

Series: Baptism - What Does the Bible Really Teach?
“Water Baptism before Paul” - Part 2

Introduction:

1. We see a division in the book of Acts that is unmistakable.
 - From Acts 1-8 the key figure is the apostle Peter.
 - From Acts 13 to 28 Peter disappears from off the historical record and Paul is the key figure, and the next book is Romans and begins with the word "Paul."
 - From Acts 9-12 we see the transition from Peter to Paul.
2. Did you know that Peter and Paul had two completely different ministries (**Galatians 2:7-9**)? You will never understand issues like water baptism until you understand this basic Bible principle.
3. Paul didn't get his message from Peter, but directly from Jesus Christ (**Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:1-3**), so we would expect them to be different, would we not?
 - They, in fact, **were** different. **Galatians 2:1-2, 6-7; 2 Peter 3:15-16**
 - Peter eventually did come to an understanding of Paul's gospel. **Acts 15:7-11** (the only time Peter is mentioned in Acts 13-28)
4. Last week we began to examine water baptism before Paul's commission in the book of Acts. We examined water baptism under the Old Testament law and John the Baptist.
5. Let's continue to examine the issue of water baptism before Paul.

Baptism under Christ's commissions to the eleven

1. Christ had died, Judas had hung himself, and the eleven were cowering behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. **John 20:19**
 2. Things could not have looked worse, but then Christ appeared to these men and demonstrated to them His bodily resurrection. After this, Christ spent 40 days with the apostles, instructing and teaching them of things pertaining to His coming kingdom. **Acts 1:3**
 - They were to tarry at Jerusalem until Christ baptized them with the Holy Spirit, which would mean supernatural power. **Acts 1:4-5; Luke 24:49**
 - They were then to witness of the risen Christ, beginning at Jerusalem. **Acts 1:8**
 3. Would water baptism be a vital part of their message as it was under John and under their three-year earthly ministry with Christ? Let's examine Christ's commissions. **Matthew 28:16-20**
 - What were they to teach the nations? Were they to teach that Christ had died for all their sins, and through faith in Christ they could have peace with God apart, from any works of the law? There is no record of them preaching this gospel of grace that we preach today. It simply wasn't revealed yet.
 - They were to preach the things Christ had taught them concerning His earthly kingdom, and baptism was once again an integral part of their message.
- Mark 16:15-20**
- This passage is clear. Water baptism was to continue to be an integral part of the gospel message they preached. It was part of the obedience of faith.

- If people believed the apostles' message concerning the risen Christ, they would be water baptized to prepare for the return of this Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom.
4. God would also baptize the apostles with His Holy Spirit, as evidenced by miraculous sign gifts (**Mark 16:17-18**). This was to confirm the message to Israel that Christ (the One you crucified) **was** the Messiah, and His wrath and kingdom are coming.
 - Throughout their history, the Jews always required a sign. **1 Corinthians 1:22**
 - The Holy Spirit would be given and these signs would be evidenced in those who believed the apostles' message and were baptized in water. **Mark 16:17-18**

Baptism under Peter

1. After Christ's post-resurrection commissions to the eleven, Christ is taken up into heaven. The eleven are reminded that Christ will return to the earth in like manner. This is a confirmation of Christ's coming earthly kingdom. **Acts 1:10-11**
2. On the day of Pentecost (a Jewish feast day), the apostles receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as promised by Christ. **Acts 2:1-5**
3. As instructed, they witness (Peter is the chief spokesman) of the resurrected Christ and warn of coming wrath. **Acts 2:32-36**
4. When Israel wanted to know what to do, how did Peter answer them? **Acts 2:37-40**
 - Peter told them exactly what Christ had taught him to say. He told them to repent and demonstrate their faith in the apostles' message by uniting with the apostles in water baptism.
5. This would result in three wonderful blessings:
 - Remission of sins - vs. 38
 - The gift of the Holy Spirit - vs. 38-39
 - Deliverance from the wrath to come on the unbelieving nation of Israel - vs. 40
6. Those that believed Peter's message were united with the little flock (the 120 - **Acts 1:15**) through water baptism.
7. After they were united, what happened next? They did signs and wonders, sold all their possessions, and met in the temple **every** day (**Acts 2:42-47, 4:34**). All of this was in line with Christ's prior instructions.
8. Some say that Peter's promise of remission of sins had nothing to do with their baptism. They say the word "for" in **Acts 2:38** means "because of." In other words, because this group already **had** remission of sins, they were to be baptized.
9. This cannot be true because **Acts 3:19** makes it clear that this was a **future** remitting of sins that they were looking to, when Christ would return to earth and establish the kingdom. **Acts 3:20-21**
10. In Acts 10, God gave to Peter a commission that seemed quite odd. Christ wanted Peter to go to a Gentile's house and tell him of the resurrected Christ.
 - The prophetic program had called for the conversion of Israel **first**, and then Israel would, in turn, bless the nations. Peter knew this plan, had been instructed in it by Christ, and was true to it.
 - This was clearly a diversion from the prophetic plan that Peter had been taught.

- To Peter's amazement, these believing Gentiles received the Holy Spirit **before** ever being baptized. Peter commanded them to be baptized **after** they had already received the Holy Spirit.
 - This was different than the kingdom program that Peter had been instructed in by Christ. The Gentiles received the Holy Spirit without water baptism and apart from the conversion of Israel.
11. An important event happened in chapter 9 that would bring about a radical change in the program of God. That event was the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul.
 12. Why would God allow Peter to divert from the kingdom program? Why would God give the Holy Spirit to uncircumcised, unbaptized Gentiles?
 13. Because God was preparing the Jewish church to receive the man who would take the gospel of God's grace to the Gentiles, apart from Israel. This man, the apostle Paul, would become known as the "*apostle of the Gentiles.*" **Romans 11:13**
 14. Would water baptism hold the same prominence under Paul's commission and ministry as it did Peter and the twelve? Next week we will examine God's Word and find out.