

The Scriptural Application of Belief and Baptism

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III. Believe and Be Baptized (Baptismal Regeneration)

It is of the utmost important to distinctly assess the scriptural application of the Greek word *bapti,zw* (**vahp•tee•zo**). Thus, it must be recognized that this term is used to represent two different things in the scriptures; one spiritual and the other, physical. The former is referenced in the Grace Covenant, as baptism by the Spirit of God in which God's elect was joined in union to Christ and was thereof positioned and is in Christ. In stark contrast, the latter is referenced in the Old and New Covenants as ritual baptisms with water wherein the recipients are identified as subjects of the Commonwealth of Israel. In Matthew 3:11, John distinguished these baptisms when he stated, "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." Though this word sustains divers' meanings, it conveys closely related ideas all referencing the identification of God's placement plans for His elect. Hence the same identical word is used for both spiritual and ritual (physical) baptisms, which suggests that the affiliation between the two ideas is identification of ones placement or positional relationship in God.

This is the underlined reasoning why the Apostle Paul declares in Ephesians 4:5 that there is only one baptism in the Grace Covenant. The contemplation of distinguishing divers' facts concerning this word is essential to a scriptural understanding of the theme and purpose of Baptism. Hence certain questions naturally arise when it is asserted that one must believe and be baptized: as to 1). What baptism is in view and 2). What is this term affixed to, Spiritual or ritual (physical)? In consideration of responding to these questions, three passages demand scrutinized exegetical attention:

Mark 16:15-16

To properly evaluate the contents of these verses, it is necessary to examine their literal Greek Manuscript readings: *kai. ei=pen avtoi/j(poreuqe,ntej eivj to.n ko,smon a[panta khru,xate to. euvagge,lion pa,sh| th| kti,sei o` pisteu,saj kai. baptisqei.j swqh,setai o` de. avpisth,saj katakriqh,setai (keh eep•ehn ahf•tees por•ehf•thehn•dehs ees ton kos•mon ah•pahn•dah kee•rehf•xah•teh to ehv•ahy•yehl•ee•on pahs•ee tee ktees•ee o peest•ehv•sahs keh vahp•tees•thees sothee•seh•teh o theh ahp•ees•tee•sahs kaht•ahk•ree•thee•seh•teh)* rendered "and he said to them, having gone to all the world, proclaimed the good news to all the creation; he who has believed and has been baptized, shall be saved; and he who has not believed, shall be condemned." Here attention must be focused on the evidence, which serves as proof that the reference made in this text is according to what had previously transpired in the addressees' ministering; including the baptism which accompanied administration of the New Covenant and Kingdom Gospel. It should be noted that baptism by the Spirit couldn't possibly be characterized in the interpretation of this passage since it was not yet fully revealed at this point historically. Hence, this evidence should at least be weighed according to all that it establishes.

Strict exegetical examination of Mark 16:15-16 shows that its language should be interpreted strictly in alignment with the grammatical structure of its Greek conveyance. In this sense, the Greek

participle *poreuqe,ntej* (**por•ehf•thehn•dehs**) rendered "having gone" and the verb *khru,xate* (**kee•rehf•xah•teh**) rendered "proclaimed" are in the imperative mood and aorist tense; both certifying completed commanding actions that were assigned to the disciples' previous ministering directives from the Lord (Matthew 10:5-15). This proves upon close examination that the reference made in the context is to ritual (water) baptism for identification purposes; not by the Spirit. Hence, any construing of this as a regenerating baptism should be immediately dismissed as a vital issue of extended argument in assessing it as such. Further verification of this is gleaned from the Greek verbs *pisteu,saj* (**peest•ehv•sahs**), which is rendered "has believed" and *baptisqei,j* (**vahp•tees•thees**), which is rendered "has been baptized," in that these are actions associated with those caused to receive the Kingdom message. This promise in the Kingdom Gospel and New Covenant is that all induced respondents to such *swqh,setai* (**sothee•seh•teh**) rendered "shall be saved," as confirmed in God's Eternal Decree.

Hence the interpretation of the language is indicating a ritual baptism, in examining the questions: 1). is this baptism by the Holy Spirit or with water and 2). what distinctions are there in them?" Unfortunately, this vital issue has been assumed without a proper investigation and determination of the divers' baptisms. Such assumption is neither grounded in necessity nor in the warrant of Scripture but only regarded in its traditional teachings based upon what has been misconstrued from this particular as well as other similar passages. It is obvious that the baptism of this passage is of necessity limited to a rite because the Scriptures historically depict it by water with its sign as a ritualistic symbol. But there is no warrant in any of the Scriptural teachings for identifying rites as the actual catalyst for receiving salvation nor should any such warrant be assumed in this particular passage, which only signifies baptism as their identification with salvation. In this instance, the evidence on the face of the passage shows that this baptism is ritual with water, rather than by the Spirit. Hence these points must be admitted: 1). this passage infers water baptism by its New Covenant association, 2). this passage infers no statements involving anything other than ritual (water) baptism, 3). Historically, these particular Kingdom Gospel Scriptures present only a ritual in the exigencies of such a literarily stated baptism and 4). this passage infers baptism, which meets its dispensationally defined requirements that are conveyed by such limited language.

In general, perceptions of ritual baptisms should be rejected in the Grace Dispensation. Contrariwise, this passage as well as all others that are kingdom focused, conveys salvation in conditional doctrines of belief and physical baptisms. Of a surety, the majority of today's ministries' doctrinal assessment of baptism is ritualistically propagated in the same breadth with belief, as a condition of salvation. However, no informed student would feel compelled to introduce these exceptions for which no provision is made in the terms of this passage but will acknowledge that its conveyance is irrelevant in the Grace Church age. The misapplication of this passage is derived at by not rightly dividing the Scriptures in their appropriate dispensations and covenants, which exudes commingling of baptisms. It is a fact that the sole baptism directly contemplated by this passage is ritual (of water), as it meets in the most absolute and unlimited manner, its condition of salvation. In an obvious requirement on the face of the passage, baptism has been given in the same breadth with belief and was in that era, universally present in every case of salvation. This was the unquestioned and accepted view in particular in the Kingdom Doctrine, which makes use of "baptized" harmoniously with the associate terms, "believed" and "saved." The use of these terms, as well as "baptized" is in general, elliptical (having a part omitted and thus relieved of otherwise revealed explication), when assessed strictly from within the confines of the New Covenant.

The terminology "believe" in these Scriptures emits dual usage; depicting both the limited action of the intellect, i.e., "the devils believe and tremble" (James 2:19) while the other embraces and controls affections of the heart, i.e., "for John came unto you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him and the tax-gatherers and the harlots did believe him, and you, having seen, repented not at lastto believe him" (Matthew 21:32). The terminology "saved," in these Scriptures also emits dual usage; depicting the human body, i.e., "all hope was taken away of our being saved" (Acts 27:20) and the soul, "He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Hence it is the identification

forum of "belief" and "saved" that is being referenced, as it is this forum of salvation that is documented in the passage. Thus "baptized" is used, as applied in identification of placement in the Commonwealth of Israel, i.e., "I indeed baptize you with water" (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26). According to one's comprehension of the terms and conditions of the New Covenant, just reasoning can be assessed to the sense that "believed," "saved" and "baptized" are inferred in the passage. The scriptural view objects to the widespread diversities of interpretations of this passage, as being without its correct dispensational and covenant's support. The only tenable supply to this elliptical passage engenders input of knowledge beyond the limited base of what was historically revealed and understood at the point when the Lord uttered the conveyance in it.

Accordingly, the proper exegetical conveyance of Mark 16:15-17 engenders its induced respondents: "having believed (with the heart upon Jesus Christ) and having been baptized (by water in identification with Jesus Christ)." It follows that such ones "shall be saved" (by God's Eternal Decree of redemption in Christ). This grammatical construction allows and its exegeted case requires a relation of dependence and unity between "believed" and "baptized," which subsist in the New Covenant. Hence, there is evidently some link binding these words and the ideas which they represent together. The truth of this pattern is that these terms and/or conditions are distinctly stipulated in the Kingdom Gospel, as the sense would imply that those who believed, were baptized and shall manifestly be saved, which is indicative of the readings in the Greek Manuscripts. The stipulations of the New Covenant insist on the fulfillment of both conditions in all manifested Kingdom recipients. While this is true; it is not all the truth, for there were even further revelations that historically followed, i.e., the messages that were delivered in John and the early chapters of Acts. This expressed faith and baptism must not be conjoined by being assigned to all of God's elect but strictly to the applicable recipients that were therein addressed. Also they must not be conjoined by being assigned universally but to their specific covenantal spheres, wherein the one is spiritual and the others physical. When they are conjoined, they are together only in specific truths, which require them to be recognized as distinct things that exist harmoniously together as specific requirements in the New Covenant; but not bearing to each other the intimate and essential relation of the cause and effect of salvation itself. That is that water baptism is a Kingdom doctrinal consequence proceeding from one's eternally assigned belief of the Kingdom Gospel.

Believing has influence over the soul through the power of God in accordance with His promise in the gospel of bringing the one who has been manifestly caused to believe into the estate of salvation with all its values, which were received from Christ. On the one hand, this new relationship of Christ being in such designated ones is through identification of water baptism and can not be absent in the manifested case of any true Kingdom constituent. On the other hand, all those having been saved; were saved quite apart from ritual baptism. The form of speech, which this text presents, is common in the non-Pauline Scriptures; hence they are void of the eternally revealed Grace Doctrines of salvation; engendering only the limited knowledge of the other dispensational features belonging to their respective covenants. For example, Luke 1:20 states, "Thou shall be dumb and not able to speak." Here the word dumb is amplified by the phrase "not able to speak." In the text in question, the word "believed" is corroborated by the phrase "and was baptized," with reference to water baptism, which is an integral part of the identification of salvation in the New Covenant.

Acts 2:38

The generally accepted translation is "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 you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The literally reading of Acts 2:38 from the Greek manuscripts is: *Pe,troj de. pro.j auvtou,j(Metanoh,sate(Ifhsi,n(Ð kai. baptisqh,tw e[kastoj u`mw/n evpi. tw| ovno,mati V Ihsou/ Cristou/ eivj a;fesin tw/n a`martiw/n u`mw/n kai. lh,myesqe th.n dwrea.n tou/ a`gi,ou pneu,matojÁ (Peht•ros theh pros ahf•tees Meht•ahn•o•ee•sah•teh (phee•seen) keh Vahp•tees•thee•to ehk•ahs•tos ee•mon ehp•ee to on•om•ah•tee Ee•ee•soo Krees•too ees ahph•ehs•een ton ahm•ahr•tee•on ee•mon keh leem•psehs•theh teen tho•reh•ahn too ahy•ee•oo pnee•mah•tos) rendered "and Peter said unto*

them repented and baptized each one of you upon the name of Jesus Christ, into remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Here note that the Greek verbs *Metanoh,sate* (**Meht•ahn•o•ee•sah•teh**) as well as *baptisqh,tw* (**Vahp•tees•thee•to**) rendered "repented" and "baptized" respectively, are in the imperative mood and aorist tense; both certifying commanding actions completed and assigned to the responders, as addressed. A very general impression obtained in the text is that the translations of the two prepositions *evpi*. (**ehp•ee**) as "in" and *eivj* (**ees**) as "for" respectively; are better translated "upon," and "into" respectively. To this may be added the demand that this passage harmonizes with all other Scriptures, that are imperative (II Peter 1:20), in that the remission of sins, as conveyed here is equivalent to their certification of personal salvation, which is independent of their beliefs and baptism, as they are expressed in this passage.

Hence it should be comprehended that the phrase "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," is applied to the positioning of sons of God (I John 3:2), which is expressive of the prior prophetic phrase, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). By just reasoning then, "believed," and "saved" could be viewed in the spiritual sense but "baptized," as expressed in this grammatical construction is strictly identification in the physical sense. Note that this does not mitigate the fact of what the essence of baptism by the Spirit engenders in this verse and in Acts 2:41. This same premises can be advanced to confer that water baptism in Mark 16:15-16 does not mitigate what the essence of baptism by the Spirit engenders, in that all the elect are ultimately positioned as sons of God (I John 3:1). This exegesis brings particular relief to the struggle of some in defending the idea that the 3,000 people that were physically baptized ritually (by water) were accommodated in no more than a covenantal administration necessity. In this scheme of son positioning, water baptism is reckoned to have identified them with what the essence of baptism by the Holy Spirit engenders, i.e., spiritual placement, which unavoidably enters into the salvation of all God's elect and does not flow as a mere testimony, which encounters no insuperable difficulty whatever.

Most of all, the correct scriptural interpretation rescues all who are blessed to receive understanding of this passage from misinterpretation, which exalts ritual baptism to the point of it being all-but-essential to salvation. It is significant that the Apostle Peter's exhortation in Acts 2:38 follows with a promise respecting the reception of the Holy Spirit. In the disproportionate emphasis placed on ritual (water) baptism, which is doubtlessly even more stimulated by disagreement on its mode; the eternal undertaking of the Holy Spirit establishes the essence of baptism, i.e., identification of placement. Hence, the only thing that conditions the believer's standing before God is exclusively His sovereignty. The dismissal of this doctrinal misperception engenders the true motive for the elect's nature and service, which has been slanted to the point that many apparently are unaware of what actually constitutes the impetus of their entrance and security in Christ. Such situations are not without precedent. At Ephesus the Apostle Paul found certain men who were resting their confidence in "John's baptism," who confessed "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:1-3). In other words, all would do well to note that the truth regarding baptism by (in) the Holy Spirit, is itself more important than what orthodox Christianity, led by sectarian teachers, purports it to be.

I Corinthians 12:13

The proper conveyance of this verse, correctly exegeted, is of necessity gleaned from its literal Greek Manuscript reading: *kai. ga.r evn e`ni. pneu,mati h`mei/j pa,ntej eivj e/n sw/ma evbapti,sqhmen ei;te Vloudai/oi ei;te {Ellhnej ei;te dou/loi ei;te evleu,qeroi kai. pa,ntej e/n pneu/ma evpoti,sqhmen* (**keh gahr ehn ehn-ee pnehv-mah-tee ee-meess pahn-dehs ees ehn so-mah eh-vahp-tees-thee-mehn ee-teh Ee-oo-thee-ee ee-teh Ehl-lee-nehs thoo-lee ee-teh ehl-ehf-theh-ree keh pahn-dehs ehn pnehv-mah eh-pot-ees-thee-mehn**) rendered "For by one Spirit we all were baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free and all into one Spirit were given to drink." Here the opening phrase *evn e`ni. pneu,mati* (**ehh ehn-ee pnehv-mah-tee**) prefaces the type of baptism, as it is inferred, may be viewed in the instrumental case and thus rendered "by one Spirit," as well as in the

locative case, which translation is “in one Spirit.” Hence, it was by means of one Spirit by (in) whom we were all *evbapti,sqhmen(eh-vahp-tees-thee-mehn)* rendered “baptized” or placed in unto the end of having been identified and son-positioned in the one Body of Christ. Here the passive voice certifies that no one can genuinely be a member of the Body of Christ, apart from such one having been eternally placed and identified in it by the Holy Spirit.

The phrase, *ei;te Vloudai/oi ei;te {Ellhnej ei;te dou/loi ei;te evleu,qeroi(ee-teh Ee-oo-thee-ee ee-teh Ehl-lee-nehs thoo-lee ee-teh ehl-ehf-theh-ree)* is rendered “whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free,” which documents that at the present time, i.e., during this Church age, there is no difference between the Jews and Gentiles in the Body of Christ (Romans 10:12), as all have been positioned in Him solely on the basis of the faithfulness of Christ (Acts 16:31; Romans 3:22). Any correlation between the ritual positioning status of men and God’s sovereign choice, can only be negative (I Corinthians 1:26-29). The last phrase *kai. pa,ntej e/n pneu/ma evpoti,sqhmen (keh pahn-dehs ehn pnehv-mah eh-pot-ees-thee-mehn)*, is rendered, “and all into one Spirit were given to drink.” Note that there is a slight variation between some Greek texts regarding the actual rendering of this phrase but the passive voice clearly indicates that God gave His elect to drink the one Spirit. Therefore, He identified such ones with (in) the Body of Christ, the Church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Hence, the many members were informed and influenced by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and they all drink into one Spirit. Hence, all the elect were made partakers of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, as corroborated by John 7:37, 39: “.....if any one thirsts, let him come unto me and drink.....and this He said of the Spirit, which those believing in Him were about to receive; for not yet was the Holy Spirit because Jesus was not yet glorified....”

Unfortunately, there is a great profusion of various readings of the phrase, “**For by one Spirit were we all baptized...**” with the misunderstanding of water baptism. Here it should be comprehended that the conveyance is definitively not “by water” but “by” or “in” one Spirit were we all baptized. For those who assign this baptism as a transient act in the sphere of time, it must be understood that baptism by water and by the Spirit are two different things (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16). Here it must be clearly stated that those baptized in waterdo so only in seeking to identify according to the directives of the Kingdom Gospel and New Covenant, which are not applicable in the Dispensation of Grace. Also, in the Grace Covenant and Gospel, water baptism does not incorporate anyone into the Church of Christ; neither into the true and invisible Church, which is the Body of Christ. Hence, this verse is not meant to signify a visible church nor is the elect baptized in or by the Spirit into a visible church. The elect indeed were baptized and received into the church but no ritual (water) baptism put them into it nor made them members of it. Some persons may be baptized in water and yet may not ever be joined to the true church of God. There is indeed no alliance made to water baptism in the Gospel of Grace, as it is the grace of the Spirit that worked regeneration and sanctification in the eternal sphere. A limited knowledge of this grace is testified of both in the Old and New Covenants and frequently signified by water, which is alluded to as baptism or “being baptized.” This symbolism of water is because of the plenteous, abundance and superabundance of it then bestowed, as is expressed by floods and rivers and “a well of living water (John 4:11; 7:38);” for this is what qualifies and fits those auspicated under ordinances of water baptism in non-grace dispensations.

All that is wrought by the Spirit of God is owing to His Divine power and energy; not to water baptism, which has no regenerating virtue, in that it decries a carnal regeneration that is not born of the blood of Christ. When water baptism is foisted as sacramental and the child of God’s entrance into God’s acceptance, salvation is then attributable to: 1). the best of men, 2). the will of the flesh and 3). the power of man’s freewill. But spiritual baptism unto salvation is totally of the Holy Spirit, who is the only sanctifier of the sons of men. God’s grace in eternal regeneration is brought into one body: the mystical Body of Christ, the invisible church that is manifestly testified, as the grace of God in election of His choice. It was exclusively God’s choice of His elect in eternity that constituted such ones as sons of God. Hence, it is spiritual baptism that exudes the sanctifying grace, which effectuated those belonging to His body and thus qualified, gave entrance and privileges of which the Spirit of God directed and manifestly brought them to. Whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; it matters

not of what state and condition of elected ones; they were regenerated, sanctified, equally positioned in His body and manifestly have equal propriety in all immunities and blessings of God's beloved (Colossians 3:11; Galatians 3:28).

This is all certified by the phrase, "**and all into one Spirit were given to drink.**" Thus, God's elect were and are all partakers of the same graces of the Spirit, i.e., faith, hope, love... and daily receive under His guidance, direction and influence out of the same fullness of grace in Christ from whence all drink the same spiritual drink, i.e., the Blood of Christ. His blood is drink indeed, hence there shouldn't any allusions of assessing an ordinance of water baptism in the Grace Covenant, as the Apostle Paul tersely states that there is only "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Moreover, all were eternally positioned in Christ, have drank His Spirit and are refreshed and nourished by the words of His faithfulness in sound doctrine through the application of His righteousness. Thus salvation entails the eternal planting of the Spirit, which was watered by His grace under the administration of the Gospel of Grace, wherein all (the elect) became one body under Christ, the Head. Here the Greek verb **evpoti, sqhmen (eh·pot·ees·thee·mehn)** rendered "were given to drink," establishes that all were made to drink one Spirit or to become one with another being knit together in love, in the bond of His perfection. Note that some of the oldest Greek manuscripts read, "all were given to drink one Spirit," omitting "into." In this view, some have drawn inference of an indirect allusion, which has evolved into a direct allusion of water baptism in this verse; as it has been linked to the phrase the "Spirit, the water and the blood" (I John 5:8). From this has evolved the very popular expression "outward signs of the inward things signified. Thus, incorrect examinations of the above passages have induced the parlance of baptismal regeneration by water, which must be laid to rest. In this regard, rightly divided exegeses demonstrate that **ritual (water) baptism, however administered, is a condition and therefore not in the Grace Covenant and should not be combined with believing as a necessary step in salvation in the Grace**