

## Water Baptism After Paul - Part 3

### Introduction:

1. Peter was asked by a group of Jews, "What shall we do?"
  - Peter responded that they should repent and be baptized in water in order to receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. **Acts 2:37-38**
2. Paul was asked by a man, "What must I do to be saved?"
  - Paul responded, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" **Acts 16:31**
3. Obviously, these are two different answers. We learned that water baptism was an essential part of Peter's message, yet Paul said he could preach his gospel without it. **1 Corinthians 1:17**
4. The same Christ that gave to Peter the gospel of the circumcision while on earth appeared to Paul from heaven and gave to him the gospel of the uncircumcision. **Galatians 2:7-8**
5. We learned that Paul was not one of the twelve apostles, but received a special commission by direct revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven.
  - To Paul was revealed the mystery of the body of Christ and the dispensation of grace that we live in today.
6. Do we see water baptism associated at all with Paul's distinct message and ministry? What role did it play in Paul's ministry? Last week we began to do a Biblical overview of Paul's ministry in order to get answers to these questions. We examined his salvation, first and second missionary journeys, as well as the Jerusalem Council in between.

### Paul's third missionary journey

1. After Paul's second journey he returned to his home church in Antioch and spent some time there. **Acts 18:22**
2. Paul then launched out on his third missionary journey. **Acts 18:23**
  - This journey ended with Paul being arrested in Jerusalem.
3. Just like Paul's first missionary journey, Paul is not seen practicing water baptism on this missionary journey, with but one exception.
4. In **Acts 19:1-7**, Paul enters Ephesus. A few things to note about this text:
  - This involves twelve Jewish men that had already believed John the Baptist's message that Messiah was coming. (vs. 2) They were believers.
  - These men had been water baptized under John's baptism and message. vs. 3
  - Paul gives these men further revelation by explaining to them that Christ Jesus was the fulfillment of John's message. vs. 4
  - These Jewish men are then baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. These men obviously desired to be baptized to demonstrate their faith in this new revelation they had received concerning the good news of Jesus Christ. This is why they are baptized in Jesus' name. (vs. 5) Remember, baptism was an essential element in Israel's program.
  - There is no evidence that Paul performed this baptism or required it, but he allowed it.

- Paul then lays hands on them; they receive the Holy Spirit and begin to manifest miraculous signs which are to be a testimony to the nation of Israel.  
**1 Corinthians 1:22 cf. 14:22**
  - Paul immediately takes these Jewish converts with him into the Jewish synagogue. As these Jewish believers manifested Israel's signs, it would hopefully cause Israel to listen to Paul's gospel of Jesus Christ.
5. One sidenote about **Acts 19:1-7**: many religions teach the necessity for re-baptism by their church or denomination based on this passage. This is ludicrous for several reasons.
    - These were Jewish men who had never heard the gospel of Christ.
    - Their re-baptism was not commanded by Paul. It was obviously their choice. Baptism was an essential element in Israel's program.
    - This is the only time something like this is ever seen in the Bible. There is no evidence that any of the 120 in the upper room in Acts 1 were re-baptized in Acts 2 (who had all been baptized under John's baptism).
  6. There is no more mention of water baptism after this on Paul's journey. When reviewing his Ephesian ministry to the elders of that church, water baptism is never mentioned. **Acts 20:20-21**

### **Paul's arrest and trip to Rome**

1. Paul is arrested in Jerusalem in Acts 21 and sent to Rome in Acts 27 and 28.
2. Water baptism is referred to once in these chapters when Paul is giving his testimony before the Jewish multitude in Acts 22. Paul simply recounts his own baptism by Ananias. This subject was covered earlier in Part 2 of this lesson.

### **Paul's Acts epistles**

1. Paul wrote several of his letters to the churches during the Acts time period. These books would include Galatians, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
2. Water baptism is mentioned once in these epistles. It is found in **1 Corinthians 1:13-17**.
  - This epistle was written from Ephesus during the Acts 19 time period.
3. There was some serious contention in this church and much of it was centered on this issue of water baptism.
  - Paul thanked God that he himself had only baptized a few of these people. vs. 14
  - Paul then stated that Christ's commission for him was not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. vs. 17
4. Some say that Paul said this because he was an itinerate evangelist, and as an evangelist he wouldn't have been the one baptizing.
  - First of all, the Scripture never designates Paul as an itinerate evangelist. It always identifies him as an apostle. As an apostle, he would have full rights to baptize people. In fact, the twelve apostles were commanded to baptize as part of their commission.
  - Second, Paul many times spent extended periods of time in one place, in which he basically functioned as the leading pastor/teacher (year and a half at Corinth, three years at Ephesus).

5. In order to be true to the text, we can only conclude one thing. Water baptism was not an integral part of Paul's ministry or message. The preaching of Christ's finished work was the focus of Paul's message. **1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:1-2**
  - Paul realized this and wrote this to a church that had been very focused on the issue of water baptism.
6. Paul wrote this in Acts 19 (after his encounter with the twelve Jewish men) and is never seen baptizing anybody after this in the book of Acts, nor does he teach on or mention this issue in any of his other Acts epistles.
7. His focus becomes Holy Spirit baptism which places the believer in the body of Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-28**

### **Paul's post-Acts epistles**

1. Many of Paul's letters he wrote after the book of Acts was complete. This would include Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.
2. Again, water baptism is never mentioned in any of these letters. Paul's focus is the "one baptism" of **Ephesians 4:5**. This is a spiritual, invisible baptism that is done by God the moment a person trusts Christ. **Colossians 2:11-13**
3. This divine baptism places a believer into spiritual union with Jesus Christ, brings spiritual life, and results in complete forgiveness of sins.
4. When a person trusts Christ, the Holy Spirit baptizes, regenerates, and indwells the believer immediately. **Ephesians 1:13**
5. So does a believer need water baptism? Does the Bible require this of believers? Does Paul teach the church that baptism is a prerequisite before someone can become a part of a local assembly? Is baptism necessary to be "right with God?"