

Baptism

Can Water Save Us?

BROTHER MARK

CAN WATER SAVE US?

INTRODUCTION

Many have attempted to explain the subject of water baptism. It's truly sad to see such diverse opinions on it. However, there can be only one answer to this doctrine. Yet, there are two questions.

One, are we to be baptized "to be saved"—in the act of water baptism our sins are forgiven by that act?

Two, are we to be baptized, as a command, of which merits no redemption? The argument has been for either one or the other there is no dilemma, there is no third argument.

One of the problems in understanding this doctrine, and many others, is people fail to follow correct exegesis when interpreting passages. Moreover, many hold to what they have been taught by some particular school of thought or training. Although, they say they don't, this then places preconceived ideas into the exegetical process, and thus error is conceived by placing man's understanding above God's.

We must always be thorough in covering any Bible doctrine, always keeping in mind it's what the Bible teaches and nothing else.

We need to understand what is meant "Biblically" by the doctrine of baptism. What is its history, meaning, teaching in the Old and New Testaments. What did John, Jesus, Paul and others in New Testament write and teach about it? What did the early church believe and teach? What has subsequent believers held to? This we will discover in this study.

Also, it's important to understand we are not simply assaulting other views. We will examine the Scriptures mainly, and consult other sources for evidence. However, we will rely on the Bible alone to determine the validity of this doctrine, its meaning, command, and intent.

PRE-SCRIPTURE HISTORY

We are not told, in the Bible, of any baptismal methodology history. We do know that other religions practice baptism. The following quote is interesting.

"Years ago as I was doing research on the mystery religions of Egypt, I ran across an interesting tidbit of information: The Egyptian baptismal ceremony was done by immersion in a coffin full of water. In fact, they held him down until he passed out, then brought him up and revived him. If he survived, he became a member. He was considered to have been 'dead and buried' in baptism. At the time, I had no idea that the Egyptians knew anything about baptism. In fact, I thought John the Baptist had gotten the idea by some kind of revelation. But in seeing that the Egyptians immersed in water, and the Hebrews sprinkled, the contrast was startling. Surely Moses would have been well acquainted with the Egyptian mode of baptism. He himself had probably been baptized by them in his early life...."

There was about 2050 B.C. in Nippur Mesopotamia, a myth god called Enki, spoken of in the "Tablets of Makly," stating, "...functioned as a god of purification in the water rituals known as rituals of the 'house of baptism' or 'of washing.'"

We do know the "Essenes" wrote about baptism possibly around 200 B.C. In the document 4Q414, Frag. 2+3 Col. 2, there is a baptismal liturgy stating, "And you shall cleanse him for your holy statutes...for the first, the third and the sixth...in the truth of your covenant to cleanse oneself from uncleanness...and then he shall enter the water...and he shall say in response 'blessed are you....'"

In ancient Iran (eighth century AD) an esoteric group practiced baptism. "Baptism wards off evil spirits and is essential to salvation. It is both a washing of the body and the soul and the resurrection to the new life. A sacramental meal forms part of the baptism, as of other important rituals."

In Hinduism we read of baptism in the river Ganges. "Thousands of Hindu pilgrims perform this act of purification in the sacred river [Ganges] each year...once a year, an image of the god Shiva is immersed in the water."

Mormons believe it is efficacious, "They who believe not your words, and are not baptized in water in my name, for the remission of their sins...shall be damned." They also believe in baptism for the dead, which was a Osiris myth, "Baptism by proxy for the dead is a major activity...the saints are...redeeming their (unbaptized) dead from the grasp of satan."

Jehovah's Witnesses believe baptism by immersion symbolizes "dedication." We do not recognize the Jehovah Witnesses or Mormons as being true Christians, the quote was provided as an example of other beliefs.

"...It is clear baptism was practiced in the Church from the first...by water and the Trinitarian formula." We know ritual washing was an ancient custom dating as far back as 2050 B.C. Baptism was to Christianity what circumcision was to Judaism.

In understanding the subsequent information we arrive at the following conclusions. Washing with water or baptism was practiced from earliest times. It had certain meanings depending on the group. Most heathen groups believed it was efficacious.

MEANING

The meaning of the word baptism must be understood, first and foremost, of its usage in Biblical language—Hebrew and Greek. The word baptism does not appear in the Old Testament in any form (baptism, baptizing, baptized, etc.) There are figures of baptism used such as, Naaman dipping in the Jordan river seven times, and the washing of the priests in the bronze Sea. According to most Biblical dictionaries the bronze sea was 18' in diameter, 7 ½' tall, and held 12,000 gallons of water, which was like a bath; the priests could literally bathe in it!

"Thou shalt also make a laver [of] brass, and his foot [also of] brass, to wash [withal]: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD." (Exodus 30:18-20)

In the New Testament, the word **baptism** (Greek baptisma) means to wash, immerse, or submerge. **Baptize** (Greek baptizo) means to wash, and immerse and also has the definition of a garment being "immersed" in water to dye it, and to describe a ship "sinking" into the sea. It's a verb that is an action one does. The Greek definition is what we use to define what the word means; however, here are some other helpful resources.

The Dictionary says, "Baptize, (bapt-tiz), v.t. [F. baptiser, fr. L. baptizare, fr. Gr. Baptizein to dip in water.] to dip or immerse in water, or to pour or sprinkle water upon, as a religious rite...." "Baptize - OF. Baptisier - Gr. Baptizein" "Baptism, emmersion in water, from Gr. Baptizein" Italian, battezzare, to immerse. Swedish, dop, to dip. Dutch, doop, to dip or immerse. German, taufe, to dip. Eccl. Latin, baptizare, to dip or immerse. Spanish, bautismo, to dip or immerse.

In the New Testament, total immersion in water is the idea conveyed to us, not pouring or sprinkling. We get an idea of what was meant when speaking about baptism from a Greek poet named Nicander who lived about 200 B.C. in the following, "...In order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptized' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change."

There are two forms of the word baptism in the Greek Septuagint—a Greek translation of the Old Testament made about 200 B.C. for those Greek speaking Jews in North Africa. It's helpful to see the way it was used still indicating immersing or submerged. The first is found in Isaiah 21:4, "My heart wanders, and transgression overwhelms me; my soul is occupied with fear."

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The word "overwhelms" is used to indicate the total immersion of the transgressions of the people he felt. In other words he felt "baptized" in it. The second place is in Ezekiel 23:15, "Having variegated girdles on their loins, having also richly dyed attire upon their heads; all had a princely appearance..."

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The writer is describing the attire on the princes' heads in which the cloth was "dyed" using the word *baptai* to mean dip or immerse in color. It's clear that the meaning of the New Testament word baptism means total immersion not pouring or sprinkling. We will see later that the idea of pouring or sprinkling cannot be an adequate method for the sacrament of baptism.

OLD TESTAMENT

As I said earlier, the word baptism does not appear in the Old Testament in any form (baptism, baptizing, baptized, etc.) There are; however, figures and types to indicate a future New Testament action. From the beginning water has been a part of peoples lives (Genesis 1:2). God called the waters good (Genesis 1:10). The first creatures to possess breath and live were found in the Ocean (Genesis 1:20-22). From the beginning the way of redemption and atonement for sin was through sacrifice (Genesis 3:21; 4:4).

Noah was declared "just" (Genesis 6:9; 7:1), and would have needed no baptism to save him. In Genesis 6:17 God uses water to destroy man; not save him. However, in the same instance He used the ark, upon the waters, to save a "remnant"—Noah and his family.

In the narrative of Abraham we see it was again sacrifice (Genesis 12:8; 22:8,13) not baptism that pleased God. Abraham is declared righteous by faith (Genesis 15:6) not by baptism. We are told very clearly that circumcision was a "sign" of the covenant—agreement between God and His people (Genesis 17:10-12). Salvation came by blood for His people in Egypt (Exodus 12:5,7,13,23).

In the narrative of the experience at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21,22) the children of Israel are crossing down between two great walls of water to come to the other side. The New Testament says of the experience, "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2). What do we make of the interpretation? Paul is making a point that those experiences were not guarantees of ones salvation because he says in 10:5, "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." In fact, this is a case against baptismal regeneration; not for it. The phrase, "... baptized unto Moses..." means they were identifying with him (Moses) for God's commands and covenant; not for salvation, for they had "already" come out of Egypt (sin). The same could be said of Joshua in Joshua 3:15,16. In fact, Exodus 19:4-6; 24:8; and 28:30, says they were saved by faith and obedience. There is no possible way the Red Sea could have cleansed them permanently because they still sinned afterwards (Leviticus 26:23,24).

The "laver" in the Old Testament was setup for the washing of the consecration ceremony—nothing dirty can approach the altar (Exodus 30:21; cf. Exodus 28:34,35). Was this for moral cleansing? No (Exodus 29:21; Lev. 9:6,7). The "washing" had no remedial value. Just as Aaron washed the same language is used in Leviticus 13:6,47 of the clothes of a leper, of an "issue" (Leviticus 15:5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11), of healing (Leviticus 15:15), etc.

In Leviticus fourteen a leper that was healed was to wash his clothes, and have his body examined then wash again; then be examined and wash again; then examined again; however, it was not until several "offerings of sacrifice" (Leviticus 14:12, 19, 20, 21, 24, 29, 30 and 31) that had been performed was he pronounced clean. Again, this was not by the water, but by "sacrifice" for atonement (vv. 20, 29, 31). Compare that with Leviticus 16:30, 34; 17:11; 23:26-28.

In fact, repeatedly, God says, "... [the priest] make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, [that] ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD." Wonderfully, anticipating the coming Priest—our Lord Jesus Christ. Common sense and God's Word tells us external filthiness is cleansed by water; internal filthiness is cleansed by blood—the sacrifice on the alter—whether Old Testament or New. In fact, the verses that deals with sin in Leviticus 4:26 through Numbers 15:28 says, "... and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him." Where is baptismal cleansing of the soul? Not here.

In Numbers 21:8,9 (the narrative account of the "fiery serpents") verse nine says to look at the serpent on the pole was to be saved-- indicating the life giving antidote. Of course, this indicated a yet future Christological salvation on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, why not have them jump into a river? Again, because baptism is a sign of a committed agreement.

The Old Testament speaks of "to wash" in several places. Many have taken those places to mean baptismal regeneration. We need to address those places in detail.

Wash, in the Old Testament uses two words. One, kabac, wash, fuller, to perform the work of a fuller. Two, rachats, wash, bath, wash off, to wash oneself. They're both verbs—an action one performs.

In 2 Kings 5:10,12,13 we have the account of Naaman washing in the Jordan river. Some have tried to tie this with washing for a cleansing of the soul.

"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean... [Are] not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, [if] the prophet had bid thee [do some] great thing, wouldest thou not have done [it]? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"

In all three verses the Hebrew word used is rachats, to wash or bathe. It simply means he was instructed to bathe in the Jordan river; moreover, no special grace was imparted to him in bathing in the river. It was faith in God

and the words of God's prophet that gave the ability of God to heal him; not the water. In washing, as leper, he was doing what other lepers of Israel were to do. (cf. Leviticus 14:9.) Another passage that is spoken of to promote baptismal regeneration is found in Ezekiel 16:8,9.

"Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time [was] the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil."

In context this chapter is talking about Israel—Jerusalem. It relates how God had pity on Israel and took her, cleaned her up, and made her beautiful (v.14). In verse nine the word water is again, rachats, wash or bath. In the same verse we're told He thoroughly washed the blood from them this word is different from that of rechats. This word is, shataph, to wash off, be scoured and rinsed. The imagery is that of a new born in which they are cleaned up after birth.

In Ezekiel 36:25 God is addressing Israel through the prophet Ezekiel telling them He, "is for them" and will do them good.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

Taken out of context this would make a good case for baptismal regeneration, although it does not say that exactly, but states that clean water will be sprinkled upon them and they shall be clean from all your filthiness.

In this verse, using this phrase, God is reminding the children of Israel of the ceremonial laws of cleansing. (cf. Numbers 8:7; 19:13; Leviticus 14:7, 51; 2 Chronicles 4:6.) We must remember without the shedding of blood is no remission, and Jesus is the completeness of that remission and redemption.

In fact Job 9:30,31 tells us we cannot cleanse our sins by water.

"If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me."

Many will say that the teaching of forgiveness of sins can be done by water in the Old Testament—in Psalms 51:2,7 it says,

"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Again, we need to remember this is Old Testament context. David is praying for forgiveness of his sin with Bathsheba. Certainly, the concept of washing with hyssop, and with water were present in his mind. He saw this many times performed by the priests. However, when we read this Psalm as a whole—not including the other Old Testament teaching and the New on forgiveness of sins—we notice the following verses that indicate it was by confession and repentance that forgiveness was achieved.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions (v.1)."

"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin [is] ever before me (v.3).

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight..." (v.4).

"... blot out all mine iniquities" (v.9).

"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give [it]: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (vv. 16,17).

"Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar (v. 19).

In another place some say Isaiah is promoting water cleansing for sins. In crying out for Israel to repent and come back to God he says,

"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil."

Once again, the word *rachats* to wash or bath is used. Again, in relating the imagery of the ceremonial washing to them he makes his point. In fact Jeremiah 2:22 says,

"For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, [yet] thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD."

Clearly, external washing even with soap--potash will not remove the internal stain of sins. Again, in Jeremiah chapter four he is relating repentance

to a backslidden people, and calling for their return to the Lord God of Israel. The prophet cries out in verse fourteen.

"O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?"

A couple things to note. One, the word wash is the Hebrew kabac wash, fuller, or to perform the work of a fuller. He says to them wash thine heart from wickedness. This must needs be spiritual and symbolic for how could one literally pull out their heart and wash it? Two, verse four says a similar statement which indicates a spiritual condition being called for.

"Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench [it], because of the evil of your doings."

Take away the foreskins of your heart? Obviously the heart does not have foreskin; therefore, it is the condition of sin in the individuals which needs to be removed. This can only be accomplished by sacrifice—ultimately in our Lord Jesus. The Hebrew words for "cleanse" used, are chata purify, cleanse, or purge it's a verb. Taher, clean, purify, or purge it's a verb. Tamruwq, things for purification or purifying.

In Jeremiah 33:7,8 he prophesies of the coming redemption in Christ to the children of Israel. He says God will "taher" clean them or "purify" them.

"And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me."

However, when and how? Not by water, for it says nowhere that water baptism is the method. When is this to happen? Verse fifteen tells us.

"In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."

We know from the New Testament that Christ is what God had in view (cf. Ezekiel 37:23). Another verse taken to mean baptismal regeneration is Ezekiel 36:25.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

Again, Israel is being spoken to here in which God is promising restoration and forgiveness, and a reclaiming of His people from among the heathen. The above verse is stating that after God takes them back from the heathen He will cleanse them. Notice the phrase, "sprinkle clean water upon you." The prophet speaks this to the Israelite people reminding them of the water of purification conducted for separation centuries earlier in Numbers 8:7,

"And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and [so] make themselves clean."

This sounds convincing, but we read in the following verse that it was not merely water that took away sin. (cf. Numbers 19:18,19; 1 Peter 1:2)

"Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, [even] fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering."

The Old Testament speaks of washings, yes, but for ceremonial purposes, and in no way implies forgiveness of sins in the act.

It's clear God was preparing His people, all of His elect, both Jew and gentile alike, for the coming redeemer that was to "sprinkle many nations."

The Old Testament says forgiveness of sins came by faith in God, confession, obedience, and sacrifice with the shedding of blood.

By Faith,

"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).

By confession,

"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these [things], that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that [thing]: And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin" (Leviticus 5:5,6).

By obedience,

"When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, [even] in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God [is] a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them" (Deuteronomy 4:30,31).

By sacrifice with the shedding of blood,

"And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it [is] most holy unto the LORD" (Exodus 30:10).

There are many other verses that speak to these areas, but I quoted those pertinent. God forgives sins in the Old Testament (Psalm 85:2; Isaiah 33:24; Leviticus 4:20, 26, 30, 31; 19:22; Numbers 15:26-28; etc.) in the New Testament, and still does today!

NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament the word baptism (Greek baptisma) means to wash, immerse, or submerge. Baptize (Greek baptizo) means to wash, immerse, and also carries the definition of a garment being "immersed" in water to dye it, and to describe a ship "sinking" into the sea. It's a verb—that is an action one does. In the New Testament the word baptism appears twenty-two times, baptisms one time, baptize seven times, baptized about fifty-eight times, and baptizing four times.

From the ancient sources mentioned at the beginning of the study, and by customs being practiced by others, baptism was known by the time of the New Testament. However, we are told John the Baptist was the one to bring this practice into use (Matthew 3:1; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; John 1:25). The idea of water baptism did not seem to be a foreign thing when John came on the scene because the Pharisees ask the following:

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"

In other words, we cannot assume they thought baptism "strange or foreign."

Baptism

Matthew 3:7; 20: 22, 23; 21:25; Mark 1:4; 10:38,39; 11:30; Luke 3:3, 7; 7:29; 12:50; 20:4; Acts 1:22; 10:37; 13:24; 18:25; 19:3,4; Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.

Baptisms

Hebrew 6:2.

Baptist

Matthew 3:1; 11:11,12; 14:2,8; 16:14; 17:13; Mark 6:14,24,25; 8:28; Luke 7:20,28,33; 9:19.

Baptize

Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4,8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26,33; 1 Corinthians 1:17.

Baptized

Matthew 3:6,13,14,16; 20:22,23; Mark 1:5,8,9; 10:38,39; 16:16; Luke 3:7,12,21; 7:29,30; 12:50; John 3:22,23; 4:1,2; 10:40; Acts 1:5; 2:38,41; 8:12,13,16,36,38; 9:18; 10:47,48; 11:16; 16:15; 18:8; 19:3,4,5; 22:16; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 1:13-16; 10:2; 12:13; 15:29; Galatians 3:27.

Baptizest

John 1:25.

Baptizeth

John 1:33; 3:26.

Baptizing

Matthew 28:19; John 1:28,31; 3:23.

We need to understand, regardless of a doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that the Scriptures are clear; one is saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by grace alone all would agree to that.

"And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:1-9)

The Scriptures expand on that by adding the following: Predestination, Election, and Foreknowledge,

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:29,30)

C.f. Romans 9:22,23; 11:5,6; Ephesians 1:4-7; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2.

Faith

"When Jesus heard [it], he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Matthew 8:10)

C.f. Matthew 21:32; Mark 8:38; 11:22; 16:16; Luke 7:9; John 1:12,13; 2:11,23; 3:15,16,36; 4:41,42,53; 5:46,47; 6:29,40; 7:38,39; 8:24,35-38,45-47,51,56; 10:42; 11:27,45; 12:10,11; 14:1-6; 16:27; 20:29,31; Acts 2:21; 4:4; 9:42; 11:16,17,21; 13:12,48; 14:1,27; 15:9,11; 16:14,15,16,31,33,34; 17:4,12; 18:25,26; 19:2-5; 20:21,24; 22:16; 28:24; Romans 1:16,17; 3:3,4,25-28,30; 4:2-5,9,24,25; 5:1,2,15-17,19,20,21; 6:3-8; 8:24; 9:11,16,30-33; 10:4,9-13; 11:23; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 1:22,24; Galatians 2:16,17-21; 3:6,8,11,13,14,22,24; Ephesians 1:13; 2:1-9; Philippians 1:29; 3:9; Colossians 2:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:13; 1 Timothy 4:10; 2 Timothy 2:10,13; 3:15; Titus 1:1-3; Hebrews 4:3; 10:38,39; 11:6; 1 John 3:23; 5:1,5,10,11,13,20.

Grace

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:16,17)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9)

C.f. Acts 13:43; 15:11; Romans 3:22,24; 11:5,6; Galatians 1:6; Ephesians 2:1-9.

Repentance/ Confession

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:1,2)

C.f. Matthew 6:11; 4:17; 6:12,14; 9:12,13; 10:32,33; 11:21-24; 14:30; 16:15-18; Mark 1:4; 1:15; 2:17; 6:12; 8:29; Luke 3:2-3,8; 5:8,31,32; 9:19,20; 10:13; 11:32; 13:3,5; 15:7,10,18-21; 17:3,4; 18:13,14; 19:9,10; 24:47; John 6:68,69; 12:42; Acts 3:18; 5:31; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Revelation 9:20,21.

Receiving Christ as Savior

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (Matthew 10:39,40)

C.f. Matthew 7:21; 11:27-30; 12:21; 16:24,25; 18:11; 19:16-30; 28:19,20; Mark 8:34; 10:21,29,30; Luke 1:47; 2:10,11,26,30; 10:16; 14:27,33; 17:33; 18:18-22; John 1:29,30-34; 4:10,14; 6:27; 8:12; 12:44-50; Acts 13:23; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 1:9,10; 5:5; 1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 5:9; 9:12,14,15; 10:10,12,14,17-19; 12:23,24; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:3-5,18,23,24,25; 3:18,20-4:1; 1 John 3:5; 4:14; Jude 1:1; Revelation 1:5; 5:9; 7:14.

Forgiveness by Christ

"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This [man] blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, [Thy] sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw [it], they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." (Matthew 9:2-8)

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee...But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)." (Mark 2:5,10)

C.f. Matt. 12:31,32; 18:21,22; Mark 3:28; 4:12; 11:25,26,30; Luke 5:20,23,24; 6:37; 7:43-50; 11:4; 12:8-10; John 5:14; 8:11,36; 20:22,23; Acts 3:18-22,36; 5:30-33; 13:38,39; 22:16; 26:18; Rom. 8:1,2; Colo. 1:20-22; 2:13; Heb. 2:9,14-17; 8:12; Rev. 13:8.

Conversion

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and should understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matthew 13:15)

C.f. Matthew 18:3; Mark 4:12; Luke 22:32.

Christ our Redemption, Ransom, Remission of Sins

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28)

C.f. Mark 10:45; Luke 1:68,69; 2:38; John 10:11,15,16; 11:50-52; 19:30; Acts 10:6,15,33-43,47,48; 20:28; Romans 3:25,26; 1 Corinthians 1:29,30; 6:11; Galatians 1:3,4; 4:4,5; 5:1; Ephesians 1:4-7; 2:13-15; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 14:4.

Jesus our Righteousness and Justifier

"Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." (Matthew 22:8-12)

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1)

C.f. Romans 5:2-11; Titus 3:4-7; Revelation 19:8,14.

By His Blood

"And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave [it] to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." (Mark 14:23,24)

C.f. Luke 22:20; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:22,26,28; 1 John 1:7,9; 2:1,2; Revelation 12:11.

Salvation

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20)

C.f. Matthew 8:23,-26; Luke 8:12; 9:56; 13:22-25; 23:43; 24:24-27; John 3:17,18; 5:21,24-26,34,39,40; 6:33,37,47,51,54,57,63,65; 10:9,10,28,29; 12:24-26,32-36; 14:19; 17:2,3; Acts 2:36,47; 4:10,12; 9:15,17,18; Romans 6:11,23; 8:32; 1 Corinthians 15:2,3,12-23; 2 Corinthians 5:19,21; 11:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:1,8-11; 3:15; Titus 1:1-3; 2:11,14; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 1:2.

Born Again

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

C.f. John 3:5; Acts 1:5.

Humbleness to Enter

"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." (Mark 10:15)

C.f. Luke 18:17.

Resurrection

"And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him." (Mark 16:6)

C.f. Luke 24:6,34,46; John 2:19-22; 11:25,26; Acts 2:23,31,32; 3:15,26; 4:33.

Obedience

"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:50)

C.f. Matthew 21:31; Mark 3:35; John 8:31,32.

Christ the New Covenant

"For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." (Hebrews 12:10)

Now I presented, exhaustively, all of the Scriptures that speak to us about who, how, and by what manner we're saved. We shall address the main Scriptures that seem to indicate baptism as a means of redemption.

"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and [with] fire: Whose fan [is] in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 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. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway 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: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:3-17, and the parallel in Mark 1:9)

First, we need to understand at the beginning of this passage Jesus has not yet come on the scene. John comes and is spoken of as, "for this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias..." His purpose? "To be, the voice of one crying in the wilderness..." and to, "prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." People were coming out to him, being led of God, and they ... were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Notice, there is a separation of baptism and confession. It does not say that in the baptism their sins were forgiven; only that they were baptized and then confessed their sins.

In the phrase, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," is what is commonly used to prove a baptismal regeneration. It has always been a wonder to me how one can try and prove something from a few verses. John says, "I indeed baptize you with water..." He is simply stating a fact of an action he says he performs. Then he says, "unto repentance" (Greek, *eis metanoia*, meaning for, to, into, in, or toward) a change of mind. He was baptizing them for identification in the coming Messiah in which by confessing and repenting they would be preparing themselves for His arrival.

It's clear they confessed their sins, and he cries out for the Pharisees and Sadducees to, "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." After baptizing several people, John then says, "but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and [with] fire." Of course he's speaking of Jesus. John says Jesus is greater than him. It would logically follow that whatever Jesus sets up as entrance into the kingdom would be greater, yes?

Jesus comes to John to be baptized. All agree Jesus did not need to be baptized to have sins removed—He had none. John tries to stop Jesus from being baptized by him and says, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" John was making it clear that it should be him (John) that was to be baptized for identification with Christ not the other way around. John believed it was Jesus that removed sins, not baptism, for he says, "...behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

We must remember, just as Moses brought the people into the red sea to be forever identified with God, so John brought the people into baptism to be identified with the coming Messiah. (Matthew 11:9,10) In light of the rest of the Scriptures, we now know it's by grace through faith one is saved.

To proclaim that baptism washes away sin is considered, by the Scriptures, a work. Which the scriptures condemns, "and if by grace, then [is it] no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if [it be] of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." (Romans 11:6)

In fact, after Jesus comes and then returns to the Father, Paul corrects the notion that John's baptism is valid (Acts 19:3-5) it is not proper to use John's methodology of baptism to create a doctrine, and not look at the rest of Scriptures to back it up.

There is a baptism which is of affliction. The Lord Jesus spoke of it in the following: (Matthew 20:22; Mark 10:39; Luke 12:50).

"And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized." (Mark 10:39).

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and [in] the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:76-79)

John was to "prepare the way" of the Lord Jesus. John was to give "knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins..." How? Water baptism? No, it would be through the, "...tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and [in] the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

"Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse [any] falsely; and be content with your wages." (Luke 3:12-14)

In this passage those that come to John for baptism ask him a question--what shall we do? This question is in the "future tense"—an action to be preformed yet future. It's interesting that if baptism was efficacious there would be no need to ask this question. Some may say, "well that was before Jesus." However, Jesus is asked this question (Matthew 10:7; Luke 10:25; 18:18) in which the answer is provided--to follow Jesus. It's asked of Paul (Acts 16:30) the answer? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul asked it of the Lord

Jesus (Acts 22:10) the answer he received turned out to be instruction of salvation in the Lord Jesus. The people asked it of Peter and the group (Acts 2:37) the result? Many became saved.

"For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard [him], and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." (Luke 7:28-30)

In this passage Jesus is commending John the Baptist, and says he's a great prophet. He then says, "but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Now we read that "...all the people that heard [him], and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John." The people, in a sense, claimed God as righteous because they believed themselves to be rightly related to God by John's baptism.

Conversely, the Pharisees and Lawyers prove their unwillingness to identify themselves with God in that they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, by being not baptized of him.

"And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet." (Luke 20:3-6)

In this passage Jesus is confronted by the Chief priests and scribes. They ask Him by what authority He does these things—miracles. He then puts the authentication of John's baptism to them and asks, "the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" We receive the answer in their statements.

One, "If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?" And two, "if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet."

What does it mean in the phrase why then believed ye him not? That is if they did believe John, naturally, they would have believed Jesus and the purpose of salvation He came to give.

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye

know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." (John 1:25-27)

John confesses, "I baptize with water, but he then adds but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

Obviously, this describes Jesus as the greater. What is even more compelling evidence of it not being efficacious, is John's own statement about Jesus in verse 29.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (v.29)

"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized." (John 3:22,23)

Some have said baptism was just for John and it was not done before the cross. Not so, "...after these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized." In another gospel additional information is added "...that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)" (John 4:1,2).

Again, we see John as the forerunner or preparer for Jesus, but as Jesus comes it was apparent that He would take over. For John himself says, "He must increase, but I [must] decrease." (John 3:30)

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John." (John 4:1)

As John baptized for identification of the coming Messiah, now Jesus' disciples baptize for identification with the Messiah present. Could Jesus have watched as people were being baptized in water, and believe they were doing it for remission of sins? What does He say? "...for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28; c.f. Luke 1:77; 24:47; Acts 10:43; Romans 3:25).

We come to a Scripture that has been used over the decades to "prove" water baptism removes sin. It's important we look at these verses with all the above passages quoted to shed light on the statements made in God's Word--that baptism does not bring remission of sins.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, [even] as many as the Lord our God shall call... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:38,39,41)

Many have been thrown off by this verse. However, let's go back a bit and get the proper setting for the position of the verse.

First, we cannot use one verse pulled out of context to prove a doctrine. We're talking about a verse, or verses, that is in the New Testament, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. As the apostles are assembled together with Jesus He speaks to them in Acts 1:5 saying, "for John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Shortly thereafter He ascends to the Father.

The apostles then return to Jerusalem and gather in the upper room (Acts 1:13). In Acts 1:4-8, before Jesus' ascension, they were gathered together with Him, and it is quite possible this was around the time indicated in Mark 16:14-18. In other words, Peter and the other apostles would have had much of Jesus' teaching fresh in their minds.

In Acts chapter two we're told, "...when the day of Pentecost was fully come" they were all together again—50 days, less than two months, from the time Jesus ascended from them in Acts 1:9. Then the promise of the Father comes upon them (2:3,4). While this is happening there, "were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." (2:5,6).

This multitude is amazed at the ability the apostles suddenly possess to speak in other languages-- "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." (2:9-11a).

Notice, in the list of peoples, that they were from all over—the group mentioned was made up of mostly peoples from outside the nation of Israel. Would they have known of John's baptism? Maybe, but not likely. Peter then stands up and delivers his great sermon, in which among other things, he says, "and it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (2:21)

"And whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (2:24)

"And that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." (2:30b)

"And Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (2:36b)

"When they hear all this, remembering that they are people from other places than the nation of Israel, they're pricked in their heart and then ask, men [and] brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter says to them, first not second or third but first, Repent!—metanoeo, change your mind. At this time, at that very moment, Peter commands them to repent. He then says, "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." There's only two interpretations to this verse.

One, it says exactly what it says and we should be baptized in Jesus' name, and in doing so we have our sins removed in that act of water baptism.

Or two, it means that being commanded to repent (change our mind which would involve confessing our sins Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5) we must become baptized for identification with Christ having our sins remitted in our repentance. Which is the correct interpretation? Yes, the second.

Why would it be illogical to baptize "these" new converts into the body of Christ when others were before Pentecost? (John 4:1,2) What can throw us off is the word "for" In Greek it's eis meaning into, to, unto, in, on, toward, or against. As one can see it has a wide verity of meanings. The dictionary defines this word as "In the most general sense, indicating that in consideration of which, in view of which, or with reference to which, anything is, is done, or takes place...."

In other words, "for" is indicating that being baptized is not in order to have remission of sins, but because we have had remission of sins. "For" (as used in Acts 2:38 "for the remission...") could have two meanings.

If you saw a poster saying, "Jesse James wanted for robbery." For could mean Jesse is wanted so he can commit a robbery, or is wanted because he has committed a robbery. The later sense is the correct one. So too in this passage, the word "for" signifies an action in the past. Otherwise, it would violate the entire tenor of the New Testament teaching on salvation by grace and not by works.

Peter also says, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Really? Is this how Peter received the Holy Spirit? No, we read in Acts 2:1-4 he received Him by waiting for the promise. Jesus says we receive it by believing in Him

(John 7:37; 14:17). Paul agrees with Him (Acts 19:2; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:13).

Peter has to be saying, to repent (they probably all ready believed) confess, be baptized, and in doing so you will receive the Holy Spirit in order for him to be in agreement with the rest of Scripture. Why would Peter say something like that? Well, he was simply following and remembering Jesus' command to him-- "and he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16)

Lastly, did Peter really believe one was saved and had their sins removed by water baptism? Let's ask him and you be the judge.

"And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:21)

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

"Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." (Acts 3:26)

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth... Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:10a, 12)

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:30,31)

"Repent..." (Acts 8:22a)

"And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God [to be] the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:42,43)

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." (Acts 15:11)

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18,19)

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Peter 2:24)

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3:18)

"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." (1 Peter 3:21)

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh...." (1 Peter 4:1a)

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:1)

In Acts eight we're given a narrative of Phillip preaching to the city of Samaria. "...and the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." Inserted in the narrative, we are introduced to a certain man called "Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries." (Acts 8:9-11)

Next we're told the people "...believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ..." only after this are they baptized, both men and women. However, in verse 13 we read, "Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

As we will see, not all that get baptized are forgiven as some would argue. Peter and John come up from Jerusalem and lay hands on them and pray from them in which the Holy Spirit comes on them. Simon, the one that was baptized which the proponents of baptismal regeneration say we receive

remission of sins, sees this and offers them money and says, "give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." Wait a minute! He was supposed to be forgiven of his sins in baptism? And he talks like this? Let's ask Peter what he thinks, Peter?

"Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and [in] the bond of iniquity." (Acts 8:20-23)

Back in chapter two our baptismal regeneration friends were hailing Peter as teaching them their doctrine, but now he seems to correct them. Simon, even though baptized, was still as full of sin as he was in the beginning. Baptism does not mean remission of sins, nor does it mean right standing with God.

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on [their] way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, [here is] water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." (Acts 8:35-38)

Philip came to the part in the gospel that said "...he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The natural inclination of the eunuch was "I believe and here is some water." Philip then reaffirms his commitment to what he has professed-- "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The eunuch is then baptized. Why would Philip be so adamant as to the eunuch's position of belief? He wanted to make sure the eunuch was truly believing. If baptism was for the remission of sins why not just baptize him? No, Philip makes sure he believes first then baptizes him.

"When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." (Acts 13:24)

Yes, John did preach that the people should repent and be baptized for identification with Christ. But not that the act of water baptism saved them.

In Romans chapter four Paul is arguing that salvation, justification, and righteousness is by faith not by works. He says, "but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Romans 4:4) He asks, "[Cometh] this blessedness[salvation by faith] then upon the circumcision [only], or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." (4:9) Then he asks, "how was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?" Answer? "Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision." (4:10)

"And, ...he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." (4:11)

The point? "For the promise, [salvation by faith] that he should be the heir of the world, [was] not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (4:13) Salvation and the remission of sins comes by the righteousness of faith not by baptism which is now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. However, it is to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Notice, to work for salvation is counted not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Baptism, like circumcision, is a seal of righteousness of faith.

Paul, talking about sin and grace, addresses this in Romans 6:3,4 in which he relates it to our being buried with Christ in baptism.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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." (Romans 6:3,4)

Paul says, know ye not, he's saying in Greek agnoeo "don't be ignorant" that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Ok, what else Paul? "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." For all who, in the rite of believer's baptism, are plunged into the water thereby declare that they put faith in the expiatory death of Christ for the pardon of their past sins. Therefore Paul likens baptism to a burial by

which the former sinfulness is buried. Paul concludes his point by saying, 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. (6:4)

In 1 Corinthians Paul makes an interesting observation about the significance of water baptism. He's talking about divisions and says in chapter 1:10 "...now I beseech you, brethren,...and [that] there be no divisions among you." He says this in preface to their behavior found in verse twelve "...now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."

In response to their divisions he asks them three questions-- is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Looking back and reflecting on the word baptism he verbally expresses his thinking out loud. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." (1:15,16) He then comes back to the issue at hand and says, "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." (1:17)

There are those that believe that water baptism removes our stain of sin either original or acquired. If such is the case, then water baptism would be of the utmost importance to everyone, and that would include God's best evangelist the apostle Paul. Surly, it would not be to presumptuous of us to find such a strong leaning with the apostle? However, what does he say? "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius..."

Interesting? Paul, thanks God that he did very little baptism? Yes, that's what he said. He did say he baptized Crispus and Gaius. How come, Paul? "Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas." In other words, he's saying if I did baptize a bunch of people you might start saying, proudly, "I was baptized by Paul." Then he says, "besides, [this is not the point, it doesn't matter] I know not whether I baptized any other." Paul, the one that should have exalted baptism if it removed sin said, one, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except a few." Two, "besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." And three, "for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Here Paul clearly makes a separation between baptism and preaching the gospel. He clearly minimizes baptism and maximizes the gospel.

Following this out to its logical conclusion, the point is made that baptism, if it were for remission of sins, would have been very, very, important to Paul. However, he informs us that's not the case. If baptism were essential to removing sins don't you think Paul would have placed more of an emphasis on

it? Of course. However, by his own testimony he concludes for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

In chapter ten Paul speaks about the children of Israel, and them being an example for us.

"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; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Corinthians 10:1,2)

Paul is saying that they were, in a sense, baptized unto Moses—for forgiveness of sins? No, why? He says they, "were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses...And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them...." (10:1-4)

"However, ...with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." They were baptized for identification not for forgiveness. Paul equates baptism symbolically with the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12), and insists that rituals are not spiritual guarantees, since God was not will pleased with the Hebrews even though they when through proto-baptism with Moses at the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-5). Now we have an obscure and difficult passage on the subject of baptism in 1 Corinthians 15:29.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

Paul is speaking about the resurrection of all, and that if Jesus was not raised we're still in our sins. He describes this whole discourse in logical terms—by using the following now if, but if, and if, yea, for if, but now, for as, for since, etc.

Then in verse 29 he says, "else"--epei, a conjunction, otherwise, seeing, or since. We might say, in a conversation, "or else" stating a condition, either positive or negative, of an action that did, will, or might happen. After developing his points on the surety of Christ's, and our, resurrection he says to them else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead...why do it if the dead rise not at all? And if they don't raise why are they then baptized for the dead? It's not agreed what is meant by baptism whether it is to be taken in a proper or figurative sense. And, if in a proper sense, whether it is to be understood as Christian baptism properly so called, or some other ablution. Some understand it of a custom that was observed, as some of the ancients tell us, among many who professed the Christian name in the first ages of baptizing some in the name and stead of catechumens dying without baptism.

And as pertinent to the argument, to suppose the "hoi nekroi" to mean some among the Corinthians were doing this.

Some understand it of baptizing over the dead which was a custom they tell us. And that early obtained to testify of their hope of the resurrection. This sense is pertinent to the apostle's argument, but it appears not that any such practice was in use in the apostle's time and it would have been in vain. If the dead do rise, and they do, why baptize for the dead? What advantage would it have to baptize by vicar or proxy when each individual has to be himself baptized? If that's the case let's baptize for everyone and all the world will then be saved. No, it is not a practice that is either Biblical, or practical.

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:26,27)

Paul is discussing justification by faith to the Galatians, and the promise of God. He says to them for ye are all [believers only] the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Why? For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ...what is the conclusion? They have put on Christ. This is clear that we are identified with Christ, and in fact put on Christ—been clothed with Him, when becoming baptized. Nothing is mentioned here about the remission of sins.

Paul is concluding some remarks to the Ephesians (4:4-6) in which he reminds them of the singleness of the Church body, and the faith in which we trusted. He says, [there is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all.

In every place in the above verses he uses heis—"one" in describing the singleness, or "just one" of the items. However, in one hope and one baptism he uses another Greek word, mia,--a certain, or only one. In other words he saying "one hope" not many other hopes, and "one baptism" not many other baptisms. Again, there is no indication of remission of sins in the passage. In fact, Paul is making it crystal clear as to what Jesus taught in Mark 16:16. That it is "this gospel" not any other.

The writer of Hebrews, speaking to Jewish Christians, is exhorting them to move on to perfection. These Christians were wavering in their faith, and trying to return to the ways of Judaism. He spoke to them saying, for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (Hebrews 5:12,13)

And also says, "but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:14)

He then turns to chapter six and says, 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, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. (6:1-3)

He says, therefore leaving-- aphiemi to forsake, to let go, let alone, let be, to depart, leave behind, or to leave. This "leaving" is not meant that we should give it up entirely. Remember this is speaking to Christians which have trusted in Christ, but desire for whatever reason to return to the "first things" for salvation. To them he says leaving the principles--arche, beginning, principality, or first. Of what? The doctrine of Christ—the first things that we did when we came to Christ. The reason? Let us go on unto perfection. How? By not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. He does not disallow this entirely for he says, and this will we do, if God permit. It's poor exegesis to imply that one that has been baptized and saved, if not in the prescribed baptismal regeneration thought, should be re-baptized. The writer of Hebrews says leave those things go on to perfection. Another "pet text" for those that hold to baptismal regeneration is found 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. The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Peter is speaking about Christians being ...of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous. He speaks about suffering as a Christian and Jesus' example of suffering for us. He then says that Jesus ...went and preached unto the spirits in prison then follows it up with 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.

It's very clear, to any open minded Bible student, that in the immediate context he's talking about the period of the flood. The thing that we notice is the similarity in the word saved to that of saved as in salvation. However, the Greek word normally used for saved or salvation in the New Testament is *sozo* meaning save, saved, deliver, or keep from perishing. The word used here in 1

Peter 3:20 is diasozo-- escape, save, escape safe, to preserve through danger, to bring safely through, bring through, to save out of danger, or rescue. Diasozo is a compound word dia—by or through, and sozo—saved. What was the instrument that saved Noah and his family? The ark of course, but we identify with the hudor--water that carried them along. Remember the water that saved them condemned others It's clear that this is what is spoken of in this passage—Noah and his family being lifted up upon the waters in the ark until the waters subsided. Peter goes on to explain what he means. In verse 21 he says, the like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us...if we stopped there we might have a case for baptismal regeneration but he doesn't.

Notice, the word like figure don't pass over this too quickly, but what does it mean? It's the Greek word antitupos--like figure, a thing formed after some pattern, or a thing resembling another. Again, it's a compound word using, anti—for or because, and tupos--ensample, example, pattern, or form. Also, it's an adjective which modifies the noun baptism asking what kind? Answer, a figurative one.

Peter then says, to further clear up what he just said not willing to confuse people as to his statement, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,)... Please notice two things. First, the parentheses they should not be there. Why? Because "Greek has only four punctuation marks, the comma and period which correspond to the English colon and question mark..." Moreover, in the manuscripts it would have been written as follows, 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. Below is the Greek text.

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Parenthetical material means enclosed material that is an interruption of the text but adds information. We could look at it that way; however, Peter wrote it without the parentheses and the recipients read it without them as well. In other words, they did not consider it "an interruption of the text" but as a part of the text!

Second, Peter is extremely careful to add not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. Can you look at the whole passage and not see this? Can you wish these words away? No. It's clearly stating that baptism is a figure and does not remove sin either original or acquired. Baptism is the answer (craving or desire) of a good conscience towards God. Some will say, "no, it means the dirtiness of our flesh in our bodies." Well, the fact is that the spiritual life—the Christian life--is not fanatically concerned with the hygiene of our bodies (James 2:3,4) but with

the moral filthiness. 1 Peter 3:21 can be compared with the following Ezra 6:21; 9:11; Proverbs 30:12; Lamentations 1:9; Isa. 4:4; Ezekiel 16:36; 24:13; 36:25; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:4; James 1:21; Revelation 17:4. The word "filth" in 1 Peter 3:21 is *rhupos*. In 1 Corinthians 4:13 Paul says, being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world... he uses the word *perikatharma*—refuse. Why is it that Peter used another Greek word if he was saying it was body dirt? Because he was referring to moral corruption. He finishes by saying it is a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Referring back to Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12.

Make no mistake baptism is very, very, important and should not be looked upon as inferior in any way. It's a part of the "whole" of the gospel package, and not just a small section. It is that rite and command of Jesus that brings us into the body of Christ codifying our seriousness in following Him. We are united with him in baptism as dying and raising again set forth as an example by Jesus Christ our Lord.

At first, baptism could apparently follow immediately upon exposure to the Christian message (Acts 8:26-39). However, later preliminary instruction became more extensive. The rite was conducted in living water, if possible, in a public bath, or in the private bath of a house Church.

THE CHURCH FATHERS

As we look at the Church fathers let us not conclude that what they thought or taught was always Biblical. We look to them as contrast not conformation. Just because they may have held to certain views, which seems Biblical, one must check them against Scripture. They may have had different interpretations of passages of Scripture, as many do today, but it does not make them right. Scripture is right not men.

"These things, beloved, we write unto you, not merely to admonish you of your duty, but also to remind ourselves. For we are struggling on the same arena, and the same conflict is assigned to both of us. Wherefore let us give up vain and fruitless cares, and approach to the glorious and venerable rule of our holy calling. Let us attend to what is good, pleasing, and acceptable in the sight of Him who formed us. Let us look stedfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God, which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world. Let us turn to every age that has passed, and learn that, from generation to generation, the Lord has granted a place of repentance to all such as would be converted unto Him. Noah preached repentance, and as many as listened to him were saved. Jonah proclaimed destruction to the Ninevites; but they, repenting of their sins, propitiated God by prayer, and obtained salvation, although they were aliens [to the covenant] of God." (Clement, to the Corinthians, Chap. 7)

"All these, therefore, were highly honored, and made great, not for their own sake, or for their own works, or for the righteousness which they wrought, but through the operation of His will. And we, too, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Clement, to the Corinthians, Chap. 32)

"Please ye Him under whom ye fight, and from whom ye receive your wages. Let none of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism endure as your arms; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as a complete panoply. Let your works be the charge assigned to you, that ye may receive a worthy recompense. Be long-suffering, therefore, with one another, in meekness, as God is towards you. May I have joy of you for ever!" (The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp)

"...as Paul admonished you. For if there is one God of the universe, the Father of Christ, 'of whom are all things'; and one Lord Jesus Christ, our [Lord], 'by whom are all things'; and also one Holy Spirit, who wrought in Moses, and in the prophets and apostles; and also one baptism, which is administered that we should have fellowship with the death of the Lord; and also one elect Church; there ought likewise to be but one faith in respect to Christ. For 'there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is through all, and in all.'" (The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians)

"Let us further inquire whether the Lord took any care to foreshadow the water [of baptism] and the cross. Concerning the water, indeed, it is written, in reference to the Israelites, that they should not receive that baptism which leads to the remission of sins, but should procure another for themselves. The prophet therefore declares, 'Be astonished, O heaven, and let the earth tremble at this, because this people hath committed two great evils: they have forsaken Me, a living fountain, and have hewn out for themselves broken cisterns. Is my holy hill Zion a desolate rock? For ye shall be as the fledglings of a bird, which fly away when the nest is removed.' And again saith the prophet, 'I will go before thee and make level the mountains, and will break the brazen gates, and bruise in pieces the iron bars; and I will give thee the secrets hidden, invisible treasures, that they may know that I am the Lord God.' And 'He shall dwell in a lofty cave of the strong rock.' Furthermore, what saith He in reference to the Son? 'His water is sure; ye shall see the King in His glory, and your soul shall meditate on the fear of the Lord.' And again He saith in another prophet, 'The man who doeth these things shall be like a tree planted by the courses of waters, which shall yield its fruit in due season; and his leaf shall not fade, and all that he doeth shall prosper. Not so are the ungodly, not so, but even as chaff, which the wind sweeps away from the face of the earth. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the counsel of the just; for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.' Mark how He has described at once both the water and the cross. For these words imply, Blessed are they who, placing their trust in the cross, have gone down into the water; for, says He, they shall receive their reward in due time: then He declares, I will recompense them. But now He saith, 'Their leaves shall not fade.' This meaneth, that every word which proceedeth out of your mouth in faith and love shall tend to bring conversion and hope to many. Again, another prophet saith, 'And the land of Jacob shall be extolled above every land.' This meaneth the vessel of His Spirit, which He shall glorify. Further, what says He? 'And there was a river flowing on the right, and from it arose beautiful trees; and whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever.' This meaneth, that we indeed descend into the water full of sins and defilement, but come up, bearing fruit in our heart, having the fear [of God] and trust in

Jesus in our spirit. 'And whosoever shall eat of these shall live for ever,' This meaneth: Whosoever, He declares, shall hear thee speaking, and believe, shall live for ever." (The Epistle of Barnabas, Chap. 11)

"I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ; lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins, is declared by Esaias the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: 'Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well; judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow: and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if ye refuse and rebel, the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God; and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed." (Justin Martyr, The First Apology of Justin, Chap. 61)

"By reason, therefore, of this laver of repentance and knowledge of God, which has been ordained on account of the transgression of God's people, as

Isaiah cries, we have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life. But the cisterns which you have dug for yourselves are broken and profitless to you. For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and from covetousness, from envy, and from hatred; and, lo! the body is pure. For this is the symbolic significance of unleavened bread, that you do not commit the old deeds of wicked leaven. But you have understood all things in a carnal sense, and you suppose it to be piety if you do such things, while your souls are filled with deceit, and, in short, with every wickedness. Accordingly, also, after the seven days of eating unleavened bread, God commanded them to mingle new leaven, that is, the performance of other works, and not the imitation of the old and evil works. And because this is what this new Lawgiver demands of you, I shall again refer to the words which have been quoted by me, and to others also which have been passed over. They are related by Isaiah to the following effect: 'Hearken to me, and your soul shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the nations. Nations which know not Thee shall call on Thee; and peoples who know not Thee shall escape unto Thee, because of Thy God, the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified Thee. Seek ye God; and when you find Him, call on Him, so long as He may be nigh you. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will obtain mercy, because He will abundantly pardon your sins. For my thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are my ways as your ways; but as far removed as the heavens are from the earth, so far is my way removed from your way, and your thoughts from my thoughts. For as the snow or the rain descends from heaven, and shall not return till it waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread for food, so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return until it shall have accomplished all that I desired, and I shall make My commandments prosperous. For ye shall go out with joy, and be taught with gladness. For the mountains and the hills shall leap while they expect you, and all the trees of the fields shall applaud with their branches: and instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle. And the Lord shall be for a name, and for an everlasting sign, and He shall not fail!' Of these and such like words written by the prophets, O Trypho," said I, 'some have reference to the first advent of Christ, in which He is preached as inglorious, obscure, and of mortal appearance: but others had reference to His second advent, when He shall appear in glory and above the clouds; and your nation shall see and know Him whom they have pierced, as Hosea, one of the

twelve prophets, and Daniel, foretold.'" (Dialogue of Justin, with Trypho, a Jew, Chap. 14)

"This circumcision is not, however, necessary for all men, but for you alone, in order that, as I have already said, you may suffer these things which you now justly suffer. Nor do we receive that useless baptism of cisterns, for it has nothing to do with this baptism of life. Wherefore also God has announced that you have forsaken Him, the living fountain, and digged for your selves broken cisterns which can hold no water. Even you, who are the circumcised according to the flesh, have need of our circumcision; but we, having the latter, do not require the former." (ibid)

"As, then, circumcision began with Abraham, and the Sabbath and sacrifices and offerings and feasts with Moses, and it has been proved they were enjoined on account of the hardness of your people's heart, so it was necessary, in accordance with the Father's will, that they should have an end in Him who was born of a virgin, of the family of Abraham and tribe of Judah, and of David; in Christ the Son of God, who was proclaimed as about to come to all the world, to be the everlasting law and the everlasting covenant, even as the forementioned prophecies show. And we, who have approached God through Him, have received not carnal, but spiritual circumcision, which Enoch and those like him observed. And we have received it through baptism, since we were sinners, by God's mercy; and all men may equally obtain it. But since the mystery of His birth now demands our attention I shall speak of it." (ibid)

"But if he takes them and restores each of them to its proper position, he at once destroys the narrative in question. In like manner he also who retains unchangeable in his heart the rule of the truth which he received by means of baptism, will doubtless recognize the names, the expressions, and the parables taken from the Scriptures, but will by no means acknowledge the blasphemous use which these men make of them. For, though he will acknowledge the gems, he will certainly not receive the fox instead of the likeness of the king. But when he has restored every one of the expressions quoted to its proper position, and has fitted it to the body of the truth, he will lay bare, and prove to be without any foundation, the figment of these heretics." (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 1)

"It happens that their tradition respecting redemption is invisible and incomprehensible, as being the mother of things which are incomprehensible and invisible; and on this account, since it is fluctuating, it is impossible simply and all at once to make known its nature, for every one of them hands it down just as his own inclination prompts. Thus there are as many schemes

of 'redemption' as there are teachers of these mystical opinions. And when we come to refute them, we shall show in its fitting-place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith." (ibid)

"They maintain that those who have attained to perfect knowledge must of necessity be regenerated into that power which is above all. For it is otherwise impossible to find admittance within the Pleroma, since this [regeneration] it is which leads them down into the depths of Bythus. For the baptism instituted by the visible Jesus was for the remission of sins, but the redemption brought in by that Christ who descended upon Him, was for perfection; and they allege that the former is animal, but the latter spiritual. And the baptism of John was proclaimed with a view to repentance, but the redemption by Jesus was brought in for the sake of perfection. And to this He refers when He says, 'And I have another baptism to be baptized with, and I hasten eagerly towards it.' Moreover, they affirm that the Lord added this redemption to the sons of Zebedee, when their mother asked that they might sit, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His kingdom, saying, 'Can ye be baptized with the baptism which I shall be baptized with?' Paul, too, they declare, has often set forth, in express terms, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and this was the same which is handed down by them in so varied and discordant forms." (Ibid)

"...indicating by these words, that he would not have come to them unless he had been commanded. Neither, for a like reason, would he have given them baptism so readily, had he not heard them prophesying when the Holy Ghost rested upon them. And therefore did he exclaim, 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' He persuaded, at the same time, those that were with him, and pointed out that, unless the Holy Ghost had rested upon them, there might have been some one who would have raised objections to their baptism. And the apostles who were with James allowed the Gentiles to act freely, yielding us up to the Spirit of God." (Irenaeus, against heresies, Book 3)

"To deal with this matter briefly, I shall begin with baptism. When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospel. Then when we are taken up (as new-born children), we taste first of all a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day we refrain from the daily bath for a whole week. We take also, in congregations before daybreak, and from

the hand of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal-times, and enjoined to be taken by all alike."

"A slight metaphrase will bring out the sense, perhaps, of this most interesting portrait of early Christian usages. In baptism, we use trine immersion, in honor of the trinal Name, after renouncing the devil and his angels and the pomps and vanities of his kingdom. But this trinal rite is a ceremonial amplification of what is actually commanded. It was heretofore tolerated in some places that communicants should take each one his portion, with his own hand, but now we suffer none to receive this sacrament except at the hand of the minister." (Tertullian, *The Chaplet*)

(Speaking of Menander a heretic) "Menander is also rejected, who will have it that death has not only nothing to do with his disciples, but in fact never reaches them. He pretends to have received such a commission from the secret power of One above, that all who partake of his baptism become immortal, incorruptible and instantaneously invested with resurrection-life." (Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*)

"And so 'the baptism of repentance' was dealt with as if it were a candidate for the remission and sanctification shortly about to follow in Christ: for in that John used to preach 'baptism for the remission of sins,' the declaration was made with reference to future remission; if it be true, (as it is,) that repentance is antecedent, remission subsequent; and this is 'preparing the way.' But he who 'prepares' does not himself 'perfect,' but procures for another to perfect." (Tertullian, *On Baptism*)

"They who are about to enter baptism ought to pray with repeated prayers, fasts, and bendings of the knee, and vigils all the night through, and with the confession of all by-gone sins, that they may express the meaning even of the baptism of John: 'They were baptized,' saith (the Scripture), 'confessing their own sins.' To us it is matter for thankfulness if we do now publicly confess our iniquities or our turpitudes: for we do at the same time both make satisfaction for our former sins, by mortification of our flesh and spirit, and lay beforehand the foundation of defences against the temptations which will closely follow." (ibid)

"But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptize. Having first recited all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living (running) water. But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast

neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let him that baptizeth and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able; and thou shalt order him that is baptized to fast a day or two before. And let not your fastings be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day of the week; but do ye keep your fast on the fourth and on the preparation (the sixth) day." (The Didache)

"And when they are chosen who are set apart to receive baptism let their life be examined...let them be exorcised...that he[bishop] may be certain that he is purified. They shall baptize the grown men and last the women...and at the time of determined baptizing the bishop shall give thanks." (St. Hippolytus, The Apostolic Tradition)

"Baptism was foremost among the sacraments as the rite of initiation into the Church. Even in the Apostolic Fathers we find the idea that it was instrumental in effecting the forgiveness of sins and in communicating the new life of regeneration. In a certain sense it may be said, therefore, that some of the early fathers taught baptismal regeneration. They held baptism to be efficacious in the case of adults only in connection with the right inner disposition and purpose, though Tertullian seemed to think that the very reception of the rite carried with it the remission of sins. They did not regard baptism as absolutely essential to the initiation of spiritual life, or of regeneration; but viewed rather as the completing element in a process of renewal. The general opinion was that baptism ought in no case to be repeated." (Louis Berkhof, The History of Christian Doctrines)

Judging from the various positions of those in the early Church; one finds it difficult to reconcile what they taught with Scripture. We presented a multitude of Scriptures confirming the fact the remission, regeneration, and forgiveness of sins does not come about by water baptism. It may very well be as Louis Berkhof wrote, "They did not regard baptism as absolutely essential to the initiation of spiritual life, or of regeneration; but viewed rather as the completing element in a process of renewal."

This seems to be an even handed view of the interpretations of the early Church. Their writings were strong and embedded with passion so as to give the tenor of a different view. There were those, just as there are today, that believed in baptismal regeneration. What they held to, or what others hold to today, is of no significance. What is significant is what do the Scriptures teach? We have outlined, in detail, what the Bible has to say about water baptism. We must obey its truth.

CONCLUSION

We're not told in the Bible of any baptismal methodology history. We do know that other religions practice baptism. In understanding the subsequent information we arrive at the following conclusions. Washing with water or baptism was practiced from earliest times. It had meaning depending on the group—most heathen groups believed it was efficacious. This is what makes Christianity different—we're not saved by water, but by the work and shed blood of our founder Jesus Christ.

The word baptism does not appear in the Old Testament in any form. When we come to the New Testament the word baptism [Gr. baptisma] means to wash, immerse, or submerge. Baptize [Gr. baptizo] means to wash, immerse, and also carries the definition of a garment being "immersed" in water to dye it, and to describe a ship "sinking" into the sea. It's clear that the meaning of the New Testament word baptism means total immersion not pouring or sprinkling.

From the ancient sources mentioned at the beginning of the study, and by custom being practiced by others, baptism was known by the time of the New Testament. However, we're told John the Baptist was the one to bring this practice into use (Matthew 3:1; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; John 1:25).

We need to understand--regardless of a doctrine of baptismal regeneration—that the Scriptures are clear one is saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by grace alone all would agree to that. I presented, exhaustively, all of the Scriptures that speak to us about who, how, and by what manner we're saved. Not all that get baptized are forgiven. (Acts 8:20-23)

Make no mistake baptism is very, very, important, and should not be looked upon as inferior in any way. It's a part of the "whole" of the gospel package, and not just a small section. It is that rite, and command of Jesus, that brings us into the body of Christ codifying our seriousness in following Him. We are united with him in baptism as dying and raising again set forth as an example by Jesus Christ our Lord.