

**Series: Baptism - What Does the Bible Really Teach?**  
**“Water Baptism After Paul” – Part 1**

**Introduction:**

1. In last week's lesson, we learned from the Scriptures that water baptism held a very prominent role in Christ's commission to His eleven apostles following His resurrection. **Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-19**
  - They were fully anticipating the reestablishment of Israel's earthly kingdom. **Acts 1:6, 11**
  - They were to be witnesses to Christ's resurrection and that He was in fact, Israel's Messiah. They were to work **first** for the conversion of Jerusalem. **Acts 1:8**
  - They were to baptize in water those that believed their message, which would result in the Holy Spirit being given to them, and insure that their sins would be remitted at Christ's Second Coming to earth. **Acts 2:38, 3:19-20**
  - All of this was a continuation of John the Baptist and Christ's earthly ministry to Israel and the gospel of the kingdom that they proclaimed.
2. A significant event happened in Acts 9 which would truly change the course of history. God reached down and saved His chief enemy, Saul of Tarsus. We know him as the apostle Paul.
  - Paul was a Jew and would be baptized in water according to Israel's kingdom program that had been revealed up to that time. **Acts 9:18, 22:12-16**
  - Paul logically began his ministry by working towards the conversion of Jerusalem, just as the kingdom program had clearly stated. But to Paul's surprise, God had other plans. **Acts 22:17-21**
3. Paul had a commission that would bypass Jerusalem and go straight to the Gentiles with the message of Jesus Christ.
4. Would water baptism play the same prominent role in Paul's ministry to the Gentiles as it did in Peter's ministry to Israel? Let's compare two passages.
  - Peter's words - **1 Peter 3:20-21**
  - Paul's words - **1 Corinthians 1:14-17**
5. Why is there such a clear difference in Paul and Peter's attitude toward water baptism?

**Paul's position was different than the twelve apostles.**

1. There are twelve apostles because there are twelve tribes of Israel. They will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in Christ's kingdom. **Matthew 19:27-28**
2. This is why Peter knew he had to replace Judas and he did so with Matthias in Acts 1. God ratified this decision by filling all of them with the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2:4**.
3. Paul knew he wasn't one of the twelve. He distinguished himself apart from the twelve in **1 Corinthians 15:5, 8**. Paul's office was the apostle of the Gentiles. **Romans 11:13**

### **Paul's commission was different than the twelve apostles.**

1. The twelve were to testify to Israel of Christ's resurrection and seek to convince them that Christ was Israel's Messiah. Acts 2-7
  - They were to evangelize Jerusalem and the cities of Israel first before going to any other nations. **Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; Matthew 10:23**
2. Paul's commission was to get **out of** Jerusalem (**Acts 22:18**). Paul's commission was to go straight to the Gentiles. **Acts 22:21, 26:16-18**
3. This difference in commissions is clearly seen in **Galatians 2:8-9**.

### **Paul's gospel was different than the twelve apostles.**

1. The word "gospel" simply means "good news."
2. How did Paul receive the gospel he preached among the Gentiles? He did not receive it from any of the twelve, but by direct revelation of Jesus Christ.

#### **Galatians 1:11-12**

- If Paul's commission would be to teach what Christ taught the twelve during His earthly ministry to Israel (**Matthew 28:19-20**), then why would Paul need a series of special revelations from Jesus Christ?
  - Obviously Christ was revealing something new. Paul called it a mystery hid in God from the foundation of the world. **Colossians 1:25-27; Ephesians 3:9**
  - A mystery is something that has been kept secret, but is now revealed.
3. Seventeen years after Paul's conversion, he traveled to Jerusalem and communicated to the twelve the gospel he preached. **Galatians 2:2, 7**
    - Why would Paul need to communicate to them privately his gospel if it was identical to what Peter had been preaching since the day of Pentecost? It clearly was different.
  4. Paul's gospel was that through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, they (Jew or Gentile) could be totally forgiven of their sins and have Christ's righteousness imputed unto them. **Romans 10:1-13**
    - This divine righteousness would be imparted without the law of Moses (**Romans 3:21-22**), without any works (**Romans 4:5**), without circumcision (**Romans 4:11**), and without water baptism (**Romans 6:3-4; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13**).
    - This is why Paul said that he could preach his gospel without water baptism. **1 Corinthians 1:17**
  5. Paul's gospel centered around the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross. **1 Corinthians 1:17, 18, 23, 2:1-2, 15:3**
  6. You do not find this in Peter's gospel message in the early part of Acts. His good news was that Israel's Messiah is risen.
    - "You crucified Him, but He is risen. If you will repent of your sin of crucifying your Messiah, He will return, remit your sins, and usher in your long-awaited kingdom. Prepare yourselves by repenting and being baptized."
  7. This is why you see Peter disappearing from the scene in the book of Acts. Israel's prophetic program was to be interrupted by something new - the dispensation of grace to all people.

8. Israel's program would be set aside temporarily and Paul's gospel of grace would go to the world. Israel's rejection of **Peter's** gospel would mean the riches of the Gentiles through **Paul's** gospel. **Romans 11:11-13**
9. Peter is the prominent spokesman in the early part of Acts, but after Acts 9 (Paul's conversion) he disappears except for a few significant events.
  - God commissions Peter to go to a Gentile household and tell them of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. God interrupts Peter's message, and these Gentile believers receive the Holy Spirit by faith alone in Jesus Christ (apart from circumcision, water baptism, the law of Moses, etc.) This is startling to Peter. Acts 10
  - Peter stands up at the Jerusalem Council and reminds them of this event and affirms the Gentile ministry of Paul. **Acts 15:7-11**
10. God used Peter to transition things to Paul's ministry and gospel, and Peter's ministry and gospel to Israel disappears from the Biblical record (Acts 9-28).
11. As we study Paul's ministry, we see water baptism still being practiced at times (**Acts 18:8**), yet it would not have the significance that it did under Israel's program.
  - When asked by the Philippian jailor, "*What must I do to be saved?*" Paul simply answers, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*"  
**Acts 16:30-31**
  - Water baptism is only mentioned once in all of Paul's 13 epistles, and in that passage Paul said that Christ sent him **not** to baptize. **1 Corinthians 1:17**
12. Paul's focus would now be a non-physical baptism that would unite the believer to Jesus Christ for all eternity (Colossians 2:12-13). We will talk more about this next week.