people. If Mat. 28:19, was a commission for the disciples to go into the whole world and baptize people in water, there would not have been one doubt in Peter's mind whether or not he should be baptizing these people. He would not have forgotten Jesus' own words that soon. When he finally did baptize them, it was not done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, but it was done in the name of the Lord.

Then one more reason we know He was not talking about water baptism is, that if He was, He would have been leaving the main thing out, which would be getting saved, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What would it accomplish to go baptize the whole world in water apart from salvation? Nothing at all.

Another reason I am persuaded to believe Mat. 28:19, is not speaking of

water baptism is this: we all know that Jesus gave this commission to eleven of the disciples. Well, after Paul had gotten saved, he was an apostle of Christ also. In 1 Cor. 1:13-17, listen what Paul had to say about water baptism, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (14) I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; (15) Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. (16) And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, **I know not whether I baptized any other.** (17) **For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:** not with wisdom of words, **lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.**" According to these verses, Paul did not think water baptism was important at all. He gives three reasons why he did not baptize, and they were: (1) "Lest any should say I baptized in mine own name. (2) For Christ sent me not to baptize. (3) Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." You that are still practicing water baptism did you realize that you are making the cross of Christ of none effect. What a terrible thing to do. After all, the things that Christ went through for us, there on the cross, that people would make it of none effect. How can people today raise up and say, Christ has sent me to baptize. Are we greater than Paul? Certainly not. In three chapters on over, 1 Cor. 4:16, Paul said this, "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." If we're really and truly going to follow Paul, we cannot practice water baptism. If Christ didn't send him, neither will He send us. After seeing how Paul stood on water baptism, how could we say Mat. 28:19, is talking about water baptism. Why would Jesus send eleven out and not send Paul, when Paul was an apostle also.

When we do some comparing with Mat. 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20, it is very plain to see they are speaking of the baptism of the Spirit in all four gospels. First of all, let's do some comparing in Mat. 28:1, 2. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (2) And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Mark 16:1, 2, "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. (2) And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. Luke 24:1, 2, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre." John 20:1, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

Also let's compare Mat. 28:7, "And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there

shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." Mark 16:7, "But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." Luke 24:9, "And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest." John 20:2, "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."

Also let's compare Luke 24:12. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." John 20:3, 4, "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. (4) So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre."

Also compare Luke 24:36, "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." John 20:19, "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

Now the most important scripture we need to compare is Mat. 28:18-20. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Mark 16:15, 16, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Luke 24:46-49, "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: (47) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (48) And ye are witnesses of these things. (49) And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." John 20:21-23, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (22) And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost: (23) Whose soever sin ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sin ye retain, they are retained."

If one will only be honest hearted, you will realize that Mat. 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20 are all talking about the same things. Jesus is giving the very same commission in all four gospels. The only difference is, each writer worded it in a little different manner, but it means the same thing in all

four places.

Mat. 28:19 says to go teach, Mark 16:15 says go preach, Luke 24:47 says repentance and remission of sins should be preached, and John 20:21 says, as my Father has sent me, even so send I you. Another thing we need to notice is that Mat. 28:19 called it baptizing, Mark 16:16 also called it baptizing, Luke 24:47 called it repentance and remission of sins, and John 20:23 called it remitting sins.

Water is not mentioned in the context of any of these scriptures. In the past we have just taken for granted that's what he was talking about.

One thing that might hinder someone from seeing that it was the same commission in Mat. 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20 is this. In Mat. 28:16, right before He gave the commission, He was talking to the eleven, but in John 20:24, after He had already given the commission, it says Thomas was not there." But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus was not with them when Jesus came." I realize if Judas was dead and Thomas wasn't there, this would have left ten disciples. But when he said Thomas, one of the twelve, this should tell us something. If Judas was dead, they had to have already been including Matthias for there to have been twelve. We all know that the four gospels were not written till after Mathias had already been elected in Acts 1:26. "And they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

If we will take a look at Luke 24, it is very evident that they were already including Matthias when the four gospels were written. From reading Luke 24:12-34, we find first of all, that Peter and Cleopas were on their way to Emmaus. As they walked along, Jesus Himself drew near and walked with them, but they did not realize it was Jesus until He took the bread and blessed it and brake it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him. Verse 33, 34. "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, (34) Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Read the context in verse 33, when he said they, he was referring to Peter and Cleopas. Then he goes on to say, they arose that very hour and went and found the eleven gathered together." There is only one way they could have found eleven of the disciples gathered together, and that is if Matthias was included, seeing how Judas was dead, and that Peter was the one that found the eleven gathered together. Also 1 Cor. 15:4, 5, let us see that Jesus was seen of the twelve after His resurrection. "And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (5) And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."

The main thing that stops people from seeing that He is talking about the

baptism of the Spirit, is because Mat 28:19 is a command for us to do the baptizing. Well, I realize that we cannot save anyone. God is the only one who can make anyone a new creature. But people cannot be saved until first they hear the Word preached. Rom. 10:14, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Remember the real command was to go preach and teach, not to baptize. But when the Word of God is preached in its power, that's what **that believe** saves people according to St. John 1:1. Jesus is the Word.

After looking at some statements Paul made, maybe it will better help us to understand what Mat. 28:19 is talking about. Paul realized that it took preaching to save people. He also realized the kind of life that we live will have an effect on people whether or not they will be saved. Notice these verses. Rom. 1:16, For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation** to everyone that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek. "1 Cor. 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching to save them.**" Rom. 11:14, "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and **might save some of them.**" 1 Cor. 7:16, "For what knoweth thou, O wife whether thou shalt **save thy husband?** or what knowest thou, O man, whether thou **shalt save thy wife?**" 1 Cor. 9:22, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means **save some.**" 1 Tim. 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both **save thyself,** and them that hear thee."

So according to these scriptures, we do have a part in getting people saved. What is it? To preach and teach the Word of God. To live a holy and separated life unto God, that we may lead some poor lost soul into the fold. This is what Mat. 28:19 is all about; go preach the gospel in all nations, so people can hear the Word preached and have the opportunity to be saved. This is nothing for us to get lifted up in ourselves about, just because we have a part in getting people saved. Paul realized this in 1 Cor. 3:5-7, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (6) I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. (7) So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

WHY DID SOME OF THE DISCIPLES PRACTICE WATER BAPTISM FOR A PERIOD OF TIME?

It is possible that some of the disciples did not understand that Mat. 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20, was talking spiritually at first, because some of the disciples did baptize with water in the book of Acts. It may be asked, why didn't Jesus instruct the disciples more about the coming dispensation? We quote Jesus' own words, John 16:12, 13, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. (13). Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that he shall speak: and he will shew you things to come."

The book of Acts covers the greater part of this forty years of transition. Therefore it is not surprising that among the Jewish Christians there were people still practicing things that were in the former dispensation. It should be remembered that John the Baptist was the last prophet of the old dispensation, and that Jesus Christ lived on earth under the old dispensation, submitting to all its ordinances. It is therefore not at all surprising that the disciples, many of whom were first John's disciples continued to baptize with water after Pentecost. They also continued circumcision, and observed the Jewish feast, but that's no proof that we need to today.

From Romans the first chapter on throughout the New Testament, there is not one scripture to prove water baptism at all, neither do we have record of anyone getting baptized in water. If water baptism was still needed, why did the apostles quit practicing it in the last part of the book of Acts, which was a transitional period.

THE COMPLETENESS IN CHRIST

Those of you who have been confused and in doubt as to how water baptism should be done, can come to complete rest and satisfaction after examining these next few passages of scripture. Col. 2:8-15, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (9) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) **And ye are complete in him**, which is the head of all principality and power. (11) In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. (12) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the **operation of God**, who hath raised him from the dead. (13) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. (14) **Blotting out the handwriting of the ordinances** that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. (15) And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." First of all, he warns us about following after the traditions of men. Then we find that in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him. Also in verse 12, he speaks of being buried with Him in baptism through the faith of the operation of God. If this scripture is talking about water baptism it would have to say through the operation of men, as we have already mentioned previously. Verse 13, says He forgives us all trespasses. Then in verse 14, we find that the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, has been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross.

Now we know why Paul said in 1 Cor. 1:17, that the Lord sent him not to baptize, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. The ordinances have been nailed to the cross. Someone may ask the question, how were these ordinances against us and contrary to us? Well I'll tell you exactly how they were against us. Here in Col. 2:17, after talking about the ordinances he says, "Which are a **shadow of things to come**, but the body is of Christ." Also Heb. 10:1, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." You see dear friend, water baptism was only a shadow of the baptism of the Spirit.

I thank God that now we have gotten past the types and shadows, and are living in the day that we can experience what the types and shadows were pointing to. Then last of all, Col. 2:20, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances."

There is another scripture dealing with these ordinances in Eph. 2:13-16, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (14) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. (15) **Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances**, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. (16) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Then, also there is a scripture speaking about the law being our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, in Gal. 3:23-27, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. (24) Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (26) For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Remember, John said when he came baptizing with water he was only preparing the way for Christ to come. Water baptism was our schoolmaster to bring us to the baptism of the Spirit. But we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

There is another passage of scripture, that I don't know how people that practice the tradition of water baptism could get around. I don't know how anyone could ask for a plainer scripture. Heb. 9:8-14, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. (9) Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. (10) Which stood only in meats and drinks, **and diverse washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.** (11) But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. (12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. (13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: (14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The word **washings**, that was used in the 9th verse, came from the Greek word "baptismos"; in Heb. 6:2, the word was translated baptisms. So we could read verse 9 like this, and not change its meaning, seeing how the word washings and baptisms came from the exact same word, "Which stood only in meats

and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." We see that the carnal ordinances were only imposed on them until the time of the reformation. The day of reformation is passed, so why are people still practicing water baptism?

Also in Heb. 9:10, the word ordinances came from the Greek word "dikaioma." In Rom. 8:4 they translated it righteousness. Let's look at the context, Rom. 8:1-9, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (4) **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.** (5) For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (6) For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

In verse 4, the word righteousness came from the same Greek word that ordinances came from there in Heb. 9:10, so we could read verse 4 like this, and not change its meaning at all. That the ordinances of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. In verse 3 we find that there were some things that the law could not do, but what the law could not do, that is what Jesus came to do. In other words, what water baptism could not do, the baptism of the Spirit does do, and what the circumcision of the flesh could not do, that is what the circumcision of the heart does do. What the blood of bulls and goats could not do, that's what the blood of Jesus does do.

Someone may ask the question, what would it hurt me to be baptized in water? It won't hurt anything as long as you don't know better. The main thing that's wrong with it is, it's nothing but a form of idolatry as we already have mentioned. If you will study the scriptures you will find God hates all manner of sin, but he especially hates the sin of idolatry. Most everyone would think pretty bad of someone who would offer bulls blood for a sin offering today, but there is not one bit of difference in doing that than to go to a water hole and claim some kind of cleansing or purification while you're in that water. The blood of bulls and water baptism have both been replaced by something far better.

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTISED?

Many people feel because Jesus was baptized by John, that He was setting an example that we should follow. But Christ or John never insinuated in any way that He was setting a literal example for us today. Mat. 3:13-16, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. (14) But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, **for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.** Then he suffered him. (16) And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straitway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Notice verse 15, he said, "For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." The very fact that Jesus was baptized in water, is another reason we don't need to be, He fulfilled it for us. The word fulfill means finish.

Many people say the reason you need to be baptized in water is to show the world we have passed from death unto life. But being baptized in water doesn't prove one thing to the world. First of all there is absolutely not one scripture to back this theory. Secondly the world is not there at a baptismal service. Thirdly, anyone can be baptized in water, and a large percentage of the world has been baptized some time or other in their life, but that's no real proof of salvation.

I would like for you to read closely the words of a song that is almost always sang at a water baptism service.

SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER

Shall we gather at the river, Where bright angel feet have trod; With its crystal tide forever Flowing by the throne of God?

On the bosom of the river, Where the Savior-King we own,
We shall meet, and sorrow never, 'Neath the glory of the throne.

Ere we reach the shining river, Lay we ev'ry burden down;
Grace our spirits will deliver, And provide a robe and crown.

Soon we'll reach the shining river, Soon our pilgrimage will cease;
Soon our happy hearts will quiver, With the melody of peace.

Chorus:

Yes, we'll gather at the river, The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints at the river, That flows by the throne of God.

When Robert Lowry wrote this song, he was not talking about a literal river. It is nothing but mockery to sing a song with words like this at a water baptism service.

Now in closing, I would like to ask a question. Are you sure you have had this baptism of the Spirit? Friend, you can be baptized in every water hole there is; you can go through every outward act and form that there is to go through, but until you have Jesus Christ in your heart and in your life, it will not accomplish one thing. You can't have Him in your life without having Him in your heart.

You may disagree with me and believe that water baptism is still needed. I certainly won't fall out with you about that. But we must agree on the fact that it takes the baptism of the Spirit to make it to heaven.