

Baptismal Regeneration, Infant Baptisms, Council Of Trent, The Reformation Exposes The Corrupt Roman Catholic Church, Roman Catechism, Meaning Of Anathema, 1992 Catechism Of The Catholic Church, First Vatican Council, Vatican II Council, Code Of Canon Law, No Water Baptism = No Forgiveness Of Sins Or Salvation According To CCC, Salvation Can Be Granted Only By The RCC According To CCC, Error Of Mixing Grace And Works, We're Saved By Grace Alone Through Christ, Contradictions And Exceptions In The Catechism of the Catholic Church, The RCC Teaches That We Can Be Saved Without Accepting Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ Is The Only Way To Salvation, Damnable Heresy, False Doctrines, False Gospels And False Prophets & Apostles

Some time ago, while discussing the important issue of being born again on our private Christian mailing list, the Endtime Discussion Group Exchange, one of our list members made the following comments, in which he quoted a verse that is found in the third chapter of the Gospel of John:

----- Begin Quote -----

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

[In other words, we must undergo the waters of baptism and receive the Holy Spirit, and then later we are literally BORN OF THE SPIRIT when we become spirit beings at the resurrection.]"

----- End Quote -----

This person embraces a controversial doctrine that's become known as "baptismal regeneration", or "being generated again through baptism". Popularized and forcefully promoted by the Roman Catholic Church, this belief states that water baptism is absolutely necessary in order for one to obtain Salvation; that is, Eternal Life. Furthermore, those who adhere to this doctrine also hold to the belief that infants can be saved by undergoing water baptism in a church shortly after birth.

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration appears to have first been embraced by the Roman Catholic Church at least hundreds of years ago during the Middle Ages; and it has been accepted by other non-Catholic denominations in more recent times as well. Looking at ecclesiastical history, we discover that by the time that the Council of Trent was convened in December of 1545, baptismal regeneration had already become entrenched in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. The purpose of the Council of Trent, which convened in twenty-five sessions from 1545 to 1563 in Trent, Germany, was to codify and reform all of the core doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and also to condemn the so-called "heresies" of the Reformation, which had swept across Europe by that time. If you would like to read the body of canon law which was established by the

Council of Trent, please visit the following URL:

<http://history.hanover.edu/early/trent/trent.htm>

As I explain in the article "History Of The Authorized King James Bible", the Reformation was a time marked by giants of faith, such as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, John Knox, William Tyndale, Thomas Cranmer, John Wesley and others. While many of the Reformers were themselves members of the Roman Catholic Church, they were appalled by the many false doctrines and corrupt practices which had infiltrated and polluted the church. This included, among other things, the sale of indulgences, (paying money or gifts in order to be forgiven for one's sins and have the period of punishment reduced); the belief in an intermediary place of purification called Purgatory, where one was purged of sins so they could continue on to Heaven; Mariology, (worship of Mary); praying to the Saints; celibacy; and finally, simony, (the buying and selling of church positions). I discuss some of these issues in other articles, so I won't be addressing them at length here.

At any rate, these brave Reformers who dared to question and defy the mandates of the so-called "Holy Mother Church", were in fact following in the footsteps of earlier Reformers, such as John Wycliffe and Jan Hus, who had exposed these very same inadequacies in the church several centuries earlier. So to reiterate, the primary purpose of the Council of Trent was to firmly establish the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, (just as the Council of Nicaea had done over twelve hundred years earlier), and to condemn as heretics, those people who refused to accept the misguided doctrines of the church. The accepted and reformed doctrines were integrated into a manual called "Roman Catechism", (a.k.a. Catechism of the Council of Trent), which was first published in 1566 during the reign of Pope Pius V. This manual carried so much weight within the Catholic world, that it was viewed as the ultimate authority regarding Roman Catholic doctrine, until the publication of the "Catechism of the Catholic Church", (or CCC), in 1992, during the reign of Pope John Paul II.

As we saw earlier, one of the doctrines that was codified at the time that the Council of Trent was convened, (and perhaps even before that), was "baptismal regeneration"; which states that absolutely no one can obtain Salvation, or Forgiveness for their sins, without being water baptized. Furthermore, it is an absolute must that infants be baptized as well, for the very same reason; even though such babies have absolutely no understanding whatsoever regarding Jesus Christ, sin, or the need for Forgiveness and Salvation. These rules were decreed by the Council of Trent in the following canons, or laws:

----- Begin Quote -----

Seventh Session - Decree On The Sacraments - On Baptism

CANON II.- "If any one saith, that true and natural water is not of necessity for baptism, and, on that account, wrests, to some sort of metaphor, those words of our Lord Jesus Christ; Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost; let him be anathema."

CANON III. - "If any one saith, that in the Roman church, which is the mother and mistress of all churches, there is not the true doctrine concerning the sacrament of baptism; let him be anathema."

CANON V. - "If any one saith, that baptism is free, that is, not necessary unto salvation; let him be anathema."

CANON XIII. - "If any one saith, that little children, for that they have not actual faith, are not, after having received baptism, to be reckoned amongst the faithful; and that, for this cause, they are to be rebaptized when they have attained to years of discretion; or, that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted, than that, while not believing by their own act, they should be baptized in the faith alone of the Church; let him be anathema."

----- End Quote -----

The word "anathema" is actually a Greek word which means to be cursed. We find it being used by the Apostle Paul in his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth, in the following two verses:

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."
1 Corinthians 12:3, KJV

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
1 Corinthians 16:22, KJV

While we may not have access to the original Roman Catechism that was published over 440 years ago, assuming, that is, if any copies have even survived to our modern day, (possibly in the Vatican Library?), all is not lost. That is because one can freely access the online edition of the 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church, which is an updated version of the same, at the United States Conference Of Catholic Bishops website, which can be accessed at the following URL:

<http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/>

You will also find a complete online version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the official Vatican website at the following URL:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

Please also note that given the authority which was ascribed to the Roman Catechism, its position regarding the need for water baptism was upheld in full by the Vatican II Council, which was convened from 1962 to 1965. For its part, in its many pages, the 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church states rather clearly that water baptism is a mandatory requirement for both adults and infants, in order to obtain Forgiveness of sins, and to inherit Salvation, or Eternal Life. It needs to be understood that the Catechism of the Catholic Church is actually a teaching mechanism, or guide, used by Catholic priests and teachers to teach the Catholic faith to the laity in Sunday School classes. Traditionally speaking, a catechism is a summary of the principles of the Catholic faith, that is usually in question and answer form. In modern lingo, you can think of it as being an extensive Roman Catholic FAQ.

But the actual basis from which the Catechism of the Catholic Church derives its strength is the "Code of Canon Law", which is the ecclesiastical law of the Roman Catholic Church. This Code of Canon Law came into being following the First Vatican

Council which convened between 1869-1870. During the Council, Catholic bishops expressed a desire to Pope Pius X to have the large body of documents which established Roman Catholic law, concatenated into a single all-encompassing code. The result was published in May of 1917 during the reign of Pope Benedict XV. In 1959, Pope John XXIII announced his plans to convoke a Second Vatican Council, which finally got underway in 1962, and was in session until 1965, during the reign of John XXIII's successor, Pope Paul VI. The purpose of Vatican II was to completely revise the Code of Canon Law. The new version of the Code of Canon Law finally came into force in November of 1983 during the reign of Pope John Paul II.

If you are interested in reading the official English version of the Code of Canon Law, you will find it posted on various Roman Catholic websites such as [vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) and [intratext.com](http://www.intratext.com). Here are the links for each one. Please note that in the case of the Vatican site, the URL is case-sensitive:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENGL104/_INDEX.HTM

http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/_INDEX.HTM

Returning to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, exactly what does this lengthy document say regarding the necessity of water baptism in order that one might obtain Salvation and Forgiveness of sins? In answer to this question, allow me to share with you the following paragraphs which are taken directly from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

----- Begin Quote -----

Para. 804: One enters into the People of God by faith and Baptism. "All men are called to belong to the new People of God" (LG 13), so that, in Christ, "men may form one family and one People of God" (AG 1).

Para. 981: After his Resurrection, Christ sent his apostles "so that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations." The apostles and their successors carry out this "ministry of reconciliation," not only by announcing to men God's forgiveness merited for us by Christ, and calling them to conversion and faith; but also by communicating to them the forgiveness of sins in Baptism"

Para. 985: Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of the forgiveness of sins: it unites us to Christ, who died and rose, and gives us the Holy Spirit".

Para. 1213: Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*),⁴ and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word."⁵

Para. 1250: Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the

priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.

Para. 1252: The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole "households" received baptism, infants may also have been baptized.

Para. 1257: The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.

Para. 1262: The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. Thus the two principal effects are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit.

Para. 1263: By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.

Para. 1265: Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte "a new creature," an adopted son of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature," member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Para. 1277: Baptism is birth into the new life in Christ. In accordance with the Lord's will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism.

Para. 1278: The essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on his head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Para. 1279: The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ.

----- End Quote -----

It is rather evident from the previous excerpts taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, that the Roman Catholic Church clearly believes that Salvation and the Forgiveness of

sins are an integral part of water baptism; and that without it, neither can be obtained. Furthermore, as it is also made clear in paragraph 849, as well as in other sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the RCC has long held the view that it is the only church which has been authorized by Jesus Christ to serve as a vehicle of Salvation; or in its own words, "the universal sacrament of salvation". In other words, one must not only be baptized in water in order to be saved, but this baptism must occur in the Roman Catholic Church. Paragraph 849 states:

----- Begin Quote -----

Para. 849: The missionary mandate. "Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men": "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age."

----- End Quote -----

Contrary to what the Scriptures plainly teach us regarding mixing Grace with works, (please refer to some of my other articles), the previous excerpts demonstrate that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ alone is not sufficient for obtaining Forgiveness of sins, or for inheriting Salvation. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, there is no spiritual rebirth unless one is water baptized. In a word, the Roman Catechism states that our faith in Christ is lacking, and must be accompanied by water baptism; which is in fact mixing Grace with works. As I have long taught, either the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ alone opened the way to Redemption and Salvation, or else it did not. If Christ's Crucifixion on the Cross didn't pay the full price for our Salvation, then Jesus died in vain.

Of course, I personally don't believe this for a minute. I am fully convinced that Jesus Christ paid the full price for our sins, and that there is absolutely nothing that we can add to His Death in order to merit Eternal Life. We are saved by the Grace of God alone, through Christ, and not by our own works. As the Apostle Paul so elegantly wrote:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Romans 11:6, KJV

It was in fact the previous verses which resulted in Martin Luther running afoul of the Roman Catholic Church of his day. So to reiterate, I personally reject the false doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, that water baptism is necessary for Salvation. Furthermore, a little later in this series, I will be sharing with you a Scriptural example where certain believers were saved, and filled with the Holy Spirit, even BEFORE they were water baptized. How is this even possible,

unless the Catechism of the Catholic Church is wrong?

At this point, you the reader have probably been persuaded that the Roman Catholic Church is quite convinced that water baptism is an absolutely essential and necessary part of the Salvation Plan. But is this everything that the RCC teaches regarding this issue? Apparently not. It seems that the RCC contradicts itself in its own catechism when it states the following:

----- Begin Quote -----

Para. 1258: The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This Baptism of blood, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.

----- End Quote -----

What that paragraph means, is that if a person happens to be martyred for their faith, (which I can only assume means the Roman Catholic faith), they will still receive Forgiveness of sins and Salvation, even if they were never water baptized. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in such a case, the spilling of a martyr's own blood acts as a type of "blood baptism" that results in the same effects as a regular water baptism; that is, the Forgiveness of their sins, and Salvation. In other words, there is a legal loophole around the necessity of water baptism when it comes to martyrs for the faith. As ironic as it may seem, this isn't really that different from what Muslim extremists believe. They also believe that if they sacrifice their lives for their faith, they will go to Paradise. Of course, Muslims don't accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or the Savior of the world.

And that is not all. Consider this next paragraph, which is likewise taken directly from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

----- Begin Quote -----

Para. 1259: For catechumens who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament.

----- End Quote -----

What that paragraph is basically saying is that if a person is preparing for their water baptism, (a catechumen), but for some reason dies before actually being able to accomplish it, just the fact that they desired to be baptized, along with being in a repentant state, and their charitable acts towards others, will guarantee their Salvation. In other words, this is a second clear example where we see that the RCC teaches that a person can still be saved, and be forgiven for their sins, even though they were never water baptized. With these two examples, we see that the Roman Catholic Church is more than willing to make some exceptions to its seemingly hard and fast rule regarding water baptism; and there is more to come.

I found the next paragraph of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to be absolutely astounding. In fact, I was so taken

back by this particular false doctrine, that eight years ago, when Cardinal Ratzinger, (now Pope Benedict XVI), first made this pronouncement, I authored a series about it, in which I exposed his sin. The series is called "Cardinal Ratzinger's Rebellion". I urge you to read it. Paragraph 1260 states:

----- Begin Quote -----

Para. 1260: "Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery." Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity.

----- End Quote -----

What that paragraph is saying, is that even if the person is not aware of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or of the existence of the Roman Catholic Church, they can still be saved, just by seeking the truth, and doing what they believe to be the Will of God, according to their understanding. In short, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that a person can be saved without even knowing Jesus Christ. It seems to be saying that we can each have our own truth, and even our own religion, Christian or not; and that as long as we strive to live by our own truth, even if it doesn't include Christ, we can still be saved. This is in fact precisely what Cardinal Ratzinger stated eight years ago, before he became the new Pope. In an article titled "Are Believers Of Other Religions Saved?", which appeared on the zenit.org website on Sept. 5, 2000, Ratzinger, who was then a cardinal from Germany, said:

----- Begin Quote -----

". . . we are in agreement that a Jew, and this is true for believers of other religions, does not need to know or acknowledge Christ as the Son of God in order to be saved, if there are insurmountable impediments, of which he is not blameworthy, to preclude it . . ."

----- End Quote -----

As I point out in the aforementioned series, this statement, and the previous paragraph from the Catechism of the Catholic are in blatant contradiction to the Scriptures where Jesus, the Gospel writers, Peter, Paul, etc., clearly tell us that Jesus is the only way to Salvation, as we see here:

". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:6b, KJV

"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, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"
1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

So this doctrine, which was uttered by the current Pope, and which is now clearly taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is utterly false. It is a damnable heresy, as Peter called them. How are we to respond to this lie which states that people can be saved without Christ? The answer can be found in the Scriptures, as we see here:

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

2 Peter 2:1, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

1 Timothy 4:1, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

Ephesians 4:14-15, KJV

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."

Hebrews 13:9, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

Romans 16:17, KJV

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him . . . For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15, KJV

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 1:6-9, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

2 John 1:9-11, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net

<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

Copyright 1994 - 2009 Endtime Prophecy Net

Published On : January 1, 2009

Last Updated : January 1, 2009

More Confusing Beliefs Of Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Arrogance Of Roman Catholic Church And Catholic Extremists, Back Peddling & Changing Doctrines For Sake Of Convenience, Roman Catholic Confession, Shrinking Dominance Of The RCC, World Ecumenism, Cardinal Ratzinger, Reverend Billy Graham, A One World Religion?, John 3:5 And Baptismal Regeneration, Jesus And Nicodemus, A Physical Birth And Spiritual Rebirth, Paul's Old Man And New Man, Scribes And Pharisees And Their Cold Formal Religion Of Traditions, Foreshadows In The Old Testament, Elisha And Naaman, Water Baptism Isn't Mentioned In The Old Testament, John The Baptist, Jesus Never Baptized, Importance Of John's Ministry, Jesus Fulfilled The Law And The Prophets To The Letter, Proper Meaning Of Word "Fulfill"

Returning briefly to paragraph 1260 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it concludes by stating "It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity". This part of the paragraph errs in two regards. First, it promotes water baptism as a necessity for Salvation; and second, it arrogantly assumes that a person would assuredly desire water baptism if they were aware of it. This false position also assumes that the person is convinced that water baptism is necessary for one to obtain Salvation, which it isn't. Allow me to share with you three more paragraphs from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

----- Begin Quote -----

Para. 1261: As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them" (Mk 10:14; cf. 1 Tim 2:4), allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism."

Para. 1281: Those who die for the faith, those who are catechumens, and all those who, without knowing of the Church but acting under the inspiration of grace, seek God sincerely and strive to fulfill his will, can be saved even if they have not been baptized (cf. LG 16).

Para. 1283: With respect to children who have died without Baptism, the liturgy of the Church invites us to trust in God's mercy and to pray for their salvation.

----- End Quote -----

In the previous paragraphs, we are told that we must simply trust God for the Salvation of children who die before being water baptized. In other words, just as with adult Catholics,

Eternal Life is not a sure thing. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that it can be lost, depending on one's deeds; and if one has not been water baptized, that makes their chances at Salvation even more "iffy". As I explained earlier, and as I explain in other articles as well, the Roman Catholic Church promotes a religion which teaches that Salvation is an odd mixture of Grace and good works, which is totally contrary to what the Bible really teaches us.

But then notice that once again we are told very clearly in paragraph 1281, that people "can be saved even if they have not been baptized". Furthermore, notice that it also states that people can be saved "without knowing of the Church"; meaning, I assume, the Roman Catholic Church. In short, that paragraph is saying that anyone, even people outside of the Roman Catholic Church, can be saved. This, of course, is in contradiction to other parts of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which states that the Roman Catholic Church is the only medium for obtaining Salvation, and Forgiveness of sins.

Now, if I were a Roman Catholic, (which I'm obviously not), I think that after reading all of the previous paragraphs from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, I would be confused in a doctrinal sense. I would be asking myself exactly what does the Roman Catholic Church really believe regarding the issue of water baptism, Salvation and the Forgiveness of sins?

At first appearance, we were given the impression that the Roman Catholic Church firmly believes that water baptism is absolutely necessary in order to obtain Salvation, and the Forgiveness of sins. However, we then learned that this is not such a hard fast rule after all, and that the Catholic Church is willing to make exceptions in some cases, saying that Salvation can be obtained, even without being baptized in water. Then, to our surprise, we discovered that not only is water baptism not always an absolute necessity in regards to Salvation and the Forgiveness of sins, but that people can likewise be saved outside of the Roman Catholic Church. In other words, a person can be saved without being baptized in water, and without even being a Roman Catholic. Finally, and tragically, we discovered that Pope Benedict XVI pushes the false belief that people of other religions can also be saved, even if they don't accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; which, according to the Bible, is an absolute damnable heresy and a false gospel.

Finally, it might also interest you to know that the Roman Catholic Church believes that in certain situations, anyone, even if they are not baptized themselves, can baptize another individual, if they follow the procedure that is mandated by the Roman Catholic Church. Paragraphs 1256 and 1284 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church state:

----- Begin Quote -----

Para. 1256: The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon. In case of necessity, any person, even someone not baptized, can baptize, if he has the required intention. The intention required is to will to do what the Church does when she baptizes, and to apply the Trinitarian baptismal formula. The Church finds the reason for this possibility in the universal saving will of God and the necessity of Baptism for salvation.

Para. 1284: In case of necessity, any person can baptize

provided that he have the intention of doing that which the Church does and provided that he pours water on the candidate's head while saying: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

----- End Quote -----

Notice that once again, in paragraph 1256, the Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasizes that the act of water baptism is an essential part of Salvation, after it has already told us several times that people can be saved without it.

In light of all of this evidence, which I extracted directly from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, one really has to wonder what to believe. My view is the following. I believe that the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy is firmly convinced that water baptism is absolutely necessary for Salvation, as well as for the Forgiveness of sins. I also believe that it is convinced that the Roman Catholic Church is the only way to obtain Salvation. Furthermore, their catechism, and other sources, clearly state that they view other Christians, who are not members of the Roman Catholic Church, as separated, and lesser brethren who are not fully in communion with God. I have even read comments written by radical Catholics who very arrogantly and condescendingly refer to Christians who belong to other denominations as "sep-breth". These Catholic radicals scoff at the idea of "sola escritura", which means that we derive our beliefs only from the Scriptures, and not from the Pope. They also laugh at our belief in "sola fide", meaning that we believe that we are saved by faith in Christ alone, without the need for water baptism, or any secondary mechanism.

However, because the Roman Catholic Church has so emphasized the misguided doctrine of water baptism being necessary for Salvation and the Forgiveness of sins, it has also created a number of problems for itself over the years with the Roman Catholic laity. In a word, promoting the doctrine that anyone who isn't baptized is lost for eternity, isn't a very popular message. Obviously, such a message will make Catholics worry about their children who may have died before there was an opportunity for them to be water baptized; and this same fear can also be applied to their other relatives who have passed on before being water baptized as well. So, over the years, the RCC has reformed a number of its doctrines, and appended these different "loopholes" to its catechism, so that Roman Catholicism appears as a more "user-friendly", convenient religion which doesn't frighten people away with its harsh, rigid doctrines and practices.

Another good example of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy's efforts to make Roman Catholicism a more friendly, convenient religion can be seen in confessions. Four decades ago when I was still a dedicated young Roman Catholic, weekly confession was absolutely necessary; and one could not partake of the eucharist, (communion host), unless he had confessed his sins to the priest prior to that week's mass. As I recall, even though my parents never attended church, they made sure that we children went to confession each and every Saturday, even if we could not think of anything serious to confess to the priest. Apparently, Roman Catholics eventually grew tired of this weekly practice; so now, from what I understand, confession is only a once-a-year affair.

The truth of the matter, however, even though the leaders of the RCC may not be willing to readily admit it, is that for

a number of years now, the influence and dominance of the Roman Catholic Church has been shrinking, and they have been seriously losing a lot of ground in a number of key areas of the world. This includes Europe, the Catholic stronghold of Latin America, and even the United States of America, which is a rebellious house when it comes to obeying the mandates of the Pope in Rome. The Roman Catholic Church has become so bogged down in its spiritually-uninspiring traditions, its questionable beliefs, and its dreary, repetitive practices, not to mention its own corruption, that people are leaving it in droves. Some Catholics have moved on to more vibrant non-Catholic denominations. Others have embraced Buddhism, or Islam, or abandoned faith altogether and become atheists.

In a desperate effort to try to save themselves, the Roman Catholic hierarchy has embarked on a so-called mission to promote ecumenism; that is, they are promoting unity among the world's Christian churches. However, it does not end there. As we saw earlier, the more recent Popes have even reached out to other non-Christian faiths, such as Muslims, Buddhists and Jews.

As I explain in the series "Modern False Prophets And Worldly Ecumenism", this is dangerous business which has already led to serious compromise. In the case of Cardinal Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, we have seen how he now foolishly promotes the false belief that people can even be saved without believing in Jesus. It may surprise you to know that Cardinal Ratzinger was not the first Christian leader to promote this dangerous and false doctrine. As I note in the aforementioned article, in May of 1997, the world famous Christian evangelist, Billy Graham, made a very disturbing comment while in an interview with Reverend Robert Schuller, who is the head of the Crystal Cathedral Church. Please notice how similar Graham's remarks are to what Ratzinger would say three years later:

----- Begin Quote -----

"I think everybody who knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the Body of Christ . . . God's purpose is to call out a people for His name, whether they come from the Muslim world, Buddhist world, the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the Body of Christ, because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus . . . and I think they are saved and that they are going to be in heaven with us."

----- End Quote -----

Notice that, like the current Pope, Reverend Graham says that people can be saved, even without knowing the name of Jesus Christ. So the serious dangers associated with the ecumenical movement are rather clear in my mind. This movement, which is spearheaded by the Roman Catholic Church, can only result in one thing; and that is quite possibly a "One World Religion" which will one day fall under the jurisdiction of the False Prophet, as we are clearly warned in the Book of Revelation. I suspect that given its current arrogant attitude regarding viewing itself as the so-called "Mother of Churches", the RCC very much desires to be at the forefront of this "universal reconciliation" between the world's religions. What does that say about its leader?

But let us change gears now and direct our attention to the verse that actually began this series; that is, John 3:5. In

the King James Version of the Holy Bible, this verse reads:

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

John 3:5, KJV

As I explained at the beginning of this series, there is a sector of Christians, known as baptismal regenerationists, who are convinced that Jesus is talking about water baptism in the previous verse. Furthermore, they are convinced that Jesus is stating that water baptism is an essential part of Salvation, and the remission of sins. As we have also seen, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was first introduced by, and has been continuously promoted by, the RCC for many centuries now. In fact, if you carefully read the excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church that I provided, then you will already know that John 3:5 is one of the key verses that they use in order to try to convince people to accept this doctrine. So the question is, was Jesus really talking about water baptism in that verse, or was the Lord saying something entirely different, which has since been twisted by Roman Catholic religionists with an agenda?

Those of you who are familiar with some of my other articles will know that I have a very different understanding of the previous verse. Before presenting my case, allow me to share with you that entire section of John chapter three, so that we have a better understanding of the precise conversation which occurred between Jesus and the Pharisee Nicodemus that night:

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

John 3:1-8, KJV

As you can see by the previous set of verses, the topic of their discussion was not really water baptism, but rather, it was the necessity of spiritual rebirth. The conversation dealt with being born physically in the womb, and then being born spiritually through accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Those verses are talking about allowing God's Spirit to dwell in us, and having our own spirits renewed by way of a second spiritual birth. The Apostle Paul wrote about this spiritual rebirth, or being born again, in the following verses, and elsewhere as well:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Ephesians 4:24, KJV

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"

Colossians 3:10, KJV

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:2, KJV

In the previous conversation from the Gospel of John, Jesus was showing the difference between the physical birth, and the spiritual birth, so that Nicodemus could understand the necessity of being born again.

We need to remember that as good-hearted of a man as he was, Nicodemus was nevertheless a Pharisee, who had been trained in the strict religious doctrines of his day. As I explain in other articles, such as "Revelation's Babylon The Great", by the time Jesus arrived on the Earth, Judaism and temple worship had become totally de-spiritualized. It was a cold, dead, formal religion of works, which had basically been reduced to "do this, but don't do that". The main religious sects of the time, (Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees), were in essence merely going through the motions of pretending to be spiritual, just like so many spiritually-dead religions today; and I am also referring to different branches of Christianity which have been corrupted by compromise.

The Scribes and the Pharisees prided themselves in being strict adherents to the Torah; that is, the Divine Laws that were given to Moses, by God, on the top of Mount Sinai, also known as Horeb. While some of these Laws were spiritual and moral in nature, others dealt with more mundane, procedural issues involving the Levitical priesthood; for example, how the priests were supposed to be dressed, what holy days were supposed to be observed, how to perform various sacrifices, what sin offerings were acceptable, what utensils were to be designed and used in the tabernacle, etc.

It was precisely in this kind of legalistic environment that Nicodemus was trained, just like the Apostle Paul. So, while it may be very easy for us today to understand exactly what Jesus meant, for someone like Nicodemus, it was extremely difficult. As Jesus said of those Jewish religious leaders who blindly clung to their old traditions and opposed Him:

". . . Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition . . . Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Matthew 15:6b, 14, KJV

The Jewish Elders had the Law; they had the Word of God; but they didn't understand it; at least not in the Spirit. All they understood was the legalistic letter of the Law. Jesus realized this; and that is why He tried to simplify things for dear Nicodemus, who came to the Lord that night with a sincere desire to know the truth. By using the phrase "born of water", Jesus was offering a very appropriate answer. The Lord was trying to remove poor Nicodemus' confusion, which was revealed by the fact that he, (Nicodemus), thought that

Jesus meant that he had to return to his mother's womb, and undergo a second physical birth. Obviously, this is by no means possible, and this is clearly not what Jesus meant.

I am personally convinced that by using the phrase "born of water", Jesus was making a direct reference to our physical birth; that is, being surrounded by amniotic fluid, (which is basically salt water), in our mother's womb. Jesus wasn't talking about water baptism whatsoever, as far as I know. To suggest that He was, is, in my opinion, inserting something which simply is not there, in order to try to support one's own personal beliefs. Please look again at what Jesus said: ". . . born of water AND of the spirit . . ." The word "and" demonstrates that Jesus was attempting to make a distinction between what Nicodemus understood, and what He really meant. In other words, "physical birth AND spiritual birth". Jesus was making a contrast between physical birth, and spiritual birth.

If you look at Nicodemus' response, it becomes rather clear that the Lord was not talking about water baptism. There is nothing in Nicodemus' question which even remotely suggests that he thought that Jesus was talking about water baptism. Did Nicodemus ask Jesus about water baptism? No; Nicodemus clearly says "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?". So Nicodemus fully understood what Jesus was talking about when He mentioned being born of water. He knew that Jesus was talking about physical birth in the womb, during which time a baby is surrounded by amniotic fluid; and that's why he couldn't understand how he could be born again. It was a physical impossibility; but as we know, Jesus was not talking about being reborn physically; He was talking about spiritual rebirth.

What some of you may find of particular interest is the fact that water baptism appears to be an entirely New Testament concept. Admittedly, there are several interesting examples in the Old Testament where water is used as a foreshadow to demonstrate Spiritual Salvation. Three good examples are the Great Flood and Noah's Ark, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the stopping up of the Jordan River. In all of these cases, it was actually a demonstration of faith in God's Word which saved them, and not the water itself. In referring to Noah and the Flood, the Apostle Peter states in part:

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

1 Peter 3:20, KJV

I will be discussing the previous verse more at length in a moment. Another Old Testament example which occurs to me is the story found in 2 Kings chapter five. It deals with the Prophet Elisha, and Naaman, who was the captain of the army of the king of Syria. As you may recall, Naaman had leprosy; and his wife's servant girl, who was an Israelite, informed the wife of the miracles which were being wrought by Elisha. Eventually, following Elisha's instructions, Naaman dipped himself seven times in the Jordan River, and was healed of his leprosy. Again, we see that it was faith in, as well as obedience to, the words of the Prophet, which saved Naaman, and not the water.

Another Old Testament example we find which is indirectly a

foreshadow of the true baptism to come in the New Testament, is where the Israelites had to wash and change their clothes before standing before the Lord at the base of Mount Sinai. The act of doing this symbolizes putting on the new man, or the spiritual man, through spiritual rebirth, as the Apostle Paul discusses in the New Testament. The high priests had to follow a similar washing ritual before entering the Holy of Holies; first in the tabernacle, and later in the temple. In all of these examples, we see a hint of being spiritually cleansed and renewed through the Blood of Jesus Christ, and being baptized by the Spirit.

However, the previous foreshadows aside, I am not aware of any real examples in the Old Testament where the practice of water baptism was performed on a regular basis, such as we see occurring in the New Testament. While I was conducting some Biblical research for this series, I discovered that the words "baptize" and "baptism", and related words, aren't mentioned one single time in the entire Old Testament. In fact, the very first time when we learn about baptism by water, is when John the Baptist arrives on the scene in the four Gospels. As far as we know, John received his mandate to baptize people in the Jordan River directly from God, or at least from one of His Angelic Agents. In the Gospel of John we read the following:

"And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

John 1:32-33, KJV

What is also worth mentioning, is the fact that there is no concrete Scriptural evidence which points to Jesus having ever personally water baptized anyone. There are one or two commentaries where it appears that some people suggest that He did, but the Apostle John, who was one of Jesus' closest followers, and who eventually became one of His top three Disciples, clarifies the situation for us when he writes:

"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)"

John 4:1-2, KJV

The previous verse, particularly the words that are encased in parentheses, begs the question: If water baptism was so important, why didn't Jesus perform this so-called necessary act? That verse of Scripture rather plainly states that the Lord Jesus never baptized anyone. So to me, the answer seems rather obvious: Jesus was fully aware of the fact that the physical act of water baptism was merely a stepping stone, and a foreshadow of a much greater reality to come; that is to say, the Baptism by His Blood, as well as the baptism by fire; that is to say, the anointing of the Holy Spirit which Jesus Himself would soon perform. Obviously, some people may question, "Well, wasn't Jesus baptized by John, and doesn't that mean that everyone needs to be water baptized?" Indeed the Lord was baptized by John. Jesus made it very clear on many occasions that He had come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, and John's appearance was indeed foretold in the Old Testament prophecies, as we see here:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye

the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Isaiah 40:3, KJV

It is interesting to note that the above prophecy was viewed as being so important to the writers of the Gospels, that all four of them mention it, as we see here:

"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Matthew 3:3, KJV

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Mark 1:3, KJV

"As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Luke 3:4, KJV

"He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias."

John 1:23, KJV

One reason why the previous prophecy is so important, is not just because it foretells of the coming of John the Baptist, but rather because it also prophesies the coming of the One after him, who will baptize with the fire of the Spirit. To explain it another way, the most important aspect of John's ministry was not water baptism, but rather that he was not only sent to prepare people's hearts to receive the Lord, by pointing out their sins, and motivating them to repent, but John was also the individual whom God had chosen to actually identify the Savior to Israel, once He arrived. Thus we find John saying to his followers in the Gospel of John:

". . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1:29b, KJV

Thus, this is why Jesus' encounter with John at the Jordan River was so important. Both He and John were following a script which had been carefully designed by God the Father Himself. Jesus had to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies, as He said He must do:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

Matthew 5:17, KJV

The problem we have today is that some people don't seem to understand what is meant by the word "fulfill". This word is derived from the Greek word "pleroo"; the meaning of which is to complete, to carry through to the end, to accomplish, to carry out. What Jesus meant was that He had come to carry out, or to complete the Law, so as to become, in a word, the Perfect Sacrifice for sin. Jesus' Death on the Cross put an end to reliance upon obedience to the Old Testament laws in order to obtain Salvation. More specifically, I'm referring to the ritualistic laws. This does not mean that we are now free to murder, to steal, to commit adultery, etc., and that we won't have to pay the consequences. So what does it mean? Please keep reading to find out.

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

Copyright 1994 - 2009 Endtime Prophecy Net

Published On : January 1, 2009

Last Updated : January 1, 2009

Tithes And Sacrifices - Heavy Burden Of Scribes & Pharisees, The Widow's Mite, Jesus Chased Money Changers Out Of Temple, Commercialized Christianity, Jesus Frees Us From The Burden Of The Law, Why The Jews Killed Jesus, A Perfect Sacrifice, Supremacy Of Grace Over The Works Of The Law, Justified By Grace And Not By The Works Of The Law, Water Baptism Was A Schoolmaster, Baptism Of Repentance, Meaning Of Repent, John The Baptist Prepared The Way For Jesus Christ, Completion Of John The Baptist's Mission, The Old Testament Ritual Of The Sprinkling Of Blood, Baptism By Blood In The New Testament, Consistency In The Writings And Meanings Of The Apostle Paul, Spiritually Cleansed Renewed Regenerated By Blood Of Christ

As I noted earlier, when Jesus arrived in Israel 2,000 years ago, the common people were totally beholden to the religious rulers of the day; more specifically, to the temple priests, and to the Scribes and the Pharisees. Their word was law to the common people of Israel, especially in Jerusalem. These oppressive religious rulers enriched themselves by enforcing the Old Testament laws regarding sins, tithes and sacrifices upon the people. There were specific kinds of sacrifices, as well as different types of tithes which had to be paid; all of which depended upon the nature of the sin, and the social and economic status of the person involved. These religious rulers used sin and guilt to condemn the people, and to keep them in complete submission. They used the Mosaic Law like a sword hanging over people's heads. This is why Jesus said of them:

"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses . . ."

Matthew 23:4, 14a, KJV

Do you recall the story of the widow's mite? In spite of her poverty, she gave all that she had in order to try to fulfill the mandates of the Old Testament laws. As Jesus said of His hypocritical, self-righteous enemies, she gave of her poverty and was blessed, while they gave of their abundance:

"And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Mark 12:42-44, KJV

The story of the widow's mite is a prime example of exactly what Jesus meant by the previous verses. As I point out in a number of other articles as well, this is precisely why the Lord drove the money changers out of the temple in Jerusalem

with a whip. It seriously grieved Jesus that they had turned the sacred business of worshiping God into nothing more than a worldly commercial enterprise. How many Christian churches and denominations do this very same thing today; and I think you already know which ones are the biggest culprits of all.

As Jesus Himself made very clear, He came to lift the heavy burdens from our shoulders, and to free us from the bondage of sin. The way that He did this, is by placing the sins of the world upon His own shoulders, when He died on the Cross. Please consider the following verses:

"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,"
Luke 4:17-18, KJV

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
Matthew 11:28-30, KJV

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."
John 8:31-32, 36, KJV

Naturally, Jesus' liberating message posed a serious threat to the Jewish religious Elders and the corrupt system which they had controlled for so long; many hundreds of years in fact; thus, they hated Jesus for it. After all, if too many people began to follow the Lord, their oppressive religious empire would eventually collapse, and the vast wealth they had accumulated would disappear. Thus, through intentional deception and craft, they eventually convinced their Roman occupiers that Jesus posed a threat to Rome; and therefore must be eliminated. Little did they realize, however, that Jesus' Death would bring spiritual freedom to us all.

So as I noted a moment ago, our bondage to the letter of the Law was terminated by Jesus' Death on the Cross. As a result of being perfect and without sin, Jesus became the Perfect Substitute, and the Perfect Sacrifice, and freed us from the bondage of the Law. He did what we cannot do ourselves. As the Apostles Peter and Paul wrote:

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
Hebrews 4:15, KJV.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."
1 Peter 2:24, KJV

Being as the Apostle Paul had been educated as a Pharisee, and thus had a keen insight and understanding of their view

of the Law, it was only fit that once he had been converted to the new Christian faith, God would choose to use him to fight against the very thing which had once been the core beliefs of his life. This is clearly evident in some of his various Epistles. Over and over again, Paul discusses the supremacy of Grace, (through faith in Jesus Christ), over the Law. He expounds on the fact that the Law was our guide and schoolmaster to bring us to the knowledge of the truth; that truth being that by knowing Jesus, and by trusting in His Sacrifice alone, we are henceforth justified by faith, and no longer by the dead works of the Law. Consider the following key verses:

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Romans 7:4, KJV

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Galatians 2:16, KJV

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

Galatians 3:11, KJV

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

Galatians 3:24-25, KJV

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Galatians 5:4, KJV

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Romans 11:6, KJV

At this point, you may possibly be wondering how all of this ties into the issue of water baptism. Quite simply, the water baptism that was performed by John the Baptist, and the first Apostles, was likewise a guide and a schoolmaster. It was a physical aid to help people to understand a deeper spiritual truth. Water baptism was a simple picture, just like the many Parables that Jesus told. However, as had occurred with the ceremonial portion of the Mosaic Law, which dealt with the different kinds of sacrifices which had to be made in order to atone for sins, once Jesus' Blood was shed on the Cross, water baptism became unnecessary. It served a purpose for a time, but that time is now passed. Similar to observing the symbolic rituals of the Mosaic Law, water baptism was just a physical act that was used to symbolize an inward spiritual change of both mind and heart, and a cleansing of the spirit. The cleansing by water was replaced by cleansing by Christ's Blood. The message of John's water baptism was in fact this:

". . . Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
Matthew 3:2b, KJV

In other words, John's ministry was a baptism of repentance. This is clarified for us a number of times in the pages of the New Testament, as we see by the following verses:

"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."
Mark 1:4, KJV

"And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;"
Luke 3:3, KJV

"When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."
Acts 13:24, KJV

"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."
Acts 19:4, KJV

The true meaning of the word "repent" is not simply to feel sorry for something wrong that we have done. Derived from the Greek word "metanoeo", it means to change one's mind for the better. It means to make a positive change in our lives; to turn around and go the other way; to put on the brakes, and in fact, to make a U-turn, and go in the opposite direction; that is, in a better direction. True repentance represents a complete revolution in our lives. As we saw earlier, this is what John was preaching. His whole ministry of water baptism was to prepare the way, to prepare people's minds and hearts so that they would be ready to accept God's Divine Plan of Salvation through Jesus Christ, who would wash us in His own Blood. Furthermore, with time, some people would also begin to receive the baptism by fire; that is, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

As I explain in "Is Salvation Meant For All Men?", when Jesus arrived, and more specifically, when He gave His life on the Cross, the way to Salvation was finally made available to all men everywhere. As Jesus Himself said in the Gospel of John:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."
John 12:32, KJV

The phrase "all men" means exactly that, both Jew and Gentile alike. However, in order to accept this wonderful free Gift, the Jews had to be willing to forsake some of their old ways of thinking. It is for this reason that once John the Baptist had fulfilled his final mission, that is, baptizing Jesus and identifying Him to the people of Israel, as soon as John was sure that Jesus was indeed the One they had been waiting for, he knew that his life's work was just about over. That is why John then directed his disciples to begin following Jesus. He knew that Jesus would baptize them, not with water; that is, the old way, but rather first with His own Blood, and later with the fire of God's Spirit -- the new way -- and also take away the sins of the world. This is quite evident in verses such as the following:

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."

John 1:35-37, KJV

"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

John 3:28-30, KJV

"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:"

Matthew 3:11, KJV

"John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:"

Luke 3:16, KJV

In fulfillment of Jesus' own promise that is found in Acts chapter one, as well as promises that He made in the Gospels, we all know that this is precisely what occurred on the Day of Pentecost in chapter two of the Acts of the Apostles, where we read:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 2:1-4, KJV

The previous verses demonstrate the first major outpouring of the Holy Spirit on a large scale; however, I am not so sure that this was the first time that Jesus shared a portion of the Holy Spirit with His most intimate followers. This seems to be evident by a little-mentioned verse which I have also briefly discussed in other articles. That verse is found in the Gospel of John and states:

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:"

John 20:21-22, KJV

Exactly what is going on in the above verses? Weren't we told that the Apostles received the Gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? Yes, but my speculation is that the above incident is a small "preview" so-to-speak, that Jesus gave to the eleven remaining Apostles. As I point out in the article "Was Jesus Filled With The Spirit From Birth?", as well as in a few other articles, the Scriptures, and more specifically, the Gospel of John, tells us that Jesus possessed the Spirit without measure. He was a spiritual powerhouse. In the third chapter of the Gospel of John we find this verse:

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

John 3:34, KJV

That's why Jesus was able to perform so many miracles. It is also why some people felt the power of the Spirit emanating from His body, such as the woman who had been healed of the issue of blood. Jesus was a powerhouse of the Spirit; and in that instance in John chapter twenty, Jesus chose to share a small portion of the Spirit with His followers; not a full in-dwelling of the Spirit yet, but just enough to give them a foretaste of what was to come on the Day of Pentecost. It is also important to realize when this incident occurred. It happened after the Lord's Resurrection. Why was this? Again, the Scriptures provide us with a very clear answer. The Lord had told them a few chapters earlier in the Gospel of John:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

John 16:7, KJV

There are certain mechanisms pertaining to the Spirit World which we humans simply cannot understand; but all we know is what Jesus said; and that is that He told the Apostles that He would send the promised Comforter and Teacher following His Death; and that is exactly what we see occurring in that previous verse.

From the Scriptural evidence that I've now presented, we see two very clear instances where the Lord baptized His closest followers, not with water, but rather with the fire of the Holy Spirit, exactly as John the Baptist prophesied that He would do. We have also seen that while His Apostles baptized people with water in the Gospels, there's no record of Jesus having ever done this.

To reiterate a point, when Jesus arrived on Earth, He changed a lot of things. Many physical examples and foreshadows were replaced by their spiritual realities, or counterparts. Water baptism was simply a schoolmaster, to help people understand the baptism by blood, as well as the baptism by fire that was yet to come. This is what so many Christians still fail to understand. This is due to the fact that organized religion has purposely cultivated this erroneous belief, that every time you see words such as "baptism" and "baptize", you must immediately think water baptism; but this just is not so. The New Testament clearly refers to different kinds of baptism; such as water baptism, (or baptism of repentance); baptism by blood, (cleansed and saved through Christ); and finally, the baptism by fire, (the baptism of the Holy Spirit).

The Greek word "baptisma" does not mean "baptism by water". What it does mean is immersion or submersion, but that most definitely does not necessarily mean that it has to be in, or by, water. It can mean anything. In fact, after providing a two-word definition, the very first example that the Greek lexicon provides is "of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed". So baptism literally means to be immersed, submerged or overwhelmed by anything, such as being overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit in a baptism of fire. The one strict meaning of applying to water only was added later by the deluded so-called "Church Fathers" of the Roman Catholic Church, who were more interested in promoting their doctrines as a way to keep the people in bondage to the Roman Catholic

Church. To even suggest that the word "baptism" only means by water, makes the phrase "baptism by fire" sound illogical, because water is the exact opposite of fire, and puts out a fire.

So initially, water baptism started out as a good thing, and it served a good purpose by preparing people's hearts to know and accept the Lord. However, just as the brass serpent made by Moses also started out as a good thing, that is, to serve as a vehicle of faith to cure the people of serpent bites, it eventually was idolized and had to be destroyed. In similar fashion, for many modern churches, particularly those which adhere to the misguided doctrine of baptismal regeneration, such as the Roman Catholics, water baptism has followed a similar course. It has become a tool of bondage which should be done away with, because our Salvation does not depend upon it by any means.

When we look at the original meaning of the Greek "baptisma", where it doesn't necessarily mean water, it is so much easier to understand why we can speak about baptism by fire, or why John the Baptist could say 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", and why Jesus could say "John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost". To suggest then that every time we see the word "baptism", or derivatives thereof, we are to think it means water baptism, is simply wrong, and reflects a poor understanding of the Scriptures. It is poor exegesis.

So John was basically saying to them, "Look, there is your true Saviour. Now it is time for you to follow Him, and not me. I have accomplished what I came to do. My ministry here is almost over. It is about time to put away these childish things of water baptism. There is the One who will baptize you with His Blood, and with the true Spirit of God." As I explain in the four-part series "Is Jesus The Only Begotten Son Of God?", The Apostle Paul spoke all about this parallel between the Old Testament ritual of the sprinkling of blood, and the New Testament revelation regarding the sprinkling of Christ's Blood on the Cross. In speaking of our "baptism by blood", Paul very clearly wrote the following:

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? . . . For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people . . . And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Hebrews 9:11-14, 19, 22 KJV

So as you can see, being baptized by Christ's Blood, that is, to be symbolically sprinkled with Christ's Blood and not with physical water, is what results in the remission of our sins, and thus in our Salvation, and nothing else. Once we gain an

understanding of what Paul is saying in the previous verses, it becomes a lot easier to understand what he means in other verses, in other of his Epistles, where he likewise mentions being baptized in Christ. In order for there to be continuity in his thoughts throughout his Epistles, he must be referring to the very same sprinkling of blood, or baptism by blood. To suggest that he is referring to baptism by blood in the above verses, but to water baptism in every other place, is simply confusing. Thus, in the following Scriptures, it is my belief that Paul is likewise talking about the baptism by blood:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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."

Romans 6:3-4, KJV

"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

1 Corinthians 6:11, KJV

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 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."

Colossians 2:11-12, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

Paul is clearly talking about being washed in, (or sprinkled by), sanctified by, justified by, cleansed by, renewed by and baptized by the Blood of Jesus Christ. As we've clearly seen, it's only this symbolic baptism by blood that results in the full remission of our sins. It is this baptism by blood that results in the death of the Old Man, and the resurrection of the New Man. It is the baptismal blood of Christ which fully regenerates our spirits. In my view, the phrase "washing of regeneration" is not referring to water baptism, but rather, is synonymous with the sprinkling of blood, or blood baptism. In short, the Old Testament, or Old Covenant, sprinkling of blood ritual, has been replaced by the New Testament, or New Covenant, symbolic sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ.

This symbolic baptism by blood, (as opposed to meaning water baptism), is confirmed for us by the fact that in those three sets of verses, Paul is writing from a spiritual perspective, and not from an actual physical perspective. When he speaks of our being buried in baptism with Christ, he is obviously writing of a symbolic burial. This is why Paul writes in his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth, "I die daily", as we see here:

"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."

1 Corinthians 15:31, KJV

Obviously, we cannot physically die, be buried, and be raised from the dead on a daily basis, so Paul must be speaking in a metaphorical or spiritual sense in those verses; and this is

in perfect agreement with what Jesus Himself taught us, as I point out in a number of my other articles. Jesus said:

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."
Luke 9:23-24, KJV

That Paul is speaking metaphorically, is made even more clear for us by the previous verses in Colossians where he explains that he's referring to spiritual circumcision, and not to the physical act of circumcision, with which all Jews were quite familiar. Thus Paul clearly says "ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands". So Paul was writing from a spiritual point of view, and not from a physical one. To try to insert a physical water baptism into his words, is to only confuse his readers, because it wouldn't be consistent with what he plainly tells us in Hebrews regarding the sprinkling of blood, or baptism by blood. The phrase "buried with him in baptism" should therefore also be understood in a spiritual sense, and means the spiritual baptism by blood, and not in a physical sense, meaning water baptism. To say that any of those verses is referring to water baptism, is to force upon them a meaning which was not intended by Paul, in my view.

Let me remind you again that a large part of Paul's ministry was to convince Jews and Gentiles alike outside of Israel, of the spiritual significance of Christ's Death and Resurrection. The Jewish Elders were so caught up in the physical aspects of temple worship, and their dead religion, that they missed the spiritual significance of Christ's coming. It is for this reason that over and over again, throughout his Epistles, he purposely expounds on the spiritual aspects of our Salvation Rebirth, and New Life in Christ, and repeatedly de-emphasizes the importance of the physical rituals of Judaism, even going so far as to tell the brethren:

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."
Romans 2:28-29, KJV

Even Jesus Himself made it very plain that our cleansing, our renewal, our regeneration, the remission of our sins, and our Salvation, is a spiritual process and not a physical one that is tied to physical rituals of any kind. In the Book of John, Jesus said:

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."
John 15:3, KJV

Jesus repeatedly forgave, cleansed and healed people through nothing but the awesome power of His words, and, of course, by the Power of His Father's Spirit that flowed from within Him. As Jesus also taught us:

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."
John 6:63, KJV

Please go to part four for the continuation of this series.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

Our Lowly Flesh, Physical Water Baptism Profits Us Nothing, John The Baptist Is Beheaded, What If John Hadn't Departed?, Ease Of Modern Bible Study, Wonder Of God's Word, Disciples Were Slow To Understand, Jesus' Disciples And Water Baptism, Large Baptism On Day Of Pentecost, Philip Baptizes Ethiopian Ananias Heals Saul's Blindness, Saul Is Filled With The Holy Spirit And then Baptized With Water, Paul Lays Hands On The Ephesian Disciples To Receive Holy Ghost, Laying On Of Hands, Peter Baptizes Roman Centurion Cornelius And Family Who Were Filled With Holy Spirit Before Water Baptism, The Thief Who Was Saved Without Receiving Water Baptism, Paul Lays Hands On Ephesian Disciples To Impart Holy Spirit, Baptism By Fire Is To Give Us The Power To Witness, Adding A Tax To A Free Gift, Jesus Paid The Full Ransom Price, Or Debt, For Our Salvation

Never once in the Gospels did Jesus say "Now ye are clean and saved through water baptism"; and as we saw earlier, there is no record anywhere in the Gospels, or in the Epistles, which indicates that Jesus water baptized anyone. On the other hand, as I point out in such articles as "The Blood Atonement: In Jesus' Own Words", Jesus most certainly spoke about the New Covenant between God and man which was sealed with the Lord's own Blood. So doesn't it stand to reason that if Jesus said that "the flesh profiteth nothing", that physical baptism of the flesh with water likewise profits us nothing? The Apostle Paul went so far as to say:

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."
Romans 7:18, KJV

"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."
1 Timothy 4:8, KJV

Considering how both Jesus and the Apostle Paul were aware of the low state of the flesh, and knew that it only leads us to sin, and that anything we do to it profits us very little, it only makes sense that baptizing the flesh with water will not have any bearing on our spiritual condition, particularly not on our Salvation. Jesus and Paul both highlighted the spirit over the flesh, and viewed it as only a vehicle to glorify and serve God the Father. As you will see momentarily, even the Apostle Peter came to realize that cleansing the flesh by means of water baptism was a useless, unprofitable act. Even King David recognized that it is only the Word of God which cleanses us; and as we all know, Jesus is the Living Word of God; because as it is written "In the beginning was the word . . . and the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us". King David wrote:

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

Psalms 119:9, KJV

Once John the Baptist had redirected enough of his disciples to follow Jesus; once he had prepared their hearts and minds by way of preaching, and a simple act of water baptism, God knew that it was time to remove John from the picture. Thus, a short while later, John received his graduation ceremony when he was beheaded by evil King Herod, and zipped off to Heaven. God removed the old schoolmaster -- John -- in order to introduce a new Schoolmaster who would take them to even higher spiritual heights, and build upon John's foundation. That, of course, was Jesus.

Think about this for a moment. What would have happened if John the Baptist hadn't been imprisoned and beheaded by King Herod? Do you think that it would have been as easy for the disciples of John to follow Jesus? Possibly not. Maybe they would have been content to continue in the old way, hearing John preach, and watching him baptize people in the Jordan River. Obviously, John the Baptist must have possessed quite a charismatic personality. It's possible that his followers would have been blinded to God's full truth being revealed through Jesus. Their spiritual growth could have even been stunted. John probably knew this, so I suspect that he may have been glad to be relieved of his earthly duties.

Today, we possess both the Old and the New Testaments, which serve as our written spiritual guide. In a sense, we've been blessed with having the full platter set out before us. In some regards, we probably have it a lot easier, inasmuch as our spiritual understanding is concerned. We can browse the pages of the Old and New Testaments, turn on our computers and use our Bible programs, listen to our Bible DVD's, etc., and make a lot of interesting connections, which in earlier times would have been more difficult to do. Many Biblical truths have been opened to us like never before. Spiritually speaking, we are really stuffed with the wonders of God's Word.

Even though many of us would have undoubtedly been thrilled to be able to sit at the Lord's feet, and hear Him teach us directly, and perhaps even hear some things that were never recorded in the pages of the Gospels or the Epistles, I have to wonder if, given the situation at the time, we might not have found ourselves in a situation similar to that of the first Disciples; that is to say, struggling with trying to understand everything that Jesus said and taught. You may think otherwise now, but that is because you have your full Bible in front of you. All they had back then were the books of the Old Testament. Of course, many of them were eager to understand just as we are today. As King David once wrote:

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Psalm 119:18, KJV

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

Psalm 139:6, KJV

The Apostle Paul likewise wrote on one occasion:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Romans 11:33, KJV

While John the Baptist was quick to understand his place in God's overall plan for humanity, with others, such was not the case. Throughout the four Gospels, we find examples where the Twelve Apostles were sometimes slow to understand some of the lessons that Jesus was trying to teach them. Today, we take these things for granted, and sometimes think that we're so smart; but are we really?

I suspect that the necessity of water baptism may have been one of the difficult issues with which they had to struggle; at least at first. We need to remember that Jesus often chose to meet people on their mental and spiritual level, and then He would gradually lead them to deeper spiritual truths, as they were able to accept them. In the case of water baptism, I don't doubt that Jesus knew that it was not necessary, but in His loving way, He probably also knew that it would take His followers some time to arrive at this same conclusion.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the Lord did not try to impede His Disciples from baptizing people. If it served to strengthen people's faith, and made their repentance more sincere, then maybe it was alright, even though unnecessary. It surely didn't hurt anything. Again, we need to remember that Jesus was dealing with spiritual babes. While this is just personal speculation on my part, I think that this may possibly be one of the reasons why the Disciples continued to baptize people, even in the Book of Acts. In other words, perhaps they just did it out of habit. The first example in the Book of Acts where we see the Apostles offering water baptism can be found in chapter two. After preaching boldly to a crowd of thousands of people, and winning their hearts to the Lord, we find the following scene occurring on the Day of Pentecost:

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 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 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. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Acts 2:37-41, KJV

While the above verses do not specifically mention water, we can assume that this is the kind of baptism that Peter was referring to, because we find him water baptizing people in later chapters. A more clear-cut example of water baptism can be found in Acts chapter eight, where Philip goes down into the water and baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch, as we see here:

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Acts 8:36-39, KJV

In the very next chapter, we find Ananias being commanded by the Lord to go to the house in Damascus where a blinded Saul is currently staying. As you may recall, at this particular point, the Lord is dealing heavily with Saul, due to Saul's stubbornness, and the fact that he has been persecuting the Lord's children. Despite his obvious reservations, Ananias does as he has been commanded, and goes to heal Saul of his blindness. It is after this, that Saul is baptized, as we see by these verses:

"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

Acts 9:10-18, KJV

We know for certain that the previous verses are referring to water baptism, because thirteen chapters later, when Paul is recounting his conversion experience before an angry mob of orthodox Jews, he specifically uses the word "water", as we see here:

"And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Acts 22:12-16, KJV

Now, depending on how one reads those verses, it sounds like Saul received his sight, and was filled with the Holy Spirit, the minute that Ananias laid his hands on him. We find strong evidence to support this possibility in Acts chapter nineteen, where Paul lays his hands on a group of about twelve Disciples at Ephesus, upon which they're all immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, as we see here:

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Acts 19:6, KJV

We will come back to that verse in a moment, as there is more important information to share from that particular incident; but the main point is that those Disciples received the Holy Spirit at the very moment that Paul laid his hands upon them. So if my understanding is correct, it was after Saul had been healed of his three days of blindness, and after he had been filled with the Holy Spirit, that he rose up and was baptized with water. This seems to strongly suggest that water baptism was a secondary action, and was not even necessary, in order for Saul to receive the Holy Spirit. In other words, Ananias was fulfilling a physical ritual which profited Paul little. If Paul was already filled with the Holy Spirit, which means that he was already saved, then what purpose did the water serve? Ananias says that it washed away Paul's sins, but did it really, or did Ananias just think that it did due to the tradition which seems to have begun with John the Baptist?

If you still remain convinced that water baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins, in order to obtain Salvation, or to receive the Holy Spirit, please keep reading, as I will be providing some additional examples. First, however, I wish to share some additional verses with you which show that, as per the example of Jesus Himself, laying on of hands was a common practice with the Disciples of the First Century Church:

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence."

Matthew 19:13-15, KJV

"And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

Mark 6:5, KJV

"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them."

Luke 4:40, KJV

"And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

Luke 13:13, KJV

"Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

Acts 6:6, KJV

"And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Acts 13:3, KJV

"And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

Acts 28:8, KJV

Another good example of a water baptism being performed can be found in Acts chapter ten where we find Peter baptizing certain Gentile believers who were members of the family of Roman centurion, Cornelius. As you will see, Cornelius and his family and friends had just been filled with the Holy Spirit. Consider the following:

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Acts 10:44-48, KJV

What I find particularly interesting regarding these verses, is that not only did Cornelius and his household receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit before actually being baptized with water, but they likewise received it without the laying on of hands, exactly as occurred to the Apostles in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. You will recall that earlier, I explained the Power of the Word, and that it is the Word of God which cleanses us, and not water; because as Jesus said, His words are Spirit and they are life, and we are clean by the Word which He has spoken unto us. That's precisely what we see occurring here. These Gentiles merely heard the Word of God, and were baptized with the Baptism of Blood, that is, saved, and then immediately filled with the Holy Spirit. They received the baptism by fire, (the Holy Spirit), before ever receiving a water baptism; which sounds very similar to what Paul also experienced with Ananias in the previous chapter.

This incident certainly seems to confirm that water baptism is not really necessary; either for the remission of sins, or for Salvation, or to obtain the Holy Ghost. As with Paul, water baptism was clearly a secondary physical ritual, which in reality, profited Cornelius' family and friends little.

To reiterate, these Gentile believers were obviously water baptized after-the-fact and definitely not before. There's no way that baptismal regenerationists, such as Roman Catholics, Baptists, and other denominations, can explain this obvious conflict with their misguided doctrine. I do not believe that God would pour out His Holy Spirit into an unclean vessel; in other words, into an unsaved individual. Therefore, it stands to reason that Cornelius and his family were saved the moment that they heard and received the Word that was being preached to them by Peter. This is because God's Word makes it clear that Salvation is a state of mind and heart that's based upon belief in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Salvation is totally independent of any physical act or ritual. The minute that we choose to accept the Word, and embrace the truth regarding the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we are in fact saved whether we've been water baptized or not, as the above incidents clearly reveal.

Paul's pride and stubbornness were smashed by God on the road to Damascus, and he humbly accepted the truth regarding Jesus Christ. That was his moment of Salvation. That is also why he was able to receive the Holy Spirit a few days later, and was then baptized in water. His belief in Christ's Atonement had already cleansed him. He was baptized in Christ's Blood even before Ananias arrived and performed water baptism upon him. In similar manner, the minute that Cornelius and his family opened their hearts, and accepted the truth of Peter's words, they were in fact saved; they received the Baptism of Blood, followed by the baptism by fire, which was the Holy Spirit. Water baptism was just a secondary ritual. So it seems to me that baptismal regenerationists don't have a leg to stand on.

A related example can be found in one of the two thieves who died on the cross next to Jesus. As you may possibly recall, one of the two malefactors began to mock the Lord. The other thief, however, was in a very repentant state, and readily admitted that he was receiving a just reward for his crimes. He then asked Jesus to remember him, and what did Jesus say to him? Did He tell the thief, "Sorry, but you've never been water baptized, so you're a hopeless case"? Of course not! He said "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise". It is rather obvious that this thief was not taken down from the cross so that he could be water baptized; yet Jesus clearly promised him a place in His Kingdom; again proving that water baptism is not necessary for the remission of our sins, or in order to obtain Salvation. Following is the full story:

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:39-43, KJV

Why wasn't water baptism necessary? Well, based upon all of the Scriptures that we have examined here, it seems obvious that this thief was baptized in Jesus' Blood, so why would water baptism even be necessary? John the Baptist's ministry clearly taught us that being in a state of repentance is the first step towards Salvation. This thief clearly recognized his sins, and he was sorry for them. In addition, he clearly recognized who Jesus was, and he accepted Him as such, as is evident by the fact that he called Jesus "Lord". In short, all of the necessary requirements for Salvation were met. He had demonstrated his faith to Jesus, and Jesus honored this, and even comforted him, by telling him that he would be in Paradise with him.

Now, some people might argue that the thief couldn't possibly have been baptized in Jesus' Blood, because Jesus wasn't dead yet; however, I would offer that the Lord's Blood had already been spilled when He received the thirty-nine lashes, when the crown of thorns was placed upon His head, when He fell on the way to Golgotha, and when the Romans nailed Him to the Cross; so the thief was able to receive Salvation right then and there. If you don't wish to accept that view, then look at Jesus' words to the thief as a prophetic statement. Jesus' Death on the Cross was already a done deed. He would be dead within a matter of a few hours, and the Promise of Redemption would be fully sealed by His Blood, so the Lord possessed the power to tell the thief that He would see him in Paradise. Regardless of how we choose to look at it, the point remains that the thief was clearly promised Salvation without having been baptized in water. That is an indisputable fact.

Let us return now to the incident which occurred in chapter nineteen where Paul laid his hands upon the Disciples in the city of Ephesus, and they received the Holy Spirit. Allow me to quote the entire story for you:

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye

received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

Acts 19:1-7, KJV

First of all, the fact that these believers are referred to as "disciples" would seem to indicate that they have already accepted Jesus and are saved. Second, we learn that they have not yet received the baptism by fire; that is, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but that they've received the water baptism of John the Baptist. The fact that while Paul is questioning them, he uses the phrase "since ye believed" certainly seems to support the idea that these are saved Christians; however, it could possibly also mean that they have believed in John's message, but they still don't know who the Savior is, because they are located in Ephesus in Asia Minor, (modern Turkey), while the events surrounding Jesus' Ministry occurred quite a distance away in Israel. Personally, my view is that they are saved, because if they weren't, it seems to me that Paul would be asking them if they had received Jesus yet, and not if they have received the Holy Ghost yet "since ye believed".

But what we want to concentrate on is what happens next. Some people claim that Paul baptized these Disciples with water, but I posit that this is not what happened whatsoever. They had already received the water baptism of John; that is, the baptism of repentance, so wouldn't it be redundant to water baptize them a second time? Even the Roman Catholic Church teaches in its catechism that water baptism can only be done once. Of course, the reason why it teaches this, is because it erroneously believes that water baptism is an inseparable and necessary part of receiving Salvation, and one can only accept Jesus one time, since He sacrificed Himself only one time. But the point remains that for Paul to baptize them a second time would be a redundant, pointless act.

Paul clearly asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost. He was asking them about the baptism by fire, and not about the baptism by water. Spiritual baptism was clearly Paul's primary concern, which suggests that Paul believed that they had already accepted Jesus and were saved. So what does it mean when it says "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus"? The very next sentence give us a clear answer. We are told that Paul laid his hands on them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost -- the baptism by fire, and not a water baptism -- precisely as had occurred when Ananias laid his hands on Paul. That Paul would do this is quite consistent with what we read in his Epistles. Paul's emphasis was not on the physical rituals, but rather on the spiritual realities; namely baptism by blood -- Salvation -- and baptism by fire -- receiving the Holy Spirit. The first one saves us, and the second gives us the power to win others to Christ, precisely as Jesus said it would do, as we see here:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Please understand that the main question here is not whether or not the Apostles baptized people with water, because it is obvious that they did, at least for a time. The real question which we are trying to answer is whether or not water baptism is absolutely necessary in order for an individual to receive Forgiveness of sins, and to obtain Salvation, that is, Eternal Life. We have now examined several Scriptural examples which demonstrate that water baptism is not necessary for either. Furthermore, we have seen that water baptism is not necessary in order to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit either. These examples clearly reveal the flawed reasoning that is embraced by baptismal regenerationists, such as the Roman Catholics, and other denominations. They're bound by a legalistic ritual and a totally unnecessary tradition, which Jesus Himself did not practice anywhere in the Gospels.

More importantly, by stating that water baptism is necessary in order to receive Forgiveness of our sins, and to achieve Salvation, they are attaching a condition to the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Indirectly, such people are stating that His Sacrifice on the Cross was not enough. When Jesus died on the Cross, He clearly said "It is finished" in John 19:30. That word "finished" is translated from the Greek word "teleo". In my Greek lexicon, this word is defined as meaning to bring to a close, to finish, to end, to fulfill, to accomplish, or to complete. It is very similar to the Greek word "pleroo" which we examined at the end of part two of this series. So this is precisely what Jesus did for us. The minute that He died on the Cross, He completed, He fulfilled, He brought to a close, He accomplished, His primary mission upon the Earth. And what was that? As we saw earlier, to open the way to Salvation for all men.

By making water baptism a necessary condition for Salvation, these baptismal regenerationists are basically saying, "Yes; Jesus died for our sins, and paid the Price that we might be able to obtain Salvation, but we still need to tax His free Gift to us, by adding water baptism to it. If you don't pay our tax, you are not really saved yet." Can you understand how blasphemous that sounds to a Bible-believing Christian? How dare these people tax a Gift which has been freely given to us by God, through the Death of His Son. It is similar to the Jewish money changers sucking every coin that they could out of the worshipers who came to offer their sacrifices and tithes at the temple in Jerusalem. In his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth, Paul tells us "ye are bought with a price, and in the Gospel of Mark Jesus plainly tells us that He has paid that ransom price, as we see here:

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45, KJV

Once a ransom price has been paid by the negotiating parties, -- in this case, God the Father and Jesus the Son -- then the hostages -- we sinners -- are set free. There is no further negotiations or conditions, such as taxing the free Gift by adding the condition of water baptism. As we saw earlier in part three, Jesus very plainly said "to preach deliverance to the captives . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised". In the case of Jesus' Crucifixion, all true, Bible-believing Christians should simply say "Mission accomplished".

Please go to part five for the continuation of this series.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

Copyright 1994 - 2009 Endtime Prophecy Net

Published On : January 1, 2009

Last Updated : January 1, 2009

Length And Importance Of John The Baptist's Baptism Ministry, Putting Away Childish Things And Reaching Spiritual Maturity, Peter Receives Understanding Regarding True Baptism By Blood, Promise Of The Holy Spirit, Peter's Evangelism Crash Course Matthew 28:19 Spurious Text Debate, False Doctrines In The First Century Church, "Great Apostasy", Holy Trinity Phrase, Emperor Constantine, Edict Of Milan, Roman Catholicism Rises, Bishop Eusebius Pamphilius Warns Of Matthew 28:19 Corruption, Theologian Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare's View On Eusebius, Justin Martyr And Dialogue With Trypho, The Demonstrations Of Aphraates, Bishop Macedonius And The Arian Macedonians Rebel, In My Name - Not Holy Trinity Phrase, 1st Council Of Nicaea, Nicene Creed, Athanasius The Trinitarian, Arius Is Condemned

Let's return momentarily to the ministry of John the Baptist. We have no idea how long John the Baptist had been baptizing people in the Jordan River prior to Jesus' arrival there to be baptized by him, but it must have been for some time. If we consider that Jesus began His earthly Ministry at around the age of thirty, and that his cousin John was approximately six months older than Jesus, then perhaps John also began his public ministry at around the same age as Jesus; which means that perhaps John had been baptizing people in the Jordan for that amount of time; that is to say, six months. Of course, this is merely speculation on my part. The point is, seeing John perform water baptisms had become a very common sight by that time. He was probably the talk of the town. King Herod certainly knew about John, which is why John eventually ended up dead.

The fact that Jesus was baptized by John may have resulted in the Apostles making the assumption that water baptism was a necessary ritual which they must continue to perform. As we have already seen, for a time, water baptism did serve a very important function. John's baptism of repentance not only was a catalyst for preparing people's hearts to receive the true Messiah when He arrived, but John's ministry was likewise the prophesied vehicle that God used to introduce the Messiah to the world. However, it is my belief that once these tasks had been accomplished, water baptism was no longer necessary; and that is why God took John the Baptist out of the way, through his Graduation to the Heavenly Realm. It was time for the baptism by fire to become a reality -- the Holy Spirit.

It was not until years later, after Jesus' physical presence had been taken from them by His Ascension, and they had time to mature in the Spirit, that His followers began to acquire a deeper understanding of Jesus' teachings. Even after Jesus arose from the dead, they were still in the dark regarding a lot of issues, which He began to explain to them more fully in the final chapters of the Gospels. But it was really the baptism of the Holy Spirit -- the baptism by fire on the day of Pentecost -- which opened their spiritual eyes the most. I believe that is what Paul meant in part by the following verses. He is saying that we must leave some things behind,

and move on to the deeper spiritual truths of God's Kingdom:

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."
1 Corinthians 13:9-12, KJV

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit."
Hebrews 5:12-6:3, KJV

Earlier in this series, I mentioned that the act of Noah and his family being saved in the Ark from the waters of the Great Flood was a foreshadow of the Salvation to come through Christ in the New Testament. I connected that ancient event to a verse found in Peter's first Epistle. Even though Peter also baptized in the Book of Acts, we later find him stating that true Baptism, and true Salvation has absolutely nothing to do with water. In comparing Spiritual Salvation to Noah and the Flood, Peter writes the following. Please notice the words that are enclosed in parentheses:

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"
1 Peter 3:20-21, KJV

Please notice carefully that Peter makes it clear that he is not referring to water baptism which cleanses the flesh; he is in fact referring to a Spiritual Baptism through faith in the Resurrected Christ. If we remove Peter's clarification that is found in between the parentheses, we're left with the phrase "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ". If Peter does not mean water baptism, what other baptism can we connect to the Resurrection of Christ? Obviously, the baptism by blood, the sprinkling of blood, which was followed by the Lord's own Resurrection. This is the baptism which "doth also now save us", because as Paul wrote, "without shedding of blood is no remission". The baptism by blood is the only thing that will result in the remission of sins, Salvation, and eventually, our own resurrection from the dead, which in fact occurs on a daily basis as the New Man rises to serve the Lord.

Even though Peter clearly water baptized Cornelius' family in Acts chapter ten, notice what he states only a chapter later, when he is recounting the vision which he had been given by

the Lord on the rooftop in Joppa, (regarding the sheet which contained the unclean animals), and the baptismal experience that he had experienced with the Gentile believers, to some contentious Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Peter tells them in part:

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

Acts 11:15-16, KJV

Peter was in fact referring back to Jesus' words, which He had shared with them in Acts chapter one, just prior to His Ascension into Heaven. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit, as we see here:

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Acts 1:4-5, KJV

In short, Peter is finally beginning to get the picture. He is getting a crash course in some of the deeper meanings that were behind Jesus' teachings. Up until Acts chapter ten, he held the belief that Salvation was only meant for the Jews; but then God gave him the rooftop vision with the sheet full of unclean animals, and then instructed Peter to go the house of a dirty filthy Roman, the very people who had murdered his beloved Master, and preach Salvation to them. As if that was not enough, not only did those Roman citizens receive Jesus, but then they were filled with the Holy Spirit as well, just by hearing Peter preach to them. So as I said, dear Peter was learning and growing in the Spirit, and was beginning to gain the world vision for souls that the Lord wanted him to have. Salvation, the Holy Spirit and being a Disciple of Christ was no longer just a private little club for Jewish Disciples.

Peter began to understand that the physical baptism of the flesh with water does absolutely nothing for anyone. It is only accepting Christ, being sprinkled with His Blood, (the baptism by blood), and then being immersed in the baptismal fire of the Holy Spirit, that really counts. When Cornelius and his family received the Gift of the Holy Spirit, even before they were baptized with water, I suspect that this experience really shocked Peter. The entire experience of even going to see a Roman centurion must have shocked dear Peter. I can't help but wonder if perhaps the reason why he even proceeded to baptize them with water, is because he was totally blown away, and really didn't know what to do. As I said, it seems that God was giving Peter a crash course in world evangelism; He was giving Peter a world vision; for as Jesus Himself had said, He would draw all men unto Himself, and not just the Jews.

I can just imagine what may have been going through Peter's mind at the time. "Well, if these people are receiving Jesus without water baptism, and if they are being immersed in the Holy Spirit just by hearing my words, or merely as a result of our laying hands on them, then why are we even continuing to water baptize them? They are already saved, and already filled with the Holy Spirit, so what purpose does the ritual of water baptism continue to serve?". Perhaps that is why Peter wrote what he wrote in his first Epistle, as we saw

earlier.

At this point, we are going to change gears in our discussion once again. As we saw in part two of this series, one of the key verses which is often used by baptismal regenerationists, such as Roman Catholics, in their attempts to convince people that water baptism is necessary in order to obtain Salvation, is John 3:5. However, this is by no means the only verse that is used to try to support their misguided doctrine. There is in fact another very controversial verse which has resulted in a considerable amount of debate over the centuries. In an online Roman Catholic test that I discovered while conducting some research for this series, it referred to the following verses as "the clearest biblical warrant for baptism":

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
Matthew 28:18-20, KJV

As I shared with you in part one of this series, it is based upon the previous verses found in the Gospel of Matthew, that we find the following paragraphs in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

----- Begin Quote -----

". . . that the essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on his head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit . . . present the fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, as a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ."

----- End Quote -----

On the surface, it may appear that the Roman Catholics, and other churches which promote water baptism, are right on the mark regarding this issue; but don't be too quick to jump on their band wagon, until you've examined all of the Biblical evidence. As we have already seen, the belief regarding the absolute necessity of water baptism in order that one might obtain Forgiveness of sins, and Salvation, or to be anointed with the Holy Spirit, is not quite as solid as it at first appears to be.

As I said, over the centuries, there has been a considerable degree of debate surrounding the previous set of verses; in particular, the nineteenth verse, which makes a reference to the so-called "Holy Trinity", as well as to water baptism. The fact is that a growing body of Biblical scholars are now convinced that this verse is spurious text which was edited by the so-called "Church Fathers" sometime during the "Great Apostasy". This is the name given by some people to a period of about three hundred years which immediately followed the First Century, when a lot of heretical doctrines crept into the body of Christian beliefs. The truth, however, is that this had begun to occur even before all of the Apostles had

died. Just as Jesus continually exposed the false doctrines of the Scribes and the Pharisees, the First Century Apostles and Disciples likewise had to contend with false doctrines creeping into the Early Church, as we can clearly see by the following verses:

"Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

Matthew 16:12, KJV

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

Ephesians 4:14-15, KJV

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."

Hebrews 13:9, KJV

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."

1 Timothy 1:3-4, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

1 Timothy 4:1, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

So in truth, the doctrinal corruption which occurred during the so-called "Great Apostasy" was merely a continuation of what had already begun to occur before all of the Apostles were dead. At any rate, it has been speculated that Matthew 28:19 may have been altered as early as the Second Century. The corruption, assuming that it really is corrupted text, is that the middle phrase "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" was inserted into the verse.

The general belief is that the text was changed in order to promote the doctrines of the "Holy Trinity" and water baptism which would eventually be espoused and forcefully promoted by the still-nascent Roman Catholic Church; which, as I explain in other articles, became a recognized religion of the Roman Empire during the reign of Emperor Constantine in the Fourth Century. This was a result of the Edict of Milan, which was a document that was signed by Constantine I in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, and by Licinius in the western half of the Roman Empire. This document made the already-corrupted Christian faith a "religio licita", that is to say, a "legal religion", in the Roman Empire. These events occurred around 313 AD. If you wish to learn more about this event, and what effects it had on our Christian faith, I encourage you to read the list of articles and series below, and others which

you will find on our web site, particularly in the Roman Catholicism section:

Book Of Enoch: Truth Or Heresy?
Gargoyles: Satan Loves Church Buildings
Have You Read The New Scriptures Yet?
History Of The Authorized King James Bible
Our Pagan World: The Easter Myth Exposed
The Seven Heads
Where Are The First Century Churches?

As I said, the idea that Matthew 28:19 contains spurious text is not a recent development. It is a debate which has raged for centuries. In fact, a number of historical sources state that during the early Fourth Century, the Greek historian and bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius Pamphilius, repeatedly warned of the dangerous corruption that is found in this verse. While conducting my research for this series, I discovered that in multiple copies of his writings, Eusebius Pamphilius quoted from Matthew in the following manner:

"Go ye and make disciples of all the nations in my name, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you."

Matthew 28:19 Eusebius Version

My research has revealed that Eusebius Pamphilius quoted the verse from Matthew in this fashion eighteen different times. As you can see, the entire phrase regarding baptism and the "Holy Trinity" is not present in Eusebius' rendition of the verse, and he has used the phrase "in my name" in its place. As the bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius had direct access to an extensive library of documents, manuscripts and books which he had inherited from his predecessor and mentor, Pamphilius. It makes perfect, logical sense that the reason why Eusebius would write Matthew 28:19 in this fashion, is because that's the way he found it written in the many documents which were at his disposal. This issue is confirmed for us by British theologian, Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, who in the 1902 edition of the Hibbert Journal, a magazine published by the Hibbert Trust, (aka Anti-Trinitarian Fund), wrote as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

"It is evident that this was the text found by Eusebius in the very ancient codices collected fifty to a hundred and fifty years before his birth by his great predecessors. Of any other form of text he had never heard, and knew nothing until he had visited Constantinople and attended the Council of Nice."

----- End Quote -----

Seven years later, in his 1909 work entitled "History Of New Testament Criticism", in the fifth chapter entitled "Textual Criticism", Conybeare reaffirms his belief in the corruption that is found in Matthew 28:19 when he states:

----- Begin Quote -----

"It is clear, therefore, that the MSS which Eusebius inherited from his predecessor, Pamphilus, at Caesarea in Palestine, some at least preserved the original reading, in which there was no mention either of Baptism or of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

----- End Quote -----

Subtle hints exist in the writings of Christian leaders who lived prior to Eusebius Pamphilius, which also suggest that they too were only familiar with Matthew 28:19, as Eusebius would later write it. For example, Justin Martyr, who wrote during the middle of the Second Century, states as follows in a work commonly known as the "Dialogue With Trypho":

----- Begin Quote -----

"God hath not yet inflicted, nor inflicts the judgment, as knowing of some that still even today are being made disciples in the name of his Christ, and are abandoning the path of error, who also do receive gifts each as they be worthy, being illumined by the name of this Christ."

----- End Quote -----

Justin Martyr's "Dialogue With Trypho" is only preserved in a collection of excerpts of early Christian writers known as the "Sacra Parallela". This anthology, or "florilegium", may possibly date to around the Sixth Century. The name "Trypho" may possibly be a reference to Jewish philosopher, priest and rabbi, Tarfon Tryphon Zarezan. The previous dialog dealt with Justin Martyr's attempts to convince Trypho of the validity of the Christian faith from the Old Testament Scriptures, or Tanakh. Please notice that Justin Martyr twice emphasized the name of Christ in the previous quote, in direct reference to making Disciples. Martyr does not mention anything regarding baptizing them in the name of the "Holy Trinity". This is in perfect agreement with the form of Matthew 28:19, as promoted by Eusebius.

Another example of Matthew 28:19 being used in a form similar to that promoted by Eusebius, can be found in the writings of one of Eusebius' 4th Century contemporaries, Aphraates. Known also as Aphrahat in the Syriac language, and referred to as the "Persian Sage", he was an Assyrian Christian who was born in Persia in the final quarter of the Third Century. Found in a collection of his twenty-three writings, which are known as "The Demonstrations", or "The Homilies", is this line:

"Make disciples of all nations, and they shall believe in me."

In commenting on this text, theologian Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare stated the following in the Hibbert Journal:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The last words appear to be a gloss on the Eusebius reading 'in my name.' But in any case they preclude the Textus Receptus with its injunction to baptise in the triune name. Were the reading of Aphraates an isolated fact, we might regard it as a loose citation, but in presence of the Eusebian and Justinian text this is impossible."

----- End Quote -----

The previous quotations from early Christian writers is not the only evidence which strengthens Eusebius' rendition of Matthew 28:19. There were others who opposed the intentions of the nascent Roman Catholic Church to create the so-called "Holy Trinity" doctrine out of thin air. One such group were the followers of Macedonius, who was a Greek, and the Bishop of Constantinople during the latter half of the 4th Century.

Known as the Macedonians, they followed in the footsteps of Arius. Based upon the clear evidence that is found within the New Testament, they refused to accept the position held by Athanasius and other bishops, who promoted the false belief that the Holy Spirit is a third person in a so-called "Holy Trinity". Neither did they accept that Jesus Christ is equal to God the Father, as I likewise point out in a number of my articles. Under the protection of Constantius II, the son of Emperor Constantine I, Macedonius and his followers prospered in Constantinople for a time, but not without much bloodshed and controversy.

Please keep in mind that these events occurred only a few decades after the 325 AD adoption of the Nicene Creed, and there was still a lot of heated doctrinal debate occurring as a result of Arianism, and other doctrines. It was a time when various religious factions were attempting to maintain control over the church. Of course, we know that the false doctrines of Roman Catholicism would eventually prevail, and both the necessity of water baptism and the "Holy Trinity", would become established doctrines, along with a number of other false beliefs and practices. At any rate, Macedonius fell from grace when he decided to disinter the remains of Constantine I, in order to repair his sepulchre, and he was eventually deposed in 360 AD. The Macedonians were likewise eventually branded as heretics in 381 AD, when Theodosius I called the First Council of Constantinople.

While Eusebius is believed to have been a Trinitarian, meaning that he embraced the doctrine of the "Holy Trinity", he possessed a strong desire to preserve the integrity and the purity of the original Gospel manuscripts, as they had been written by the First Apostles. Thus, he was strongly opposed to the changes which had been made to this verse in Matthew chapter twenty-eight.

So we must ask ourselves, if Eusebius Pamphilius is correct, and his version of the verse is the original, inspired form of the verse, as written by the Apostle Matthew, then who is responsible for the so-called "inspired" version that's been popularized in so many Bibles for so many years? The obvious answer is those early, so-called "Church Fathers". Eusebius felt so strongly concerning this issue, that in a number of his commentaries, such as "Demonstratio Evangelica", he said the following regarding why Jesus said "in my name" in that verse, and not "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost":

----- Begin Quote -----

"For he did not enjoin them 'to make disciples of all nations' simply and without qualification, but with the essential addition 'in his name.' For so great was the virtue attached to his appellation that the Apostle says, God bestowed on him the name above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of things in heaven and on earth and under the earth. It was right therefore that he should emphasize the virtue of the power residing in his name but hidden from the many, and therefore say to his Apostles, Go ye and make disciples of all nations in my name."

----- End Quote -----

Eusebius wasn't even aware of the corrupt version of the text in the Gospel of Matthew, until he participated in the First

Council of Nicaea, that was called by Emperor Constantine in 325 AD, in the northwestern region of Asia Minor, then known as Bithynia. Today, this region is a part of Turkey. Ancient Nicaea, which in our modern times is now known as the Turkish city of Iznik, was located approximately seventy miles to the southeast of Byzantium. This city later acquired the name of Constantinople when Emperor Constantine set up his eastern capital there. Today, the city is known as Istanbul.

As I explain in the seven-part series "The Seven Heads", the First Council of Nicaea was attended by over three hundred bishops who had gathered from throughout the Roman Empire, in order to establish the formal doctrines of the Fourth Century Roman Catholic Church. As I said earlier, by this time, about three hundred years had passed since the time of Jesus Christ and the First Apostles, and their original teachings had been corrupted by many heretical doctrines during this period of doctrinal turmoil known as the "Great Apostasy". One of the more significant results of the gathering in Nicaea, was the acceptance of the Nicene Creed as a symbol of the fundamental beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. To this day, its tenets are accepted by a variety of churches to varying degrees. It should be noted, however, that there's more than one version of the Creed, such as the 325 AD version, the 381 AD version, the Athanasius version, etc.

While a number of churches do recognize the authority of the Nicene Creed, (such as the Roman Catholic Church and some of its derivatives), not all churches, and not all Christians are of this persuasion. One of the reasons for the rejection by some Christians, is that the Nicene Creed establishes the so-called "Holy Trinity" doctrine; which, as we have already discussed, finds its support, in fact, its only support, in the questionable rendition of Matthew 28:19. It appears that a large part of the blame for the corruption that's found in this verse, and for the formalization of the "Holy Trinity" in the Nicene Creed, is cast upon none other than Athanasius, who was the bishop of Alexandria, and also a contemporary of Eusebius.

Athanasius' notoriety is due primarily to his conflicts with Arius, who was a Fourth Century Christian priest, and also a resident of Alexandria, like Athanasius. The basis for the powerful conflict between Athanasius and Arius, was that the former was a Trinitarian, (or firm believer in the doctrine of the "Holy Trinity"), while the latter was not. Arius was not convinced that Jesus Christ is equal to God the Father, and questioned whether or not Jesus had existed eternally with the Father. He in fact posited that Jesus may have been created by God the Father, and did not accept the existence of a physical "trinity" as is expounded by the Trinitarians. It was in fact this conflict which resulted in Constantine evoking the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. As I said earlier, the result was the establishment of the Nicene Creed as the symbol of orthodox Roman Catholic beliefs at that time.

With the acceptance of the Nicene Creed, Athanasius had won the doctrinal battle. Arianism was condemned, and Arius was ruled a heretic at the Council of Nicaea. Let me also point out, however, that Athanasius was eventually condemned and exiled by Emperor Constantine, during a synod in 335 AD, at which Eusebius of Caesarea was present. Athanasius had in fact refused to attend two synods called by Eusebius during the previous years.

Please go to part six for the continuation of this series.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

Unmasking The Great Apostasy, Theodosius, Nicene Christianity, Nicene Trinitarianism, Catholic Christianity, Holy Trinity Is Promoted By Theodosius, Roman Catholic Faith Is Enforced By Persecution, Torture, War, And Death, False Doctrines Of RCC, Eusebius Pamphilius Compromises, Why Original Manuscripts No Longer Exist, Persecution By Jewish Elders, Jews Killed Jesus Complicity Of Jewish Leaders In The Murder Of Jesus Christ, Persecution Of Jews & Christians, Emperor Diocletian's Reign, Historia Ecclesiae Or Church History, Jerusalem Is Destroyed Diocletian Destroys Religious Texts, William Barclay Swete, Desiderius Erasmus, John Froben And Non-Latin Vulgate Bible, Jerome, Pope Damasus I And The Corrupt Latin Vulgate Bible, The Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, & Codex Alexandrinus Constantin von Tischendorf And Tsar Alexander II Controversy, Septuagint, Masoretic Text & The Corrupt Latin Vulgate Bible, Erasmus, Textus Receptus And The Authorized King James Bible, Jesus Never Used Trinity Phrase Anywhere Else In the Gospels, In My Name Or Triune Phrase, Apostles Never Used Triune Term

While I have used the common phrase the "Great Apostasy" to refer to the three-hundred-year period that followed the age of Christ and the First Apostles, we truly need to wonder if this period of spiritual darkness really ended with the First Council of Nicaea -- as Roman Catholics and their associated churches seem to imply -- or if in fact it was actually made worse; and even continues until this very day. Furthermore, we must also ask ourselves if it was really the true Church, that is, the one that was established by Jesus Christ and His First Apostles, which arose to such great power and influence during the Fourth Century, under the protection of the Roman emperors, or if it was in fact something else; that is, an impostor church which, contrary to the teachings of Christ, seriously compromised with the world.

While Christianity, or perhaps more correctly stated, what the so-called Fourth Century "Church Fathers" claimed to be Christianity, became a legally recognized religion with the 313 AD signing of the Edict of Milan by emperors Constantine and Lucinius, it was not until almost seventy years later, in 380 AD, and during the reign of Emperor Theodosius, that it came into full power as the only legitimate religion of the entire Roman Empire. This development came about in the following manner:

Through a series of military and political maneuvers -- which you can study elsewhere -- Theodosius I was able to unite the eastern and western portions of the Roman Empire for a time. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Constantine I and Lucinius, he promoted a brand of Christianity referred to as "Nicene Christianity", or "Nicene Trinitarianism", within the empire. In 380, shortly after arriving in Constantinople, which was the eastern capital of the Roman Empire, he, along with co-emperors Valentinian II and Gratian, who ruled in the western half of the empire, issued an edict that decreed that "Catholic Christianity", or "Nicene Christianity", which was

the faith of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, was now the only legitimate imperial religion. This decree in effect put an end to state support for the traditional pagan religion of the empire. This decree stated:

----- Begin Quote -----

It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation, should continue to the profession of that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the one deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title of Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since, in our judgment they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give to their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the divine condemnation and in the second the punishment of our authority which in accordance with the will of Heaven shall decide to inflict.

----- End Quote -----

A year later, in 381 AD, Theodosius convoked an ecumenical council at Constantinople, which he used to impose the new "Nicene Orthodoxy" all across the empire. One result of this council was that the Holy Ghost was officially established as the third person of the so-called "Holy Trinity". From that time until his death in 395 AD, Theodosius I worked to stamp out both the remnants of Arianism, as well as all forms of paganism, throughout the Roman Empire. Thus we witness the ungodly marriage of the legal and military might of Rome to a corrupt version of our Christian faith. In coming years and centuries, this Roman church would use its might to kill millions of people who refused to recognize it as the "one true faith", and the so-called "Kingdom of God on Earth", as it clearly viewed itself during the Byzantine period.

Exactly which church is this? What ecclesiastical power swept across all of Europe and the Middle East as a result of the compromise with the oppressive, iron-fisted Roman government? Was it a church which preached God's Love and Salvation, or was it one that relied upon persecution, oppression, torture, war and death, in order to force the masses to adhere to its erroneous, heretical doctrines?

As is now clearly evident, and as I likewise explain in some of the aforementioned articles, what we in fact see in these historic events, is the birth of a corrupt form of worldly, organized Christianity, under the banner of what eventually became known as the Roman Catholic Church. As a result of the unholy marriage between the might of Rome and these misguided power-hungry, so-called "Church Fathers", which was in direct contradiction to the teachings of Jesus Christ and His first Apostles, who all clearly taught us to remain separate from the world, and to eschew worldly power and riches, the bishop of Rome eventually received the title of "Pope", which finds its origin in the Greek word "pappas". Furthermore, it should be noted that the "Great Apostasy" never really ended, for it is this Roman church which introduced such false doctrines as the following to the world, and continues to defend them:

1. Immaculate Conception - Claims that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was born without sin. This is utterly false. See Romans 3:23, Psalm 51:5 and related verses.
2. Co-Redemptress/Mediatrix - This doctrine claims that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is an equal co-redeemer, and mediator, with Christ. This is utterly false. Please see John 14:6, 1 Timothy 2:15, Act 4:12 and related verses.
3. Mary, the mother of God - Claims that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the mother of God. This doctrine is utterly false, because God has no beginning or end, and Jesus is the Son of God, and not the same as God the Father.
4. The Assumption - Claims that Mary, the mother of Jesus, rose bodily to Heaven. This is utterly false. There is no record of this event anywhere in the Bible.
5. Infallibility of the Pope - This is utterly false because all men are born in sin with a corrupt, imperfect nature, and make mistakes.
6. Transubstantiation - Claims that the eucharist bread and wine is transformed into the actual Flesh and Blood of Christ. This is utterly false, is not found in the Bible, and basically teaches cannibalism, which is prohibited in the Bible.
7. Water baptism is necessary for Salvation - This is utterly false, as this series, and the Bible, clearly reveal.
8. Doctrine of the Holy Trinity - This is utterly false, as this series, other articles, and the Bible clearly point out.
9. Salvation is possible without Christ - This is utterly false, as this series, other articles, and the Bible, clearly point out.
10. Praying to Mary and the Saints - This is an utterly false practice. Please see 1 Timothy 2:15.

For his part, Eusebius was alarmed and upset by the dangerous changes which were foolishly being made to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the writings of the Apostles and he clearly expressed his displeasure with the direction that the Church was taking. Sadly, in spite of the fact that he realized that some of the Biblical text was being altered and manipulated, such as Matthew 28:19, according to online sources, after he was threatened with excommunication, Eusebius chose to submit himself, and even contributed to the Nicene Creed. Eusebius was, after all, a Trinitarian.

At this point, perhaps you may be wondering why we don't just examine the original Gospel manuscripts that were written by the First Apostles, so that we can resolve this controversial issue, regarding Matthew 28:19, once and for all. Sadly, the simple answer is that all of the original manuscripts ceased to exist many centuries ago. In fact, even by Eusebius' time, none, or probably very few of them, were still in existence. We need to remember that over two hundred years had gone by since the last Original Apostle had died. All that remained for the most part were copies of copies of their writings, and other fragments. This reality is due primarily to three

specific reasons. The first of these reasons is obviously the passage of time. Physical documents, regardless of how well they are composed and preserved, will eventually decay. The second reason is the severe persecution which First Century Christians suffered under the Jewish religious Elders. This persecution began with the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

While the actual Crucifixion of Christ was carried out by members of the Roman government, it is important to realize that the Jewish Elders were the real instigators behind this evil deed. They were intent on making sure that it happened, no matter the cost to themselves. In fact, in their state of delusion, they thought that they were saving themselves by murdering Jesus. The complicity of the Jews in the murder of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is evident by verses such as the following, where we see them plotting against Jesus:

"Then assembled together the CHIEF PRIESTS, AND THE SCRIBES, and the ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might TAKE JESUS BY SUBTILTY, AND KILL HIM. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people."

Matthew 26:3-5, KJV

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES SOUGHT HOW THEY MIGHT KILL HIM; for they feared the people."

Luke 22:1-2, KJV

"And therefore did the JEWS PERSECUTE JESUS, AND SOUGHT TO SLAY HIM, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

John 5:16-18, KJV

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the JEWS SOUGHT TO KILL HIM . . . Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? WHY GO YE ABOUT TO KILL ME? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who GOETH ABOUT TO KILL THEE? . . . Then said some of them of Jerusalem, IS NOT THIS HE, WHOM THEY SEEK TO KILL?"

John 7:1, 19-20, 25, KJV

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but YE SEEK TO KILL ME, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now YE SEEK TO KILL ME, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:37-44, KJV

"Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore HE THAT DELIVERED ME UNTO THEE HATH THE GREATER SIN. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."
John 19:10-12, KJV

". . . My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be DELIVERED TO THE JEWS: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
John 18:36b, KJV

"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, WHOM YE SLEW AND HANGED ON A TREE."
Acts 5:27-30, KJV

Not only did the Jewish religious leaders murder Jesus, but as we also learn from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, and also from the Epistles, they then proceeded to persecute and kill the Apostles and Disciples as well. Furthermore, as I explain in other articles, we know that the Jewish Elders sent spies to infiltrate and divide the First Century Church, and also falsified and distributed many documents, in order to try to sow doctrinal confusion amongst the brethren. It's for this reason that the Apostles issued so many warnings regarding false doctrines, as we saw earlier.

The third main reason why the original manuscripts no longer exist, is because Rome eventually tired of both the Jews, and the Christians, and a wave of persecution began against both. In the case of Jewish rebellion, Rome's solution was rather brutal, direct and swift; and that was the total destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 AD. However, in the case of the Christians, Roman persecution against them didn't reach its height until the opening years of the Fourth Century, during the reign of Emperor Diocletian.

In his Fourth Century work entitled "Historia Ecclesiae" in Greek, or "Church History" in English, which chronicles the development of the early Christian Church from the time of Jesus Christ and the First Apostles in the First Century, up until his own time, in books seven and eight, Eusebius makes mention of the terrible destruction of Christian literature which was occurring at the time. In Book Eight of this ten-book work, he writes the following:

----- Begin Quote -----

"I saw with mine own eyes the houses of prayer thrown down and razed to their foundations, and the inspired and sacred Scriptures consigned to the fire in the open market place"
H.E. viii 2

----- End Quote -----

This destruction of the holy manuscripts must have occurred throughout the Roman Empire, in an attempt to wipe out the Christian faith. In that same work, Eusebius also points to the utter destruction of Jerusalem by Roman general, Titus, who was the son of the then reigning emperor, Vespasian, as being God's judgment against the Jews, due to their hand in killing Jesus. He writes:

----- Begin Quote -----

". . . that from that time seditions and wars and mischievous plots followed each other in quick succession, and never ceased in the city and in all Judea until finally the siege of Vespasian overwhelmed them. Thus the divine vengeance overtook the Jews for the crimes which they dared to commit against Christ."

----- End Quote -----

In light of the fact that so many original texts, as written by the Apostles, or at least copies of those manuscripts were destroyed by Diocletian, assuming that the original texts had actually perished long before that time, you may be wondering how it is that we even possess our English Bible today. Where did it originate, and who is responsible for its compilation? In partial response to this important question, in the 1880 Variorum Bible, noted British Bible scholar, and also Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, William Barclay Swete, likewise mentions in the Bible helps section, entitled "Aids To The Student", that Emperor Diocletian was behind the vast destruction of religious texts at that time. He also explains that it was a result of some of those texts nevertheless surviving, as well as through other means, that we have been blessed with our Bible today. Professor Swete wrote in part:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Diocletian in 303 AD ordered all the sacred books to be burnt . . . but enough survived to transmit the text."

"The text of the New Testament rest upon the combined testimony of the streams of documentary evidence - extant Mss. of the Greek original, ancient versions, and 'patristic' quotations, i.e. passages cited by a succession of ancient Christian writers known as 'The Fathers'."

"The autographs of the New Testament Scriptures were probably lost within a few years after they were written. No early Christian writer appeals to them as still existing . . . men could not anticipate their importance to posterity."

"So extensive are the quotations of the New Testament in the Greek and Latin Christian writers of the first five centuries that it would have been possible, in the event of all the MSS. of the Canon having perished, to recover nearly the whole of the text from this source alone . . ."

----- End Quote -----

It was probably later copies of those surviving Greek texts, which were then used by noted Dutch scholar and theologian, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, who in 1516, with the help of printer, and fellow Reformer, John Froben, published the very first non-Latin Vulgate version of the Bible.

As a matter of historical fact, the Latin Vulgate Bible was the creation of the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformers did not trust the Latin Vulgate Bible, and viewed it as being a corrupt version of the Holy Scriptures, because it was based upon several corrupt texts known as the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Alexandrinus. For example, in the Codex Vaticanus, next to the verse Hebrews 1:3, there is a marginal note, written in the Greek language, apparently by one of the scribes, which states "Fool and knave, can't you leave the old reading alone and not alter it!". There is also considerable controversy surrounding the Codex Sinaiticus and one Constantin von Tischendorf, who at the behest of the Tsar (or Czar), Alexander II of Russia, made several visits over a period of years to the Monastery of Saint Catherine, in order to search for old manuscripts. This monastery is located at the base of Mount Sinai in Egypt. One highly debated story tells of how Tischendorf found parts of the Codex Sinaiticus thrown in a trash bin, demonstrating that it was viewed as worthless garbage.

The Latin Vulgate Bible was based in large part upon the work of Fourth Century priest and apologist, Jerome, who in 382 AD was commissioned by Pope Damasus I to revise the older Latin translations. Rather than use the Septuagint -- or LXX which was a popular Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible which was made by Jews prior to the time of Jesus -- as the foundation for his translation of the Old Testament, Jerome chose to use the Masoretic Text, which is the Hebrew text of the Tanakh or Jewish Bible. It should also be noted that, as with the other codices, over the centuries, there has been some controversy surrounding the accuracy of the Septuagint. At any rate, it's also important to mention that Jerome began his work shortly after Roman Catholicism was declared by Theodosius I to be the official religion of the Roman Empire. It is no surprise then that the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible was compiled in such a way so as to support the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church; which casts even more doubt upon the true form of Matthew 28:19.

Desiderius Erasmus, on the other hand, compiled his Greek New Testament from six or seven partial New Testament manuscripts which were available to him at the time. Erasmus' translation has become known as the "Textus Receptus", or the "Received Text". It's upon this Sixteenth Century text that the beloved Authorized King James Version of the Bible is based. If you are interested in taking a more in-depth look at the history behind the Authorized King James Version of the Bible, please consider reading my two-part article entitled "History Of The Authorized King James Bible", as well as the article "The Book Of Enoch: Truth Or Heresy?".

But returning to the controversy surrounding Matthew 28:19, personally, I have to agree with Eusebius, and lean towards the belief that the verse may in fact contain spurious text for several reasons. From my own studies of the Bible during the past forty years, it is quite evident to me that Jesus even speaking in this manner, by referring to the "trinity", is totally out of sync with all of the other things that we find Him saying in the Gospels. Nowhere else does the Lord say "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". What He does say numerous times is exactly what Eusebius writes in his version of the verse; that is, "in my name". In fact, a number of years ago, I created a KJV verse list which emphasizes this exact phrase. Please consider the following:

"And whoso shall receive one such little child IN MY NAME receiveth me."

Matthew 18:5, KJV

"For where two or three are gathered together IN MY NAME, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 18:20, KJV

"But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle IN MY NAME, that can lightly speak evil of me."

Mark 9:39, KJV

"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink IN MY NAME, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

Mark 9:41, KJV

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; IN MY NAME shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;"

Mark 16:17, KJV

"And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child IN MY NAME receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

Luke 9:48, KJV

"And whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing IN MY NAME, I will do it."

John 14:13-14, KJV

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send IN MY NAME, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father IN MY NAME, he may give it you."

John 15:16, KJV

"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing IN MY NAME: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask IN MY NAME: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:"

John 16:23-26, KJV

So why would Jesus say "In my name" so many times, and then just suddenly turn around and say something so different? It just doesn't make sense, and clearly points to manipulation, and corruption, of the Scriptures by someone with an agenda. The triune phrase sticks out as something unusual, which is totally out of place, and which does not flow with the rest of Jesus' comments in the Gospels.

This is not the only reason why I embrace Eusebius' version of Matthew 28:19. Consider this question: If it is true that following His Resurrection, Jesus commanded His Apostles to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", and if the Apostles truly respected Jesus' Power, and the Authority of His word, why did they not do as He had supposedly told them to do? As Jesus clearly states in Luke 6:46:

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

Luke 6:46, KJV

In other words, just as we don't find the triune phrase being used anywhere else in the four Gospels, neither do we find it being mentioned or used one single time in the Book of Acts, or anywhere in the Epistles, or in the Apocalypse. The triune phrase is only found this one time in Matthew 28:19, and that makes it extremely suspect in my view, and points to it being spurious text. The fact of the matter is that the 1st Century Apostles, who had personally known the Lord, knew that He had explicitly told them on many occasions to do things in His Name, and to ask for things in His Name; and so that is what they did. In answer to Luke 6:46 above, they in fact did do the things that He commanded them to do. They obeyed Jesus to the letter. They were fully aware of the Power that resides in the Name of Jesus Christ, as we can clearly see by the following verses:

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:9-11, KJV

"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, KJV

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

John 20:31, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

In looking at the Book of Acts, we find many examples where the First Century Apostles always utilized the phrase "in the name of Jesus", or close derivatives thereof, and never once used the triune phrase "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". If there's any truth at all to the claim that Jesus Christ stated Mt. 28:19 as the baptismal regenerationists and the Trinitarians like to insist, would that not mean that the Apostles were in direct disobedience to the Lord's order? The only reason why they would not use this phrase, is because Jesus never once told them to use it. So I lean strongly towards the belief that the triune phrase was inserted into Matthew 28:19 long after all of the First Apostles were dead.

Please go to part seven for the continuation of this series.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

Apostles Always Preached & Healed Only In The Name Of Jesus,
Power In The Name Of Jesus, Qumran And The Dead Sea Scrolls,
Work Of Flavius Josephus, Philosopher Philo, Pliny The Elder,
Did All Of The Autographs Truly Disappear By The 4th Century?
Sinaitic Syriac, Sinaitic Palimpsest & The Missing End Page,
Professor Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare & Textual Criticism
1 John 5:7-8, The KJV And The "Comma Johanneum" Controversy,
Edward Gibbon And Sir Isaac Newton On The "Comma Johanneum",
Erasmus & Codex Montfortianus Codex Britannicus Controversy,
"Novum Testamentum" Became Basis For Tyndale And KJV Bibles,
Matthew 28:19 And 1 John 5:7-8 Supposed Support For Trinity,
Volume Of Early Manuscripts Don't Support "Comma Johanneum",
Popes Reject "Comma Johanneum", Nova Vulgata Catholic Bible,
Contradiction Between John 14:26, Acts 4:12 & Matthew 28:19,
Comparison Of Scriptures Which Discuss The Great Commission

As I concluded in part six, Jesus told His Disciples to use His Name, and not the triune name, which is exactly what we see them doing in the Book of Acts. Consider these rather clear, indisputable examples:

"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 ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
Acts 2:38, KJV

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."
Acts 3:6, KJV

"And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."
Acts 4:18, KJV

"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."
Acts 5:40, KJV

"(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)"
Acts 8:16, KJV

"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus . . . And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him."
Acts 9:27, 29, KJV

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
Acts 10:48, KJV

"And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

Acts 16:18, KJV

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Acts 19:5, KJV

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Acts 22:16, KJV

There is another strong reason, which is directly related to the ancient manuscripts, which should cause anyone who has an honest heart, a sincere desire, and a true hunger for knowing Scriptural truth, to doubt the authenticity of Matthew 28:19, as we commonly read it today; and that is the following. As I noted earlier several times, according to my online research, prior to the Fourth Century, when the Roman Catholic Church began its rise to power and worldly affluence, there are no known original manuscripts of the Gospels, or autographs as they are called, as written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I offered several reasons why this is so; namely, the natural process of decay due to time, Jewish persecution, and Roman persecution. Every online source I examined offered one or more of these reasons for the absence of the autographs, as written by the original First Century followers of Christ.

What troubles me about this assumption, is the fact that even today, ancient manuscripts are still being found, which date back to the First Century, or even earlier. Undoubtedly, one of the most well-known examples is the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls, as you may already know, were discovered between 1947 and 1956 in eleven caves that are located near the ruins of the ancient settlement of Khirbet Qumran, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. These famous Scrolls consist of about nine hundred ancient documents, including some texts from the Hebrew Bible -- the Tanakh -- or the Old Testament. The Scrolls do not contain any books from the New Testament. The Scrolls are written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic -- which was Jesus' language -- and Greek. Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls are written on parchment, while some are also on papyrus. But what I personally find most intriguing about the Dead Sea Scrolls story, is that they've been dated from about 150 BC to 70 AD. That makes them over 2,000 years old.

A few other examples of manuscripts dating back to that time period include the writings of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus -- such as his "The Jewish War" and "Antiquities Of The Jews" -- the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo, and the writings of Roman knight, (Equestrian), military man, geographer and explorer, Pliny the Elder, who was a friend of Emperor Vespasian, at the time that Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD. Pliny the Elder also witnessed the violent eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which resulted in the utter destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Historical documents state that it was a result of breathing in the toxic fumes from Vesuvius that Pliny the Elder died. His most famous literary work is entitled "Naturalis Historia", or "Natural History".

Can you see my point? The Dead Sea Scrolls, which are just as old as, or even older than, the Gospels of the New Testament, and other New Testament writings, still exist. Granted, they are not all in the best of shape -- some have crumbled due to

ignorance, mistreatment or age -- but enough of them survived in the caves of Qumran so that scientists have been able to use different scientific methods to carefully extract their historic contents; and it's taken them years to do so. So the huge question in my mind is how the Dead Sea Scrolls managed to survive until our current time, two thousand years later, yet all of the original manuscripts, as written by the First Century Apostles and Disciples, were destroyed within two or three hundred years, so that none existed by the time of the Fourth Century. Should we simply rely upon the common belief that the persecution of the Early Christians, first by their own Jewish brethren, and later by the Romans, was so severe, and so thorough, that all of the autographs -- the original manuscripts -- were totally destroyed, leaving us only with a few scattered copies, and second hand accounts, that are found in extant texts?

Some scholars, such as William Barclay Swete, have suggested that no one at that time realized the value of the original manuscripts of the Apostles, which contributed to their quick destruction and disappearance by the Fourth Century. I have some doubts about this. Surely the First Century Christians understood the importance of the original Gospels, as well as the Epistles, as penned by their original authors, and would have gone to great lengths in order to preserve them for the sake of future generations just as the Essenes so wisely did. Furthermore, we must remember that we are not just talking about one copy of each Gospel and each Epistle. It seems only natural that many copies of the Apostolic writings would have been made to distribute to the different churches throughout Israel, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. If this is the case, one would suppose that at least some of these original copies, if not the original texts themselves, that is, the autographs, would have still survived in some places up until the Fourth Century; yet historians and scholars say that this is not so.

I simply find this strange. While some people may accuse me of being a conspiracy theorist, I can't help but wonder if there is more to this story than we are being told. In fact, it fascinates me to even consider the possibility that some of the First Century autographs may still exist, locked away and long hidden in the vaults of some church, institution, or private individual. Might the Roman Catholic Church know, or perhaps the Jews, or someone else? If there is any truth to this possibility, the obvious question is why they would do this. Well, consider this. If those ancient documents contain information which they don't want us to know, or information which contradicts and exposes the falsehood of doctrines that are currently being taught, wouldn't it be smart to keep them under wraps?

Before you simply dismiss this possibility, allow me to share with you an important piece of information that will help you to better understand why I have gone to such great lengths to share with you all of this information regarding the ancient texts, as they relate to the development of the Bible. In one of the oldest extant (or existing) Biblical texts of the New Testament, that is, the Codex Sinaitic Syriac, (also known as the Sinaitic Palimpsest), which contains a Syriac translation of the four Gospels that predates the Peshitta, (the standard Syriac translation of the Bible), the last page of the Gospel of Matthew is missing. This codex was also discovered at the aforementioned Monastery of Saint Catherine in Egypt, and has been dated to the late Second Century. Why is this document missing the last page of the Gospel of Matthew, where the

controversial verse, Matthew 28:19, should be found?

To further add to the mystery regarding the last page missing from the Sinaitic Syriac version of the Gospel of Matthew, it is worth mentioning that Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, who was Professor of Theology at the University of Oxford during the early 20th century, and who in 1909 and 1910 authored two important books regarding textual criticism entitled "History Of New Testament Criticism: A Study Of Christian Origins" and "Myth, Magic, And Morals" which was later republished as "The Origins of Christianity", likewise mentions that the last page of the Gospel of Matthew is also missing from the oldest Latin texts. Why is this same page, which contains Matthew 28:19, also mysteriously missing from the oldest Latin texts?

Is it merely a coincidence that the same page is missing from both of these texts, a page which can prove or disprove, the reliability of the baptismal triune phrase?

In addition, in the aforementioned books, Professor Conybeare concurs with Eusebius Pamphilius, and clearly states that the baptismal and triune phrase that is found in Matthew 28:19 is spurious text. Taking the debate even a step further, in the fifth chapter of "History Of New Testament Criticism", which is entitled "Textual Criticism", Professor Conybeare offers a lengthy exposé in which he agrees with many Biblical scholars going back as far as the Fourth Century, who regarded both Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 5:7-8 -- the other verses which some say supposedly support the "Holy Trinity" -- as spurious text. Conybeare concurs that parts of these verses were added later by the baptismal regenerationists of the Catholic Church, in order to support the false doctrines of water baptism and the "Holy Trinity".

Concerning 1 John 5:7-8, the inserted spurious text is known in scholarly circles as the "Comma Johanneum". This "comma", or clause, consists of the words "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth". In other words, at the current time, the Authorized King James Version of the Bible states as follows:

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

1 John 5:7-8, KJV

However, based on a great deal of early manuscript evidence, it is believed that in its original form, 1 John 5:7-8 really states as follows:

"For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

I find it troublesome that the "Comma Johanneum" is included in the 1611 edition of the King James Version of the Bible. In his "History Of New Testament Criticism", Conybeare states the following, which not only explains how much doubt existed regarding the reliability of the "Comma Johanneum" in earlier centuries, but also in what manner it came to be included in the King James Bible:

----- Begin Quote -----

In the first printed edition of the New Testament, called

the Complutensian, prepared at Alcala in Spain in 1514 by Cardinal Francis Ximenes, the words here italicised were included, having been translated from the Latin text into Greek; for the Greek MSS. used did not contain them. They are only found in two Greek MSS., one of the fifteenth the other of the sixteenth century. About 400 other Greek codices from the fourth century down to the fourteenth ignore them. All MSS. of the old Latin version anterior to Jerome lack them, and in the oldest copies even, of Jerome's recension of the Latin text, called the Vulgate, they are conspicuously absent.

Erasmus's first edition of the Greek Testament, in 1516, omitted the verse, as also did the second; but in 1522 he issued a third edition containing it. Robert Stephens also inserted it in his edition of 1546, which formed the basis of all subsequent editions of the Greek Testament until recently, and is known as the Received Text, or Textus Receptus.

In 1670 Sandius, an Arian, assailed the verse, as also did Simon, a learned Roman Catholic priest, in his *Histoire Critique du Nouveau Testament*, part i., chap. 18, about twenty years later. He was followed by Sir Isaac Newton, who, in a learned dissertation published after his death in 1754, strengthened Simon's arguments.

Gibbon, in his thirty-seventh chapter, sarcastically wrote:

The memorable text which asserts the unity of the Three who bear witness in Heaven is condemned by the universal silence of the orthodox fathers, ancient versions, and authentic manuscripts. After the invention of printing, the editors of the Greek Testament yielded to their own prejudices, or those of the times; and the pious fraud, which was embraced with equal zeal at Rome and Geneva, has been infinitely multiplied in every country and every language of modern Europe.

----- End Quote -----

In the previous quotes, Professor Conybeare is referring to noted British historian Edward Gibbon, who during the latter part of the eighteenth century authored a multi-volume work entitled "The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". In the six-volume work, Gibbon partially attributes the fall of the Roman Empire to the spread of Christianity throughout the empire.

Regarding Sir Isaac Newton, Professor Conybeare is referring to Newton's 1690 treatise entitled "An Historical Account Of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture". In this dissertation, Isaac Newton clearly reveals his personal thoughts regarding the corruption that is found in 1 John 5:7-8, when he states:

----- Begin Quote -----

"In all the vehement universal and lasting controversy about the Trinity in Jerome's time and both before and long enough after it, this text of the 'three in heaven' was never once thought of. It is now in everybody's mouth and accounted the main text for the business and would assuredly have been so too with them, had it been in their books."

----- End Quote -----

From the information I have gathered, the primary reason why

Desiderius Erasmus chose to omit the "Comma Johanneum" text from the first two editions of his Greek "Novum Testamentum", is simply because the phrase wasn't found in any of the Greek manuscripts which were at his disposal. However, according to some sources, which I personally do not trust, by the time he was ready to release the third edition of his New Testament, Erasmus had been presented with two codices which include the controversial text, known as the "Comma Johanneum". One codex is the Codex Britannicus. The other codex, at least so claim some sources, is the Codex Montfortianus, which is now found at the Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

At first glance, it may appear as if including the spurious "Comma Johanneum" in the First Epistle of John was the right thing to do; however, before you embrace such a conclusion, allow me to share with you the remainder of this interesting story. As it turns out, the Codex Montfortianus and the Codex Britannicus are not two separate manuscripts; they are one and the same. Erasmus referred to it as Britannicus. However, later, during the Seventeenth Century, when it fell into the possession of one Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, a French priest and preacher, who, sadly, is in large part responsible for the false practice of Mariology -- the glorification and worship of Mary as "Mediatrice" and "Co-Redemptrice" -- it was assigned the new name of Codex Montfortianus, and has been known by this name ever since.

To cast further doubt upon Erasmus' decision to include the "Comma Johanneum" in the third edition of his New Testament, or "Novum Testamentum", let us consider the actual history of the controversial Codex Britannicus. Research suggests that, in reality, the Codex Britannicus may have been nothing less than an invention of the Roman Catholic Church. According to available information, it has been said that the reason why Erasmus finally chose to include the "Comma Johanneum" in the third edition of his New Testament, is because he had stated that if he could be provided with even one Greek manuscript which contained the questionable spurious text, he would add it to his New Testament. It was at this point that the Roman Catholic Church saw its opportunity to have the triune phrase inserted into our beloved Bible. No Greek manuscripts existed which contained the "Comma Johanneum", so they simply had one of their Franciscan friars, by the name of Froy, create one. According to what I have read, this friar made a copy of a Tenth Century manuscript, which didn't contain the spurious text, and then inserted the "Comma Johanneum" from a Latin manuscript, thus creating what became known as Britannicus.

Apparently, being a man of his word, and having been given this falsified "evidence", Desiderius Erasmus thus chose to include the "Comma Johanneum" in the third edition of his "Novum Testamentum". However, it should be noted that in his Annotations, Erasmus made it clear that he still doubted the authenticity of the "Comma Johanneum" text. One source also states that Erasmus never made such a promise, and that it never occurred to him that the Codex Britannicus might have been created in order to purposely deceive him. Rather, the source states that Erasmus included the "Comma Johanneum" in the third edition of his New Testament, because he did not wish to appear unorthodox, (or non-Catholic?), which might negatively affect the acceptance of his "Novum Testamentum".

Whatever the truth may be, the end result is that in spite of his personal doubts regarding the "Comma Johanneum", Erasmus nevertheless included it in his "Novum Testamentum". As we've seen, this work later became known as the Textus Receptus and

eventually formed the basis for the Tyndale Bible, as well as the Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible and more. Having said that, lacking these verses -- Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 5:7-8 -- there is absolutely no support in the Bible for the baptismal triune phrase, or for the "Holy Trinity". They are concoctions of the Roman Catholic Church, plain and simple, which have been erroneously promoted for centuries.

Let me reiterate again, that the earliest known copies of the Latin Vulgate Bible did not contain the "Comma Johanneum". In addition, early so-called "Church Fathers" such as Jerome and Clement of Alexandria, and others, did not mention it, and it is not found in important manuscripts which form the actual basis of the Roman Catholic Bible, such as the corrupt Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Vaticanus. Oddly enough, these same manuscripts do include Matthew 28:19 as we know it today.

Furthermore, it speaks volumes that out of the many thousands of manuscripts in existence which contain a Greek version of the New Testament, only eight of these contain the spurious text referred to as the "Comma Johanneum". While Trinitarian supporters like to point to these few manuscripts, in their desperate attempt to lend support to their wayward doctrine, wisdom dictates that we should give preference to the wider body of evidence against acceptance of the "Comma Johanneum".

Furthermore, the vast majority of these corrupted texts that do contain the "Comma Johanneum", date from many centuries after Jesus Christ and His Apostles walked the Earth, and wrote their manuscripts. Most of the corrupted manuscripts in fact date from the Middle Ages and forward. In short, the Roman Catholic Church has had plenty of time to corrupt the Holy Scriptures to their liking, in order to promote their many false doctrines, which only serve to enslave people to their church.

Ironically, on June 2, 1927, to the chagrin of Trinitarians, Pope Pius XI decreed that the "Comma Johanneum" was open to dispute. Furthermore, following the counsel of the Second Vatican Council, the 1979 edition of the Vulgate Bible, known as the "Nova Vulgata", doesn't include the "Comma Johanneum". The Nova Vulgata, which was republished in 1986, is currently the official Latin version of the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church, and has the full support of the Holy See. In short, the popes of Rome have in reality, and quietly, gone back to the view which was held by early "Church Fathers"; which is that the text which was inserted into 1 John 5:7-8, that is, the "Comma Johanneum", is spurious text. Now if only certain dogmatic Protestant denominations and believers would follow suit, and reject this text.

So with the ouster of the "Comma Johanneum" from the official Roman Catholic Bible, what this actually means is that aside from Matthew 28:19, which is already in serious dispute, the only support that Catholic Trinitarians have for the trinity doctrine, is the word of their church, and that isn't saying much. The time for the false Trinitarian doctrine to be done away with, has come.

So, let us return briefly to our discussion of Matthew 28:19. Thus far in this series, we have relied upon several methods of investigation in order to discover the truth regarding the validity of water baptism, the baptismal triune phrase that is found in Matthew 28:19, and the triune phrase that is also found in the First Epistle of John. We have discussed ancient

manuscripts, different Bible versions, and offered quotations from various sources, such as from the patristic writings of early Christian writers, and from modern theologians and scholars.

Furthermore, as is my regular custom in most of my articles, we have also relied upon internal evidence, that is to say, we have compared what different Scriptures say, in order to arrive at the truth. There is additional Scriptural evidence which convinces me that the version of Matthew 28:19, as was promoted by Eusebius, is really the correct one. By simply comparing the actual structure of certain verses, we can see how much Matthew 28:19, in its current form, does not fit in with all of the rest, and appears out of place. Previously, we noted the importance of the phrase "in my name"; but let's re-examine a few verses from part six one more time, because they are an excellent example of comparative, or internal, criticism, and there is something in them which you may have missed earlier. Here they are:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"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, KJV

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"

Matthew 28:19 KJV

There is something very much out of harmony in the previous three verses. Are you able to see it? If Jesus clearly told His followers that the Father would send the Holy Ghost "in my name" -- meaning Jesus' Name -- and if Peter preached in the Book of Acts "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved", meaning the Name of Jesus Christ, does it make any sense, and would it not in fact be in total contradiction to Jesus supposedly using the triune phrase at the end of Matthew chapter twenty-eight? In other words, saying that we are saved in the Name of Jesus, and we receive the Holy Spirit in the Name of Jesus, (which is what true baptism is, the baptism by fire), but suddenly turning around and saying that we must be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is very confusing, as well as quite contradictory. Only one can be correct. If you still don't understand this, please keep reading, and you will see the light in a moment.

To insist that the trinity phrase that is found at the end of Matthew 28:19 is inspired text, is really to imply that Jesus contradicted Himself. He clearly said in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit would be sent "in my name", but now He is saying "Oops . . . sorry, I goofed! The Holy Spirit will actually be sent in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." As we have already seen, and as John the Baptist clearly stated, Jesus came to baptize with fire; so even if we just accept the baptism part of Matthew 28:19, it still does not make sense, because if we apply the true meaning of that word, as revealed to us by John the Baptist, then Jesus is saying that we must receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost

in the triune name, and not just in His Name, as He had said in John 14:26. Do you understand? If not, please read this paragraph again.

As we saw earlier in this series, nowhere else do we see the triune phrase being used in the Bible; and when people were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts, it was with the Name of Jesus, and nothing more, exactly as the Lord had promised them. In short, all of the verses regarding baptism which are found in the Book of Acts are in agreement with John 14:6, because they baptized in Jesus's Name, and people received the Holy Spirit in Jesus' Name. On the other hand, none of the baptismal verses in the Book of Acts agree with what Jesus supposedly stated in Matthew 28:19, because no one was ever baptized, or received the Holy Spirit, in the triune name; that is to say, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

We find some additional internal evidence which casts doubt on the accepted wording of Matthew 28:19 by comparing the final verses which are found in several of the Gospels, as well as at the beginning of the Book of Acts, and in a few other places as well. With the following similar verses, you will again see how the current rendering of Matthew 28:19 is completely out of place:

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Mark 16:15-18, KJV

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24:46-47, KJV

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:"

John 20:21-22, KJV

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 1:8, KJV

"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:"

Romans 1:4-5, KJV

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Matthew 28:19-20, KJV

Please go to part eight for the conclusion of this series.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

Comparison of Scriptures Which Discuss The Great Commission, Professor Conybeare Rejects Triune Phrase In Matthew 28:19, Rightly Divide The Word Of Truth, Were Church Fathers Wise?, Why The Roman Catholic Church Emphasizes The Church Fathers, Trust In Authority Of Catholic Church Or "Sola Escritura"?, Be Guided By Holy Spirit, Immutability Of God's Holy Word, How To Receive The Holy Spirit - Simply Ask For It, There's Nothing To Prove & No Strings Attached, Born Through Faith, Believe By Faith, Bold Witnessing Is Proof Of Holy Spirit, Water Baptism Is Acceptable If It Serves As A Demonstration Of Our Faith And Is A Witness To Others...But, Is The Bible Truly The Inspired Inerrant Word Of God?, Theological Views Regarding Inerrancy Of The Bible, Due To Manipulation And Corruption Is The Bible Trustworthy?, God Has Preserved The Essence Of His Word Despite Corruption, Study God's Word!

Here again is the list of verses from part seven for your personal consideration. Please notice the structural and elemental similarities:

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Mark 16:15-18, KJV

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24:46-47, KJV

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:"

John 20:21-22, KJV

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 1:8, KJV

"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:"

Romans 1:4-5, KJV

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Matthew 28:19-20, KJV

As you can undoubtedly see, all of the previous verses deal with a central theme; that is, the "Great Commission"; which is Jesus' mandate to us to preach the Gospel of Salvation to all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit. With the lonely exception of the final verses from Matthew, all of the other verses have something very unique in common. Aside from the fact that they contain the "Great Commission" message, we also see that:

1. They shall perform miracles "in my name" - Mark 16:15-18
2. They shall preach "in his name" - Luke 24:46-47
3. They shall be witnesses "unto me" - Acts 1:8
4. They shall be obedient "for his name" - Romans 1:4-5
5. They shall be sent by Jesus - John 20:21-22

In every case, they shall do all of these things in His Name, or unto Him, or for His Name, or by Him, and not "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". The Apostle Paul makes it even more plain when he states in his Epistle to the Colossians:

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
Colossians 3:17, KJV

Does Paul even slightly hint at doing anything "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? Most definitely not.

So in comparing what Eusebius wrote regarding the verse; and in examining what we actually find written in the entire New Testament; and in seeing what the Lord actually said to them about the "Great Commission", and in following the actions of the First Century Apostles through the Book of Acts, and in reading what is written in the Epistles, it is difficult not to conclude that Matthew 28:19 contains spurious text which was intentionally inserted into the verse at a later date by the Trinitarian-leaning "Church Fathers", who were motivated by their desire to force their misguided doctrine regarding the necessity of water baptism for Salvation, as well as the so-called "Holy Trinity" doctrine, upon the heathen masses which they wanted to control. Returning briefly to Professor Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, his position regarding the reliability of Matthew 28:19, as it is currently printed in so many Bibles, is summed up as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

"In the course of my reading I have been able to substantiate these doubts of the authenticity of the text Matthew 28:19 by adducing patristic evidence against it, so weighty, that in future, the most conservative of divines will shrink from resting on it any dogmatic fabric at all, while the more enlightened will discard it as completely as they have its fellow-text of the three witnesses."

----- End Quote -----

In short, Professor Conybeare is stating that Matthew 28:19, in its current form with the triune phrase intact, cannot be

trusted any more than 1 John 5:7-8. That is what he means by the phrase "fellow-text of the three witnesses". As we have seen, Conybeare is by no means alone in his view concerning Matthew 28:19. Since the earliest centuries following the Ascension of our Lord and Savior, Bible-believing Christians have been rejecting the spurious triune phrase. While we've examined the opinions of a few theologians in this series who concur with Conybeare's view, if you take the time to conduct your own research, you will discover that there are many more than those whom I have mentioned here. Rather than foolishly embrace the subtle deceptions of the Roman Catholic "Church Fathers", such as Athanasius, and other Trinitarians, they have embraced the truth of the Scriptures, because God's Word is the only true Authority and Foundation of our faith, and not the misguided ramblings of Roman Catholic theologians who fail miserably to "rightly divide the word of truth", as the Apostle Paul so excellently wrote to Timothy, as we see here:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

The Book of Proverbs offers us some similar advice when it states the following:

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight."

Proverbs 11:1, KJV

"Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good."

Proverbs 20:23, KJV

So as I point out in my article "Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth", we must carefully compare and weigh the meaning of the Scriptures, in order to arrive at the truth. Not only do these Roman Catholic theologians fail to rightly divide the word of truth, but they in fact attempt to insert their own spurious text into it repeatedly, and for century after century. They invent verses, and invent doctrines, seemingly out of thin air. One minute a verse is not there, and the next minute it is, as we have seen with Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 5:7-8.

So what it really comes down to is who you will choose to believe; Jesus Christ and His First Century Apostles, or the allegedly wise "Church Fathers", the majority of whom lived centuries later, and who never really knew Jesus Christ or His First Apostles personally. It should really bother you that these people who support the belief in the necessity of water baptism in order to obtain Salvation, and who try to convince us to accept the misguided doctrine of the "Holy Trinity", are always pointing to the writings of the "Church Fathers", as if these individuals are the ultimate authority when it comes to our Christian beliefs. As I said, if their corruption of Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 5:7-8 is an example of the wisdom which these men possess, then I for one will pay them no heed, unless the doctrines they teach are in full agreement with the Scriptures. I will continue to lean on the wisdom and direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to understand the Bible, as I have done now for many years. How about you?

In case you haven't fully understood why the "Church Fathers" are so heavily promoted by the Roman Catholic Church, as well

as by their derivative churches, such as the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Anglican Communion, etc., allow me to explain it to you in a few words. As we saw earlier in this series, for a long time, centuries in fact, the Roman Catholic Church has believed that it alone has the sole power to grant Salvation. Furthermore, as I point out in the article "Have You Read The New Scriptures Yet?", it has convinced itself that Christian doctrine can only be established by the "Holy Mother Church" and the allegedly infallible pope. Furthermore, it has taught for centuries that the words and doctrines which are promoted by the "Mother Church" take precedence over what is contained in the Scriptures. Any dedicated Catholic will be forced to confess this truth if you press them on the issue.

In short, similar to the Mormons, the Holy Bible is only used to support and confirm what the Catholic Church has already decided is true. This approach is totally contrary to how we Bible-believing Christians operate. Catholics refer to this approach of deriving Christian doctrine from the Holy Bible as "sola scriptura", or Scripture only, and they're convinced that our approach is wrong. Considering the issues which we have examined in this series, one really has to wonder about their claim.

As I explained earlier, we must have an unchanging, reliable, authoritative source for establishing, as well as confirming, our Christian beliefs, and that can only be the inspired Word of God, as found in the Bible. This series has clearly shown that the word of the Roman Catholic Church has been anything but unchanging and reliable over the centuries. Their foolish untrustworthy transcribers have inserted text, changed text, removed text, and invented doctrines as they please for many centuries. History itself clearly testifies that they will do whatever is necessary in order to maintain their hold on the masses. But what does the Bible tell us about God's Word, and God's character? Consider the following:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"
Numbers 23:19, KJV

"LAMED. For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."
Psalms 119:89, KJV

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."
Ecclesiastes 3:14-15, KJV

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"
Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."
Romans 3:4, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:2, KJV

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

James 1:17, KJV

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"

2 Peter 1:19, KJV

Can there really be any doubt regarding who we should trust? Can there really be any doubt regarding which is the more sure and enduring foundation of our faith? I think not.

In this series, we've talked a lot about the baptism by fire; that is, being filled with the Holy Spirit. We have seen that the primary purpose for which Jesus gave this precious gift to His Disciples on the Day of Pentecost, was so that they would be empowered to preach the Good News of Salvation with boldness, in every nation. So what about you? If you are also a Christian, have you ever been filled with the Holy Spirit? Do you even know how to receive it? If not, it isn't nearly as difficult as you may be inclined to think. In fact, it is really quite simple. As I explain in the article, "Was Jesus Filled With The Holy Spirit From Birth?", all that we have to do in order to receive God's precious Gift of the Holy Spirit is to simply ask for it, as is made perfectly clear by these verses:

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Luke 11:13, KJV

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22, KJV

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:"

Matthew 7:7, KJV

Jesus just said "ask". He didn't say that you have to go to your favorite church and get dunked in water. He didn't say that you have to speak in tongues in order to prove that you are saved, or to prove you have received the Holy Spirit; He just said "ask". He didn't say that you have to roll on the floor, stomp your feet, shout "Hallelujah!" ten times at the top of your voice or do anything else to convince others that you are saved or filled with the Holy Spirit; all He said to do was "ask"; three times in fact.

The minute that we choose to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, and ask for the Gift of Eternal Life, the Bible says that we are born of the Spirit, by faith, right at that moment. We may not receive the full Promise until the day of our Resurrection, but nevertheless, we have the Promise, and God's Spirit dwells within us, even without a physical water baptism, from that very minute, and not at some future date. Being saved, and receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit is a simple act of faith. As Jesus said, believe that you receive and you will have it. If you need physical proof before you will believe, then you really don't have faith; for as the

Apostle Paul wrote:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Hebrews 11:6, KJV

Now, if, as some people erroneously believe, water baptism is absolutely essential in order to be saved, or to receive God's Holy Spirit, then I suppose that I must not be truly saved or filled with God's Spirit, because I have never been water baptized in the typical fashion. Yes, I recall that I was baptized in a Catholic Church many years ago as a young boy, but I have never been immersed bodily in water, as some baptismal regenerationists claim is necessary. So should I just assume that I somehow missed the train, and that all of these years that I have served the Lord have been in vain? I don't think so. As far as I know, if there is one true act which demonstrates whether or not we are really saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, I believe that it would have to be the following:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 10:9-10, KJV

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Matthew 7:20, KJV

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

Proverbs 11:30, KJV

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:16, KJV

That is what witnessing is all about; and that is what Spirit filled Christians do; and I personally have done plenty of it over the years, as I continue to do to this day via the World Wide Web.

So what about water baptism? Personally, I see nothing wrong with being baptized in water. It might even encourage certain people's faith. For some Christians, undergoing a baptism in water is their way of demonstrating their faith. That is fine too. However, when a church or denomination adamantly teaches that a person cannot be saved, and much less be filled with God's Spirit without undergoing a water baptism, then that is where I must strongly disagree; because it is corrupting our faith, and changing it from one of Grace and Faith, to one of works, and you simply cannot have it both ways. We are saved by Grace through Faith, exactly like the Old Testament Saints who were never water baptized either. They looked forward in faith to the time of Christ, just as we now look backward in faith to the time of Christ. Only faith saves us; not water baptism.

To adamantly insist on the necessity of water baptism, is to behave just like the Scribes and Pharisees of old who clung to the traditions of the Mosaic Law, instead of to the Grace

that we find through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Which do you do? Have you been liberated from the bondage of the law, or are you still a water baptizing legalist? Jesus came to set you free.

In light of all of the evidence which I have presented in this series, we are faced with a rather important question. Regardless of which version we use, is the Bible truly the inspired, inerrant Word of God? As a dedicated user of the Authorized King James Version of the Bible for forty years, I am forced to confess that while I continue to believe that the KJV Bible is inspired, I cannot in all honesty say that it is inerrant; and I dare say that this same judgment can be equally applied to all of the other versions of the Bible which are available at this current time. The history behind Matthew 28:19 and 1 John 5:7-8 alone is clear proof of this. The original First Century autographs, as authored by the First Apostles and Disciples were inspired, and perhaps even inerrant; but since that time, humanity has had almost two thousand years to alter and manipulate them; so to continue to suggest that they are without error is to purposely, and wishfully, ignore the historical facts, in my view.

Whether they were well-meaning alterations which were made in order to enhance the understanding of the readers, or errors which resulted from confusing marginal notes with the actual Biblical text, or intentional falsifications which were made in order to promote the doctrinal or political ideologies of the parties involved in the manipulation, nevertheless, the changes were made to the original autographs of the Apostles, and we must all recognize this. Of course, I am not the first person to make such an admission. There have been a number of prominent theologians and textual critics down through the years who have made the very same observations. For example, Professor Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare noted:

----- Begin Quote -----

"In the case just examined, (Matthew 28:19), it is to be noticed that not a single manuscript or ancient version has preserved to us the true reading. But that is not surprising for as Dr. C. R. Gregory, one of the greatest of our textual critics, reminds us, 'the Greek MSS of the text of the New Testament were often altered by scribes, who put into them the readings which were familiar to them,' and which they held to be the right readings."

"These facts speak for themselves. Our Greek texts, not only of the Gospels, but of the Epistles as well, have been revised and interpolate by orthodox copyists. We can trace their perversions of the text in a few cases, with the aid of patristic citations and ancient versions. But there must remain many passages which have not been so corrected, but where we cannot today expose the fraud."

"The exclusive survival of (3) in all MSS., both Greek and Latin, need not cause surprise. In the only codices which would be even likely to preserve an older reading, namely the Sinaitic Syriac and the oldest Latin MS., the pages are gone which contained the end of Matthew."

----- End Quote -----

Professor Conybeare was referring to Caspar René Gregory who was a late 19th Century/early 20th Century German-American theologian who studied at the German University of Leipzig

under German Bible scholar and textual critic, Constantin von Tischendorf, who we discussed earlier in this series. Conybeare was quoting from one of Gregory's works entitled "Canon And Text Of The New Testament", which was published in 1907.

Speaking of the excessive corruption which is to be found in the Codex Vaticanus, we also find the following quote in a 1924 edition of the Fraternal Visitor, which was a monthly magazine devoted to the defense of the faith of Jesus Christ as preached by the Apostles. This particular quotation is actually translated from German, being as it was apparently copied from the Fraternal Visitor, and printed in the German magazine "Christadelphian Monatshefte":

----- Begin Quote -----

"Codex B. (Vaticanus) would be the best of all existing MSS if it were completely preserved, less damaged, (less) corrected, more easily legible, and not altered by a later hand in more than two thousand places. Eusebius, therefore, is not without grounds for accusing the adherents of Athanasius and of the newly-arisen doctrine of the Trinity of falsifying the Bible more than once."

----- End Quote -----

In his second letter to the Bishop of London in 1917, noted British theologian, historian, and mathematician, William Whiston, whose primary fame rests upon his translations of works by Flavius Josephus, such as "Antiquities of the Jews", had this to say regarding corruption in the Biblical texts:

----- Begin Quote -----

"We certainly know of a greater number of interpolations and corruption's brought into the Scriptures . . . by Athanasius, and relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity, than in any other case whatsoever. While we have not, that I know of, any such interpolations and corruption, made in any one of them by either the Eusebians or Arians."

----- End Quote -----

A final example of how textual corruption was introduced into the Bible -- in this case, the Doxology that we read at the end of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew chapter six -- is related in the work of late 19th Century British theologian, scholar and textual critic, Dr. Charles Edward Hammond. In the fourth edition of his book entitled "Outlines Of Textual Criticism Applied To The New Testament", published in 1890, Dr. Hammond writes as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

"There are two or three insertions in the New Testament which have been supposed to have their origin in the ecclesiastical usage. The words in question, being familiarly known in a particular connection, were perhaps noted in the margin of some copy, and thence became incorporated by the next transcriber; or a transcriber's own familiarity with the words might have led to his inserting them. This is the source to which Dr. Tregelles assigns the insertion of the Doxology at the close of the Lord's Prayer in S. Matt. vi, which is wanting in most of the best authorities. Perhaps also Acts viii.37, containing the baptismal Profession of

Faith, which is entirely wanting in the best authorities,
found its way into the Latin text in this manner"

----- End Quote -----

Please note that the above quotations are only a few examples which demonstrate how our Bible has been corrupted over the course of the past two thousand years. Some of these edits to the Word of God are minor, and perhaps not even intentional; however, as we have now seen, others are considerably more serious, intentional, and in fact affect the doctrines of our faith. If you conduct your own research, you will find other examples which demonstrate how various heretical teachings have been insidiously introduced into our faith by the Roman Catholic Church, beginning no later than the Fourth Century, through purposely altering the Scriptures.

Some of you reading this, and learning this information for the very first time may be alarmed. You may even be wondering to yourself, "Well, if what you are saying is true, then what am I supposed to believe? Why should I even read the Bible?". As I explain in a few other articles, my response to you is this: I remain convinced that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Inerrant? No; but nevertheless inspired. I also hold to the belief that God is more powerful than man, and that He is more than capable of preserving the most important aspects and elements of His Word, regardless of what man has tried to do to it over the past two millennia. In other words, despite the tampering by man, whether accidental or intentional, I'm still of the opinion that what God wants us to know is still there; the primary message being, of course, Salvation by the Grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the saving Gospel, and no man has been able to extinguish the light of its fire, and never will.

So please don't let the truths I have shared with you in this series dissuade you from reading God's Holy Word. It is one of the most rewarding experiences that you will ever have in your life. It will feed you spiritually; it will inspire your heart; it will motivate you to do good; and it will fill your life with meaning and purpose. Most importantly, believing its primary message will save you, and give you a wonderful new life in the world to come. Isn't that one reason alone sufficient to motivate you to become a dedicated student of God's Word? I truly hope so.

With these words, I will bring this series to a close. I trust that it has been informative, and a blessing in your life.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>