

Water Baptism And The Great Commission



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Note: Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise stated. They are in italics rather than being placed within quotation marks.

Water baptism in Jesus' name is the faith-response to the Gospel and, therefore, is the essence of the Great Commission. The aim of this lesson is to show the absolute necessity of water baptism in Jesus' name.

Part One

Jesus' Great Commission

The Great Commission is the charge that Jesus gave to His disciples on His post-resurrection visits with them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. He so charged them because He had just died for the sins of all mankind on the cross and, thus, had purchased salvation for every soul who would believe and obey the Gospel. As Hebrews 5:9 states, *He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.* His Apostles were to carry this Good News into all the world. This commissioning of the disciples by Christ is recorded in all four Gospels. These four records cover three specific occasions, given over a forty day period, when the Commission was given. The first was in Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection, recorded by John. The second was later in Galilee, recorded by Mark and Matthew. And the third, recorded by Luke, was later still, back in Jerusalem, just prior to Jesus' Ascension. What's extremely significant regarding the Great Commission is that Jesus included what the hearers' response to the Gospel would entail. In each occurrence of this revelation process, it will be seen to involve water baptism. In short, the Great Commission is a charge to preach the Good News of salvation in Christ and a command to baptize those who believe.

I use the term Great Commission in this study to mean the combined charge and understanding given to the disciples on these several occasions when Jesus specified their mission to spread the Gospel to the whole world. In this sense, the Great

Commission is not confined to one particular occasion of its being given but is the result of the three occasions, of which each is but a segment. In other words, for instance, Matthew 28:18-20 is not, singularly, *the* Great Commission, as it is generally considered to be, but is a contributing segment of the whole Commission along with the two other occurrences. Matthew 28:18-20 is actually the middle segment. If any one occurrence could be considered the whole of the Great Commission, it would not be Matthew's account, but Luke's, since it was Jesus' last word on the Commission and provides the fullest revelation of the formula, or, name, to be used in water baptism.

Combined, they provide a complete picture of what the Great Commission really is.

Our Greatest Advantage In Understanding The Great Commission

Examining the individual installments of the Great Commission allows us to see the contribution of each in producing the whole. Taken together, they provide a fuller picture of what the Great Commission entails. Actually, to do less would be unscholarly and reckless. But there's another advantage to understanding the Commission that goes beyond even the study of its collective parts. *The Great Commission has a fulfillment!* In the book of Acts, we can see the Apostles following through on their divine charge and souls were saved as a result. Nothing affords greater understanding of the Great Commission than viewing its actual fulfillment by the very Apostles to whom it was given. Therefore, combining the Commission's fulfillment with its previously mentioned component parts is the fullest picture possible of the Great Commission. In this study, we will take advantage of that full picture. As we approach each segment of the Great Commission in the Gospels, we will take notice of the direct fulfillment of it in Acts to see its clear and specific teaching. This procedure ensures us to have the clearest and most complete understanding of what Jesus really said in His important Great Commission.

The Great Commission Of Christ Is The Only Christian Commission In The New Testament

A profound significance regarding the Great Commission of Christ is that it is the *only* Christian commission in the New Testament. Therefore, all of us in this Christian era are sent by this Commission, and this one only, and are sent according to its terms. It's incumbent upon us, then, to correctly understand the Great Commission since it now applies to us. The Apostles' commission of the Gospel is now our commission of the Gospel. There has been no change except in personnel. And since there is but one commission, there can be no change in its content. What was told the hearers of the Gospel back then to be saved is exactly what is still required today. It would be impossible to overemphasize this simple, but very important, point.

It is most vital, then, that we properly understand the Great Commission. For if a person cannot properly grasp it, or if he misunderstands it, and goes forth to teach or preach, he does so, not by the commission of Christ, but of himself, or of someone else, and with disastrously different and defective results. That risk is unfathomably serious. It gives meaning to James' fearful admonition: ***My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation*** (James 3:1). The bottom line is that we all are to carry out the Great Commission *as it was given by Jesus, and fulfilled by His Apostles*. That is all we have biblically to go on. The only authority we have from God is according to that sole commission. Regard to it is imperative and should grip us to faithfulness. As the Apostle Paul said, this sacred, soul-saving Gospel has been committed by God to our ***trust*** (1Thessalonians 2:4; 1Timothy 1:11). We are entrusted, then, with the only means to save souls. As true servants of God, we can only carry out this trust according to the biblical commission we have received from Him.

The Great Commission came during the forty day time period between Christ's resurrection and His ascension. He waited to give this evangelistic instruction until after He had won salvation for us on His cross. But once salvation was procured, beginning on the very day of the resurrection, Jesus clearly enunciated what was to be preached and how believers of the Gospel message could respond in faith to obtain the grace of God dispensed in what we call the Grace Dispensation, or, the Church Age.

The First Commission in Jerusalem

The first occasion involving the Great Commission was on the day of Christ's resurrection in Jerusalem, recorded in John 20. It is evident in Jesus' words in verse 21, ***as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you***. Here, Jesus clearly spoke of sending His disciples out. It is significant, and to be expected, that just after accomplishing what He came to do— give His life as a ransom for all— Jesus would immediately speak of the appropriation of His death's benefits to mankind, freeing us from our sins. Verse 23 records the role that the Apostles would have in the conversion experience of those who would believe their message: ***Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.***

We learn here that the hearers' response in faith would result in the Apostles remitting their sins. That may sound perplexing at first. One may wonder what Jesus could possibly have meant by it.

But the confusion readily goes away when you remember that the Great Commission had a fulfillment and that each segment of the commission can be examined and

understood in view of that fulfillment. The fulfillment began on the Day of Pentecost. That is when the Gospel was proclaimed for the first time by the Apostle Peter. And what do we hear when the prospective converts, who were convicted by Peter's Gospel message, asked what they should do? Peter answered, ***Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*** (Acts 2:38).

With the advantage of looking ahead a little bit, we can see that the remission of sins that Jesus told His Apostles they would effect would occur by baptizing converts in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the *only* way the sins of one person were remitted by another in the Christian era.

Incidentally, the fact of baptism remitting sins is also attested to by the Apostle Paul's conversion experience when Ananias said to him, ***And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*** (Acts 22:16).

The two subsequent occasions of the Commission are consistent with this initial one, each one adding more fullness of meaning and direction to the Commission so that, by the time of its fulfillment, the Apostles would have no doubt as to what to preach.

The Second Commission in Galilee

Mark 16:15-16

The second time Jesus commissioned His Apostles was in Galilee. This occasion is recorded by both Matthew and Mark. Mark's account says, ***Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...*** (Mark 16:15-16). What's particularly noticeable here is that baptism is singled out as the response of the believer in order to be saved. In the first commission in Jerusalem, Jesus indicated that the Apostles would be involved in their converts' remission of sins. Here in Galilee, He names baptism as the required follow-up to believing the Gospel. The connection of remission of sins and baptism in these two incidences is, as previously noted, helped by our having the advantage of seeing their fulfillment in Acts. There, baptism is seen to effect the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). With that advantage, we can spot a pattern developing in both the first commission and this one, namely, that sending out the disciples to convert souls would result in the remission of their sins through baptism.

In this giving of the commission in Galilee, baptism is stated to be what is required of one believing the Gospel and that it (baptism) *saves!* *How* it saves is clear from its fulfillment. It involves remission of sins. Remission of sins is a requirement for

salvation and certainly is something in which every sincere candidate for salvation is highly interested. Remission of sins is not to be overlooked or neglected. And it occurs when one is baptized in Jesus' name.

The Apostle Paul may provide us with an illustration here. He wrote, ***Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*** (1Corinthians 5:7). But just as the passover lamb's blood was not effective at the time of the Exodus without being applied, so Christ's blood must be applied. This is effected when we are buried with Him by baptism into His death (Romans 6:3-5). For this reason the Great Commission emphasizes baptism. Again, hear Jesus: ***He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...*** Peter, Christ's Apostle and chief spokesman to introduce the Gospel (Matthew 16:19), said the same thing in 1Peter 3:21, ***...even baptism doth also now save us.***

Taking in this enlarged perspective, here is essentially what we have in Christ's commission thus far: In Jerusalem, Jesus essentially said, "Go, and effect the remission of sins" (John 20), which is seen in its fulfillment to be baptism in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38). And in Galilee, He essentially said, "Go, and preach the Gospel throughout the world, baptizing those who believe it" (Mark 16). In just these two instances of the Great Commission, and also as seen from the vantage point of the inspired history of Acts, it is evident that baptism is the believer's response to the Gospel, making it the essence of the Great Commission. If you remove baptism from the Commission, you have destroyed it. John 20:21 does not just say, "I'm sending you out; tell them what I have done", but speaks of a consequence, namely, remission of sins. Mark 16:15-16 does not just say, "Go preach the Gospel to every creature", but includes the efficacy of baptism in salvation. Removing baptism from the Great Commission would remove faith's response upon hearing the Gospel and the all-important remission of sins that takes place at that response.

Baptism is according to faith and not "works".

Those who say baptism is a condemned, or, useless, "work" are completely mistaken. There is no such disparaging of baptism in the Bible. The Bible says, ***One Lord, one faith, one baptism*** (Ephesians 4:5). Baptism could never be placed in that context with, ***Lord***, and, ***faith***, if it is not vital for salvation. Baptism, in reality, is an act of faith.

Baptism is the act of faith that you take when you believe what Jesus did on your behalf, that is, that He died, was buried, and rose again. The perfect example of the preaching of the Gospel and its faith response was on the first day in which it occurred, the Day of Pentecost. Peter preached the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2). When those who heard it were convicted, they asked, believing, and thus in faith, ***Men and brethren, what shall we do?*** Peter did not answer, "Oh, nothing; there's nothing for you to do now that you believe. You just did it by believing." Instead,

having been taught by Jesus, he answered, **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** (Acts 2:37-38). And it wasn't a suggestion or an add-on. It was an imperative! And in the next verse (39), he said this is for all those whom God would **call!**

Faith is involved in the act of baptism because one believes the message of the substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and trusts the efficacy of the Christ-appointed means to take away his sins, namely, baptism. One would not be baptized without faith— faith in Christ and in His Word. Jesus said that **he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved** (Mark 16:16). There is no physical proof that baptism can save. But faith accepts the divinely appointed terms of the Gospel. According to James 2:14-26, *all* faith is followed by corresponding action. Baptism is the divinely appointed faith-response to the Gospel. To quote 1Peter 3:21 again, Peter said that baptism saves, and is **the answer of a good conscience toward God**. It corresponds to our faith in Christ.

What's more, because baptism is of faith, it promotes further experience in God. Notice again how the fulfillment of the Great Commission, beginning in Acts 2 on the birthday of the Church, places due significance on baptism. Peter stated it as an act followed with a promise. That could not be said of a dead or faithless work. In Verse 37, those convicted asked, **what shall we do?** Peter replied, **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**. Notice that the promise of receiving the Holy Ghost is to those who are baptized. Baptism promotes further experience in God because it is of faith.

Matthew 28:18-20

Let's proceed with Matthew's account of the Great Commission at Galilee. Verse 19 says, **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost**. Once again, baptism is most apparent. In fact, it is treated as the culmination point of teaching. The importance of baptism is also highly evident here because it is treated as universally as the teaching of the Gospel itself. All nations were to be taught; all nations were to be baptized. It doesn't appear optional at all, but as necessary to faith. This point of the universality of baptism is also observable in the other references to the Great Commission. It never appears optional. It sounds like Jesus really meant it. Recall that this in Matthew is the same occasion of the commission that Mark records. We already observed the same universality of baptism there. **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved** (Mark 16:16).

On this second occasion of the commission as recorded by Matthew, Jesus indicated that administering baptism would involve the divine name— the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The coupling of a name to baptism here is an important addition to the Great Commission. (This is especially so when you recall that, according to Joel’s prophecy, salvation was to involve the name of the Lord— Joel 2:32.) Some people, who do not consider the Great Commission beyond Matthew 28:19, prematurely think that Jesus was calling for a repetition of the titles, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, none of which involves a proper divine name. But, if we take advantage of the opportunity to look ahead to the third commission, as we will in a moment, and to the fulfillment of the Great Commission in Acts, it becomes clear that the divine name Jesus called for was His Own (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38). Beginning on the Day of Pentecost, water baptism was *always* administered in the name of Jesus. Therefore, it is certain that the Apostles considered the “name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” to properly be the name of Jesus, the sole name under heaven that can save (Acts 4:12).

Summarizing what we have studied so far, we see that, in just two instances of the giving of the Great Commission, a great deal is already evident. The Apostles’ role in conversion will involve baptism, remission of sins, and use of the divine name. What will the third and final commission entail? It would seem that it would congeal into even more clarity.

The Third Commission Back In Jerusalem

Finally, the third recorded occasion of Christ commissioning His disciples occurred back in Jerusalem just before His ascension. It is recorded by Luke in chapter 24:45-49. The commission to preach here is evident in His explaining what to preach when they began and also in His instruction to wait until a certain time to preach, that time being after they were filled with the promised Spirit. Invariably, baptism is once again apparent. In verse 47, Jesus taught them that ***repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*** The direct fulfillment of this on the Day of Pentecost could not be clearer. Peter’s words in Acts 2:38-39 state this practically verbatim, and it occurred in Jerusalem, the named beginning point. ***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.*** Even the expression, ***among all nations***, in Luke 24 is alluded to in Peter’s address. ***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.***

A number of additional important points can be made here regarding the third commission.

Point 1. Especially noteworthy here on this last occasion is the fact that Christ is said to have opened the understanding of the Apostles (Luke 24:45). It reads as such: ***Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.*** If there had been any ambiguity regarding their commission prior to this, it had just been removed. From this point for sure, their understanding was clear and they were ready to preach the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost. The illumination of their understanding no doubt included the Old Testament prophecies of His death and resurrection being fulfilled, but surely also included an enlargement of their understanding in what would follow as a result, namely, preaching the procurement of Calvary's benefit, for that is tied inextricably to the fact of the illumination given by Jesus. The assigned preaching to take place, according to prophecy, was to be repentance and remission of sins in His name. This last commission of Christ shows that the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ includes these vital tenets of faith. And the fulfillment of this commission on the Day of Pentecost shows us exactly what Jesus meant. Peter, correspondingly, preached repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

Point 2. The preaching of repentance and remission of sins in His name that was to begin in Jerusalem was to follow upon their receiving the promised Spirit (Luke 24:49). This, again, is just too plain to miss. That's exactly what occurred in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. The Apostles and others were filled with the Holy Ghost (verses 1-4). This aroused the curiosity of the spectators, who questioned what was taking place. That led to Peter's preaching of the resurrected Christ, which brought conviction to the hearers, who asked, ***Men and brethren, what shall we do?*** (verse 37). And Peter responded, ***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*** (verse 38).

Point 3. As Jesus commanded here in Luke (verse 47), all of this began ***at Jerusalem*** on the Day of Pentecost. And from there this same message was preached ***among all nations***. Examples of this evangelism are in Acts 8 to the Samaritans, in Acts 10 to the Gentiles in Caesarea, and in Acts 19 to those in Ephesus in Asia Minor. These all received the same salvation that began on the Day of Pentecost.

Point 4. Because this commission in Jerusalem recorded by Luke was the last of the commissions given, and was attended by the afore-mentioned enlightenment, it is the fullest revelation of the commissions. What was vaguely stated on the very day of the Resurrection about six weeks earlier in John 20, ***Whose soever sins ye remit***, was now at the time of Luke 24 understood to be accomplished by baptism. The ***name***

that was not fully expressed on the second occasion in Galilee (Matthew 28:19), but was said to be the ***name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost***, is now on the third occasion back in Jerusalem, and very soon to be fulfilled, revealed to be in Christ's Own name (Luke 24:46-47). This, the Apostles obeyed throughout the book of Acts. And what other name could be used? There is but one saving name in the New Testament and that is Jesus. ***Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*** (Acts 4:12).

Summary

In summary, according to Jesus, the Great Commission is as important as heaven and hell (Mark 16:15-16). It was His last instruction to His Apostles just prior to the Church Age. It was given for the purpose of reaching and winning souls with the Gospel. We have a great learning advantage in consolidating this material involving the Great Commission and viewing its fulfillment in the inspired history provided by the book of Acts. Generally, we can view past events with clarity, especially when there's a simple chronology involved. And this is the case with the Great Commission. It is well documented. It was given on three separate occasions, each growing in specificity, which is usually the case in divine revelation, and was fulfilled very prominently within about ten days after the last commissioning. By the wisdom of God, the simplicity of the chronology is a safeguard to every sincere soul who wants to be saved and help in the salvation of others.

The only way for these three occasions of Christ commissioning His disciples to biblically align and teach ***One Lord, one faith, one baptism***, as the Bible affirms (Ephesians 4:5), is just the way they were, in fact, fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, as seen in Acts 2:38. *In fact, there is nothing else to point to in Acts or elsewhere in the New Testament as the direct, initial fulfillment of these commissions.* Let me illustrate: That which was spoken by Christ in Jerusalem in John 20 involving remission of sins was fulfilled by the Apostles in Acts 2:38, which stated baptism to be for the remission of sins. That which was spoken by Christ later in Galilee, recorded in Mark 16 and in Matthew 28, as the saving efficacy of baptism involving the name of the Father, and of Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was fulfilled in Acts 2:38 by baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. (To say that Jesus taught otherwise in Matthew 28:19 regarding the name to be used in baptism would be to say that He contradicted Himself in Luke 24 and that the Apostles didn't obey Him. And it would leave no fulfillment of Matthew 28:19 in the Scripture. All three of these prospective consequences are impossibilities.) And that which was spoken by Christ back in Jerusalem just prior to His ascension in Luke 24, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem, was fulfilled in Acts 2:38.

In this study we have seen, based on the Great Commission and its fulfillment, that Acts 2:38 is the plan of salvation for the Church Age. It includes the mandate to be baptized in Christ's Own name for the remission of sins. It is the New Testament grace of God. It is the most gracious verse in the Bible. It offers every soul the most tremendous salvation God has ever given, or that is even possible to give. It offers a person the chance to turn to God, obtain full remission of sins, and be filled with God's Own Holy Spirit. That's the new birth experience involving water and Spirit that Jesus referred to in John 3:5, which is the antidote to the sinful nature that we receive by natural birth. It is man's highest obligation and privilege to obey Acts 2:38 and receive all the benefits of Jesus' death on Calvary. This is the great salvation Jesus died to give all who believe the Gospel. This is what the Great Commission of Jesus Christ is all about.

Epilogue

This document material thus far could be encapsulated in the following way: In a series of commissions, Jesus gave His Apostles a command to baptize souls who would believe the Gospel. That baptism would effect the remission of their sins. The commission series culminated in Christ specifying that the name to be used in baptism was His Own. This command, accordingly, was carried out by the Apostles in the book of Acts by baptizing converts in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. That leads us to part two of this study.

Part Two

The Fulfillment Of The Great Commission

As we pointed out in Part One, the Great Commission is the post-resurrection, pre-evangelism teaching of Jesus to the Apostles. Christ is the sole Author and Finisher of our faith and, as the Head of the Church, He directed the evangelism that would produce it. *All of the evangelism of Acts was based on the Great Commission.* In fact, in a very profound way, the Great Commission drives the rest of the New Testament. Everything in Acts and the Epistles is the result of it. The Great Commission and the rest of the New Testament that follow it are, therefore, inseparable. It is all very organic. The one is the fulfillment of the other. The book of Acts carries out the mandated evangelism and reveals the salvation that Jesus taught and commissioned. The Epistles expound theologically on the salvation that resulted from the Great Commission. Therefore, the justification by faith, theologized by Paul in the Epistles, is directly based on the salvation that began on the Day of Pentecost, which, in turn, was based on the Great Commission. That is a very simple, but profoundly helpful, fact that offers tremendous perspective to the subject of Christian salvation.

In the Great Commission, Christ taught water baptism as the faith-response to hearing the Gospel. In Part Two of this study, we will focus on the fulfillment of the Great Commission and see how baptism was faithfully carried out under the ministry of the Apostles. The book of Acts records the actual, consequent evangelism of the Apostles. As previously stated, there is no greater assurance of knowing what Jesus intended in His Great Commission than *seeing the actual fulfillment of it by His Apostles!* Interpretation of Christ's words was handled flawlessly by those divinely-guided men who carried it out. That leaves nothing wanting to us in the way of understanding what to teach relative to salvation. The Bible couldn't be easier or clearer in this regard. It is the mercy of God, Who provided us so great salvation, to make the way to procure it plain and abundantly evident in His Word. He gave us an inspired thirty-year history of His Church in the book of Acts. In it, He recorded numerous examples of souls being saved under various ministers. There was total uniformity among the ministers regarding the accepted plan of salvation. All the converts to Christianity were saved the same way. They were always baptized in Jesus' name. As Jesus said in Luke 24:47, the message of repentance and remission of sins in His name began in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and, from there, spread to all nations. Let's observe this important history in the book of Acts.

The Day of Pentecost

As we have noted previously, the Day of Pentecost was the first day of the Christian Church era (Acts 2). It was the first occasion of the fulfillment of the Great Commission. That is profoundly important. The first converts to Christianity were made on that very day. Logically, then, whatever the Great Commission truly involves must be evident then and there.

On this occasion, Peter preached to those Jews who had witnessed, and were perplexed by, the startling circumstances involving the Spirit that was poured out on the Apostles and others, about 120 in all, gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. When he convinced the inquiring Jews that they had crucified their Lord and Messiah, they were convicted in their hearts and asked, ***Men and brethren, what shall we do?*** Peter responded with the first use of the instruction given by Jesus in the Great Commission. In fact, he revealed at this time the plan of salvation to the world. He said, ***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*** (Acts 2:37-39). Three thousand were added to the Church by this means on that first day.

Several things are very apparent, to which we should take notice.

1. Peter commanded them to **be baptized for the remission of sins**. That is in direct alignment with the Great Commission. All four of the Gospel accounts of the Great Commission address the issue of baptism/remission of sins. It is the faith-response to the Gospel. Jesus said it was what those who believed were to do to be saved (Mark 16:16).

2. Baptism was commanded by Peter to be **in the name of Jesus Christ**. This, again, is in direct fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission. At the second commission in Galilee, Jesus said baptism would involve the divine name— the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. At the third and final commission back in Jerusalem just days prior to the Day of Pentecost, He further expressed that that divine name would be His Own (Luke 24:47). And this is exactly what Peter enjoined on the Day of Pentecost. The name of Jesus is all that was used in baptism by the Apostles and other ministers of the Lord in the New Testament. In fact, Peter declared that there is no other saving name. **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved** (Acts 4:12).

*It's extremely important to understand here that baptism in Jesus' name is what Jesus taught His Apostles. Acts 2:38 was in perfect obedience to the Great Commission. Peter did not take it upon himself to use the name of Jesus in baptism. He simply obeyed His Lord. Christ Himself called for the name of Jesus to be used on the Day of Pentecost. To repeat again, He said in His last commission that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in His name **beginning at Jerusalem** (Luke 24:47). What Peter preached in Acts 2 is *that very beginning point!* And Christ's words, **beginning at Jerusalem**, imply that the Apostles would *continue* to use His name in baptism, and they did!*

Sometimes misinformed souls reason in the following, erroneous way: "I'd rather do what Jesus said in Matthew 28:19 than what Peter said in Acts 2:38". A worse example of hermeneutics may not even be possible. We're talking about interpreting the Bible, which is in perfect agreement with itself. It is impossible that Jesus and Peter were at odds. That would make the Bible totally unreliable. In fact, it would destroy it. The High Priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 totally discredits the idea of contradiction between Him and His Apostles. (Please read that chapter.) In verses 6 through 20, Jesus confirmed the Apostles' eligibility to take the Gospel into the world. And in verse 20, He said that the word of the Apostles would be the means for their hearers to believe in Him. That anticipated time and means began on the Day of Pentecost with Peter's words. Peter, along with the rest of the Apostles, followed

through on Christ's commission to them by baptizing in Jesus' name. It was the fulfillment of Matthew 28:19, which was more specifically expressed in Luke 24:47 after He had ***opened their understanding*** (verse 45).

What's remarkably superficial in the unfounded rationale of some to take Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19 over Peter's in Acts 2:38 is the fact that Jesus' words in Luke 24:47, which came after those in Matthew, are totally disregarded by them. That doesn't square with a sincere desire to fulfill Jesus' words! There, in Luke, we have Jesus' words! And they were His last words on the subject! Why are they not considered by all those who claim to put Jesus' words first? They certainly were considered by Peter and the rest of the Apostles, who did indeed put Jesus' words first, and fulfilled them.

3. Peter stated this requirement involving baptism as the plan of salvation for the entire Church age. He said it is for ***every one of you, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*** (Acts 2:38-39). It became the ***Apostles' doctrine*** (Acts 2:42). It was never veered from in the New Testament but was maintained by all Apostolic ministers. That word is still in force today. God is still calling souls by the original message of salvation, which was preached on the first day of the Church and continued throughout the history of Acts. Millions of people in our own day have obeyed it.

The Conversion Of The Samaritans

Acts 8 records the Gospel spreading to the country of Samaria. The significance here is that the Samaritans represent a new class of people responding to the Gospel. Previously, the Gospel was confined to the Jews. Samaritans were different from the Jews in that they were neither Jew nor Gentile (non-Jew), but were a mixture of the two. Of course, ethnicity mattered nothing to God. Christ died for all and the Gospel is for ***every creature*** (Mark 16:15). Acts 2:38 is for ***every one of you... even as many as the Lord our God shall call*** (verse 39). So Philip went down to Samaria with the Gospel message. Revival ensued. The Samaritans believed his preaching of the Gospel and were baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 8:12,16).

With this example of numerous people responding to the Gospel and being baptized in Jesus' name, we have so far in the history of the Church in Acts two countries and two occasions involving thousands of people being baptized in Jesus' name with nothing contrary remotely apparent. Bible authority regarding baptism is profoundly established and still there is more.

The Conversion of Saul (Paul)

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who became the great Apostle Paul, was one of the most significant things to happen in Christian Church history. This remarkable event is recorded for us in Acts 9 and is recounted by Paul himself in Acts 22 and 26. The significance of his conversion lies in the fact that he was previously determined to wipe out Christianity but, upon his unexpected conversion, he became one of the greatest proponents of Christ's Church, enlarging it by his own missionary endeavors and writing about half of the New Testament Scriptures. His was a conversion of great consequence. But how was he saved? Did his conversion involve baptism? Indeed, it did. And it is recorded in a very powerfully instructive way.

Paul's encounter with Christ on the Damascus road changed his life. He became a believer immediately. Many would say he was saved there. But salvation involves remission of sins and the narrator of Paul's conversion took great care to point out that remission of sins for him did not occur until three days *after* his encounter with, and belief in, Christ. Remission of sins took place at his baptism, as is consistent with the Great Commission. And his baptism was in the name of Jesus. As he recounted the experience himself when he was witnessing to his fellow Jews, he quoted Ananias, the Christ-sent man who attended his conversion, as saying to him, ***And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*** (Acts 22:16). His baptism effected the remission of his sins *three days after* his belief in Christ on the Damascus road. The significance of this chronology screams to be noticed. Its doctrinal implication is profound. It *proves* that baptism does indeed save because it is the means by which we receive remission of sins and that justification does not occur when a person believes in Christ apart from baptism. It powerfully illustrates what Jesus taught in the Great Commission regarding baptism. Exactly in accordance with Scripture, Christ's Commission was fulfilled in the Apostle Paul when he was baptized in Jesus' name. We shall see later that he, likewise, regarded the same conditions of the Great Commission when he embarked on soul winning.

The Conversion Of The Gentiles (non-Jews)

In the case of the conversion of the Gentiles, recorded in Acts 10, we add a new and final people group to the list of converts receiving the Acts 2:38 message and being baptized in Jesus' name. Gentiles are non-Jews. So, therefore, the Gospel was opened up here to the rest of the world. This occasion adds to the significance of the examples of conversion we have seen so far in Acts because now we have included all classes of humanity— Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles— and all of them received the same Gospel message. The Great Commission to reach all nations with the Gospel was being fulfilled. And Acts 2:38-39 was being fulfilled. It was being proved that this

one, universal Gospel message was for **every one of you, ...even as many as the Lord our God shall call**. Let's go to Acts 10 to see it unfold.

We find in this chapter that Peter was divinely persuaded to follow three men to the household of a Gentile named Cornelius in Caesarea. They had told him of an angelic visitation that Cornelius, their master, had received along with an order to send for Peter, who would tell him what he needed to do (Acts 10:3-6). We can see from this that heaven was still backing Peter's message 10 years after the Day of Pentecost. Peter began to preach to him of the resurrected Christ. Even while Peter was preaching, **the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word** (verse 44). They knew this because **they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God** (verse 46). Then in verse 48, Peter **commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord** (Jesus). So what Peter had introduced on the Day of Pentecost for the Church age and for all people is evident now among the Gentiles. What's also very significant here regarding baptism is the fact that it is **commanded** (verse 48), even after they had received the Spirit of God, making it plain that no spiritual experience precludes the necessity to be water baptized in Jesus' name.

This is a powerful example highlighting the need for Acts 2:38 since we read such an illustrious account of Cornelius' devotion prior to conversion. He is said to have been **a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway** (Acts 10:2). *The angel that visited him said, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God* (verse 4). Those two verses provide a powerful testimony as to his belief in, and relationship with, God. He was no trifler in religion. It shows that people can have a vibrant relationship with God prior to fulfilling the New Testament plan of salvation. Yet he needed to fulfill the requirements of Christian salvation spelled out in Acts 2:38. As fine as his life and faith were prior to Peter's coming, he was not saved without Acts 2:38. This is evident from the angel's words as recounted by Peter (Acts 11:14). Here the angel is quoted as telling Cornelius that he must send for Peter, who would tell him words by which he and all his household could be **saved**. And, from the perspective of our study of the Great Commission and its fulfillment, it's easy to see why Cornelius wasn't previously saved and needed to hear Peter's words. Salvation must include the remission of sins. And that occurs by baptism. Peter, accordingly, said plainly and unequivocally in his first epistle that *baptism saves* (1Peter 3:21). Cornelius, as good as he was, needed to be baptized *because baptism saves!* How would it be possible to state the necessity of baptism, and its efficacy, more plainly? Remember Peter was taught by Christ, Who Himself said, **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved** (Mark 16:16).

The *Re-baptism* Of The Disciples At Ephesus

The present occasion under consideration is recorded in Acts 19:1-7 and involves the Apostle Paul on his third missionary venture. He arrived in Ephesus, a major seaport city in Asia Minor. Upon arrival, he found certain disciples. Commentators agree that they had been believers in Christ for more than twenty years. This case is especially significant because it involves *re-baptism* in order to fulfill the requirement that Christian baptism be in the name of Jesus. As previously stated, the name of Jesus is declared to be the only saving name in the New Testament (Acts 4:12). That fact is displayed here. The disciples whom Paul met were previously baptized unto John the Baptist's baptism, which did not involve Jesus' name. Paul explained to them that John's baptism was preparatory to the coming of Christ. That indicated that there was further revelation to come once the Messiah's Kingdom was put in place. They accepted his exhortation and were re-baptized in the name of Jesus. Upon their obedience to baptism in Jesus' name, they were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues.

Once again, this is a most emphatic expression of the need to be baptized in Jesus' name. John 1:6 records of John the Baptist that he ***was a man sent from God***. The same was ***sent to baptize*** (verse 33). Jesus said of him that there was not a greater born of women (Matthew 11:11) and that those who rejected his baptism ***rejected the counsel of God against themselves*** (Luke 7:30). But as great as he was and as great as his baptism was in its time, it was superseded on the Day of Pentecost by the new and fuller revelation of baptism in Jesus' name, as given by Jesus in the Great Commission. And if language and logic mean anything, then the baptism that replaced John's, which itself could not be rejected without rejecting God Himself, cannot be rejected without similar peril. What took place in the ministry of the Apostle Paul in Acts 19 with these believers in Christ stresses the need to be baptized in Jesus' name. It gives Bible authority to re-baptize anyone who is not so baptized. Paul, obviously, was fully in agreement with Peter regarding the need and efficacy of baptism in Jesus' name. And in this example of these Ephesians, we have yet another example of previous, vibrant faith— *even in Christ Himself*— and of long duration, not being sufficient reason to dismiss the need for baptism in Jesus' name.

Brief Summarization Thus Far

The historical picture God gave us here in Acts is often overlooked but it must not be. It clamors for our notice for it bears upon us most forcefully. It shows the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Baptism was made by Jesus to be the essence of the Great Commission. Take away baptism, and you destroy the Great Commission. You remove the Christ-appointed faith-response to the Gospel and alter Christianity. Take away baptism and you take away remission of sins and, thus, deny biblical

justification. Acts fulfills what Jesus said in the Great Commission, ***that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*** (Luke 24:47). The history of the Church that God, in His wisdom, chose to record in Acts shows the Gospel proclaimed for the first time to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost. From there it spread to the Samaritans, then to the Gentiles, showing that the same Gospel was for all the peoples of the world. In fact, Peter himself was on hand and involved in all three of these occasions.

What's more, the Apostle Paul was converted in the identical way and, as a minister, insisted on the very same message of salvation, as we saw in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). This Ephesian example may be the most powerful and demonstrative of all. It showed those who previously believed in Jesus Christ were baptized in Jesus' name upon learning of it from the Apostle. It was certainly the goodness of God that included this example because very many people since have been in the same situation. I believe the wisdom of God provided it for the millions of souls today who believe in Him, many of them earnestly and for a long time, but have never been baptized in His name to have their sins remitted according to His prescription in the Great Commission. When it comes to the subject of salvation, there is no more serious matter to consider than remission of sins. And that is accomplished by baptism in Jesus' name.

Further Examples Of Baptism In Acts

The five examples provided above are the most detailed and important references to baptism in the book of Acts. But there are also other examples following upon Paul's missionary ventures that show baptism was the believers' regular response to the Gospel (See Acts 16:14,15,31-33; 18:8.). Virtually everywhere Paul evangelized, though no other detail of his converts' salvation be mentioned, still the Scriptures recorded that they were baptized. Can a single example of Christian salvation be seen in Acts to have occurred without baptism? No! Or, can a single example of baptism be seen where any other name than Jesus was used? No! *Acts does not witness of any belief system or salvation example that denies baptism in Jesus' name.*

While we have shown by examples in Acts that baptism is essential for salvation, there is nothing there to show that salvation occurs without it. It also plainly states that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). That's what makes baptism so essential because without remission of sins there can be no Christian salvation (Mark 16:16; 1Peter 3:21). Hebrews 9:22 states that ***without shedding of blood is no remission***. It implies that without remission, there is no salvation. Baptism in Jesus' name is for the remission of sins.

Baptism Describes One's Spiritual State Of Being

Following are several examples where it is evident that one's spiritual state of being is affected by baptism.

The Pharisees Who Rejected John's Baptism

There is an interesting passage in Luke that points out how baptism affects one's position with God. It is Luke 7:28-30.

28 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.

29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

John the Baptist's baptism was vital in its time. Jesus said that those who received his baptism ***justified God***, that is, they ***acknowledged that God's way was right*** (NIV). But those who rejected his baptism ***rejected the counsel of God against themselves***. Their position in God was according to their position regarding John's baptism.

As we pointed out a little earlier in the example of the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19, John's baptism was superseded by Christian baptism. Replacing John's baptism lays vast emphasis on the importance of baptism in Jesus' name.

The Apostle Paul (Saul of Tarsus)

Paul's sins were not remitted until he was baptized in Jesus' name. Therefore, he was not yet saved, though he was a believer in Jesus Christ and had submitted to Him in repentance. Comments in the following example may help explain this.

Cornelius

It was plain to see in the experience of Cornelius in Acts 10 that his religious character and relationship with God, which seem extraordinary and remarkable (verses 1-4), were not sufficient for salvation (Acts 11:14). This example shows that faith in God does not necessarily translate into salvation, nor does mere relationship with God. But biblical faith and covenant relationship do. The Bible consists of two covenants, the old and the new. The terms of each covenant are what is important because a covenant's specific terms cannot be disregarded or be arbitrarily changed. The terms of the New Testament, or, New Covenant, were inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost and were

based on Christ's Great Commission. The new covenant, being so established, cannot change. For that to be possible, Christ would have to change His Word. But He affirmed that heaven and earth would pass away first (Matthew 24:35). That's why Peter **commanded** Cornelius and his household to be baptized. That is very strong language. But it was according to a strong and lasting covenant that God had graciously made with mankind. It was salvation that **began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him** (Hebrews 2:3). Even though Cornelius and his household were people of strong faith and had just been filled with the Holy Ghost, the condition for salvation was not complete. They must be baptized, and so **Peter commanded them** (Acts 10:48). Upon this, Cornelius and his household, who were previously called unsaved, were added to the Church, just as those on the Day of Pentecost were said to have been, who had heard the very same message from Peter (Acts 2:41). Chapter 10 closes on their baptism.

The Ephesian Disciples

Looking briefly at this case in Acts 19 one more time, we can see that the Apostle Paul actually assessed the spiritual state of the long time believers in Ephesus by their baptism. Upon meeting them, he quickly asked regarding their baptismal experience, both Spirit baptism and water baptism. He, being the wise missionary that he was and great soul-winner and Kingdom-builder, would not have done so if baptism wasn't a telling means, a true indicator, of spiritual state. He wouldn't have inquired about a matter that had no spiritual significance. The only conclusions one can draw from this whole context is that baptism is vital and that it has to be the correct baptism for this Christian era. He is seen to be *practicing* at Ephesus what he *preached* in his Ephesian letter, **One Lord, one faith, one baptism** (Ephesians 4:5).

Apollos

Apollos was an **eloquent** preacher. Acts 18 says that about him. The Bible has a lot of praise for this minister. It furthermore says he was **mighty in the Scriptures** (verse 24). Verse 25 starts out by saying of him, **This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord**. Verse 26 says he spoke **boldly in the synagogue**. He was a *real good preacher*, as we might say. It sounds as though he was quite anointed, too. That generally tends to convince us that a preacher is all right. He was taught, and believed, that Christ was the Messiah and he preached this fact powerfully from the Old Testament Scriptures. So far, so good. But then we get a strong indication of doctrinal deficiency. The Bible, not man, describes Apollos' state by his knowledge of baptism! It describes him as **knowing only the baptism of John**. His experience and preaching were lacking and it was so observed by his knowledge of baptism. He was

not preaching the full truth. And some of what he was preaching no longer applied to his hearers. Sometimes that can be an honest mistake but it still needs correcting. Sincerity doesn't equate to truth. His effectiveness in his task was impaired by his ignorance of current, covenant truth. Error never yields positive results. And he wasn't accomplishing what he thought he was. Souls were not really being saved because they weren't receiving the true plan of salvation. He wasn't preaching to them Acts 2:38. This is the same deficiency in Acts 19 with the Ephesian believers.

Believers and preachers today can still be categorized in this way. Nothing has changed. Correct knowledge of baptism is still vital. Deficiency in the knowledge of baptism is common and is extremely dangerous. And we have two powerful biblical examples (Apollos and the Ephesian disciples) that show it must be corrected. In the case with Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla, ministers who were acquainted with Paul, took him aside and **expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly**. That, "more perfect way of God", of course, referred to the knowledge of baptism, which was the area of his deficiency. They taught him the newer revelation of baptism in Jesus' name just as Paul did in the case of the Ephesian believers. And in the next verse, indicating his compliance with this admonition, the brothers in the faith wrote their fellow disciples, exhorting them to receive him. This all makes baptism look very important!

Had Apollos not conformed to the Apostolic teaching on baptism, what effectiveness might his ministry have had? It's true that he could still lead people to know that Jesus is the Christ. And that's a great step in the right direction. And that's exactly why God had been using him. From that initial step of faith, any one of his hearers who placed his trust in Christ could potentially learn of the increased light of truth from another source and be saved, just as those in Acts 19 were. But if they did not, they would miss the vital remission of sins that comes by being baptized in Jesus' name. And Apollos' ministry to them would not have had the effect he might have believed it did. But conforming to Apostolic doctrine, based on the Great Commission, Apollos became a true witness of Christ and could effectively lead souls to remission of sins.

Conclusion

Jesus said to His Apostles in the Galilee occurrence of His Great Commission, **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved** (Mark 16:16). In His last commission to them in Luke 24, He **opened their understanding** and declared baptism to be in His Own name. Peter, in accordance with Christ's declaration, announced on the Day of Pentecost the plan of salvation for the Church age. On the very first occasion of the Great Commission being applied, he said, **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. (Acts 2:38-39). Peter attended the conversions of the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. They all received the identical salvation experience, involving Spirit baptism and water baptism in Jesus' name. The Apostle Paul was converted by, and preached, the same Gospel message that Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost. He *re-baptized believers* who had previously been baptized according to John the Baptist's baptism. Acts shows that assessment was made concerning the spiritual state of believers by their baptismal experience. There was an insistence on using the saving name of Jesus in baptism. Baptism in Jesus' name is what Jesus taught in His Great Commission and was the only baptism that was accepted by His ministers in the book of Acts. God is good to give us means whereby we can *know* we're saved, salvation being such a vital issue, and the choosing of it being relegated to our time here, our state being irreversible after this life. Acts provides us with the greatest assurance of salvation in that it brings to our eyes the examples of conversion that occurred under the ministry of those Christ hand picked and personally taught.

Part 3

Baptism Puts One Into Christ

Baptism is both a practical and theological necessity. It is a practical necessity in that it is for the remission of sins. It is a theological necessity because it is the means, along with receiving the Holy Ghost according to Acts 2:38, whereby one comes to be in the Body of Christ. These two elements of water baptism and Spirit baptism comprise the new birth experience of John 3:5.

Romans 6:3-5

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

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

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

Notice that verse 3 says that we were baptized ***into Jesus Christ*** and ***into His death***. Verse 4 says that we are ***buried with Him by baptism into death***. Baptism is the means whereby we are ***in Christ***. Verse 5 says we are thus, ***planted together in the likeness of His death***. And by that planting we are promised the hope of being ***in the likeness of His resurrection***. Obviously, a lot hinges on baptism. It is a seminal

experience. Its efficacy cannot be overstated. It remits sins, and puts one in Christ, and by it there is hope of new, everlasting life.

Galatians 3:27

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Paul again refers to baptism being the means to put one ***into Christ***. He said you have been ***baptized into Christ***. And by that baptism, one has ***put on Christ***, as though clothing oneself with Christ. That is very descriptive language relating to the efficacy of baptism.

Colossians 2:12

Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.

Here Paul continues his theme of burial with Christ in baptism. By this means of baptism he claims one is ***buried with Him*** and ***risen with Him***. That terminology is very theologically charged.

Baptism As A Seminal Experience

Its Relation To Receiving The Holy Ghost

The importance of baptism as a seminal experience cannot be denied. In Part 1 of this document, under the heading, **The Second Commission In Galilee**, we pointed out that the promise of receiving the Holy Ghost followed upon obedience in the area of repentance and baptism. Peter said, ***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*** (Acts 2:38-39). Peter stated that the promise of receiving God's Spirit followed upon obedience to repentance and baptism. Therefore, baptism promotes further experience in God, specifically the experience of receiving His Holy Spirit.

Its Relation To Holiness

What's more, baptism is associated with the subject of holiness in Romans 6. In fact, Paul used baptism there as the basis for his instruction on holy living. We see from this that baptism is not only an important doctrine itself but it begets theology. Notice that Paul did not sit down just to write the great things he did about baptism in Romans 6.

Baptism was actually incidental to his aim. His purpose was to use it to address another subject and found that subject on it. He reasoned that baptism, from a theological standpoint, necessitates holiness. Baptism makes it clear that God wants us to be free of sin. He washes away our sins in baptism as if to say, "I don't want to see your sin. I am putting it out of My sight forever". Baptism, thus, implies that future sin would be just as offensive to God. What would be the point of remitting sins in the first place if they were just allowed to pile up again? God doesn't want to see sin. Sin is, of course, that which separated us from God in the first place. And Jesus went to Calvary in order to bring about a remedy to it. Recall that John the Baptist said of Christ's mission, that He is ***the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*** (John 1:29). Therefore, ***God forbid*** (Romans 6:2,15) that a Christian should continue in sin. In Titus 3:5, Paul referred to the disposal of sin by baptism and of the new life that emerges as, ***the washing of regeneration***. By baptism in Jesus' name, Christ has washed us from our sins to live a new life of holiness. That is the desired end for the redeemed. Paul made this point throughout the rest of the chapter. But his reason is based on baptism.

Conclusion

Water baptism is not the little subject that some make it out to be. Rather, it's massive. It is one of the very most important subjects in the Bible. Because it affects remission of sins, it ranks in the top three of biblical subjects of relevance. The Apostle Paul summarized Christianity by saying, ***One Lord, one faith, one baptism*** (Ephesians 4:5). Baptism fits in that profound context because it ranks so highly.