

Heaven Only for the Baptized?

The Gospel of Christ vs. Pardon through Baptism

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I. Introduction

The Bibleⁱ states in Romans 1:16 that “the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” In Galatians 1:6-9, the apostle Paul warns of “another gospel: which is not another,” a “perver[sion of] the gospel of Christ,” and states that “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.” One who believes in, promotes, or associates with a gospel other than that taught in the Bible forfeits the glories of heaven for the eternal curse of God. One of the most dangerous perversions of the gospel of Christ is baptismal regeneration, the idea that one is born again or forgiven of sin at the time of baptism. The true gospel is that one receives forgiveness of all sin, eternal life, and a certain future in heaven the moment he, in repentance, trusts in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. This book will present a number of evidences in favor of the true gospel and refute the major passages which allegedly support baptismal regeneration. God’s Word is clear. No one who honestly studies the Biblical evidence should continue to affirm pardon through baptism.

The book is divided into sections for clear understanding and easy reference. It first states what religious groups believe in baptismal regeneration. Second, it explains the true gospel, that the reader may have a clear understanding of the contrast between it and pardon through baptism. It then expounds the legitimate purpose and nature of baptism. Following this section, the book provides detailed reasons Scripture opposes baptismal regeneration from Old Testament passages, New Testament passages, and general Biblical principles. It then carefully examines every significant text of Scripture employed to support baptismal regeneration, along with other general arguments made in favor of the doctrine and against the true gospel. Finally, it draws conclusions based on what the Word of God teaches on the subject. The book follows this logical progression for good reason, and the reader is strongly encouraged to read the work in its entirety, especially if he either believes in or has questions concerning the validity of baptismal regeneration. After having read the book through, however, a Christian, one who has already taken “the helmet of salvation” and who wishes to effectively use “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17) as he seeks to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15) can use the book’s divisions as a reference tool. The detailed table of contents should make it easy to examine of any particular passage or argument related to baptismal regeneration. Since this study of the gospel and of baptismal regeneration seeks to deal comprehensively with the pertinent Scriptural material, it necessarily includes a variety of technical details and the analysis of secondary arguments related to the doctrine. Such material is contained in the extensive endnotesⁱⁱ to the book, while primary issues essential for all readers are found in the main text. May this division, along with the rest of the user-friendly aspects of this book, assist all readers to “search the scriptures” (John 5:39) to the utmost of their ability—for they contain the key to eternal life.

II. Who Believes in Baptismal Regeneration?

Sadly, many groups that call themselves Christian believe that sin is forgiven through baptism. Roman Catholicism and Eastern Catholicism (Greek Orthodoxy, Russian Orthodoxy, etc.) believe this doctrine, as did the ancient heresy of Gnosticism.ⁱⁱⁱ Following Martin Luther,^{iv} modern Lutheranism teaches baptismal salvation. Anglicanism, Episcopalianism,^v Methodism,^{vi} Presbyterianism, and other Reformed denominations that practice infant baptism also connect baptism and the forgiveness of sin.^{vii} Essentially all who teach that infants should be baptized believe that this act has something to do with salvation. Furthermore, the denominations originating with Alexander Campbell (Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, etc.) teach that believer's baptism is necessary to obtain the remission of sins. Oneness ("Jesus only") Pentecostalism, some other Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, Mormonism, and many other cults and false religions agree. Against all these so-called Christian groups, the Bible and true churches have affirmed from the days of Christ their founder until today^{viii} that one's sins are removed, and one enters into a right standing with God, by faith in Christ before and apart from water baptism.

III. The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Before looking at the false gospel of baptismal regeneration, the true nature of the gospel of Christ should be explained. Since the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, it is rightly man's sole authority for faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16),^{ix} and the sole determiner of the nature of the gospel. Scripture teaches us that the human race was created perfect, but when the first man, Adam, disobeyed God (Genesis 3), "sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Likewise by "the offence of [Adam] many be dead," and "judgment was [upon all] by [Adam] to condemnation . . . by one man's offence death reigned by one . . . by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation . . . by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Romans 5:13-19). When the father of humanity sinned, we all sinned. Furthermore, we enter the world with a sinful nature. We can say, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Jeremiah 17:9 declares that the human "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). In fact, all people begin life "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) because of the sin of Adam and their own sinful nature, and so are "children of disobedience . . . by nature the children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:2, 3). This corruption of heart leads us to commit all kinds of sins (Mark 7:21-23), so that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Indeed, "there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no,

not one” (Romans 3:10-12). When God looks on humanity, He sees “that the wickedness of man [is] great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [is] only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5). Until someone is born again, he walks “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:2-3). Man is naturally so depraved that he will always choose evil, unless God draws him and enables him to act differently: “There is none that seeketh after God” (Romans 3:11). Jesus Christ said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . . no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father” (John 6:44, 65). Jeremiah 13:23 reads, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” In fact, until one becomes God’s child, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13), he cannot truly please God in any way, for “they that are in the flesh [are unsaved] cannot please God” (Romans 8:8, cf. John 3:6). For such “*is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Titus 1:15). All men are born as sinners, are totally depraved by nature, and consequently commit innumerable sins.

God, who is entitled the “Holy One” forty-eight times in Scripture (Isaiah 1:4, etc.), has commanded mankind to be as sinless, righteous, and holy as He is Himself: “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy” (1 Peter 1:15); “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). “Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” (Leviticus 19:2). He demands perfect conformity to His character in nature and action, and views sin, any and every failure to meet that standard, as an infinitely loathsome and detestable evil. God’s Law, as seen in the Bible, is an expression of His holy character. It pronounces a curse upon all disobedience: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Galatians 3:10). Nothing less than sinless perfection is acceptable: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). Every individual sin deserves hell, for “the wages of sin *is* death” (Romans 6:23), which includes “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8); since all have sinned, all deserve sin’s wages, and every man’s “damnation is just” (Romans 3:8-10). All who have not been saved have the “wrath of God abid[ing]” (John 3:36) on them. Although they do not yet realize the awful consequences of it, they are “condemned already” (John 3:18), with their every heartbeat in the hands of the same God whose holy and just character demands their damnation, and whose wrath could at any moment break forth on them and send them to “unquenchable fire” and “everlasting punishment” (Matthew 3:12, 25:46).

Escape from damnation, and entry into the presence of God, who is of “purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (Habakkuk 1:13), requires that man be both

absolutely sinless and perfectly righteous. Men are sinners by birth and choice, and “are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Ruined, totally depraved and utterly unable to please God, hell would appear an absolute certainty for all. However, God made a glorious provision for man’s salvation! “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God’s eternal Son, the second Person of the Triune God, equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7, Matthew 28:19), left His heavenly glory to become a Man, Jesus Christ. Thus, “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16). The Lord Jesus lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death on the cross, and rose bodily from the grave the third day. On the cross, He “once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18), and “redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13). God the Father “made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus Christ “knew no sin”; He had no sin in Adam or sin nature, for He was virgin born (Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), and throughout His life He fully obeyed the demands of the Law of God. When He died, God “made him *to be* sin for us,” for “the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). All the sins of the world were placed on Jesus Christ, who suffered and paid in full the legal penalty demanded. He endured this so that “we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Having died and shed His blood to fulfill the demands of the Law, the Son of God forgives all sins—past, present, and future—of those whom He “washe[s] . . . from [their] sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5). Also, “Christ died . . . [so that we might be] justified by his blood” (Romans 5:8-9). To be *justified* means to be *declared righteous*. God not only forgives all the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, but He judicially reckons them just. Because Christ having suffered and died as their Substitute to pay for their sins, God accounts to the redeemed the righteousness of His Son. Their sin debt is paid in full, and the Father views them as if they had no sin nature, had lived a sinless life as did Christ, and were as spotless and holy as Jesus Himself, for “Christ Jesus . . . is made unto [them] wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). They can say, “the LORD [is] our righteousness” (Jeremiah 33:16, 23:6), since they have been “made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The Lord Jesus Christ’s work on the cross is sufficient to satisfy in full the demands of the Law and to perfectly and eternally save the worst sinner who receives pardon through it.

God decreed that the redemption Christ purchased on the cross would be received by “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). One repents of his sin and places his faith in Christ for salvation at a particular moment of time; repentance and faith express two aspects of the one decision to receive Christ (John 1:12), so that to repent involves believing in Christ, and believing in Christ involves repentance. Thus, the Bible warns that “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3) and “he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16); it also states, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins

may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19), and “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36). One cannot repent, that is, turn from his sins (Ezekiel 33:11; Revelation 2:22), without forsaking the awful sin of unbelief (1 John 5:10); nor can one believe or trust in Christ to save him from sin’s penalty without wanting the Savior to free him from sin’s enslaving power (cf. Matthew 21:32). Repentance and faith are inseparable aspects of the decision to come to Christ for salvation (John 6:37) and are therefore implied in the many verses that predicate redemption upon only the one or the other; it is proper to speak of salvation by faith alone, as Scripture does abundantly, without an explicit mention of the repentant nature of saving faith. Although they are two sides of the same coin, repentance and faith do emphasize different aspects of man’s required response to Christ’s saving work.

Saving repentance is a gift of God (Acts 11:18), where a sinner, having agreed with God that he is lost, is as wicked as the Bible declares (Leviticus 26:40-41), and is headed to and worthy of hell (cf. 1 Kings 8:47, Luke 5:32, 2 Timothy 2:25), with a godly sorrow over his sins (2 Corinthians 7:9-11) turns from them (Ezekiel 14:6, Revelation 16:11) to God to submit to Him unconditionally as Lord (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10) and believes or trusts in Christ alone for salvation (Acts 3:19, 20:21). God “now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). The Lord Jesus Christ declared, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:34-35). When people turn from their sins and surrender to Christ, God changes them so that those who “repent and turn to God” will “do works meet for [i. e. befitting] repentance” (Acts 26:20) and “bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matthew 3:8). While doing good works is not part of repentance but a result of it, all who truly repent and believe in Christ will manifest their change of heart in a changed life (James 2:17).

One exercises saving faith, which is also a gift of God (Philippians 1:29), when, accepting the facts of the gospel, he trusts in Christ alone for salvation. The Lord Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). The kind of faith that brings justification is not merely intellectual knowledge of the gospel or of the Bible. Rather, to “believe on him” and be “justified by faith” includes “being fully persuaded that, what [God] had promised, he was able also to perform” (Romans 4:21-5:1), and so to “trust in the Lord” (Philippians 2:24), to “trust . . . in God” (2 Corinthians 1:9). One who has justifying faith can say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). Recognizing that he is totally unable to save or help save himself, a man is justified or declared righteous in the sight of God when he entrusts his soul to Christ alone to give him eternal salvation.

It is impossible for a man to savingly believe on Jesus Christ while thinking that his works have anything to do with obtaining the forgiveness of sin. The Bible says, “For by grace [undeserved favor] 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). If salvation is “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); grace and works are mutually exclusive in the matter of the forgiveness of a man’s sins. Anyone who believes that deeds, such as baptism, church attendance, partaking of the Lord’s supper, seeking to obey the Bible, prayer, confession of sin, or any other act has a particle to do with receiving justification before God does not believe in Jesus Christ at all; he merely has intellectual understanding of the facts of the gospel, a kind of “faith” that he shares with the devils (James 2:19) and the damned. Rather, “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5). As long as one is working for salvation, he does not believe in Christ for it, because salvation is for the one who “worketh not, but believeth on him.” Saving faith trusts that Christ is actually the Savior, and so is One who saves men without the “filthy rags” of “all our righteousnesses” (Isaiah 64:6) as blasphemous additions to the sufficiency of the death and shed blood (Revelation 7:14, 1:5) of Him who “is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him” (Hebrews 7:25). God’s people are “found in him, not having [their] own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9). Saving faith looks to the Lord Jesus and His work on the cross alone for salvation; if one truly believes that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16), he will not add conditions to salvation that God has not added. If God says “whosoever believeth in him” is certain of everlasting life, then, obviously, belief in Christ is sufficient to save. Since the Bible promises that “he that believeth on him is not condemned” (John 3:18), the very moment one trusts in Christ he “hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). The instant one believes, all of his past, present, and future sins are washed away in the blood of the Savior, and he receives the righteousness of Christ as his legal standing before God. Because the Lord Jesus paid for his sins in full when He died as his Substitute, God treats every believer as if he were as sinless and righteous as His own Son. The penalty of the Law entirely satisfied, both God’s justice and mercy demand the eternal salvation of the justified individual.^x God is “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:26), so we conclude, with the Apostle Paul, that “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).

God has stated that salvation “*is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all” believers (Romans 4:16); therefore, all who believe in Jesus are eternally secure. Once one is saved, he is always saved; no justified person can ever perish. In fact, entry into eternal glory is so certain for all who have been justified that God can refer to it in the past tense: “whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. . . . Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . [W]e are more than conquerors through

him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:30-39). The Lord Jesus said, “I give unto [my people] eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand. I and *my* Father are one” (John 10:28-30). Just as all who believe in Jesus Christ are unfailingly saved from sin’s penalty and certain of eternal glory, so the Lord always frees His people from their former bondage to sin, so that all the justified characteristically live for Him. God puts His “laws into their mind, and write[s] them in their hearts” (Hebrews 8:10). The Bible promises, “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). Those whom God “hath saved . . . not according to [their] works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given [them] in Christ Jesus before the world began” are also “called . . . with an holy calling” (2 Timothy 1:9). Good works do not justify or help justify anyone in the sight of God, nor do they keep anyone saved. God has promised eternal life to all who simply trust His Son; these He saves and keeps simply by His grace. However, good works are the natural and certain result of the new nature that God gives His people when He justifies them.

IV. The Biblical Purpose for Baptism

God commands all who have been justified by faith (Romans 5:1) to submit to the ordinance of baptism as “the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Peter 3:21). In Scripture, only believers are baptized (Acts 2:41; 8:13, 35-38; 18:8, etc.) because faith is a prerequisite to Biblical baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 41). Since infants cannot understand, much less believe the gospel (Romans 10:14), or testify to their conversion (Matthew 3:6-8), they cannot be Biblically baptized.^{xi} Furthermore, one who is baptized is “planted together in the likeness of [Christ’s] death” and “shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection” (Romans 6:5), so baptism pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior, as well as the death of the believer’s old life and his resurrection to new life in the Lord Jesus. Only immersion pictures death, burial, and resurrection;^{xii} sprinkling and pouring water on the head are not Scriptural baptism, which requires going down “into the water” (Acts 8:38) and coming up “out of the water” (Matthew 3:16).^{xiii} Baptism also publicly identifies believers with Christ^{xiv} and adds them to the membership of the church^{xv} which authorizes the ordinance (Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 27, 1:2), so only the church has Christ’s authority to baptize (Matthew 28:17-20; Mark 16:15-16, etc.).^{xvi}

V.) Scriptural Arguments Against Baptismal Regeneration

A. The Old Testament Teaches Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism

The good news of salvation through faith in Christ and His saving work is the “everlasting gospel” (Revelation 14:6). While believers in Old Testament days would not necessarily have possessed as clear an understanding of their coming Savior as those after the giving of the New Testament, salvation has always been by faith in Christ.^{xvii} The “gospel of God . . . concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” was “promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures” (Romans 1:1-3). Galatians 3:8 informs us that “the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham.” The gospel preached in the church age was preached to Israel in the wilderness, but it did not profit most of them, “not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*” (Hebrews 4:2). God swore “that they should not enter into his rest . . . because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:18-19). Likewise, to Christ “give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43, cf. Luke 24:27, Acts 3:24). Throughout the Old Testament, “no man [was] justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11, cf. Romans 1:17, Hebrews 10:38-39, all quoting Habakkuk 2:4). Even before Christ came, God promised to justify sinners simply by faith in His Son:

1.) “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.” (Psalm 2:12). “Kiss the Son” is repentance,^{xviii} and if all who trust in Him are blessed, obviously repentant faith is sufficient for God’s favor.

2.) “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed . . . For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Romans 9:33, 10:11, both quoting Isaiah 28:16). If “whosoever” believeth will not be ashamed when he stands before God, belief suffices for justification; otherwise God would have to say “only some of those who believe will not be ashamed” or “whosoever believeth will not be ashamed when he stands before Me if he also does this and that.” Isaiah 28:16 asserts justification by faith, and, contrariwise, Isaiah 7:9 (cf. 43:10) promises judgment for unbelief.

3.) Isaiah also clearly states the gospel of Christ in 52:13-53:12 of his book. This passage shows the Lord Jesus as “despised and rejected of men,” and as bearing our sins on the cross, “wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all . . . for the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many.” It shows His blood washing away the sins of Jews and Gentiles; “so shall he sprinkle [the Hebrew term used for the sprinkling of sacrificial blood before God, Leviticus 4:6, 17; 5:9] many nations.” It predicts His death and resurrection: “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied.” Obviously one who is made an “offering for sin” dies; but after this, the One foretold would “prolong *his* days” and see a variety of things, which requires a resurrection from the dead. Isaiah prophesies that Christ, God’s “righteous servant,” will also “justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” Forgiveness of sins and the imputation or reckoning of Christ’s

righteousness to believers, is as much an Old Testament doctrine as a New Testament one; Old Testament saints were not righteous before God through their works, but could look to their Savior and say “the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:6, 33:16), “Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:2). “[I]n the LORD have I righteousness and strength. . . . In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified” (Isaiah 45:24-25). In Isaiah’s presentation of the gospel in 52:13-53:12, he questions, “who hath believed our report?” (53:1), for he believed in justification by faith (cf. Isaiah 28:16, Romans 9:33, 10:11, 16).

4.) Many Old Testament statements promise spiritual salvation (which often brought physical blessings to Israel as well) to all who believe or trust in the Lord. Such promises could not have been made if the Old Testament taught justification by works, for then only some who believed would be saved. Since these promises are still in the Bible, they prove that salvation is even in our day by faith alone. Twelve representative verses follow—many more could have been added:

i.) “*As for* God, his way *is* perfect; the word of the LORD *is* tried: he *is* a buckler to all them that trust in him” (2 Sam 22:31).

ii.) “He that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain” (Isaiah 57:13). Obviously only those who are saved will enter the future 1,000 year reign of Christ (cf. Revelation 20) in view in this passage; but this is promised all who trust in the Lord.

iii.) “The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him” (Nahum 1:7).

iv.) “O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Psalm 34:8).

v.) “The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory” (Psalm 64:10).

vi.) “Every word of God *is* pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him” (Proverbs 30:5).

vii.) “Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about” (Psalm 32:10).

viii.) “O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee” (Psalm 84:12).

ix.) “They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, *which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever” (Psalm 125:1).

x.) “Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength” (Isaiah 26:3-4).

xi.) “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD *is*” (Jeremiah 17:7).

xii.) “The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate” (Psalm 34:22).

It is evident that justification by faith is the repeated promise of the Old Testament—indeed, Peter informs us in Acts 10:43 that “to [Christ] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins,” for pardon to all believers is the teaching of all the prophets from the foundation of the world. From the days of Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, through the rest of the Old Testament, whoever believed in the coming Christ received remission of his sins—and Peter set this forth as a pattern for justification by faith in New Testament times. Good works were a result of an already received

justification, not a prerequisite to forgiveness, and, obviously, no Old Testament believers were baptized. God promised to credit His Divine righteousness to all who believed in Him and provided them a perfect standing before Him through the work of Christ, not through any righteousness of their own.^{xix}

Furthermore, Old Testament examples of conversion testify to justification by faith. Hebrews 11 informs us that by “faith . . . the elders [the Old Testament people of God] obtained a good report” (Hebrews 11:1-2). They were “heir[s] of the righteousness which is by faith” (v. 7), and so “perished not with them that believed not” (v. 31). The chapter specifically mentions that Abel (v. 4), Enoch (v. 5-6), Noah (v. 7), Abraham (v. 8-10, 17-19), Isaac (v. 9, 20), Jacob (v. 9, 21), Sarah (v. 11-12), Joseph (v. 22), Moses’ parents (v. 23), Moses (v. 24-28), believing Israel in the days of the Exodus (v. 29), those fighting Jericho (v. 30),^{xx} Rahab (v. 31), Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets (v. 32-38) “obtained a good report through faith” (v. 39).^{xxi} Romans four proves that Abraham was justified by faith (v. 1-5) by quoting Genesis 15:6: “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” In both the Old and the New Testament, “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5). As Abraham was justified by faith before the Mosaic Law, so after Moses’ day “David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Romans 4:6-8, quoting Psalm 32:1-2). Since baptism is not found in the Old Testament, when Noah (Genesis 6:5, 8-9), Job (Job 13:15), Jethro (Exodus 18:1-12), Ruth (Ruth 2:12, cf. 1:14-18), Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:13), the people of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5), and all other Old Testament saints were converted, they had their sins forgiven and the righteousness of Christ imputed or reckoned to them the moment they believed, apart from baptism. Since “all Scripture [not just the New Testament] . . . is profitable for doctrine” (2 Timothy 3:16) and the Old Testament is written for “ensamples . . . [and] for our admonition” (1 Corinthians 10:11), we would expect that justification in the New Testament would similarly be by faith alone, apart from baptism.

Because the gospel, the good news about salvation through Christ, is everlasting and unchanging, the fact that justification was by faith apart from baptism (or other works) during the 4,000 years from Adam to the incarnation of Christ is a powerful argument that forgiveness is still received immediately upon believing. The gospel of the Old Testament, salvation to all who trust in God’s Son (Psalm 2:12), is the gospel of the New Testament (Galatians 3:8, Hebrews 4:2). The New Testament also explicitly argues that justification in the church age is by faith because salvation was by faith in the previous eras (Romans 4, Hebrews 11).^{xxii} How incongruous is the assertion that men were saved by faith alone for thousands of years, but now the plan of the unchanging God has been altered to salvation by baptism! Such a change would nullify the timeless promises which fill the Old Testament of salvation for all who simply trust in the Lord. It would also reckon the examples of conversion in the first three-fourths of the Bible

an irrelevant pattern—indeed, a false and dangerous one—and set aside the numerous New Testament passages which positively affirm justification by faith today based on the Old Testament model. The Old Testament proves that baptismal regeneration is a false doctrine.

B. The New Testament Teaches Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism

1.) New Testament Promises Teach Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism

Just as the Old Testament promised eternal glory to all who trust in Christ, the New Testament is filled with promises that all who believe in the Lord Jesus will be saved. Twenty sample passages, out of many more that could be referenced, from only three New Testament books (John, Acts, and Romans), are quoted below. There is no way one who is honest with these passages can conclude that one who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ is still under God's wrath, or uncertain of a future eternity in His kingdom.^{xxiii} The passages will be followed by brief commentary:

1.) “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). The moment you believe on Jesus Christ, you are born again, and become a child of God.^{xxiv} Since “as many as” believe become the sons of God, one becomes a child of God by faith alone.

2.) “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:14-18). “Whosoever” believeth is promised eternal life; God says all who believe “should not perish” and guarantees that they “have everlasting life.” He could not promise this if trust in Christ was not enough to justify and make heaven certain; God would have to say “whosoever believes, and does everything else also needed, will get everlasting life then; only some who believe get it.” The Bible also promises that “he that believeth on him is not condemned.” Since “is” represents the present tense, all who believe are immediately freed from condemnation. Baptismal regeneration teaches that they are still condemned, but these verses promise salvation by faith alone.

3.) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). Once again, one is said to get everlasting life the moment he believes. “Hath” is present tense; everlasting life is the present possession of the believer. (Consider as well that he has “everlasting” life, not temporary or conditional life. Since everlasting life lasts forever, one cannot have it for only a short time. Therefore, as soon as a sinner believes and is given it his eternity is certain; once he is saved, he is always saved.) The believer does not need to wait until he dies to find out if his good works outweigh his bad works and he can get into heaven, for the Lord Jesus

promised that all who believe immediately have everlasting life. Since the Son of God makes this guarantee, baptism cannot be essential for heaven.

4.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). Here again, the one who believes receives everlasting life as a present tense possession (“hath”), and is likewise assured that he “shall not” come into condemnation but has already passed from a state of death to a state of life. If one believer were ever condemned, then Christ’s “shall not” would be a lie. To affirm that those believers who die before they are Scripturally baptized are condemned denies the Lord’s “hath,” “shall not,” and “is passed.”

5.) “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Once again, since Christ means “shall” when He says it, all who believe are saved.

6.) “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:40). It is the Father’s will that “every one” who believes on the Son receives everlasting life and a resurrection to eternal glory. Who dares to contradict the will of the Father and remove unbaptized believers from His kingdom?

7.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). Either one has eternal life by faith alone, or the Lord Jesus Christ’s “verily, verily” is not true.

8.) “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25-26). The Lord Jesus promised that all who believe “shall” have eternal life, and “shall” never die the second death (Revelation 21:8) in the lake of fire. To affirm that unbaptized believers are lost rejects these verses.

9.) “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). John 20:31 states the reason the gospel of John was written—that men might have eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ. People therefore get eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ.

10.) “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). Were baptism essential for forgiveness of sin, the apostle Peter’s “whosoever believeth” would have been too broad. Furthermore, Peter affirmed that all the Old Testament taught forgiveness by faith in Christ. Either the witness of all the prophets to salvation is false, or baptismal regeneration is false. Not one prophet breathed a word about baptism. If forgiveness came through baptism, the verse would have to read, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever is baptized [and remains obedient enough throughout his life to not fall into condemnation again] shall receive remission of sins.”

11.) “And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39). If “all” that believe are justified, nothing subsequent to belief is required to receive justification.

12.) “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”^{xxv} (Acts 16:31). Paul’s “shalt” be saved requires that all who believe are immediately saved, without any other preconditions.

13.) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). Either the gospel is that we are saved by faith alone, or “every one” that believeth does not really mean “every one.”

14.) “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:22-28). God clearly affirms that the “righteousness of God . . . [is] upon all them that believe,” so sinners have Christ’s righteousness credited to them the instant they trust in Him. At that moment they are redeemed and God’s wrath is propitiated (appeased, placated, satisfied). This way of salvation by faith alone leaves no room for boasting, because men are justified by faith apart from works, including baptism.

15.) “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:3-5). Just like Abraham was counted righteous when he believed, so everyone who believes is counted righteous. To believe on him excludes working to be saved; one either “worketh” or “believeth,” but not both, for they are mutually exclusive. A man who seeks to do good or be baptized to obtain salvation may have intellectual knowledge about Christ, but he does not believe on Him at all. Because he does not believe what the Lord Jesus promised in His Word about salvation, he is a wicked and unbelieving rebel, regardless of his morality, sincerity, religiosity, or knowledge of Christian doctrine.

16.) “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also” (Romans 4:11). Divine righteousness was put to Abraham’s account when he believed, and it is also credited to all who believe today as well, before and apart from any religious ritual, such as circumcision or baptism.

17.) “He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for

righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 4:20-5:1). God promises that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us when we believe on His Son, and tells us that we possess peace with Him and are justified the moment we believe. Advocates of baptismal regeneration deny these truths to their eternal ruin.

18.) “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 9:33). If “whosoever believeth” will not be ashamed when he stands before God, one is saved by faith alone.

19.) “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4). If the law’s demands are fully satisfied through the forgiveness and imputed righteousness received by “every one” that believeth, people are justified by faith alone.

20.) “For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 10:11). When God says “whosoever” and “shall not,” He means exactly what He says. No believer can possibly perish.

Many more passages which demonstrate the same point could be adduced; these are only representative selections from three books of the Bible. Scripture unmistakably teaches that we are justified, and have our eternal happiness secured, the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When God employs words like “shall,” “will,” “every one,” “whosoever,” He means exactly what He says. Baptismal regeneration is, therefore, absolutely impossible.^{xxvi}

Since saving “belief” and “faith” are synonyms, many verses promise salvation at the point of “faith,” just as they do at the point of “belief.” Since twenty promises of salvation to “belief,” have already been listed, only five (of a good many) more where God promises salvation to all who place their “faith” in Him are here added. Verses from books of the Bible not already quoted from in the earlier list are employed:

1.) “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8). Many verses promise justification by faith. Not one breathes a hint that God would justify anyone by baptism.

2.) “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). Once again, faith is the instrument or means through which justification is obtained.

3.) “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26). If faith were not sufficient to make one a child of God, the verse could not say that “all” became children of God by faith; it would have to read, “some of you who had faith became the children of God when you were baptized,” or “you are all the children of God by faith, baptism, and good works.”^{xxvii}

4.) “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). The

word “grace” means “undeserved favor.” Grace and works are mutually exclusive as a basis for salvation: “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). Either one is saved by God’s unmerited, undeserved favor (grace), or one earns, merits, or deserves salvation (works). Ephesians 2:8 teaches salvation is entirely by grace, and not at all by works, as Ephesians 2:9 states. Baptism is a good work. Therefore salvation is not by baptism. Justifying faith is ceasing to work and trusting or relying solely upon Jesus Christ and His complete and finished work on the cross; God saves “him that worketh not, but believeth” (Romans 4:5). This fact explains the contrast in Ephesians 2:8-9 between faith and works. Were good deeds, such as baptism, a prerequisite to receiving forgiveness, salvation would be of ourselves, but the verses affirm it is “not of yourselves.” Were deeds involved, we would earn salvation. We certainly merit or earn damnation (“the wages of sin is death,” Romans 6:23a), but salvation is unearned. It is, Ephesians 2:8 affirms, “the gift of God” (cf. “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,” Romans 6:23b). Salvation is a gift of infinite value, purchased through the death and shed blood of God’s only begotten Son, and offered to sinners “without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1). One who attempts to earn or purchase this gift blasphemously denies that Christ’s blood is really sufficient to merit redemption. He attempts to add the “filthy rags” of “all our righteousness” (Isaiah 64:6) to the righteousness of Christ, which as a glorious and spotless robe clothes all believers (Revelation 7:14). Salvation is “not of works,” for then there would be grounds for boasting (Ephesians 2:8-9). Clearly faith is the only instrumentality for justification, while baptism and all other good works are excluded.

5.) “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9). Here attempts at righteousness by works are explicitly contrasted with the Divine righteousness imputed to believers by faith. We are counted righteous for Christ’s sake the moment we place our faith in Him.

Although one verse would suffice, God promises in multitudes of texts throughout the New Testament that immediate justification and future eternal glory in heaven is guaranteed for all who simply believe in or place their faith in Christ. Since “God . . . cannot lie” (Titus 1:2), men must take Him at His Word and trust wholly in His Son for the immediate receipt of eternal life. One who believes baptism is needed for salvation rejects the Word of God, denies the power of the Savior to really save, and perverts the gospel, falling under the dread sentence of Galatians 1:8-9: “let him be accursed.”

2.) New Testament Examples Teach Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism

In addition to the vast numbers of verses promising salvation simply to faith, the New Testament contains many examples of people saved apart from baptism. Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-6), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Simeon (Luke 2:25-31), were justified without being baptized. John the Baptist himself, of whom Christ said “among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater”^{xxviii} (Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:28),^{xxix} was justified without being baptized. Joseph, the wife of Mary mother of Christ (Matthew 1:19), was justified without

baptism, and Mary had Christ as her Savior from her sin without baptism (Luke 1:30, 47). These all were New Testament saints who were declared righteous apart from baptism prior to the time Christ began His earthly ministry.

During His three-year ministry, the Son of God saved many apart from baptism when they placed their faith in Him. Christ said to a sinful woman who, in repentance, came to Him and washed His feet with her hair, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke 7:50; cf. 37-49). The Lord said of this woman, “her sins, which are many, are forgiven” (v. 47), although she had not been baptized. The Lord said to the blind beggar Bartimaeus “thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 18:42, cf. v. 35-43, Mark 10:46-52). Although he had not been baptized, he had come in faith to Christ, crying “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me” (Luke 18:38). The Lord said to a Samaritan leper who believed in Him, “thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 17:19, cf. 17:15-18).^{xxx} He said to a woman with an issue of blood who, unlike the crowd that surrounded Him physically, came to Him spiritually in faith (cf. John 6:35, 37), “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:24-34, Luke 8:43-48). When the Lord Jesus was brought a man sick of the palsy, and He “saw their [the sick man’s and his four friends, Mark 2:4] faith” (Mark 2:5, Matthew 9:2, Luke 5:20), He said, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” The gospels relate the stories of many other unbaptized sinners the Lord Jesus saved. Christ saved a demoniac while in Gedara (Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39), a Samaritan woman while she talked with Him by a well (John 4:1-42), and a man blind from birth who came to Him after being cast out of the synagogue (John 9:38). The Lord Jesus saved a tax collector (publican) who was in the temple (Luke 18:10-14), a man named Zaccheus while he was in a sycamore tree (Luke 19:6, 9, cf. 1-10), and a centurion who had placed his faith in Christ without ever seeing Him (Matthew 8:10-13, cf. v. 5-13, Luke 7:1-10). The Son of God even saved, after His death, the Roman soldiers who crucified Him and gambled for His clothing (Luke 23:33-34, 47, Matthew 27:54).^{xxxi} When a thief who was crucified next to Christ, and who had been reviling the Savior only a little earlier (Matthew 27:44), turned to Him in repentant faith, he was promised Paradise that very day (Luke 23:40-43), although he died unbaptized.^{xxxii} All these, in the gospels, were justified by faith apart from baptism.

The rest of the New Testament also provides examples of men justified by faith before baptism. Timothy, his mother, and his grandmother were all saved by faith (2 Timothy 1:5, cf. v. 8-12, Acts 16:1). Paul was saved by faith and called to preach the gospel before his baptism (Acts 26:15-18).^{xxxiii} God saved the runaway slave Onesimus through the preaching of Paul while the apostle was in prison (Philemon 10). Unless Roman jails were equipped with Christian baptistries, Paul had not baptized him. Paul was the human instrument through which the members of the church at Corinth were born again (1 Corinthians 4:15),^{xxxiv} but he had baptized, at most, only a small fraction of their congregation (1 Corinthians 1:14-17). Consequently, the members of Corinthian church were justified apart from baptism. Baptism is not mentioned in connection with the salvation of the 144,000 Jews or the “great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations . . . before [God’s] throne, and before the Lamb,” although both groups

will be washed in Christ's blood during the coming "great tribulation" (Revelation 7:1-17). Nor is baptism mentioned in connection with the conversion of the nation of Israel at the time of Christ's return to set up His thousand year kingdom (Zechariah 12-14, Revelation 19-20). Indeed, baptism is not mentioned at all in the book of Revelation or in the extensive sections of other books in the Old and New Testament that prophesy of the future. Baptism is absent from the coming Tribulation, from the thousand-year reign of Christ, and from the eternal state. The description of conversion in the entire New Testament is inconsistent with baptismal regeneration. From before the birth of John the Baptist, through Christ's earthly ministry, and throughout the church age, salvation is uniformly by faith alone. It will continue to be by faith alone after Christ comes and sets up His thousand-year reign on earth. It will be by faith until the last sinner is saved and joins the innumerable blood-washed multitude that sing the praises of their God forever in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21-22).

In Acts 10:1-33, Cornelius the Gentile seeker for truth, and "many that were come together" (v. 27), had assembled to hear Peter, who preached to them "words, whereby [he] and all [his] house [should] be saved" (Acts 11:14). The apostle told his audience that "to [Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). Then, "while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (v. 44). All these received "the gift of the Holy Ghost" (v. 45), spoke "with tongues, and magnif[ie]d God" (v. 46). While Cornelius, his family, and his friends (v. 24) heard Peter's sermon, God gave them repentant faith in Christ. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit when they "believed on the Lord Jesus Christ . . . [and] God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:17-18). They were clearly forgiven, although they had not been baptized in water. They partook of the same work as the Jews of Acts two,^{xxxv} but that chapter makes an explicit connection between "remission of sins . . . [and] recei[pt] of the gift of the Holy Ghost" (2:38). Forgiven Jews received the Spirit in Acts two, and forgiven Gentiles received Him in Acts ten. Cornelius and his friends had repented "unto life" (11:18), for they had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ when Peter had preached to them that all the prophets had witnessed that "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (10:43). When Peter recounted their justification and the church glorified God over the salvation of these Gentiles, not a word was said about baptism (11:14-18)—were the ordinance the means of receiving salvation, Peter would have, when describing the salvation of Cornelius and his companions, left out salvation! Furthermore, it was as they heard the words of Peter's sermon, which contained no command to his audience concerning baptism, or even the vaguest hint of an association between baptism and forgiveness (10:43-48), they were saved (11:14). The conversion of Cornelius and his friends are proof that salvation comes before baptism.

Cornelius and his associates had received the gift of the Holy Spirit during the sermon when they believed,^{xxxvi} but baptism with and receipt of the Spirit, along with speaking in tongues, pertain only to the saved. One of the "spiritual gifts . . . [was] divers kinds of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:1-11), but the Spirit only gives saved people spiritual gifts. Romans 8

contrasts the unsaved and the saved. The lost are called fleshly or carnal, while the saved are called spiritual. Romans 8:8-9 read, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” The Spirit only dwells in God’s people.^{xxxvii} When the Gentiles of Acts 10 “believed . . . [they] were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise . . . the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14). Christ spoke “of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive” (John 7:38-39). The Apostle John informs us that “hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. . . . Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (1 John 3:24, 4:13). Paul tells the Galatians that men “receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:14, cf. 3:5), and “because [the saved] are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into [their] hearts” (Galatians 4:6). When one is “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5-6) at the moment of repentant faith in Christ, he becomes the “temple of the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This Spirit, whom “the world cannot receive,” now is in believers (John 14:17). The moment Cornelius and the many others with him believed, they were no longer fleshly, but spiritual. They were sealed with the Spirit, they dwelled in God, became His sons, had His Spirit in their hearts, were temples of the Holy Spirit, were separated from the world, and spoke in tongues. They received all these Christian blessings before they were baptized in water. Like a good Baptist, Peter had Cornelius and those with him immersed because they were already forgiven, not in order to save them (Acts 10:47-48). The conversion of Cornelius, his family, and his friends harmoniously coheres with the doctrine of justification by faith. Neither the gospel records nor any period of time subsequent to them provides a single example of a sinner forgiven at the point of baptism—neither the book of Acts, the epistles, or the book of Revelation and other prophetic texts support baptismal regeneration in any way.

The examples of conversion given in the preceding paragraphs are not comprehensive; others could have been included. People who believe in baptismal regeneration have not been saved the way in which Anna, Simeon, Zechariah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Joseph, Mary, the woman who washed Christ’s feet with her hair, blind Bartimaeus, the Samaritan leper, the woman with the issue of blood, the man sick of the palsy, the demoniac of Gedara, the tax collector in the temple, Zaccheus, the Samaritan woman by the well, the man blind from birth, the centurion whose servant Christ healed, the Roman soldiers who crucified Christ, the thief on the cross, Timothy, his mother, his grandmother, the apostle Paul, Onesimus, Cornelius, the many others with him that believed, or the church at Corinth were saved. People who think they are saved through baptism will not be saved the way the way the coming 144,000 Jewish witnesses, national Israel in the future, or the great future multitudes from every tribe and nation that are washed in the blood of Christ during His coming thousand year reign will be saved. They are also unable to provide a single counterexample in the New Testament of someone who was born again through baptism. New Testament examples of salvation uniformly support

justification by faith and oppose forgiveness through baptism. One who believes in baptismal regeneration must reject the overwhelming and unified testimony against the doctrine provided by the examples of conversion in the New Testament. To reject the Word of God for baptismal regeneration will bring certain eternal ruin. “Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded” (Proverbs 13:13).

C. Other Reasons to Believe in Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism

While the reasons presented in the examples above conclusively refute baptismal regeneration, a number of powerful arguments against it lie yet untouched. Even without the testimonies already advanced, the arguments that follow suffice to demolish the doctrine.

No verse in the Bible states that we will be damned if we are not baptized. Christ warned that “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3), and “He that believeth not is condemned already” (John 3:18), but the Bible never states that the unbaptized are lost. If the Bible does not say it, who dares to teach it? “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:6; cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Mark 7:7-9, 13; Revelation 22:18-19).

Different portions of the Bible emphasize various important truths that God has for His people; for example, the book of Proverbs teaches much about wisdom, the Psalms about worship, and 1 and 2 Chronicles about the history of God’s kingdom. The Apostle John tells us that that his gospel is “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). His gospel’s main purpose is to show mankind how to find life through Jesus Christ. The book is God’s “gospel tract,” as it were, showing people how to be saved. Yet the book of John never states that one must be baptized to receive salvation. This omission would be inexplicable if baptism were required for forgiveness.^{xxxviii} John does state, however, that “Jesus himself baptized not” (John 4:2). If baptism is necessary for salvation, then the Son of God, the Savior of the world, never personally saved anybody. John’s gospel is also filled with statements promising eternal life to all who simply believe, such as “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). John employs the Greek verb “believe,” *pisteuo*, one hundred times in his gospel. Indeed, even the book’s statement of purpose, John 20:31, twice refers to “believing,” and promises “life through his name” to those who believe! The theme and content of John’s gospel prove baptismal regeneration false.

Christ’s High Priestly office (Hebrews 6:20) for all believers refutes baptismal regeneration. Part of Christ’s priestly position is making “intercession for us [who believe]” (Romans 8:34), and His prayers are, of course, always answered (John 11:22, 41-42). John chapter seventeen presents an example of this intercession of Christ to the Father (cf. Luke 22:32). He stated that His prayer in this chapter is on behalf of “the men which thou [the Father]

gavest me [the Son] out of the world . . . [who] have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me” (v. 6-9). He prays for all believers living at the time and for “them also which shall believe on me through their word” (v. 20). His intercession is for all who ever come to faith in Him. His prayer reveals that the Father gave the Son this elect company, all believers, from the foundation of the world (v. 2, 5-6, 9-10, 12, 24). The Son gets glory from them (v. 10) and indwells them (v. 26). Christ prays, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me . . . those that thou gavest me I have kept . . . keep them from the evil . . . the glory which thou gavest me I have given them . . . thou . . . hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (v. 11, 12, 15, 22-24). The Son of God prays that all who have ever believed would be kept by the Father, be with Him in heaven, and see His glory. Indeed, these elect ones are loved of the Father “even as” the Son is loved (v. 23) and are so certain of eternal glory that Christ can refer to their receipt of it in the past tense (v. 22). If one believer ever perished, many impossible horrors would follow: the eternal love-gift of the Father to the Son would be incomplete, the glory promised the elect would be a lie, God’s infinite love for them would be ineffectual, Christ’s glory in them would be denied, both Father and the Son would fail to keep them from evil, Christ’s prayer and passionate desire for their entry into heaven would be confounded, and people would be in hell with Christ indwelling them. Since it is clear that all who have believed in Christ do not get baptized, baptismal regeneration requires all these blasphemies. The notion, held by essentially all baptismal salvation groups, that one who has truly believed in Christ can fall away from a saved state and finally perish, also requires the rejection of the prayers of the Son of God.^{xxxix} Baptismal regeneration nullifies Christ’s high priestly office, and both the Father and Son’s purposes, nature, power, and glory; it is idolatry. Thank God, in reality Christ “is able to save [all] to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). This brings exceeding great comfort to His people, since the Lord Jesus uttered John 17 “in the world, that they might have [His] joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:10).

In Acts 26, before King Agrippa and his associates, Paul testified of his salvation on the road to Damascus and his commission from Christ to go preach the gospel. Verses 15-23 read:

15 And I [Paul] said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the

temple, and went about to kill *me*. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

The risen Lord sent Paul to the Gentiles (v. 17) that they might have their eyes opened, be turned from darkness and the power of Satan to light and the power of God, and receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them “which are sanctified by faith that is in [Jesus]” (v. 18). Christ’s commission said nothing about baptism; He indicated that the Gentiles would be saved “by faith that is in me.” Indeed, Paul explicitly stated that “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17). Men are, therefore, turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, apart from baptism. In Paul’s description of his preaching of salvation (Acts 26:18-19), he indicated that he called men to repentance (v. 20) but said nothing about baptism—an incredible omission were it the indispensable act that transferred one from a lost to a saved estate. When Paul was specifically asked, “What must I do to be saved?” (16:30), he replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (16:31). Paul preached that all who believe were absolutely certain of salvation (“shalt be saved”) in heaven, eliminating baptism as a prerequisite. In the record of his sermon in Acts 13:16-41, he never commanded his audience to be baptized, but told them that through Christ “all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (v. 39). Since all who believe are justified, but not all who believe are baptized, Paul taught them justification by faith apart from baptism. Those that heard his sermon and remained lost were those who would “in no wise believe” (v. 41), while “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (v. 48). Notice that Paul’s testimony in Acts 26 led king Agrippa to say, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (v. 28). Agrippa could have become a Christian^{xi} “by faith that is in [Christ]” (v. 18) even while he stood to judge the apostle Paul, and that without a mention of baptism anywhere in Paul’s speech to him, anywhere else in Acts 26, or a baptistery within the place of judgment. Christ’s commission to Paul, as recorded in Acts 26 and elsewhere in Acts, disproves baptismal regeneration.

The book of Galatians provides further evidence that Paul’s gospel did not include baptism. Paul testifies to the church at Galatia that “the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ . . . when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood” (Galatians 1:11-12, 15-16). Paul informs the Galatians that he received the gospel directly from Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:12-18; 9:1-6; 22:5-10), apart from the interposition of any man. On that road, the Lord Jesus said nothing about baptism; Paul only heard of the ordinance several days later from a man, Ananias (22:16). Therefore baptism is not part of the Pauline gospel. Furthermore, Paul told the Galatians, “God . . . called^{xli} *me* by his grace, [and] reveal[ed] his Son in me” on the Damascus road. The Apostle was consequently saved at that time when he heard the gospel from Christ, before Ananias

baptized him. A comparison of the passages in Acts detailing Paul's conversion with Galatians chapter one makes it clear that Paul was born again on the road to Damascus before he was baptized when Christ, without mentioning baptism, revealed the gospel to him. Baptismal regeneration is not Paul's gospel—or Christ's.

In addition to Acts and Galatians, 1 Corinthians excludes baptism from Paul's gospel. The apostle defines the message of salvation in 1 Corinthians 15:

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.^{xlii} 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;^{xliii} 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

“[T]he gospel . . . [is that] by which also ye are saved” (v. 1-2), and those who “received” it “believed” (v. 2). It was “preach[ed], and . . . believed” (v. 11) in “faith” (v. 14, 17). While faith is mentioned, Paul defines the gospel without any reference to baptism; it is, therefore, not part of the gospel, and is not a prerequisite to justification. Paul confirms in 1 Corinthians 1:17 what he taught by omission in 1 Corinthians fifteen, stating, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (cf. Acts 26, Galatians 1:11-16). He specifically contrasts the gospel, which saves from sin (15:2, cf. 4:15), and baptism, which does not. Paul also thanks God that he did not baptize people (1:14) and does not remember if he baptized others (1:16). How strange these assertions would be were baptism essential to obtain forgiveness!^{xliv} Furthermore, Paul tells the church that “though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten^{xlv} you through the gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:15). Paul was the one through whom the church had been born again—but he had baptized only a tiny fraction of the membership (1:14-17). In 1 Corinthians, Paul states that the gospel saves (15:2, 4:15). He also excludes baptism from the gospel (15:1-4; 1:17) and informs the members of the Corinthian church that he was the means through which they had been born again, although he had not baptized them (4:15, 1:14-17). Furthermore, Paul affirms that on the road to Damascus, when he saw the risen Christ, he was “born”^{xlvi} again (1 Corinthians 15:8), although yet unimmersed. Paul's statements about baptism and the gospel in 1 Corinthians definitively disprove baptismal regeneration.

The Lord Jesus Christ was baptized to “fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Baptism is a work of righteousness, a good deed, something believers do to honor God.^{xlvii} However, the fact that it is a good work means that it cannot save, for the Bible tells us that we are not saved by good works, as the following ten representative passages demonstrate:

1.) “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Romans 4:3-8).

2.) “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Romans 9:16).

3.) “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).

4.) “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Galatians 2:21).

5.) “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Galatians 3:21-22).

6.) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9).

7.) “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).

8.) “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9).

9.) “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration,^{xlviii} and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

10.) “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his” (Hebrews 4:10).

Since salvation is not by good works, but baptism is a good work, baptism does not save. Good works are a manifestation of an already received salvation, not a prerequisite to justification (Ephesians 2:10, Titus 3:4-8).^{xlix}

Almost all baptismal regenerationist sects reject the Biblical teaching that once one is saved from sin, he is always saved. They typically affirm instead that one who is baptized is only forgiven for past sins (or, with some groups, only original sin). Their doctrine affirms that if a person sins after baptism, he is again lost. If he dies without being forgiven afresh, he will go to hell. The doctrine that saved people can become unsaved again fits well with baptismal regeneration. If one is originally forgiven by works, it is natural to conclude that continued forgiveness is dependent upon continued works. However, this doctrinal system leaves baptismal regenerationists with a number of severe problems.

The Bible teaches that it takes only one sin to deserve damnation. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Galatians 3:10).

Since the standard of righteousness God demands is sinless perfection (“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” Matthew 5:48), one would need to be sinlessly perfect his entire life after his past sins are cleansed in baptism to prevent the immediate loss of salvation, for only spotless holiness satisfies Jehovah’s perfect law and character. One would need to be far more righteous than the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:3-5) or the apostle Paul (Romans 7:22-25). Indeed, one would need to be infinitely greater than any of the sons of Adam who has ever lived, or ever will live (1 Kings 8:46), not to lose this “salvation” which does not actually save a man unless he completely stops sinning. Who can say he loves God perfectly—the greatest commandment of all (Matthew 22:36-38)? Perfect love would mean perfect obedience (John 14:15), but if one does not perfectly obey, he is lost, if salvation depends upon works. On the other hand, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:8, 10). Sinless perfection is required or works salvation fails to save. Since nobody is sinlessly perfect, salvation by works is impossible.

Those that affirm that salvation can be lost may assert that they will do all the works that they can, and God’s grace will make up the difference. However, if salvation is “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). Justification is either all of God’s undeserved favor, His grace, or all of works. The two cannot be combined. The notion that salvation can be lost also downgrades the holy law of God to something that sinful mankind can keep. It likewise downgrades the holy character of God to a level to which sinful mankind can conform, denying that He will allow into His presence “in no wise . . . any thing that defileth” (Revelation 21:27). How much better to have all sin—past, present, and future—utterly removed, and to possess Christ and His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21), received simply by faith (Romans 5:1), as the sole basis for one’s standing before God! God’s people, by Christ’s “one offering . . . perfected for ever” (Hebrews 10:14), are saved by the Lord Jesus’ work, not their own works. They are kept by His faithfulness, not their faithfulness. They are saved as long as their Savior is good enough, not as long as they are good enough. Therefore those who “believe on the name of the Son of God . . . may know that [they] have eternal life” (1 John 5:13), while those who trust in baptism and their own continued faithfulness demonstrate tremendous pride and presumption if they affirm any certainty of everlasting bliss. Indeed, were advocates of works salvation freed from pride and given a proper view of their wretched sinfulness and depravity, they would realize that, unless one is saved and kept saved entirely apart from personal merit, he can know assuredly, not that he will be saved, but that he will be damned.

Furthermore, the idea that one can again be lost after baptism supposedly washes away past sins¹ ignores the overwhelming testimony of Scripture that all who are ever justified are certain of heaven. (The great majority of baptismal regenerationists would also say one can be saved again after becoming unsaved by sinning. However, they do not rebaptize those that “lose

their salvation” to wash away sin the second, or third, or fourth time they are allegedly saved. Baptism, it seems, only washes sin away the first time—after that transgressions can be remitted without the ordinance.) The Bible states that “whom [God] called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:30). All who have ever been justified by faith (Romans 3:28) are certain of eternal glory. The Scriptures say, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:33-34). He has “justified” believers—forever declared them righteous on the basis of Christ’s merit. Who can say that they are not righteous? God calls them His “elect” or “chosen”—He has prepared His kingdom for them from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34). How can they fail to enter it? Christ intercedes for them from the right hand of God (cf. John 17). Can His intercession fail? God has “predestinated [them] unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself” (Ephesians 1:5). Can His predetermined purpose be frustrated? He has promised that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate [them] from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus [their] Lord” (Romans 8:38-39). How then can a believer be separated from God at “death,” or in his “life” lose his salvation, or fall from God’s forgiveness at “present,” or at a time “to come,” or be separated from God’s love by anything from the “height” of heaven above to the “depth” of hell beneath, or by any created “creature” whatsoever?^{li} Such a fall is impossible; the elect may be “confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in [them] will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). All those who are “now justified by his blood . . . shall be saved from wrath through him” (Romans 5:9). Eternal salvation is entirely based on Christ and His work, and God’s character makes the performance of all His precious promises to believers absolutely certain.

Many baptismal regenerationists insist that baptism only remits sin if administered by one of their particular denominational affiliation. Baptismal regenerationist sects that oppose infant baptism often add that one must believe their denominational doctrine when receiving the ordinance, or it does not remit sin. For example, the Church of Christ denomination teaches, with extremely limited exceptions, that one must be immersed by one of their own party, while believing that the immersion is performed in order to receive the forgiveness of sin, or one is certain of damnation. Oneness Pentecostals do not accept non-Oneness baptism. It is natural to conclude that if one must be part of a particular baptismal regenerationist denomination to be saved, and baptism enrolls one as a church member, then baptism at the hands of all others must be invalid. Otherwise false churches that are the enemies of God have the authority to perform the ordinance which the Lord commanded His church. Acceptance of these premises, however, leads baptismal regenerationist groups to the position that those who founded their denominations were themselves lost, since they did not receive baptism at the hands of their own sect. For example, Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Disciples of Christ denomination and

its splinter groups, such as the Church of Christ sect, was baptized by a Baptist. Campbell did not believe in baptismal regeneration at the time of his immersion, and he never repudiated his Baptist baptism. According to the theology of his modern denominational followers, he must be in hell.^{lii} Following the same line of reasoning, since Oneness Pentecostalism did not exist until the early twentieth century, the founders of the different Oneness groups, not having received their own form of baptism, must be damned. Furthermore, if the founders of these baptismal regenerationist groups are lost, they had no authority to baptize anyone themselves. This conclusion can only be avoided if lost men affiliated with false, Satanic churches, or with no church at all, can baptize people into a new “true” church with which they themselves are unaffiliated. If these denominational founders had no authority to baptize anyone themselves, than their second generation, those whom the founders ushered into their new sects, were not truly baptized or truly church members. Therefore, all those to whom this second generation in turn administered the rite did not have it effectually administered. Neither the denominational founders nor their disciples would be able to pass on the saving ordinance to any subsequent followers. The conclusion is inescapable that all the members of their denominations would themselves not be truly baptized, and so not truly saved.^{liii}

VI.) “Proof-texts” for Baptismal Regeneration Examined

The advocates of baptismal regeneration seek to use a handful of verses and general arguments to support their theory. In light of the overwhelming testimony of Scripture against their position and the non-contradictory nature of God and His Word, the presumption that these verses do not teach what so many others plainly deny must be very strong. The heavy burden of proof lies on the baptismal regenerationist in these passages: he must prove that his handful of verses cannot be interpreted consistently with justification by faith, while the believer who defends the true gospel need only show that the passages may reasonably bear another meaning. While the analysis below will do far more than demonstrate the mere potential of an interpretation that does not necessitate baptismal regeneration in the texts claimed to support the doctrine, it is important to remember where the burden of proof lies in these verses. The critic of water salvation does not need this handful of passages to prove his doctrine. He has an army of texts, many of which have been examined in the earlier sections of this book, that conclusively validate his position. In contrast, if the few passages baptismal regenerationists rely on fail to prove their teaching beyond any doubt, everything that can even be misconstrued to support the doctrine has evaporated. We will discover, as we carefully examine these proof-texts for baptismal regeneration, that they provide no proof for that heresy; justification by faith alone, supported by the hosts of verses examined in earlier sections of this work, will stand unshaken. The alleged proof-texts will be evaluated in the order of their canonical appearance.

1.) Mark 16:16a^{liv}

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” the first half of Mark 16:16, allegedly proves baptismal regeneration. Since this half of the verse states that one who believes and is baptized will be saved, the conclusion that one who is not baptized will be damned supposedly follows. However, this argument has major problems.

First, the truth of an affirmative does not require the truth of its converse or negative.^{lv} “He that flieth to the equator shall be warm” does not mean that those who do not leave cooler areas by jet will not be warm; they could get to the equator by car, boat, or bus, or could simply dress in enough layers and stay where they are. Similarly, Mark 16:16’s declaration that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” makes a positive affirmation about who will be saved but says nothing about who will not be saved.^{lvi} A verse that stated, “He that believeth but is not baptized shall be damned,” or simply “He that is not baptized shall be damned,” would prove baptismal regeneration—but no such verse is found anywhere in the Bible.^{lvii} In contrast, Scripture asserts not only that those who believe are justified (“He that believeth on him is not condemned,” John 3:18a.), but that those who do not believe are unforgiven (“[B]ut he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,” John 3:18b-c.). Since no verse, including Mark 16:16a, affirms that “he that is not baptized is condemned already, because he hath not been baptized in the name of the only begotten Son of God,” the baptismal regenerationist’s argument fails.

Second, considerations of the context of Mark 16:16a further devastate the baptismal regenerationist’s argument. Mark 16:16-18 reads:

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 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.

The second half of the verse, Mark 16:16b, states, “[H]e that believeth not shall be damned,” demonstrating that the imperative matter for the receipt or loss of salvation is believing, not baptism. In Mark 16:17-18, Christ continues, “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.” Verse 17, which is closely connected to verse 16 by the word “and,” also demonstrates that believing, not baptism, is the essential matter for the receipt of salvation, since Christ promised signs following “them that believe,” not “them that are baptized.” Unless one is willing to affirm that the “them that believe” of verse 17, who are casting out devils, speaking with new tongues, taking up deadly serpents, drinking poison without dying, and healing the sick, will still be lost unless they are baptized, the conclusion that belief, not baptism, is the imperative matter for salvation is contextually supported by v. 17-18. Verse twenty also mentions the Lord “working with *them* [the “them that believe” of v. 17], and confirming the word with signs following.” One cannot argue that these signs follow only baptized believers, for Acts 10:44-48 presents unbaptized believers who spoke “with new

tongues,” as mentioned in Mark 16:17.^{lviii} The Bible also connects “work[ing] miracles” and “the hearing of faith” (Galatians 3:5) elsewhere. God gave signs to demonstrate that He was with His people, in confirmation of their message; obviously, then, those believers performing them were already reconciled to Him.

Third, the overwhelming majority of baptismal regenerationists do not even accept the declaration of the first half of Mark 16:16; they do not teach that “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”^{lix} The statement promises eternal security to those who believe and are baptized (and denies nothing more or less to the unbaptized), while those who teach that baptism is the means through which past sins are forgiven almost always also stipulate that the baptized one can fall away and not be saved if he does not continue to do good works.^{lx} Thus, the baptismal regenerationist’s proof-text refutes his own doctrine.^{lxi} Mark 16:16, to truly be suitable, would need to read as follows: “He that believeth and is baptized may be saved, if he continues to be faithful enough; but he that believeth and is not baptized shall be damned—along with he that believeth and is baptized who does not continue to be faithful enough.” The next verse would need to begin, “And these signs shall follow them that believe, are baptized, and are continuing faithfully enough; they shall cast out devils, etc.” Mark 16:16a not only does not prove the doctrine of baptismal regenerationists, it actually contradicts it.

Why, then, does Christ bring baptism into Mark 16:16 at all? Surely He does not do so to contradict His repeated promises of eternal life to simple faith (John 3:16, 6:47). Since believers show their faith by their works (James 2:18), and the God-given gift of saving faith (1 Corinthians 3:5-7) is not merely intellectual knowledge but works by love (Galatians 5:6), the new nature given by God (Hebrews 8:8-12) at the point of belief (Romans 5:1) will inevitably express itself in holiness of life. Obedience to Christ’s command to be baptized is expected of the convert. Furthermore, since man cannot see the heart, only the outward actions of others (1 Samuel 16:7), while sinners are justified by faith apart from works in the sight of God (Romans 3:28), Christians should only have confidence that others have been born again when they see fruits that evidence regeneration (cf. Matthew 7:16, 20), including baptism. Nothing is more natural for one who has been given a new heart to love the Lord Jesus than to seek to keep His commandments (John 14:23), including the command to be baptized. The Bible contains numbers of passages that, in a manner comparable to Mark 16:16a, conjoin promises of justification by faith apart from works (Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:4-7) and statements about the works that are the fruits of that justification (Ephesians 2:10, Titus 3:8).

Mark 16:16a does not prove baptismal regeneration. Neither the verse, nor any other text in Scripture, states that the unbaptized will be damned. The immediate context (16:16b, 16:17-20) manifests that belief, not baptism, is the point upon which eternity rests. Those who typically affirm baptism forgives past sins do not even believe their proof-text. It guarantees salvation for those who believe and are baptized, while baptismal regenerationists almost universally affirm that baptized believers who fail to continue to do enough good works will be lost. While saving faith shows itself in obedience, a doctrine Mark 16:16 supports, the verse by

no means contradicts the overwhelming testimony of Scripture that a man is justified before God by faith alone.

2.) John 3:5^{lxii}

In John 3:5, the Lord Jesus Christ told a Pharisee named Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Baptismal regenerationists declare that the “water” refers to baptism, so one must be baptized or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. This argument simply reads into the text what is not there, while ignoring the context of the Lord’s statement.

Christ simply did not say that one must be either born the first time or be born again by “baptism.” He said “water.” Had He wished to say that one is born again by baptism, He could have done so. He did not, either in verse 5 or in the rest of His conversation with Nicodemus (3:1-21). Instead, in addition to upbraiding Nicodemus for unbelief (v. 12), not a lack of baptism, He repeatedly asserted in their conversation that all who believe, not those baptized, have eternal life: “[W]hosoever believeth in him [the Son of man] should not perish, but have eternal life. . . . [W]hosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. . . . He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (3:15-18). Since baptism is not mentioned anywhere in the Lord’s discussion with Nicodemus, one who wishes to use John 3:5 as a proof-text for regeneration through the ordinance must insert into the verse what is not present, and do so despite the contradiction such a conclusion creates with Christ’s statements a few verses later (v. 14-18).

The context of John 3:5 indicates that the “water” refers to physical birth. It is certainly natural to think of the word “born” in association with physical birth, the primary meaning of the word (Luke 1:13; Matthew 2:4). Nicodemus had just asked how one can “enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born” (John 3:4). The Lord, in His reply, concedes that physical birth, being “born of water,” is indeed necessary, but one also^{lxiii} needs to be “born of the Spirit,” a spiritual birth.^{lxiv} The “water” is the amniotic fluid of a mother’s womb which surrounds the preborn child. When a woman’s “water breaks,” childbirth has begun! “Water” is also used to represent physical birth in 1 John 5:6-8. This passage states that Christ “came by water and by blood” (v. 6), by “water” in His incarnation and physical birth, and “blood” in His bloody death upon the cross. In the Old Testament, Job 38:8 refers to ocean water “br[eaking] forth, *as if* it had issued out of the womb” (see also v. 9-11; 3:10). Water is compared to the procreative and birth process in Proverbs 5:15-18 and in the Song of Solomon 4:12-15.^{lxv} The association of “water” and childbirth is also found in ancient literature outside of the New Testament.^{lxvi} Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ meant that Nicodemus had already been born physically, but still needed to be born spiritually, when He told him about his need to be “born again” (v. 3). While Nicodemus did not yet understand the nature of the second birth^{lxvii} in his reply to Christ’s

statement, he understood well that the first birth was childbirth: “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (v. 4). Christ then repeated that one must have both physical birth (“born of water”) and spiritual birth (“born of the Spirit”) to enter the kingdom of God (v. 5). He paralleled the statement of verse 5 in verse 6: “That which is born of the flesh [the first birth, physical birth], is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit [the second birth, “born again”] is spirit” (John 3:6). Verses five and six demonstrate that being born of water is synonymous with being born of the flesh, a term for the physical birth of v. 3, 4. Both v. 5 and 6 contrast this physical/first/water/flesh birth with spiritual second birth by the power of the Holy Spirit (“born again,” v. 3/ “of the Spirit,” v. 5/ “of the Spirit,” v. 6). Verse seven continues the comparison, mentioned in v. 3, 4, 5, and 6, between physical and spiritual birth: “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). Christ affirmed that Nicodemus had indeed been born physically—that was not in dispute—he needed only the second birth, being “born again.” Then in v. 8, the Lord assumed that all had received physical birth, but “every one [out of the group that had the first birth] that is born of the Spirit” possessed a Divinely-wrought spiritual change that passed human understanding, so that men could “not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.” For six verses in a row, the contrast between the first, physical birth, and the second, spiritual birth is maintained:

Verse reference	Birth #1	Birth #2
John 3:3	born the first time	born again
John 3:4	born in mother’s womb	born the second time
John 3:5	born of water	born of the Spirit
John 3:6	born of the flesh	born of the Spirit
John 3:7	born the first time	born again
John 3:8	all people	some born of the Spirit

The contrast is also continued later in Christ’s discourse. In verse 12 “earthly things” (which pertain to the first birth) are contrasted with “heavenly things” (the second birth). Verse 13 mentions that Christ “came down from heaven” (in the incarnation, when He was born physically), and in verse 14, the Lord, in reference to this physical birth, calls Himself “the Son of man.” Being “born of water” is not baptism, but physical birth. Nor does this phrase denote the means through which one is “born again,” but the means through which one is “born” the first time. The baptismal regenerationist must ignore both the contextual significance of “born of water” as a reference to childbirth, and the number of the birth. One is not “born again” of water, but “born” of water the first time, and “born again,” not of water, but of the Spirit.

In addition to ignoring the immediately preceding and succeeding context of John 3:5, the baptismal regenerationist must disregard the only previous reference to birth in John’s gospel, John 1:9-15.^{lxviii} In this passage, the first birth, being “born of the flesh,” is mentioned for all people (“every man that cometh into the world,” v. 9, “born . . . of blood . . . of the will of the flesh . . . of the will of man,” v. 13) and also connected to the Son’s incarnation and physical birth (“He was in the world,” v. 10, “He came unto his own,” v. 11, “the Word was made flesh,”

v. 14, “He that cometh after me [was born after I was] is preferred before me: for he was before me [He existed as the preincarnate Son],” v. 15). The second birth, being “born of the Spirit,” is, unlike physical birth, a direct work of God: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13, cf. James 1:18).^{lxix} The comparison between physical and spiritual birth found in John three is also contained in John chapter one. As in John three (see v. 14-18), so in chapter one the second birth is received by faith (John 1:12). Indeed, all who believe have the “power” or right to “become” what they were not before, the children of God, and this second birth is expressly stated to not be of “the will of man” (v. 13). In contrast, baptism is certainly something which originates in the will of man. The only previous passage on the new birth in John’s gospel is consonant with the view that being “born of water . . . [is the birth] of the flesh,” physical birth, in John 3:5-6. The second birth of both John chapter one and three is a supernatural working of the Spirit of God, which involves only Divinely-given faith on our part (1:12-13, 3:14-18).

None of the numerous other references to the new birth in the New Testament connect it with baptism. Instead, they affirm that “whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1), and maintain the connection of the first birth with physical birth and the second with a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:29). The Spirit works the new birth through a response of faith to the Biblical gospel (1 Peter 1:23) apart from baptism. In fact, Paul, whom Christ sent “not to baptize, but to preach the gospel,” was the one God used to bring the members of the church at Corinth to the new birth without baptizing them (1 Corinthians 4:15; 1:14-17) and saw another convert born again in a Roman prison, which would not have contained a baptistry (Philemon 10). The Bible mentions a variety of works as evidence of the new birth (1 Peter 2:2; 1 John 2:29; 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18) but never specifies baptism as one of them, an exceedingly strange situation if it were the means through which regeneration was received. Just as John three and the rest of the gospel of John do not connect baptism and the new birth, other New Testament books do not make the connection, but associate it with Spirit-engendered faith.

John 3:5 provides no support for baptismal regeneration. The verse does not use the word “baptism,” so the rite must be read into it. The context of John three demonstrates that being “born of water” is the first birth, physical birth, which is contrasted with the second birth, not made the means to achieve it. The previous context in John one, context in John one, the rest of John’s gospel, and the rest of the New Testament, all make the first birth physical birth and the second birth a work of the Spirit apart from human potency, received by faith, not by baptism. Being “born of water” is not baptism, nor being “born again,” but simply being born.

3.) Acts 2:38

Acts 2:38 reads, “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.” This verse is the favorite proof-text for many who defend salvation by baptism. It is usually argued that Peter affirms that one must repent, and then be baptized, in order to receive (“for”) the remission of sins, after which one receives the Holy Spirit.^{lxx} The dogmatic crux on which the argument turns is the assertion that baptism is “for” the remission of sins in the sense that it is administered “in order to receive” forgiveness.^{lxxi} Careful study will demonstrate that Peter does not assert baptism is administered in order to receive forgiveness in Acts 2:38, nor is such a view of the verse consistent with the apostle’s teaching elsewhere in the book of Acts.

While the baptismal regenerationist insists that “for” in Acts 2:38 means “in order to” receive remission of sins, those who give credence to the overwhelming testimony of Scripture in general to justification by faith alone usually^{lxxii} contend that the “for” signifies “with respect to” or “on account of” remission of sins already received. A poster with a picture of a criminal affirming that he is “wanted for robbery” asserts that he is wanted “on account of” a robbery already committed, not (hopefully!) “in order to” commit another robbery. The English of Acts 2:38 is consistent with the view that Peter affirmed that the crowds at Jerusalem needed to repent, and then be baptized “on account of” the remission of sins that they received when they repented, rather than repenting, and then being baptized “in order to obtain” the remission of sins.

An examination of the Greek text underlying Acts 2:38 similarly harmonizes with justification by faith. The word translated “for” is the Greek preposition *eis*. The second most common preposition in the New Testament, it appears 1,767^{lxxiii} times. As one might expect with a word this common, *eis* has a great variety of meanings in different contexts—as does the English word “for.”^{lxxiv} The preposition *eis* can signify “on account of” or “with respect to,” as it does, for example, in Matthew 12:41 and 10:41-42 (3 times):

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas [Greek, *eis*, “on account of” the preaching of Jonah, not “in order to obtain” the preaching of Jonah]; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. (Matthew 12:41)

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet [Greek *eis*, “on account of” or “with respect to” the name (or character) of a prophet—hardly “in order to obtain” the name of a prophet] shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in [Greek *eis*, “on account of” or “with respect to”] the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in [Greek *eis*, “on account of” or “with respect to”] the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. (Matthew 10:41-42)

Among the many uses of the word *eis*, the meaning “on account of”^{lxxv} or “with respect to” is clearly found in Scripture. This sense of *eis* represents Acts 2:38 as “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ on account of the remission of sins [received at the time of repentance].” The baptismal regenerationist concludes too much when he affirms that Acts 2:38 proves his doctrine that baptism is administered “in order to obtain”^{lxxvi} forgiveness.

The verse can easily convey a meaning perfectly harmonious with justification by faith before baptism.^{lxxvii}

To determine more exactly the significance of *eis* in Acts 2:38 requires consideration of the verses where the preposition appears in connection with baptism. While the word can signify “on account of” and “with respect to” in reference to other objects, if, in verses that associate *eis* and baptism, the sense is clearly “in order to” obtain, the baptismal regenerationist argument in Acts 2:38 might carry some weight. However, no such connection is found in the sixteen verses that associate baptism and *eis* in the New Testament.^{lxxviii} The clear sense of the word in many of these verses is “on account of” or “with respect to.” Not one of the uses must signify “in order to” obtain; indeed, such an idea is impossible in a number of passages.^{lxxix} For example, John the Baptist preached, “I indeed baptize you with water unto [*eis*] 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). Here it is obvious that John baptized people “on account of” their prior repentance; he certainly did not wrestle unrepentant sinners into the water “in order to” get them to repent!^{lxxx} The affirmation that Acts 2:38 proves that baptism is “in order to” obtain the remission of sins does not take into account the use of *eis* in connection with baptism in the rest of the New Testament.

Indeed, John’s preaching of a baptism on account of (*eis*) repentance (Matthew 3:11), a baptism that is the result of repentance (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4),^{lxxxi} controls a proper understanding of Acts 2:38. John had “preached . . . the baptism of repentance [the baptism that is the result of repentance] to all the people of Israel” (Acts 13:24), and his message of baptism on account of repentance had filled “all the land of Judea . . . of Jerusalem . . . [and] all the country about Jordan . . . [so that] all men [came] to him” (Matthew 3:5; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:3; John 3:26). Peter and the other apostles had been baptized by John (Acts 1:22). When Peter preached, “[Y]e men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem . . . [r]epent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for/on account of (*eis*) the remission of sins” (Acts 2:14, 38), his Pentecostal message of baptism on account of the remission of sins was one with which both the apostle and his audience were familiar from the preaching of John the Baptist. The message of John, baptism on account of repentance (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4), was what Peter preached in Acts 2:38. Peter’s Pentecostal sermon was no more “Repent, and be baptized in order to obtain the remission of sins” than John’s message was “I indeed baptize you with water in order to get you to repent.” The context and historical setting of Acts 2:38 within the framework of the baptism of John do not merely make it possible that Peter’s message was baptism on account of the remission of sins, but clearly establish this sense of the command.

The grammatical structure of Acts 2:38 connects the receipt of the Holy Spirit (and thus the new birth “of the Spirit” (John 3:5-8) and its associated receipt of eternal life) with repentance, not baptism. The section of the verse in question could be diagrammed as follows:

Repent (2nd person plural aorist imperative)

be baptized (3rd person singular aorist imperative)

every one (nominative singular adjective)

in (*epi*) the name of Jesus Christ

for (*eis*) the remission of sins

ye shall receive (2nd person future indicative) . . . the Holy Ghost

Both the command to repent and the promised receipt of the Holy Spirit are in the second person (i. e., “Repent [ye]” and “ye shall receive”). The command to be baptized is in the third person singular, as is the adjective “every one” (*hekastos*). Peter commands the whole crowd to repent and promises those who do the gift of the Holy Ghost (cf. Acts 10:47; 15:8).^{lxxxii} The call to baptism was only for the “every one of you”^{lxxxiii} that had already repented, received the Holy Ghost, and become the children of God. The “be baptized every one of you” section of the verse is parenthetical to the command to repent and its associated promise of the Spirit. Parenthetical statements, including those parallel in structure to Acts 2:38, are found throughout Scripture.^{lxxxiv} That is, the grammar of Acts 2:38 requires the connection “Repent ye, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,” not “Be each one baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The connection in Acts 2:38 between the receipt of the Holy Spirit and repentance, rather than baptism, overthrows the assertions of baptismal regenerations on the verse.

Peter also clearly affirmed elsewhere in Acts that at the moment of repentant faith one receives the Spirit and eternal life. As taught in all the rest of the New Testament, Peter believed that one “receive[s] the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:14), not by baptism. In Acts 10:34-48, just as on the day of Pentecost (11:15, 17), eternal life, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, was received at the moment of repentant faith (11:18; 10:43-48) and before baptism. Peter explicitly stated that God “purif[ied] [the] hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9) of those given eternal life in Acts 2 and 10, when they “heard the word of the gospel, and believe[d]” (15:7, cf. v. 11), at which time they received the Holy Spirit (15:7-9). Furthermore, in the rest of the book of Acts, Peter proclaimed justification by repentant faith alone. He preached, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). He associated “repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). He commanded men to “repent . . . and . . . be forgiven” (Acts 8:22). In Acts 10:43, he preached that “through [Christ’s] name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” If Peter taught forgiveness by baptism in Acts 2:38, why did he teach justification by repentant faith, as the other apostles did (Acts 13:39; 16:31), in all the rest of Acts? Did he change his mind in Acts 10-11 and 15, and, twice, inform the very church at Jerusalem that included numerous converts from his sermon in Acts 2 that they were saved by faith, not by baptism? Did the entire Jerusalem church agree with Peter’s new teaching and “glorify God” (11:18) for it, including those that were supposedly baptized in order to receive the remission of sins on that first Pentecost? The allegation that Acts 2:38 conditions forgiveness of sins on baptism ignores the clear statements of Peter about what happened on that day, his preaching of the gospel everywhere else in the book, and the numerous affirmations of salvation by repentant faith alone by others in Acts.

Acts 2:38 does not by any means prove that one must be baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. This assertion not only exceeds the English of the verse, it ignores the variety of usage of the Greek preposition *eis* in the New Testament, the Biblical uses of *eis* associated with baptism, the grammatical structure of Acts 2:38, the commentary of Peter upon the events of Acts 2, the teachings of Peter elsewhere in Acts, and the teachings of every other preacher of the gospel in the book and in the rest of Scripture.

4.) Acts 22:16

In Acts 22:16, Ananias tells Paul, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). This statement allegedly proves that one must be baptized to receive forgiveness. However, both careful consideration of the assertion of the verse itself and study of its context demonstrate the falsity of this claim.

Since the verse associates baptism and the washing away of sins (although the verb “wash away” is actually connected to “calling on the name of the Lord,” not to “be baptized”), one must ask if baptism literally or figuratively washes sin away. If baptism literally washes sins away, then this verse would advance the cause of baptismal regeneration. However, the Bible indicates that the blood of Jesus Christ really takes sin away: “Jesus Christ . . . loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5). Surely one cannot assert that the blood figuratively takes away sin, while baptism literally takes it away! But if baptism does not literally take away sin, it must take it away representatively or figuratively (cf. Matthew 26:26).^{lxxxv} To teach that baptism figuratively takes away sin by representing what really does remove it is consistent with justification by faith alone. Baptism is a figure of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5) and a public testimony of the believer’s faith in that death and resurrection. One who at the moment of faith has had his sins literally removed by the blood of the Christ who died and rose again later represents, testifies, and symbolizes his salvation by baptism.^{lxxxvi} Indeed, the tense of the verb “wash” in Acts 22:16 supports a figurative washing. In the Greek middle voice, it points to the idea that Paul washed his sins away himself in baptism.^{lxxxvii} In contrast, Revelation 1:5, which states that “Jesus Christ . . . loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” contains the word “washed” in the active voice.^{lxxxviii} Christ really washes us from our sins in His own blood, and we consequently and representatively wash ourselves from sin in baptism. The Christian-killer Saul’s sins (cf. Acts 22:4) were literally washed away when he believed in the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus—those same sins were figuratively washed away, so that believers would no longer need to fear him (Acts 9:26), in baptism. Acts 22:16 teaches that baptism washes away sin figuratively; Christ’s blood really washes it away.

The book of Acts definitively indicates that Paul’s sins were forgiven before he was baptized as mentioned in Acts 22:16. His testimony of salvation appears three times in Acts (chapters 9, 22, 26). A comparison of these three narratives indicates that Paul was born again

and justified as he traveled on the road to Damascus several days prior to his baptism. In Acts 9, the Savior told Ananias that Paul “is a chosen vessel unto me” (v. 15), although the apostle had not yet been baptized. The Lord never reveals that any unjustified or unregenerate person is “chosen” or “elect,”^{lxxxix} one of the “vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory” (Romans 9:23). Before Paul was baptized, Christ had already commissioned him to “bear [His] name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15); such a commission is not God’s portion for one still lost and under Divine wrath.^{xc} Before Paul’s baptism, Christ had set him aside as one who would “suffer for [His] name’s sake” (9:16). Can one who is a child of the devil, as all the lost are (Ephesians 2:1-3, John 8:44), really suffer for Christ’s sake? God accepted Paul’s prayers before his baptism (Acts 9:11).^{xc} Since the prayers of the unsaved are an abomination to Him (Proverbs 15:29, 21:27, 28:9), and Paul already had access to God through the Lord Jesus, he was already justified (1 Timothy 2:5, Romans 10:12-14).^{xcii} Paul also received a prophetic vision before his baptism (Acts 9:12). After the Lord originally appeared to Ananias, He sent him to Paul, who had been blinded since he saw the Son of God’s glory on the Damascus road, to lay his hands on him, “that he might receive his sight” (v. 12). Christ did not tell Ananias to visit Paul in order that the apostle might have his sins forgiven—the Lord knew he was saved already—but that he might regain his vision. Ananias feared to go, for he did not know Paul was already converted; he called him “this man,” a contrast with Christ’s “saints” (v. 13). However, the Lord Jesus’ testimony about Paul’s participation in election and his commission to preach (v. 15-16) manifested to Ananias that Paul was no longer an enemy of the gospel but had been born again, so that when they met, Ananias’ address was not along the lines of “this man,” (v. 13), as before, but “Brother Saul”^{xciii} (v. 17). Ananias called Paul a brother in Christ^{xciv} and in so doing indicated that the former persecutor was born again before his baptism. Paul was also filled with the Holy Ghost while with Ananias before his baptism (v. 17)—indeed, since “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12:3), his Damascus road declaration, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”^{xcv} (Acts 9:6, cf. 22:10) is indicative of one already “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5, 6, 8), not an unsaved man. He also received his sight (v. 18) before his baptism. Furthermore, just as Christ did not state that Ananias was sent to baptize Paul (v. 12), Ananias did not state that his purpose of coming was baptism (v. 17), a circumstance inconsistent with baptismal regeneration. Paul’s salvation testimony in Acts 9 proves that he was already one of God’s people before his baptism.

The records of Paul’s conversion in Acts 22 and 26, along with his preaching elsewhere in Acts, evidence that he was justified before his baptism. It is mentioned, as in Acts 9, that Paul is already a Christian brother before his baptism (22:13). He is already “chosen” (v. 14), and already ordained as a witness (v. 15). The apostle calls Christians “them that believed on [Christ]” (v. 19),^{xcvi} not “them that were baptized.” Moreover, as discussed earlier,^{xcvii} Paul was saved (Galatians 1:15-16) and received the gospel directly from Christ apart from the interposition of any man (Galatians 1: 11-12, 15-16) on the road to Damascus, but the Lord never said a word to Paul about baptism—He said salvation was “by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

Paul almost persuaded Agrippa to become a Christian (26:28), although he said not a syllable about baptism in his salvation testimony (26:1-23), so one can become one without receiving the ordinance. Furthermore, while Christ sent the apostle to “open [men’s] eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in [Jesus]” (26:18), Paul tells us that “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17), so men can be turned from darkness and Satan to light and God, and have their sins forgiven, by faith in Christ, without being baptized. The gospel Paul preached in Acts was “by [Christ] all that believe are justified from all things . . . believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 13:39, 16:31). The accounts of Paul’s testimony in Acts 22 and 26, along with his preaching as recorded elsewhere in Acts, show he was forgiven before his baptism.

Acts 22:16 does not establish baptismal regeneration. The verse itself demonstrates that the “washing away” of sins in baptism mentioned is representative and figurative, not literal. The record of Paul’s salvation in Acts 9, 22, and 26, his preaching elsewhere in Acts, and supplementary information supplied in 1 Corinthians and Galatians, clearly demonstrate that Paul’s sins were forgiven on the road to Damascus before his baptism, when he placed his faith in the risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

5.) Romans 6:3-4

Baptismal regenerationists allege that Romans 6:3-4 teaches that baptism is the literal means through which one is united to Christ. They argue that spiritual blessings are said to be “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3) and that these verses say one is “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Romans 6:3). They conclude that a person is out of Christ until he is baptized, and through baptism “into” Christ he gets “in” Christ and begins receiving spiritual blessing for the first time. However, an exposition of the passage in its context demonstrates the fallacious nature of this claim. This argument for baptismal regeneration also cannot be supported by an analysis of the phrases “into Christ” and “in Christ” that are found throughout the Bible. One is “in Christ” at the moment of faith, prior to baptism.

In chapters 1-5 of the book of Romans, Paul clearly explains that the gospel, “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,” is “that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” that “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,” so that “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:16, 3:28, 4:5, 5:1). Having explained that sinners are justified by faith alone in these chapters (where the words *believe* and *faith* are found almost fifty times, and baptism is never mentioned), Paul then begins in Romans 6-8 to explain the implications of justification by faith in the life of the saved individual. He naturally mentions baptism early in this section of his discourse, since it publicly identifies the saint with the people of God, and is one of the first acts of obedience for the newly regenerate individual. Romans 9-

11 then surveys God's relationship to Israel, while chapters 12-16 discuss God's righteousness at work in the believer's life. The greater context of the book of Romans supports the conclusion that baptism, as mentioned in 6:3-4, is not the means through which one is declared just before God, for it appears in a section dealing with the Christian life, not the reconciliation of the lost. A careful examination of the passage also yields the same conclusion.

Romans 6:1-11 reads as follows:

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 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. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In verses one and two, Paul deals with the slanderous notion that the doctrines of justification by faith alone and the eternal security of the believer provide a license to sin; the enemies of the gospel had affirmed as much (Romans 3:8). He counters that one who dies to sin^{xcviii} at the time he is justified by faith (as expounded in chapters 1-5, cf. Galatians 2:19-21) and so is now "dead to sin" cannot "live any longer therein" (v. 2). A dead man is not influenced or affected by the affairs of this life; its sounds, tastes, pleasures, ambitions, and all else mean nothing to him. God gives a sinner a new heart and nature at the moment of regeneration (2 Corinthians 5:17, Hebrews 8:10-12), so that his "old man" is now "crucified" with Christ and he henceforth will "not serve sin" any longer (Romans 6:6). Paul argues that, since God breaks the dominion of sin over men when they believe, justification by faith leads to a holy life, not lawlessness. He then reminds his readers that their baptism was a symbol or "likeness" (v. 5) of their death to the old life of sin and resurrection to a new holy life in Christ at the moment when they trusted in Him. They were "baptized into [Greek *eis*, "with reference to"]^{xcix} Jesus Christ," and so were "baptized into [Greek *eis*, "with reference to"]^c his death" (v. 3). They were "buried with him"^{ci} by baptism into [Greek *eis*, "with reference to"] death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so [they] also should walk in newness of life." Since Paul taught justification by faith, not baptismal regeneration, he affirmed, as Baptists do today, that baptism is connected with a "walk in newness of life." Nothing in Romans six states that the ordinance is administered "in order that men might obtain the remission of past sins." Nor does the chapter affirm that baptism is the act that makes one dead to sin. On the contrary, it states baptism is a picture or "likeness" (v. 5) of Christ's atoning work, which is the true foundational cause of deliverance from sin's penalty (Revelation 1:5) and power (Hebrews 9:14). Indeed, baptismal regenerationists must affirm the incongruity that one buries a man in baptism in order

to kill him to sin, rather than burying one who is already dead to sin, as do true churches. Happily, very few of the advocates of forgiveness through water bury people in order to kill them, or argue in favor of such a practice, at any other time than when they attempt to prove their views from Romans 6. When baptismal regenerationists affirm that a person dies to sin when he is buried in baptism, the ordinance is no longer a true likeness of Christ's death (v. 5), for Christ died before He was buried, just as in Baptist baptism one is dead to sin before he is buried beneath the baptismal waters. Furthermore, v. 5 states that those Biblically baptized ("planted together in the likeness of his death") "shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection." Since only true believers can be baptized, and all true believers are eternally secure, this certain promise of resurrection with Christ for the Scripturally baptized fits well within the Biblical view of baptism. However, baptismal regenerationists almost always deny that those they baptize are eternally secure; thus, the "shall be" guarantee of v. 5 creates a significant problem for them. Paul's argument in v. 6-10 also gives no solace to advocates of water salvation; the passage never states that one actually dies to sin in baptism, while the use of the Greek perfect tense to state that one dead "is freed"^{cii} from sin (v. 7) buttresses the fact that those so dead will never be alive to sin again, and so are eternally secure. Finally, v. 11 commands believers to constantly "reckon . . . yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The dominion of sin having been shattered when justified by faith, the saints are to count themselves dead indeed to sin as they grow in holiness day by day. Nothing in Romans six affirms that one gains forgiveness of sin or is literally made dead to sin at the moment of baptism. On the contrary, the chapter invalidates baptismal regeneration.

Not only does the context of Romans 6:3-4 nullify the affirmations of baptismal regenerationists, but a study of the Biblical uses of *eis* + *Christon* ("into . . . Christ," Romans 6:3) and *en* + *Christo* ("in Christ") demonstrate the fallacious nature of the baptismal regenerationist assertion that one only becomes *en* or "in" Christ at the time of baptism. The word "Christ" is the object of the preposition *eis* nineteen times in the New Testament.^{ciii} Examination of these verses demonstrates that the two New Testament instances of the presence of the word "baptize" after the preposition *eis* prove nothing about how one gets *en* or "in" Christ. If baptism *eis* Christ proves one literally enters into Christ at the moment of the ordinance, then why cannot one believe *eis* Christ to get in Him, since believing *eis* Christ is found more frequently than is baptism *eis* Christ (Acts 20:21, Galatians 2:16, Colossians 2:5)? In fact, one is said to believe "into" (*pisteuo* + *eis*) the Lord Jesus Christ in 45 verses.^{civ} If baptism *eis* proves one is "in Christ" only after the ordinance, why does one not actually speak *eis* or "into" Christ (Ephesians 5:32), or even sin *eis* Christ (1 Corinthians 8:12)? Why is it that baptism *eis* proves that one is not "in (*en*) Christ" until baptized, and baptism is the means through which one becomes "in Christ," but belief *eis* Christ does not prove that one is "in Christ" at the moment of faith? Why not affirm that one is *eis* or "into" Christ whenever he speaks, or that one must actually sin *eis* or "into" Christ? Baptismal regenerationists who argue that baptism *eis* Christ proves one is unforgiven until he receives the ordinance evidence either

ignorance or dishonesty concerning the preposition *eis* as found in New Testament Greek. When it employs the preposition *eis*, Romans 6:3 simply asserts that one is baptized “with reference to” Christ.

Furthermore, the New Testament does not associate the state of being “in (*en*) Christ” with baptism. Eighty-five verses in the New Testament contain the terms “in (*en*) Christ,” but not one connects baptism with the phrase.^{cv} This is a devastating fact for one who would assert that one is *en* Christ through baptism. It is further compounded by the fact that the forty-six verses that speak of being “in the Lord” (*en Kurio*),^{cvi} the fifty-two verses that use “in Him” (*en auto*) with reference to Christ,^{cvi} the twenty-three verses where the phrase “in Me” (*en emoi*) references being “in Christ,”^{cvi} the references where “in Thee” is used of being “in Christ,”^{cix} the twelve references to being “in God” (*en Theo*),^{cx} the references to being in the Father or *en Patri*,^{cx} to being in the Son or *en Huio*,^{cxii} and to being *en* the Spirit (*en Pneumati*)^{cxiii} never state or even hint that through baptism one enters into the state of being in Christ, in God the Father, or in God the Holy Spirit. If people were to become *en* Christ through baptism, one would expect to find a great number of verses that connect the two; but never once, in the two hundred seventy-nine verses which deal with the appropriate phrases in Scripture, does such an assertion appear.

While Scripture never affirms that one is “in Christ” (*en Christo*) at the moment of baptism, it does make affirmations about the “in Christ” state that are incompatible with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Nothing can remove one who is “in Christ” from that blessed state; he is eternally secure therein (Romans 8:37-39).^{cxiv} All who are “in the Spirit” are saved (Rom 8:9), but people were so before water baptism (Acts 10:44-48). Only *en* the Spirit can one confess Jesus as Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3), but this profession must be made before baptism is Biblically possible. Indeed, the Spirit leads one to submit to baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13),^{cxv} for one has Him before immersion.^{cxvi} Furthermore, men are “in Christ by the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6), and it is “the gospel . . . by which also ye are saved” (1 Corinthians 15:1-2). Truly God’s “purpose and grace, which was given [the elect] in (*en*) Christ Jesus before the world began” is “manifest by . . . our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:9-10, note v. 12), but the gospel is defined with no mention of baptism (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) and is, in fact, even contrasted with baptism (1:17). These references alone refute the notion that one is *en* Christ by means of baptism.

Christ's high priestly prayer in John 17 demonstrates that one is “in Christ” by faith, not by baptism. The Savior asks His Father that “them . . . which shall believe on me . . . may be one in (*en*) us . . . I in (*en*) them . . . that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:20-23). Since all Christ’s prayers are answered, all who believe on Him are in the Father and the Son. Christ is also in all of them (v. 23; note also Galatians 2:20, “Christ liveth in me . . . I live by the faith of the Son of God,” and 2 Corinthians 13:5). The Lord’s intercessory prayer never mentions baptism. It indicates, rather, as do other

passages of Scripture, that one is in Christ by faith, and that the Son likewise indwells all believers.

The book of 1 John also devastates the idea that one is “in Christ” only upon baptism. It affirms that we can know that we are in Him if we are keeping His Word, not if we are baptized (1 John 2:5-6, 3:24). The transforming power of spiritual union with Christ is altogether different from the ordinance of baptism. All who are in Christ have been given the Holy Spirit, and they can know they are saved because of the Spirit’s presence (1 John 4:13), but the Holy Ghost is received before baptism.^{cxvii} God the Spirit also guarantees that all truly in Christ “shall abide” in Him (1 John 2:25-27). Consequently, were one were “in Christ” through baptism into a congregation’s membership, church discipline or excommunication would be impossible. Further, those in Christ cannot live in continual sin (1 John 3:5-6, 9), but church members can do so. God dwells in all who from a heart of faith confess Jesus (1 John 4:15-16), but such a confession is a prerequisite to baptism (Acts 8:36-38). Similarly, all who love God, which they begin to do when they first know and believe the love God has for them, are in Him (1 John 4:16). If baptismal regeneration is true, one must baptize someone who does not have the Spirit and so is not led by Him into its waters. Baptism would be for those who do not confess Jesus as Lord, who do not obey God’s Word, who live in sin, and who do not love God, but hate Him. When such Spirit-resisting, non-confessing, disobedient and sinful God-haters are baptized, they then could not be subsequently be removed from the church rolls, for one “in Christ” remains there forever. Either all this is true, or baptismal regeneration is false, and one is “in Christ” before baptism. Furthermore, John writes “unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,” and this life “is in (*en*) his Son.” (1 John 5:13, 11). His audience is “in (*en*) him that is true, even in (*en*) his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20). Believers constitute John’s intended audience in his epistle, and his audience is *en* Christ and has eternal life as a consequence of faith. 1 John proves that believing, not baptism, gets one in or *en* Christ.

Indeed, the doctrine that one is “in Christ” or *en Christo* by faith is very frequently taught in scripture. In Galatians, Paul associated being *en Christo* and faith, declaring 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 . . . we seek to be justified by (*en*) Christ” (Galatians 2:16-17). Galatians 3:14 is similar: “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through (*en*) Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:26 reads, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in (*en*) Christ Jesus.” Galatians 5:5-6 states, “We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in (*en*) Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” Note also Galatians 2:20-21; 3:2. Galatians repeatedly associates the “*en* Christ” state with faith.

The book of Ephesians also indicates that one is in or *en* Christ by faith. Ephesians 1:1 refers to the “faithful [*pistos*—translated “believing” in John 20:27; Acts 10:45; 16:1; 2 Corinthians 6:15; 1 Timothy 4:10; 5:16; 6:2] in (*en*) Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 1:12-15 declares that we “trusted in (*en*) Christ . . . [upon hearing] the word of truth, the gospel of . . . salvation,” and that when one “believe[s], [he is] sealed with that holy Spirit of promise . . . the earnest of your inheritance,” for “faith [is] in (*en*) the Lord Jesus,” and God demonstrates “the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe” (v. 19). All the spiritual blessings “in Christ” of Ephesians 1:3-14 are given to those who believe or trust in Him (v. 12-19). Ephesians 2:6-10 clearly links being in Christ with faith, stating that God “hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in (*en*) Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through (*en*) Christ Jesus. 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. For we are his workmanship, created in (*en*) Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 3:11-12 states that we are “in (*en*) Christ Jesus our Lord: in (*en*) whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” Thus, Ephesians 1-3 repeatedly links the state of being in or *en* Christ and faith, but baptism is not mentioned anywhere in these chapters.

Other books of the Bible also associate faith and the “in (*en*) Christ” position. Colossians 1:4 refers to “faith in (*en*) Christ Jesus”; 1 Timothy 1:14 to “faith . . . in (*en*) Christ Jesus”; 1 Timothy 3:13 and 2 Timothy 3:15 to “faith which is in (*en*) Christ Jesus”; 1 Corinthians 4:17 to those who are faithful/believing “in (*en*) the Lord”; Philippians 2:19, 24 to “trust in (*en*) the Lord Jesus . . . trust in (*en*) the Lord”; Colossians 2:5 to “faith in (*en*) Christ”; 2 Thessalonians 3:4 to “hav[ing] confidence [or trust]^{cxviii} in (*en*) the Lord”; and 1 Timothy 6:17 to “trust . . . in (*en*) the living God.” We are “found in (*en*) him, not having [our] own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9). Dozens of passages indicate that one is “in (*en*) Christ” by faith. Many others that do not make the connection to faith explicit are nevertheless incompatible with baptismal regeneration. Not one of the two hundred seventy-nine relevant texts connect being “in Christ” and baptism.^{cxix}

Romans 6:3-4 provides no support whatever for baptismal regeneration. Neither the passage in its context, nor the phrase “into (*eis*) Christ,” nor the phrase “in (*en*) Christ,” provide a shred of evidence for salvation by baptism. At the moment of faith one is in Christ, and the Lord Jesus indwells all believers, not the baptized only. Those who argue for baptismal regeneration using passages such as Romans 6 “do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).

6.) Galatians 3:27

Galatians 3:27 states that “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Since the verse declares that in baptism one puts on Christ, baptismal regenerationists argue that forgiveness for (past) sins is only received at the point of baptism.^{cxx} This view has a number of major problems.

First, “put on” (*enduo*) is never plainly used for anything that relates to the immediate forgiveness of sin in any of its twenty-eight appearances;^{cxxi} the baptismal regenerationist must simply allege, without any evidence, that to “put on” Christ refers to justification. *Enduo* (“put on”) is, in contrast, clearly used in a number of passages for the walk of the already forgiven Christian, and of those already baptized. In Romans 13:12-14, Paul exhorts the baptized believers at Rome to “cast off the works of darkness, and . . . put on (*enduo*) the armour of light . . . put ye on (*enduo*) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfill* the lusts *thereof*.” His command to the church at Rome to “put on” Christ and the armor of light is an exhortation to live for God, not to receive forgiveness of past sins by being rebaptized. Paul similarly commands the church at Ephesus to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man . . . and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and . . . put on (*enduo*) the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24). Again, the text calls already baptized believers to live for God. It is not an exhortation for church members to submit to a second baptism. Later in the same epistle, the apostle commands the congregation at Ephesus to “put on (*enduo*) the whole armour of God. . . . Stand therefore . . . having on (*enduo*) the breastplate of righteousness.” Similarly, Colossians 3:10-14 relates an appeal to the church at Colosse to “put on (*enduo*) the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. . . . Put on (*enduo*) therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind . . . and above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” 1 Thessalonians 5:8 likewise commands “us, who are of the day, [to] be sober, putting on (*enduo*) the breastplate of faith and love.” In all these instances, those who are already forgiven are commanded to “put on” a variety of things that relate to the Christian life. One could compare baptism to the uniform donned by an enlisted man when he joins the army;^{cxxii} the recruit is enrolled before he gets his uniform and puts it on. The uniform simply makes him easier to identify than civilian clothing would. Since “put on” is terminology for those already justified before God, the statement of Galatians 3:27 indicates that those already forgiven should “put on” Christ in baptism as a public testimony of a previously received pardon and as a public identification with Christ. The verse does not teach that one receives remission of sins or becomes a Christian through baptism.

Second, both the immediate and wider context of Galatians 3:27 explode the claim that the verse teaches baptismal regeneration. Galatians 3:26, the verse immediately preceding v. 27, indicates that “ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” If Paul were to affirm in v. 27 that one becomes a child of God through baptism, he would contradict what he had said the verse before.^{cxxiii} Paul’s contextual point is the equality of Jew and Gentile (v. 28); both are

saved in the same manner by faith (v. 26) and both receive the same baptism (v. 27). The immediate context of Galatians 3:27 destroys the baptismal regenerationist argument.

The wider context of Galatians 3 also demolishes the argument of baptismal regenerationists in 3:27. Paul argues that the Spirit was received “by the hearing of faith” (3:2), that the ministration of the Spirit and the working of miracles was not “by the works of the law” but by the “hearing of faith” (3:5), and that “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (v. 6). He concludes, “know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (v. 7). As Abraham was justified by faith, so today men are justified by faith. Abraham was certainly not baptized, so baptismal regeneration confounds Paul’s comparison. The doctrine also confounds Paul’s assertion in Galatians 3:8 that the Scripture “preached before the gospel unto Abraham . . . foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith,” unless one wishes to argue the *non sequitor* that Abraham received prophecies concerning baptism. Paul concludes that “they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (v. 9). The chapter then asserts that “the just shall live by faith . . . the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith” (v. 12, 14). Paul proceeds to vindicate justification by faith on the basis of God’s offer of the gospel to Abraham before the giving of the Mosaic law (v. 15-21), completing his argument with the recognition that “the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (v. 22). An unbaptized Abraham cannot be the prototype of a supposed New Testament teaching of baptismal regeneration, but an Abraham saved by faith in the coming Savior is a great proof for New Testament justification by faith in Christ. The Law of God itself is “our schoolmaster to *bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (v. 24), for “ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (v. 26). The rest of Galatians chapter three, along with the rest of the book (2:16, 20-21; 5:5, etc.), demonstrates the folly of affirming baptismal regeneration in Galatians 3:27.

Galatians 3:27 utterly fails as a proof-text for remission of sins through baptism. “Put on” is not Biblical terminology for the receipt of remission of sins; it is a term of Christian growth. Both the immediate context, Galatians 3:26, and the wider context of the chapter and the rest of the book preclude baptismal remission in 3:27. Those who use the verse to prove that baptism is the gateway to heaven completely miss the point.

7.) Ephesians 5:26

Baptismal regenerationists sometimes attempt to make Ephesians 5:26 support their doctrine. However, this verse, along with the next two analyzed (Colossians 2:12, Titus 3:5), usually represent the second-string of proof-texts for the doctrine, since they do not even appear as strong as some of their first-level choices—for example, none of them even uses the word “baptism.” Nevertheless, they will be dealt with. Ephesians 5:26 reads, “That he might sanctify

and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” It is affirmed that the “washing of water” refers to baptism, which, therefore, is a prerequisite to the forgiveness of sin. This claim is a stretch that can by no means be proven or reasonably sustained from the verse.

A number of considerations demonstrate that baptismal regeneration comes up dry in Ephesians 5:26. First, the verse simply does not mention baptism. The word is not used in the verse, or even in the rest of the chapter. Second, Ephesians 5 addresses those already saved; Paul addresses “dear children” who are “light in the Lord” (5:1, 8), not unsaved individuals whom he points to the baptistery as the door to heaven. Third, the verse teaches that Christ “sanctifies and cleanses . . . with the washing of water by the word” (v. 26) those already part of His church.^{cxxiv} Since this sanctifying and cleansing is a work the Lord does upon those already in His congregation, not a means through which those not in the church enter in, it cannot refer to baptism. The number of baptismal regenerationists who baptize those already church members to sanctify and cleanse them is exceedingly small. Fourth, the immediate context of v. 26 addresses Christian husbands and wives who are already forgiven; the wives are to submit to their husbands as the church should to her Lord, and the husbands are to love their wives as Christ does the church. As Christ loves, nourishes and cherishes the church (v. 25, 28, 29), so ought husbands to care for their wives. Part of this love of Christ for His church is His acting to “sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (v. 26). This sanctifying work of the Savior is not a one time event like baptism, but a repeated or continuing action, an element of Christ’s progressive work in making those in His church more holy. One hopes that baptismal regenerationists do not teach that husbands are to love, nourish, and cherish their wives only one time. As God commands wives to receive such care from their husbands continually, so does Christ sanctify and cleanse His church continually.^{cxxv} Fifth, this sanctifying and cleansing is “by the word” (v. 26), which fits in with the fact that the Bible sanctifies believers (John 17:17; 15:3; Ephesians 6:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 6:5-9). Christ sanctifies and cleanses His church by the Word as His congregation hears it preached and taught (2 Timothy 4:2), sings it in psalms and Scriptural hymns (Colossians 3:16), reads (1 Timothy 4:13), memorizes (Psalm 119:9, 11), and meditates (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:15) upon it. A comparison with the related Pauline references to the “word” shows that Ephesians 5:26 refers to the work of the Spirit through the preached Bible, not to baptism (Romans 10:8; 17-18; cf. 1 Peter 1:25). Baptism does not fit sanctification and cleansing “by the word” well at all, and Scripture nowhere states that baptism somehow cleanses people through the Word of God. The reference to “water” in Ephesians 5:26 is simply a symbol of practical sanctification, as it is in John 13:8, 10 for the already saved and baptized apostle Peter, and as often found in the Old Testament (Exodus 30:18-21; Leviticus 8:6; 16:4, 24; cf. Ezekiel 16:8). Finally, even if the “washing of water” in Ephesians 5:26 were baptism, which it is not, the phrase would not help the cause of baptismal regeneration. One who believes in justification by faith alone can agree that baptism is an act which, as part of the Christian life, both sets the saint apart from the world and contributes to his progressive sanctification and cleansing. Baptism cleanses in the same way that other

Christian duties do, such as prayer, the study of Scripture, and church attendance. This verse, which is to prove that baptism saves from hell, mentions neither baptism nor deliverance from damnation. Ephesians 5:26 does not support baptismal regeneration.

8.) Colossians 2:12

Colossians 2:12 states that believers are “buried with [Christ] in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” It is alleged that since people are “buried with him” in baptism, and also “risen with him” in the ordinance, one must therefore be baptized to have his sins removed. However, the verse does not say that sins are removed through baptism; it affirms that in the ordinance one is buried and risen with Christ.^{cxxvi} The true churches of the Lord Jesus affirm both justification by grace through faith alone and that, having already been justified and become dead to sin, men are to be outwardly buried with Christ in baptism by immersion^{cxxvii} and rise with Him when they come up out of the water. Since the verse never states that forgiveness of sins happens at the moment of baptism, one cannot legitimately draw such a conclusion. Furthermore, the spiritual circumcision of verse 11, which does take place at the point of faith and so regeneration (cf. Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 2:28-29),^{cxxviii} is “without hands”; God performs this new birth as a work of His mighty power apart from human agency. In contrast, baptism is very much a work of man and is certainly not performed “without hands.” As in Romans 6:4,^{cxxix} the only other passage in Scripture where the verb “buried with”^{cxxx} appears, Colossians 2:12 affirms that in baptism believers publicly identify with Christ but fails miserably to prove that the unbaptized are damned.

9.) Titus 3:5

Baptismal regenerationists attempt to use the fact that Titus 3:5 refers to the “washing of regeneration” to prove their doctrine. This washing, they affirm, is baptism. However, the complete verse reads, “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.” In addition to the omission of any mention of baptism, the verse specifically states that men are not saved “by works of righteousness.” Since baptism is a work of righteousness, as is plain upon consideration of its nature and purpose, and as Matthew 3:15 specifically indicates, Titus 3:5 clearly eliminates it as a prerequisite to forgiveness. The “washing of regeneration” is the cleansing by the blood of Jesus that takes place the moment a sinner forsakes confidence in his works and believes in Christ alone for justification. For water salvation advocates to make the “washing of regeneration” a reference to the unmentioned and unimplied act of baptism, despite the fact that a handful of words earlier the text excludes the ordinance, is to “wrest [this verse] . . . as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16).

10.) 1 Peter 3:21

The final major attempt to support baptismal regeneration with Scripture comes from 1 Peter 3:21. This verse states that “baptism doth also now save us,” while verse 20 mentions that “souls were saved by water.” Baptismal regenerationists argue on this basis that the unbaptized are lost. However, this view takes the verses out of context, as a study of the passage and Peter’s teaching elsewhere indicates.

First Peter 3:18-22 reads:

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 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. 21 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: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Within the wider context of a primary theme in 1 Peter, suffering for Christ (v. 13-17), verse 18 mentions the Lord Jesus’ substitutionary death for sin, as He, “the just for the unjust,” suffered in the place of mankind. The verse then recounts His “death in the flesh,” and explains how, by the Holy Spirit, Christ was “quickened” or “made alive.” Verses 19-20 mention that by this same Spirit He preached to those who are now “spirits in prison,” but were, at the time of the preaching, the rebellious and ungodly generation of men that “sometime were disobedient . . . in the days of Noah.” When Noah, a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5), proclaimed the truth to his contemporaries, he functioned as God’s mouthpiece, so that, by the Spirit, it was really Christ preaching to that rebellious generation. However, since the men of Noah’s day did not receive the truth in that time “while the ark was a preparing,” they died in the flood and went to hell, where they are now “spirits in prison.” Eight people or “souls,” namely, Noah, his wife, and their three sons with their wives (Genesis 6:18; 7:7, 13) were then “saved by water”; that is, they were separated and saved from the ungodly world system by means of the waters of the flood. They were not saved from their sins by the floodwaters, and the water certainly did not save them from either physical or spiritual death—those in the water and not in the ark drowned and were damned. Verse 21 then explains that as Noah and his household were saved from the ungodly world by the flood waters, so Christians today are saved from the ungodly world by baptism (v. 21a), which is not the act which actually puts away sin (v. 21b) but is rather the “answer of a good conscience toward God” (v. 21c). The doctrines mentioned in the text are only possible because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (v. 21d), who has ascended into heaven and has all authority (v. 22). Furthermore, these truths can encourage the suffering Christian (4:1ff.). Having surveyed 1 Peter 3:18-22, an analysis of its alleged support for baptismal regeneration is now possible.

First, the parenthesis in verse 21 demonstrates that Peter does not here teach baptismal regeneration. On the contrary, it expressly disclaims the doctrine. It could well have been included specifically to forstall the danger of abusing the passage to unwarrantedly conclude that baptism is required for forgiveness. The parenthetical statement teaches us that baptism is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.” Peter’s affirmation that baptism does not put away filth is incongruous if regeneration takes place by means of the ordinance.^{cxxxix} Conclusive evidence against baptismal forgiveness is found in the affirmation that baptism is the “answer of a good conscience toward God.” Peter affirms that one has a good conscience prior to his baptism, which is his “answer^{cxxxix} . . . toward God” resulting from his reconciled state and peace of mind and heart.^{cxxxix} If one heading up to the baptistry is, as baptismal regeneration teaches, still lost and a child of the devil (John 8:44) who is under the wrath of God, a heartbeat from the fires of hell, and an unforgiven, Spirit-resisting, non-confessing, disobedient God-hater^{cxxxix} who still sinks under the weight of every sin he has ever committed his entire life, how can he possibly have a “good conscience” toward God, as 1 Peter 3:21 affirms one must prior to baptism? The lost have, rather, a “reprobate mind” (Romans 1:28) and a “corrupt mind” (2 Timothy 3:8). They are “vainly puffed up by [their] fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18). They have “their mind and conscience defiled” (Titus 1:5) and “seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2). They need to have their conscience “purge[d] . . . [with] the blood of Christ” (Hebrews 9:9, 14; 10:2,^{cxxxix} 22). The fact that baptism is a good conscience’s answer^{cxxxix} toward God proves that baptismal regenerationists err in their view of 1 Peter 3:21.

Second, a study of the specific words used in 1 Peter 3:20-21 indicates that spiritual salvation from sin and hell is not in view. In verse 20, the word “saved” (“in the days of Noah . . . eight souls were saved by water”) is *diasodzo*. This Greek word is never used in the New Testament for salvation from sin;^{cxxxix} instead, it means “to rescue or deliver from a hazard or danger, bring safely through.”^{cxxxix} A first century Christian reading Peter’s epistle in Greek might be saved in the *diasodzo* sense by means of baptism if he hid in the baptistry and so escaped from Roman soldiers seeking his arrest, but he would not have used *diasodzo* to convey the idea of salvation from sin. The idea is similar to the declaration in Hebrews of Noah’s physical deliverance and separation from the world system when he “prepared an ark to the saving [physical deliverance, not spiritual salvation] of his house” and in so doing “condemned the world” (Hebrews 11:7). The use of *diasodzo* in verse 20, which also fits with the background of Hebrews 11:7, controls the understanding of Peter’s use of the verb *sodzo* in verse 21 (“baptism doth also now save us”). This word^{cxxxix} is used for both physical deliverances such as salvation from drowning (Matthew 14:30) and for salvation from sin (Matthew 1:21). The connection with the *diasodzo* of verse 20 indicates that in verse 21 *sodzo* does not speak of baptism saving in the sense of forgiving sin.^{cxli} Rather, baptism “doth also now save us” in the sense of disassociating believers from this world and its ungodly system and identifying them with God’s new order. God “spared not the old world, but saved Noah . . . bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:5). As Noah was saved from “the world that then

was” (2 Peter 3:6) by the Deluge, being separated from its influence and power, so baptism saves a Christian from the ungodly world with its influences and power and identifies him with God, His redeemed people, and His new order. When the Christian identifies himself with Jesus Christ in the ordinance, he outwardly and publicly cuts himself off from his old life and ways. Having submitted to Christ as his King and entered His kingdom at the moment of repentant faith, in baptism he publicly puts on the uniform, as it were, of His Master’s host (cf. Galatians 3:27).^{cxli} Baptism’s saving the Christian from the world’s ungodly system and publicly separating him unto God fits the words used in 1 Peter 3:20-21. Baptism to achieve forgiveness of sin does not.

Third, Peter’s comparison between the events in the days of Noah and baptism nullifies claims of regeneration by the ordinance. Noah’s deliverance or salvation “by water” is “the like figure”^{cxlii} whereunto baptism saves us. Noah, however, was by no means saved from his sin by the waters of the Flood. The book of Genesis recounts that “the wickedness of [the entire race of] man was great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5); therefore, Noah was a sinner deserving condemnation along with the rest of the mankind. However, “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Genesis 6:8); God saved Noah by His grace, by undeserved favor, and so justified him entirely apart from any righteous act of his. As Romans 11:6 states, “if [salvation is] 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.” Noah was “heir of the righteousness which is by faith” and was saved “by faith” (Hebrews 11:7). Furthermore, God commanded Noah to enter the ark because he was “seen righteous” (Genesis 7:1), “just,” and “perfect” (Genesis 6:9) before Him, being justified on the basis of Christ’s blood and righteousness (cf. Revelation 13:8b) when he believed in the coming Savior. Because he had been justified by faith, Noah manifested his change of state in a change of life—he “walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). Having been “seen righteous” judicially before Jehovah, he “did according unto all that the LORD commanded him” (Genesis 7:1, 5) in his practical life. Christ was in fact preaching through Noah (1 Peter 3:18-19) for one hundred twenty years (Genesis 6:3) before the flood; by the grace of God, the sinner Noah was transformed into a “preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5). Clearly, he was saved from his sin and manifested his change of life far before the time of the flood. Indeed, God saved him from the evil world by the Flood specifically because of his state as an already justified individual (Genesis 7:1). As evidenced in the life of Noah, individuals today must be justified and show evidence of regeneration before they are Biblically baptized (Matthew 3:8). The comparison with Noah in 1 Peter 3:20-21 demonstrates that one must be justified by faith before he can rightly enter the waters of baptism. As Noah was justified before he passed through the flood, so for Christians today justification by faith takes place before one reaches the water and is a prerequisite for a proper relationship to it.

Fourth, a recognition that Noah’s ark pictures Christ provides further evidence that 1 Peter 3:20-21 does not teach baptismal regeneration. As the ark was “lift[ed] up” (Genesis 7:17),

so “the Son of man [was] lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). As there was only one ark, so there is only one Savior (Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5). Only one door saved from destruction in Noah’s day, and Christ, the only way to heaven (John 14:6), said, “I am the door” (John 10:9). The ark was sufficient and complete to save from destruction, as Christ is sufficient to save (cf. Hebrews 9:12-14; Hebrews 10:10-14). The ark was available for all men who believed God’s promise of judgment and accepted His provision for salvation (cf. Revelation 22:17; 1 Timothy 2:4) which was needed by all (Romans 3:10, 23); so it is with Christ. God waited patiently before the Flood (Genesis 6:3; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:9), but there came a time when it was too late to accept His offered escape (Genesis 7:11-13; 2 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-14); likewise He waits patiently today for men to repent and believe in His Son, but a time will come when the opportunity to receive salvation has passed. Furthermore, all that were in the ark were secure and saved, shut into it by God’s power; not one person on the ark was lost or died, just as all who believe are in Christ and will never suffer eternal death (Genesis 7:16; 1 Corinthians 15:22, John 10:27-30, 1 John 5:11-13). Those who are in Christ will never have the wrath of God poured out upon them, as it was poured out on the inhabitants of the world in Noah’s day who were outside the ark (Psalm 79:6; Ezekiel 22:31; Revelation 14:10-11), since Christ, pictured by the ark, saves men from their sin. Only those first in the ark passed through the water with Noah; it was the “ark . . . wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” As Noah and his household were in the ark, shut into it by a miraculous act of God (Genesis 7:16), a week before the flood began (Genesis 7:1, 4), so a man must be “in Christ” by faith before he can enter the waters of baptism.^{cxliii} One certainly did not pass through the waters of the flood in order to enter the ark—nor does one become “in Christ” by means of baptism. The ark saves from destruction, and the water from the world system. The “figure” of Christians and their baptism (1 Peter 3:21) provided by Noah’s passing through the flood fits very well with the Biblical truth that men are justified before their immersion; it does not fit baptismal regeneration well at all.

Fifth, 1 Peter 3:20-21 does not affirm baptismal regeneration because Peter earlier in his epistle, and elsewhere in Scripture, taught justification simply by “precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1). 1 Peter 1:1-5 affirms that the “elect . . . are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (1 Peter 1:1, 5). Peter establishes in the beginning of his epistle that God’s elect, all believers, are eternally saved and secure by Divine power. He affirms that “believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of *your* souls” (1:8-9). Further, he contrasts redemption by the incorruptible blood of Christ (1:18-19), received by supernaturally given faith (v. 21) in the imperishable Word of God (v. 23) with redemption by “corruptible things” (v. 18), which would include the solely temporal waters of baptism. The apostle also states that “he that believeth on [Christ] shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious” (2:6-7).^{cxliv} When Peter speaks of the new birth, he never connects it with baptism (1 Peter 1:3, 23). In Acts, Peter’s message was: “repent . . . that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19); “repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins” (5:31); and

that “through [Christ’s] name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (10:43). Peter declared: “God gave them the [Holy Spirit] . . . who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (11:17), since “the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost . . . purifying their hearts by faith” (15:7-10).^{cxlv} Peter did not contradict his teaching elsewhere and affirm baptismal regeneration in 1 Peter 3:20-21. As the waters of the flood lifted up the ark (Genesis 7:17), baptism is designed to exalt Christ, who in His death, burial, and resurrection, provides the meritorious cause of justification, which is received instrumentally simply by faith.

The conclusion that 1 Peter 3:20-21 does not teach forgiveness by baptism is clear. The parenthesis of verse 21, the words used for “saved” in the passage, the comparison to Noah’s deliverance by the Flood, and Peter’s teaching elsewhere in his epistles and in Scripture prove this fact. Baptismal regenerationists must mangle this verse, as they do the handful of other passages examined earlier, to invent support for their view, since the Word of God provides no support for their devilish perversion of the precious gospel of Christ. Those who neglected the ark and were in the water in Noah’s day died. Those who look to the waters of baptism for deliverance from sin will likewise be destroyed.

VII.) Miscellaneous Arguments Against Justification by Faith Alone Refuted

Baptismal regenerationists often advance a number of other arguments against the gospel of Christ. Just as their mainstay proof-texts, examined already, fail to establish their doctrine, so these arguments likewise fail.

Objection #1: “James 2 teaches salvation by faith and works.”

James 2:14-26 is perhaps the most important text employed by the adherents of water salvation that remains unexamined. Since v. 17 states that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone,” v. 26 reads very similarly, v. 21 indicates that “Abraham our father [was] justified by works,” and v. 24 declares that “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only,” baptismal regenerationists argue that one is certainly not justified in the sight of God by faith alone. However, this argument misinterprets the passage and manifests a misconception about the nature of saving faith in the Biblical gospel.

Verse fourteen begins the section of the epistle that runs through v. 26 with a question: “What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” The passage addresses one who says he has faith, but has no works. He claims to believe but persistently lacks actions that back up his claim.^{cxlvi} The question addressed in James 2:14-26 is, “Can [that kind of] faith save him?” (v. 14d).^{cxlvii} Will someone who claims to have the new birth, but possesses no change of life, go to heaven? The question of James expects a negative answer, for such a merely intellectual knowledge is not “the faith of God’s elect” (Titus

1:1). “God hath before ordained” that those who “by grace are . . . saved through faith . . . not of works . . . are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Ephesians 2:8-10). All who are delivered from the penalty of sin, eternal damnation, are also freed from bondage to sin, and will manifest the new nature God gave them in a changed life (2 Corinthians 5:17). The man who has a James 2:14 “faith” has never truly repented and believed the gospel. Verses 15-17 illustrate the assertion of v. 14 with an example: “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:15-17). Just as words will not clothe the naked or fill an empty belly, so an outward profession of conversion without a changed life manifests an absence of genuine faith. The kind of faith that does not lead to works^{cxlviii} is “dead, being alone” (v. 17), because it never was saving faith at all. Verse eighteen continues, “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” The contrast between dead faith and real, living faith is continued; one is to show his faith by his works. The works do not change dead faith into living faith—only the Spirit of the Almighty can cause such a transformation—but they manifest its presence. When the leaves of trees and grass shake, and dirt particles fly through the air accompanied by howling noises, one knows the wind is blowing (cf. John 3:8); when all is still and silent there is no wind. However, the shaking leaves and flying dirt are certainly effects, not the cause, of the wind. Likewise, one who believes the gospel and is, therefore, born again (John 3:1-21) and justified (Romans 4:5), manifests his inward change in outward actions, but these are the result, not the cause, of the new birth and of justification before God. A living faith will certainly lead to works—but saving faith is alive before it produces any works, rather than being dead until baptism or some other work supposedly changes its nature. James 2:19 continues the demonstration that intellectual assent is not saving faith: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” An orthodox doctrine of God (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4) is good, as far as it goes—but it is not saving faith. The devils believe that there is only one God; indeed, they believe in the Trinity, the infallibility of Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, His death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming, and all other orthodox doctrine; they have a correct creed through and through. For that matter, they understand the doctrine that God justifies men solely by faith and not by baptism or other works very well, and they believe in a literal lake of fire where they will dwell forever along with those who accept their perversions of the gospel. Furthermore, the devils not only have a sound creed, but they “tremble” on account of their knowledge, and so exceed many with right doctrine but without living faith. All this, James affirms, still falls short of justifying faith. It is not enough to possess knowledge of religion and accept its truth; saving faith also trusts or relies upon the Lord and Savior Christ to effectually save from sin’s penalty and power. In v. 20, James continues, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” The man who has only a faith that brings no works believes in vain; he has never

possessed the supernaturally originated trust in Christ as Savior and Lord that marks the people of God (Philippians 1:29).

James then presents two examples, Abraham and Rahab, to illustrate his point: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:21-24). Justification here refers to being “shown righteous” before man^{cxlix} on the basis of one’s works, rather than being “declared righteous” by God on the basis of Christ’s atoning work. The moment a lost man trusts in Christ, all his sins are removed and the righteousness of Christ is judicially reckoned to him so that he possesses a perfect standing before God; “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,” and this righteousness is the “righteousness of God,” even “the righteousness of [Christ] . . . unto justification of life” (Romans 4:5; 3:22; 5:18). When one believes in the Savior, “God imputeth righteousness without works” (Romans 4:6), for “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4); by the “righteousness of [Christ is he] made righteous” (Romans 5:19) and “Christ Jesus . . . is made unto [him] . . . righteousness” (1 Corinthians 1:30); the believer’s standing before the Father is established entirely apart from any actions of his own, solely on the basis of Christ’s obedience and substitutionary work. God views him as eternally, unchangeably, and perfectly righteous, since the Lord Jesus’ death has paid his sin debt in full and Jesus’ sinless life and perfect righteousness are legally reckoned his own. However, before mankind, justification is by works, not by faith only (cf. Luke 16:15). Abraham manifested his faith in the world, and was shown righteous or “justified” in this sense, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar (James 2:21), a reference to Genesis 22. In that passage, Abraham’s faith worked with his actions (James 2:22a) and was completed or perfected (v. 22b) by them. James informs us that this righteous action of Genesis 22 was a fulfillment (v. 23) of the verse that said “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness” (v. 23b), a statement found in Genesis 15:6. Abraham was certainly not declared righteous before God and saved from his sin at the point of Genesis 22, for this was around two decades after the events in Genesis 15 took place. Abraham had righteousness imputed to him many years before the events of Genesis 22. Indeed, Abraham had to be justified before God by faith (Genesis 15:6) before he would respond in the obedient manner of Genesis 22. James affirms that Abraham, since he had been declared righteous or justified in the sight of God by faith (Genesis 15:6), manifested his faith in a changed life, and was consequently justified or shown righteous before the world by his works (Genesis 22) and was appropriately titled God’s friend (James 2:23; Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7). “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness” (James 2:23; Genesis 15:6) affirms justification before God by faith and denies justification before Him by works; Paul can consequently quote the same Old Testament passage (Romans 4:3) to prove that Abraham was

not justified by works before God (Romans 4:1-2), but by faith alone (v. 3-5). James simply affirms that saving faith will manifest itself in outward action, so that one who has been justified before God at the point of faith is, in the eyes of humanity, justified by works, and not by faith only (James 2:24). As with Abraham, so with Rahab; she “likewise . . . was . . . justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and . . . sent *them* out another way” (James 2:25). Having heard of the power of God in delivering Israel from Egypt and giving His people the land of Canaan (Joshua 2:9-10), she had believed in the Lord and been justified before Him by faith (Hebrews 11:31; Joshua 2:11; cf. Deuteronomy 4:39), so she hid the spies of Israel when they came to search out Jericho (Joshua 2:1ff.) and did not perish in the fall of the city (6:22-25) with those that “believed not” (Hebrews 11:31). Her justification before God by faith led to a change of action, as it inevitably will, so that she was, before man, “justified by works” (James 2:25). James concludes, “for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). Acceptance of a creed will not save; one must have the kind of faith that leads to fruit. James 2:14-26 contrasts mere intellectual knowledge or dead faith with living, life-changing faith. James affirms that the latter leads to heaven, not the former. Since this does not in any way contradict the doctrine, proven throughout Scripture (e. g. Romans 4:1-8) and affirmed by James himself in chapter 2 (v. 23), that at the moment one believes or trusts in Christ to save him from hell and from the power of sin he is justified before God, nor prove that one must be baptized to receive forgiveness, nor that one who has truly believed can ever fall away and finally perish, nor any other doctrinal position favorable to baptismal regeneration, it contributes nothing to its cause. Baptismal regenerationists may use snippets of v. 21, 24, and a few other sections of James 2:14-26, but the passage examined as a whole in its context coheres harmoniously with justification before God by faith alone.

James 2:19-26 deals with the outworking of saving faith in one’s life; it demonstrates that those who have truly believed will certainly be changed. However, the difference between an affirmation that one is justified before God at the moment of genuine faith, which will lead to a change of life, and the belief that genuine faith will not save apart from baptism, is as vast as the gulf between heaven and hell. Sadly, many baptismal regenerationists do not understand that justifying faith is a God-given trust in Christ to deliver from sin’s penalty and power. They falsely think saving belief is simply a cold subscription to a certain set of doctrinal propositions, and that proponents of justification by faith alone affirm that such a subscription infallibly saves. The defenders of Christ’s gospel have never defined faith in this manner, and James 2 perfectly harmonizes with their true position. Baptismal regenerationists, however, pervert the nature of saving faith, then use their misinterpretation to exchange the justification before man by works mentioned in James 2 with forgiveness of past sins by God on account of a single work, baptism; “faith without works is dead” is changed to “faith without the one work of baptism is dead.” Such a confusion of the gospel brings with it eternal damnation.

Objection #2: The verses that say we are not saved by works only refer to Moses' law. We are saved by works, but not by the works of the law of Moses."^{cl}

Some argue that all the verses where the Bible teaches that justification is by faith apart from the works of the law exclude only the revelation given to Moses at Sinai. Supposedly men are saved by doing “works of faith” rather than “works of Moses’ law,” so people are really saved by keeping the law—just a different law. Instead of salvation by offering sacrifices, and by other Old Testament ceremonial procedures, people are now supposedly saved by following New Testament morals and ceremonial procedures such as baptism. This argument fails for many reasons. First, the people of God in the Old Testament were saved by faith, not by offering sacrifices and completing ceremonial procedures.^{cli} Second, no man on earth, not even the holiest, meets the standard of sinless perfection demanded by God (Matthew 5:48)—every Christian sins every day in thoughts, words, and deeds (1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 143:2) so that even his “righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, all who seek justification in their attempts to keep the moral law, instead of in Christ’s imputed righteousness received by faith alone (Romans 3:20-28), will fall short of the Divine standard and be eternally damned for their disobedience, rather than received into heaven because of their obedience. Third, it is impossible to demonstrate that all the verses of Scripture that refer to salvation apart from the law refer merely to the regulations given to Moses. The word “law” is used for the precepts written upon the hearts of the Gentiles who have never heard of Scripture (Romans 2:14). This law is obviously not a reference to commandments given to Moses on Sinai. The Bible states that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4)—if this verse only speaks of the law of Moses, then it would not be sinful to disobey the “new law” supposedly established in the New Testament in order to receive salvation, and those who lived before Moses could not have sinned because God had not yet given the law. Verses that affirm that salvation is not by the law refer not only to Mosaic commandments, but to all righteous precepts ever given by God. “[T]he law is . . . holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12), and it includes eternal standards such as “Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7), not only ceremonial or civil regulations given Israel. Fourth, the texts that specify that salvation is not by works make no distinction between moral works that are allegedly essential to justification and ceremonial works that are excluded (cf. Romans 3:20, 28; 4:6; Galatians 2:16; 3:11). On the contrary, the moral law, with its condemnation of ungodly speech, murder, bitterness, irreverence, and the like, is the context for the specification that salvation is not by works (Romans 3:10-19 & 3:20-28). In Galatians 3:10, the “law” that brings the “curse” that is removed by Christ on the cross (Galatians 3:10-14) is the moral law, for Galatians 3:10 quotes Deuteronomy 27:26, where sins such as idolatry, bribery, dishonor of parents, perversion of justice, incest, and stealing are mentioned, rather than ceremonial law (Deuteronomy 27). Concerning this moral law, Paul states: “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). Fifth, the continued contrast between “righteousness . . . of the law . . . [and] the righteousness which is of

God by faith” (Philippians 3:9, Galatians 2:16) shows that the Biblical distinction is between justification simply by trusting or relying on Christ and justification by any and all works whatever. The contrast is between working and not working, not between two different sets of works, one of which is supposedly necessary. Sixth, the Bible explicitly states that no law of any kind has ever been given which can bring forgiveness. Scripture makes this truth the very reason why justification is simply by believing: “*Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life,*^{cliii} verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture^{cliii} hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Galatians 3:21-22). The hypothetical statements in the passage demonstrate that no law has ever been given which can give life—neither the law of Moses, nor the law of love, the golden rule, the law of the New Testament, the law of the church, or any other law whatever can justify—God saves, instead, all “them that believe.” Seventh, many verses promise “salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16) and affirm it is to “him that worketh not, but believeth” (Romans 4:5), “not by works of righteousness” (Titus 3:5), and “through faith . . . not of works” (Ephesians 2:8-9), without any reference or limitation to Moses or use of the word “law” at all. The attempt to limit declarations of justification without works to a mere repudiation of ceremonial procedures revealed to Moses at Sinai must ignore these verses. God promises salvation to believers apart from any works of any kind.

Objection #3: “Jesus said, ‘If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments’ (Matthew 19:17), so we are saved by works, not by faith alone.”

The Lord Jesus Christ did indeed say “if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” However, an examination of the context of his statement demonstrates that the Lord did not then deny justification by faith alone. The passage in question reads:

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:16-22; cf. Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23)

A certain rich young man came to Christ and wished to know what good thing he could do to earn eternal life (v. 16). Nobody will trust in the Savior for forgiveness until he realizes he is sinful and condemned, so Christ began to bring the man to recognize his wickedness in God’s sight. He had called the Lord Jesus “Good Master” (v. 16), so Christ told him that no one but

God is good (and so He was God, for He was good). The young man should then have recognized that since he was not God, he was not good, but an evil sinner. Since “the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24), the Lord Jesus used the law with the young man to bring him to a sense of his sinfulness. He had asked what he could do to earn eternal life, so Christ informed him that the law required that he “keep the commandments” (v. 17) to earn heaven. If the young man had perfectly obeyed the law his entire life, and had no sin nature and imputed sin from Adam, he could have merited eternal life (Leviticus 18:5; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12). However, nobody can actually be saved this way, for all have sinned (Romans 3:23). Therefore, “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26). All who will actually be saved will receive eternal life based on Christ’s death and substitutionary righteousness, appropriated simply through faith, apart from any works of their own (Galatians 3:10ff.; Romans 3:28). The only obedience that can meet God’s holy demands for mankind is Christ’s obedience reckoned to the believer. The Lord Jesus, having told the man that he must keep the commandments if he would merit salvation, recounted a number of them to him to open his eyes to his guilt: “Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Matthew 19:18-19; cf. Exodus 20:1-17; Leviticus 19:18). An angry thought is murder (Matthew 5:21-22). A lustful thought is adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). Essentially everyone has stolen something, even if it is, in his eyes, only a very small thing, or at least has borrowed something and not returned it promptly (cf. Psalm 37:21). Nobody has honored his parents as he ought, since this requires, as a minimum, perfect obedience with an attitude of perfect love and reverent, sacrificial submission. Nobody perfectly loves his neighbor. Consequently, the Lord’s listing of commandments should have made the rich young man deeply conscious of his iniquity and his need for mercy. However, “the young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” (v. 20). His declaration that he had kept all of the commandments Christ listed from his youth up was nonsense. One wonders what his parents would have said if they had heard their son affirm that he had honored them perfectly from his youth. He was proud and self-righteous. Since he did not yet see his sinfulness, Christ told him, “If thou wilt be perfect [a requirement for heaven, Matthew 5:48; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21], go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me” (v. 21). The Son of God touched on a vice dear to the young man—covetousness—for “he had great possessions” (v. 22). Finally recognizing his sin, but unwilling to turn from it, “when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful” (v. 22). His self-righteous illusion was shattered—the law of God had done its work—however, since the man did not respond to its conviction properly, he never found out that sinners can have Jesus’ perfect righteousness reckoned to them by believing, as the Savior preached many times to others (John 3:16-18; 5:24; 6:47). Matthew 19:17 does not

prove that sinners can get to heaven by personal obedience to God's law. It does demonstrate that evangelistic preaching that follows Christ's example uses the law of God to lead men to understand their lost condition before it expounds the remedy for sin through faith in the Savior.^{cliv}

Objection #4: "The Bible mentions people who believed, but were still lost."

A small number of texts are used to argue that individuals believed without being forgiven. These are then alleged to overcome the overwhelming testimony of vast numbers of passages that eternal life is conditioned solely upon faith. Opponents of justification by faith alone must take these passages out of context and ignore the fact that intellectual acknowledgment is not synonymous with justifying faith.^{clv} One can apprehend truth intellectually without "being fully persuaded, that what [God] had promised he was able also to perform" (Romans 4:21), but only with this sort of faith is sin forgiven and Christ's righteousness imputed (4:20-5:1).

The first example alleged to undermine justification by faith is that of the chief rulers who "believed on him [Christ], but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). These chief rulers believed in certain facts about Jesus, such as His power to work miracles (12:37), but they had never, in repentance (cf. John 12:25-26), actually trusted in Him as Lord and Savior.^{clvi} Had they done so, they would have been immediately justified, as Christ promised elsewhere in John 12 (v. 36, 46) and many times in other parts of John's gospel. To argue that trust in Christ as Lord and Savior is not sufficient to save, based on John 12:42, negates Jesus' promise four verses later that "whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." If at least some of those who believe are still in darkness, the Son of God's "whosoever" and "should not" promises are nullified. The point of 12:42 is not that faith alone does not save, but that intellectual acknowledgment falls short of genuine faith.

Some baptismal regenerationists argue that John 8:30-31 undermines justification by faith alone. They allege that Christ told the "many" who "believed on him" (v. 30): "Ye are of your father the devil" (v. 44), so demonstrating that they were not yet justified, having not been baptized. However, an examination of the context in John 8 demonstrates that the Lord did not address the same group of people in v. 30-31 and in v. 44. The discourse of John 8 takes place in the Jerusalem temple (v. 2, 20, 59), where Christ debates and refutes the Pharisees in front of a watching audience. In 8:12-13 Christ addresses "the Pharisees" and they reply. He then responds in v. 14-18, they answer Him in v. 19, and He responds in v. 19, making it clear that they are lost in their sins (v. 19). This interaction between the Pharisees and the Lord continues in v. 20-29. Although now called "the Jews" (v. 22), Christ still debates the same Pharisaic opponents, for v. 21 ("then said Jesus again unto them") indicates He still speaks to the Pharisees of v. 13. Verse 24 ("therefore") also shows the interaction continues through v. 29. It is very

apparent that these Pharisees are lost (v. 21, 23, 24); indeed, they will be responsible for Christ's crucifixion (v. 28). As the Lord preaches to and answers the Pharisees, many of those listening to His public disputation with them savingly believe on Him (v. 30-32).^{clvii} Therefore, Christ tells those who have now believed on Him that their initial justifying faith will evidence itself in perseverance (v. 31-32).^{clviii} In v. 33, the Pharisees ("they," as in v. 27) challenge Christ's address to His new disciples. The speakers in v. 33 are not the new converts—their words are nowhere recorded in the chapter—rather, the public disputation with the Pharisees found in the rest of John eight is continued. Christ answers the Pharisees' challenge in v. 34-38. Their response in v. 39 leads to the Savior's words in v. 39-41.^{clix} In v. 42-47, Christ replies to the Pharisees' statement in v. 41. Verse 42 shows that those with a right relationship to God love Christ,^{clx} an evidence of a right relationship, not a means to gain one. Verse 43 clearly presents a different audience from v. 30-32; those addressed in v. 31 can continue in Christ's Word, while those in v. 43-47 are unable to even hear it,^{clxi} and so obviously cannot continue in it. With the previous disputing as the background, in v. 44 Christ calls the Pharisees children of the devil. They obviously constitute an entirely different group than those in v. 30-32, at least some of whom were already Christ's "disciples indeed" based on the Lord's use of the present tense ("are," v. 31). Furthermore, those in v. 30-32 believe in Him, but those in v. 44 do not, as evidenced in v. 45-46 ("ye believe me not . . . ye [do] not believe me"). Those in v. 30-32 also, at the very least, received as true Christ's statement that He always did what pleased the Father (v. 29), while those in v. 48 hold a radically different conception. Christ's reply to the Pharisees in v. 49-51 also supports a changed audience; His declaration at this point is "if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death," rather than "if ye continue" (v. 31), for He now disputes with unconverted men. The chapter ends with the record of the Pharisees' counter in v. 52-53, the Lord's reply in v. 54-56,^{clxii} and their final words to each other (v. 57-58), after which the Pharisees seek to stone Christ, so that He leaves the temple precincts (v. 59). Thus, John chapter eight records a conversation between Christ and the Pharisees with others looking on. Some of the onlookers believed on the Savior and received His exhortation in v. 30-32, the only break in the dialogue, and one which occurs without a record of the response of those addressed. The people mentioned in 8:30 and 8:44 are certainly different groups of people. A comparison of the two texts provides no proof whatever that one is still lost and a child of the devil prior to the time of baptism. On the contrary, John chapter eight supplies further evidence against this doctrine.

John 2:23-25 states that when the Lord Jesus was in Jerusalem at the passover, "many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself^{clxiii} unto them, because he knew all *men*, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." The "belief"^{clxiv} of v. 23 is simply intellectual understanding that Christ is able to do miracles and is powerful, a recognition that falls short of saving faith. In the following context, Nicodemus (3:1-2) had the kind of faith mentioned in 2:23; he knew that Christ was "a teacher come from God" because "no man [could] do these miracles that [he did], except God be with him" (3:2). However, Nicodemus still lacked the new birth (3:3-7). For that

reason, Christ told him that “whosoever believeth in [the Son] should not perish, but have everlasting life” (3:14-18). No succor for baptismal regenerationists is contained in this passage, since baptism is nowhere mentioned in it.^{clxv} Furthermore, Christ does not direct Nicodemus to a response other than faith as his means of justification, but commands him to receive eternal life simply by believing in Him. Saving faith is looking to the God-Man (3:13)^{clxvi} Jesus Christ, who was crucified to provide a perfect and sufficient salvation on the basis of His sin-bearing death (3:14-16, Numbers 21:6-9) for all who trust in Him alone (3:14-18). All of these will experience a radical change of life, wrought by the Spirit of God, upon placing their faith in Him (3:3-8, 19-21). All who so place their faith in Christ are certain of eternal life. All who are simply convinced He can do miracles,^{clxvii} as did those mentioned in John 2:23,^{clxviii} are not.

The Scriptures are filled with examples of people justified simply by faith in Christ.^{clxix} The examples alleged to undermine this doctrine utterly fail to do so.^{clxx} Since justification by faith alone is definitively the Biblical teaching, all allegedly Scriptural arguments against it of necessity fail.

VIII. Conclusion

Over the course of these pages, the gospel of Christ has been plainly explained, the Biblical purpose of baptism has been given, and conclusive reasons have been enumerated for receiving the doctrine of justification by faith alone from the Old Testament, from New Testament promises and examples, and from a variety of other arguments. Passages allegedly teaching baptismal regeneration have been carefully examined and found to contain no such doctrine, and the other arguments that are advanced in favor of the teaching have been examined and refuted. No honest reader of this work has any justifiable reason to continue to believe in baptismal regeneration. All who accept this doctrine of devils will certainly be damned, for one cannot think that baptism is a prerequisite for forgiveness and savingly believe in Jesus Christ. If you have followed this wicked heresy in the past, immediately repent of it and, turning from your other sins as well, trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Do not delay; tomorrow it may be too late. “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). Upon turning to the Savior, you will immediately be “justified by faith [and] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). You must then separate from all religious organizations that teach baptismal regeneration and other false doctrines, such as Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, Episcopalianism, Methodism, Presbyterianism, Reformed denominations, the “Church of Christ,” “Disciples of Christ,” “Christian Church,” Oneness Pentecostalism, and Mormonism—all such religions are Satanic substitutes for Christ’s true churches. Then seek out a Bible-believing and practicing independent Baptist church, submit to Biblical baptism, and serve the Lord as part of His true church (Hebrews 10:25)—not in order to be saved, but because you are already saved. “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). “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1). “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Ephesians 5:11). “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

Appendix #1: Miscellaneous Further Arguments Against Justification by Faith Refuted

Eight further arguments made by baptismal regenerationists against justification by faith alone are here examined. They are weak enough that they did not deserve inclusion in the main body of the book, but deserve to be refuted for the sake of completeness, and because they could seem plausible enough to cause some people confusion.

1.) “The Bible says that we are ‘saved by hope’ (Romans 8:24). However, we are not saved by hope alone, for we also need faith, repentance, etc. Therefore, verses that affirm that we are justified by faith do not mean that we are justified by faith alone, just as we are not justified by hope alone.” This argument ignores the Biblical idea of the word “hope” when it refers to God. The noun *hope*, the Greek word *elpis* in Romans 8:24, is related to the verb *elpidzo*, “to hope,” a verb sometimes even translated “trust” (1 Timothy 4:10; Matthew 12:21; 1 Peter 3:5), and thus shown to be associated with saving faith. Indeed, the noun *elpis* itself is rendered “faith” in Hebrews 10:23. Biblical hope in God is “the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment” (BDAG definition of *elpis*); it is not something questionable (as hope in other matters may be, cf. 1 Timothy 3:14-15), but a future certainty not yet fully possessed (Acts 24:15; Romans 5:1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 6:17-19). The “hope” of Romans 8:24 is inextricably associated with justifying faith (cf. Romans 4:18-5:1). One repents, believes, makes Christ his hope for salvation, receives Him (John 1:12), and comes to Him (John 6:37) at the same moment in time. The varied expressions simply emphasize different aspects of the same event. In contrast, it is not possible to equate these terms with baptism, since the ordinance is necessarily temporally subsequent to faith. All who savingly believe in Christ hope in Him; none have this hope without this faith (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Romans 8:24 does not in any way undermine the Biblical fact that the moment one believes in Christ he is justified and certain of eternal salvation.

2.) “Faith is a work, according to John 6:29.” This verse supposedly obliterates a distinction between faith and works, so one can believe in salvation by works. This argument fails because: a.) It would make the Bible utterly contradictory. Many verses present an incontrovertible antithesis between faith and works for justification (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:5; 11:6; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5). The overwhelming presentation of Scripture that saving faith is the very opposite of works must be nullified to uphold this misinterpretation of John 6:29. b.) It runs utterly counter to the contextual meaning of the verse. Having arrived at Capernaum after miraculously feeding thousands (Matthew 14:21; John 6:10) with five barley loaves and two fish (John 6:9) a day earlier, Christ was found by the crowds that had seen His miracle (John 6:22-25), who sought Him for the physical food He had provided rather than the spiritual provision He offered (6:25-26). The Lord Jesus consequently commanded them to “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you” (v. 27). They were not to set their hearts on and put their primary effort into the material things of this life, the “meat” or “food” which perishes, but

into the enduring spiritual food which Christ would “give” them (v. 27, 32, 34). Hearing this command, the crowd asked Him, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” (v. 28). Their rabbinic system teaching salvation by merit, they wished to know what works they should be doing to earn salvation. (Note the use of the verb *poiomen* in v. 28, a present active subjunctive of *poieo*, therefore, “What shall we be doing . . . [to] work the works of God?” Compare John 13:15 for *poieo* in the present active subjunctive as continuing action, in contrast with the point action of the verse’s aorist indicative.) Christ’s reply, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (v. 29), indicates that deeds do not save at all, but faith in Him suffices; the only “work” that God requires is to believe on His Son. In deliberate contrast to the continuing action of the question in v. 28, the aorist tense of the verb *believe* in John 6:29 indicates that faith as a point action, the instantaneous decision to trust in Christ for salvation, is “the work of God.” They wanted to know what righteous acts could bring salvation, but the Lord directed them away from their works to faith in His Person. John 6:29, examined contextually, refutes works salvation rather than supporting it. c.) Even if the verse made faith a good work, which it does not, it would not support baptismal regeneration. The crowd had wanted to know what (plural) “works” were required for forgiveness, and Christ told them that belief in Him was “the [singular and sufficient] work” commanded, which would guarantee them eternal life (6:35, 37, 40, 47, 51, 54, 58). All righteous actions, such as baptism, are therefore excluded on the ground of the sufficiency of belief. John 6:29 does not help the doctrine of baptismal regeneration at all.

3.) “Justification by faith alone means baptism is not important.” Baptism is unquestionably important. Those who have been justified by faith are commanded to be baptized, regardless of the personal cost or potential opposition. A Christian who is disobedient to the command to be baptized will have great sorrow and trouble in this life (Hebrews 12:5-13) and loss of heavenly reward in the next, although he himself still will be saved (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Often, however, someone who claims to have been justified by faith, but is unwilling to be baptized and follow the Lord Jesus Christ, manifests that he has never been given a new heart by God and has thus never truly received salvation at all (Luke 7:30; 1 John 2:3-4). Someone who has trusted the Lord Jesus for salvation from sin’s penalty and power will have both the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 14) and his new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17) powerfully stirring up within him powerful desires to obey God. Believers mentioned in the Bible were baptized and steadfastly followed Christ even if it meant persecution or death (Acts 2:41-42, 47; 8:1, 4; 22:4; 2 Timothy 3:12; Matthew 10:32). Justification by faith alone is by no means a license to rebel against God and disobey His commands (Romans 6:1-2, 14-15). Baptism is very important, but that is not the question at hand. The question is not whether baptism is important, but whether one is justified by faith or is still lost until he is baptized. Scripture teaches the former, not the latter.

4.) “The gospel must be ‘obeyed’ (Romans 6:17; 10:16), so one must be baptized to be saved.” This overlooks the fact that God commands men to believe the gospel and come to

Christ (Matthew 11:28; Mark 1:15; John 12:36; Revelation 22:17), so believing in the Lord Jesus is itself obedience to God's command. No passage of Scripture anywhere states that baptism is obeying the gospel, while Romans 10:16 specifically defines obeying the gospel as believing it: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" Second Thessalonians 1:8-10 also divides the world into those who "obey not" (v. 8) the gospel and those who "believe" (v. 10) it, demonstrating that one obeys the gospel by believing in Christ. A sinner obeys the gospel by believing it, not by being baptized.

5.) "If we are saved by faith alone, then grace, the blood, God's mercy, etc. are not needed for salvation." This cavil ignores the fact that God's grace, Christ's death and shed blood, and similar necessities for the forgiveness of sinners are conditions on God's part. He is the giver of grace, the One who sent His Son to shed His blood, and the giver of mercy. Salvation by faith alone means that nothing in addition to genuine trust in Christ is required on man's part to obtain justification. The provision of eternal glory to sinners involved many mighty and difficult conditions on God's part; the only condition for sinners is faith. Similar is the assertion that "If we are saved by faith alone, one does not need to love Christ. However, those who do not love God are cursed (1 Corinthians 16:22). Therefore we are not justified by faith alone." This argument ignores the fact that no unbeliever loves God (John 5:42; Romans 8:7), but all believers love Him (cf. 1 John 4:19) because He has given them a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26). All who have been justified by faith alone love God. Nobody who has not been justified loves Him.

6.) Baptismal regenerationists who have poor knowledge of Greek, or no knowledge of the language at all, sometimes note that the word "believeth" in John 3:16 and various other texts predicating salvation simply upon faith occur in the Greek present tense. They then contend that the Greek present is a "continuous tense," one that universally indicates continuing action, so these verses only promise life to unending and continuous faith. They then equate unending and continuous faith with continual and unending obedience, which they allege only begins at baptism, and conclude from the use of the Greek present tense that one must be baptized in order to go to heaven. They thus change "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31) into "continually obey without sinning from the time of baptism until the moment of death, and you will at that time be saved." They then neglect, overlook, or explain away the fact that people believe before they are baptized, and in this manner seek to refute all the promises of justification and eternal security to all who ever come to Christ in faith. The problems with this line of argument are numerous and severe. A.) Since the Greek present has many categories of usage, it is unsound to simply declare that all Greek verbs in the present tense express continuous action. (The categories of the instantaneous, aoristic or punctiliar, progressive or descriptive, extending-from-past, iterative, customary, habitual or general, gnomic, historical or dramatic, perfective, conative, tendential, voluntative, and futuristic presents are discussed by Daniel Wallace on pgs. 513-539 of his *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*.) Furthermore, the Greek construction employed in many present tense promises of

salvation to faith (*pas + ho + present participle*, found in John 3:15, 16, 18, 36, and other texts) “routinely belong[s] . . . [to the category of] the gnomic present[,] . . . [which] refers to a general, timeless fact. [The] *gnomic* present refers to a general, timeless fact. . . . [and] is generally *atemporal*” (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, pg. 523). Thus, the syntactical structure of many of the present tense promises of salvation to faith is regularly used for actions that are actually atemporal, rather than continuous. B.) Even granting the erroneous premise that all Greek presents express continuing action, Philippians 1:29 states that God has given the gift of faith (in the present tense) to His people. Thus, Christians have been given “continuous faith,” and they will not stop believing. C.) Large leaps are made in the process of transforming simple promises such as “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31) into something more palatable to baptismal regeneration. The gymnastics of turning such promises into “continuous belief that does not bring salvation until the moment of death,” which then becomes into “continuous obedience that does not bring salvation until the moment of death,” which must then become “non-continuous obedience, for one who sins and loses salvation but confesses the sin and gets salvation back again has not continually obeyed but will still be saved as long as he has confessed everything before he dies,” which then becomes “a state of non-continuous obedience that brings salvation at the moment of death and which only begins at baptism (if not later)—although (as Campbellites, Oneness Pentecostals, and others affirm) one must believe before being baptized—so actually one is not saved when he believes, but only after he is baptized,” manages to turn the plain statement of myriads of Scriptures promising justification immediately upon belief into exactly the opposite of what they actually say. D.) The Johannine distinctions in Greek tenses for *pisteuo* do not distinguish the present as a “continuous tense.” Endnote #156 documents the real distinctions. E.) When the Greek present tense is simplistically and erroneously stated to be a “continuous tense,” it is contrasted with the Greek aorist tense, which is labeled as point action. However, eternal life is not just promised to faith in the present tense (John 3:16), but to faith in the aorist tense (cf. Romans 4:3; Galatians 2:16; Hebrews 4:3). Indeed, the only time in Scripture the question “What must I do to be saved?” appears, the answer is “Believe [aorist tense] on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30-31)! Eternal security is clearly predicated upon receiving Christ in an aorist tense manner (John 4:13-14). F.) Saving faith is indicated with every tense for the Greek verb “believe” in the New Testament—not just the Greek present, but *pisteuo* in the perfect, future, aorist, imperfect, and pluperfect tenses designates the faith of the justified (John 16:27; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 17:8, 20-24; Acts 14:23; 16:31; John 12:11, 37, 40).

Baptismal regenerationists who employ the “*believe* is in the Greek continuous tense” argument would do well to stop doing so, and use the time they formerly spent propounding such foolishness learning Greek.

7.) “If repentance is implied when salvation is promised to faith, baptism is likewise implied. Verses that promise salvation to faith really only promise forgiveness to baptized believers.” This allegation has many problems. As demonstrated in the earlier section “The

Gospel of Jesus Christ,” repentance and faith emphasize two sides of one supernaturally-produced, instantaneous decision to trust in the Son of God for deliverance from sin’s penalty and power. One cannot turn from his sins in repentance without turning from the sin of unbelief, and one cannot believe on or trust in Christ for salvation from sin without wanting deliverance from sin’s bondage and control. Baptism, on the other hand, simply is not an inward turning from sin to depend upon the saving work of Christ. It is not an instantaneous decision but a process in which one who has previously professed repentance and faith is dipped under water and brought up out of it.

Furthermore, the idea that baptism is included whenever faith in Christ is mentioned turns multitudes of Biblical texts into absurdities. For example, this notion would require that, contrary to explicit Biblical testimony (Hebrews 11:13, 39; John 8:56; Galatians 3:6-14), no Old Testament saint ever believed in Christ, for baptism was not practiced in the Old Testament. It would also mean that promises such as, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24) really mean, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and is baptized on him (?) that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life,” although nothing that sounds remotely similar is found anywhere in Scripture. Why is it that throughout the Bible the pattern is that those that first “gladly received [God’s] word were baptized” (Acts 2:41)? Did they all gladly receive the Word without believing it? This argument turns into nonsense the examples of people saved by faith in the New Testament. Was the woman who washed Christ’s feet with her hair being dipped in water when the Lord said to her, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke 7:50)? When Christ told blind Bartimaeus, “Thy faith hath saved thee” (Luke 18:42), was one of the apostles dipping the beggar into a pool of water that was somehow present on the road to Jericho (Luke 18:35)? When, while Peter was preaching, Cornelius and his friends “believed on the Lord Jesus Christ . . . [and were] granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:17-18; 10:43) and instantly received the gift of the Holy Ghost, was Cornelius’ house inside of a large pool, and were people holding these new converts under water during the sermon so that they believed and were baptized at the same moment? This argument for baptismal regeneration turns the narratives of the holy Bible into something ludicrous.

In light of the ridiculous implications of this argument, it is not surprising that those who employ it do not really believe it. Denominationalists who oppose the baptism of infants, but accept baptismal regeneration, will not say that those they have convinced to join their religion and are about to place underwater are unrepentant, unbelieving, faithless God-haters (Titus 1:15-16). However, if believing in Christ includes baptism, such unbelieving God-haters are the only people one can lead to the baptistry. Those who contend for infant baptism also cannot consistently maintain that faith always includes baptism, for denominations that sprinkle or pour water on infants still require a confession of faith from adults who convert to their religious system. The members of religious societies that practice infant baptism do not believe that their

adult converts are unrepentant, unbelieving, faithless God-haters when they are baptized. Nor do those who employ this argument really think that the verses that guarantee everlasting bliss to every single person who believes (such as John 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:47) actually promise that every single person who has ever been baptized receives eternal life. Baptismal regenerationists universally deny that someone who is baptized in conscious and definite rebellion and resistance to God receives the forgiveness of sin despite his inward repudiation and hatred for the ordinance. They teach that a person does not get eternal life if he is deliberately rejecting both the significance of baptism and He who instituted it at the time he receives the “sacrament.” They therefore do not believe that God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever is baptized should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Clearly, the idea that baptism is implied every time the Bible promises salvation to belief is impossible. It turns countless verses into nonsense. Even those who employ this notion as an argument against justification by faith do not really believe it. The argument demonstrates the absurdities that those who reject the gospel are driven to in order to defend their heretical notions.

8.) The city of Jericho and Naaman the leper are also used to argue against justification by faith alone. Hebrews 11:30 states that “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.” The argument alleges that since the walls did not fall down until the Israelite army marched around the city for seven days (Joshua 6), faith does not exclude works, so baptism can supposedly be a prerequisite for salvation. Similarly, since Naaman the leper needed to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River before he was healed from leprosy (2 Kings 5), justifying faith and works are supposedly not mutually exclusive, and baptism can be a prerequisite for salvation. Appealing to the walls of Jericho and Naaman the leper washing himself in the Jordan to prove baptismal regeneration would be humorous, were the argument over something less than eternity in heaven or hell. Apart from the fact that neither passage has anything to do with receiving justification, and that Naaman had no faith at all until after he washed and was healed, this baptismal regenerationist allegation confounds justifying faith with daily faith for serving God in life. Doing works for God, such as the Israelites did in defeating Jericho, is the daily serving faith of the people of God, not the justifying faith of the sinner who comes to Christ for pardon empty-handed. The former is intimately associated with works (Ephesians 2:10; John 14:12), but the latter excludes works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:5; 11:6). God never promised Israel that the city of Jericho would fall the moment they believed, but He did promise immediate pardon to believers in a vast number of passages. (See the sections “The Old Testament teaches justification by faith alone, not by baptism” and “The New Testament teaches justification by faith alone, not by baptism” above.) Those who use Jericho and Naaman to defend baptismal regeneration, rejecting the clear promises of God to save all believers, ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Other arguments, not dealt with in this book, may at times be made by baptismal regenerationists to support their doctrine. (See, for example, pgs. 116-122 of, *Campbellism—Its*

History and Heresies, by Bob L. Ross. Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1976, for some other arguments employed by those of this denomination. The arguments mentioned in *Campbellism*, but not refuted here, were deemed so transparently faulty that they were not worthy of mention. Note also John Owen, *Exposition of Hebrews* (Evansville, IN: Sovereign Grace, 1960) for comments on Hebrews 10:22, should anyone wish to employ that verse against justification by faith.) However, the overall doctrine of baptismal regeneration having been thoroughly demolished, diligent and prayerful study of the Bible will undoubtedly answer, by God's grace and for His glory, whatever else may be alleged in its favor.

If you have further questions about baptismal regeneration, or other questions from the Bible, please contact:

You can also visit <http://sites.google.com/site/faithalonesaves/salvation> for more information about the gospel, salvation Bible studies, information about Bible-believing and practicing Baptist churches in your local area, and other helpful material.

ⁱ All Bible quotations employ the King James Version (KJV/KJB), which has been the standard English version for the last 400 years (based on the Greek and Hebrew texts used by God’s people from the first century to today), and is by far the best English Bible. As a trustworthy rendering of the inspired and preserved original language texts, it is the Word of God in the English language. Two features of the KJV which distinguish it from other English versions should be noted at this point for the sake of those not familiar with them. In the KJV, words that are necessary for English grammar but are not explicitly contained in the original language text are put into italics, like *this*. The italicized words are not for emphasis, but for accuracy of translation. Additionally, thou/thee/thy forms indicate second person singular words in the original language texts (e. g., “I gave the book to you, John Doe,” where “you” is only one person) while ye/you forms in the KJV indicate second person plural words in the original language texts (e. g. “I gave the books to you all, all twenty of you,” where “you” refers to more than one person). Both of these distinctions have been lost in nearly all modern versions. For more information on the issue of Bible texts and versions, see *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*, ed. Kent Brandenburg, El Sobrante, CA: Pillar and Ground Publishing, 2003, and *Defending the King James Bible*, D. A. Waite, Collingswood, NJ: Bible For Today, 1999.

ⁱⁱ When endnotes cite outside sources, the citations in the references should be specific enough that the interested reader can acquire and examine the material for himself. Any book or periodical listed can be acquired at one’s local library through a process known as an interlibrary loan, with which any helpful librarian can assist the unfamiliar reader.

ⁱⁱⁱ “By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin” (section 1263, pg. 321, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Paulist Press: Mahwah, NJ: 1994. Emphasis in the original.). “The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation” (section 1257, pg. 320, *Catholic Catechism*). “Baptism is a new birth. It is being born to the life made new by our Lord Jesus Christ. It means to be alive in Christ. . . . Through Holy Baptism all become Christ’s. We become Christians and have the opportunity to inherit God’s Kingdom. . . . Why in the world would any parents who claim to be Christians want to put off making their offspring Christians as soon as possible? Don’t they want their infants to share in the Kingdom of God?” (Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church, *One Church*, 1981).

While there was a great diversity in belief among the ancient Gnostic heretics, the doctrine was found among them that the “Spirit of Christ is communicated in Baptism, which is therefore necessary to salvation” (pg. 63, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, Henry B. Swete. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1912 (1966 reprint ed.)).

^{iv} Luther called baptism “a new birth by which we are . . . loosed from sin, death, and hell, and become children of life, heirs of all the gifts of God, God’s own children, and brethren of Christ” (Luther, *Works*, 53:103). Martin Luther composed the Lutheran *Small Catechism*, which affirms that “baptism effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare.” (IV). The classic Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* states that “baptism . . . is necessary to salvation . . . [we] condemn the Anabaptists, who reject the baptism of children, and say that children are saved without baptism” (Article IX). Luther and his followers today state that when a baby is sprinkled with water to “baptize” him or her, God gives the baby faith and the infant is “saved by faith”—upon being baptized. This belief is still baptismal regeneration, just in a slightly more subtle form than the Roman Catholic doctrine.

^v The Anglican and Episcopalian confession of faith, the *39 Articles of Religion*, states in Article 27 that “baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened [made Christians by baptism], but it is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church: the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed.” The affirmation that baptism is a “seal” of forgiveness of sin is a declaration that it brings about regeneration. One is “baptized, and born again” (Article 15). The Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (New York, NY: Church Pension Fund, 1945, pgs. 270, 280) commands the priest to pray, immediately before baptism, “Give thy Holy Spirit to this child, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation,” and, after administering the water, to thank God that He was pleased “to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thy own child, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church.” The *Anglican Catechism* begins with the declaration of the catechumen that “baptism [was that] wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and the inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”

^{vi} John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was an Anglican priest, and the Anglican *39 Articles*, which taught salvation by baptism, were endorsed by him and his denomination. The Wesley brothers called adults already baptized as infants to conversion only because of their heretical Arminian theology. Since they rejected the Biblical truth that once one is saved, he is always saved, they held that one who was regenerated in infant baptism could fall away and become a child of the devil again, at which time he would need a second new birth. Commenting on John 3:5, Wesley affirmed, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit—Except he experience that great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptized (wherever baptism can be had) as the outward sign and means of it [he cannot

enter into the kingdom of God]” (*Notes on the Old and New Testaments*, John Wesley. elec. acc. *Online Bible*; orig. pub. 1767). He states here that baptism is the means of the new birth. He also declared, “It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition” (John Wesley, sermon, *The New Birth*). In his *Doctrinal Tracts* (pg. 246, 251) he wrote, “[T]he benefits . . . we receive by baptism, is the next point to be considered. And the first of these is the washing away of original sin, by the application of Christ’s death. . . . the merits of Christ’s life and death, are applied to us in baptism. . . . infants are . . . proper subjects of baptism, seeing, in the ordinary way, they cannot be saved unless [sin] be washed away in baptism. Infants need to be washed from original sin. Therefore they are proper subjects for baptism” (cited in chapter 9, *The Evils of Infant Baptism*, Robert Boyt C. Howell, accessed in the *Fundamental Baptist CD-Rom Library*, Oak Harbor, WA: Way of Life Literature, 2003). John’s brother, the Methodist hymn-writer Charles Wesley, wrote against the Baptists, “Partisans of a narrow sect/ Your cruelty confess/ Nor still inhumanly reject/ Whom Jesus would embrace./ Your little ones preclude them not/ From the baptismal flood brought/ But let them now to Christ be saved/ And join the Church of God” (*Charles Wesley’s Journal*, 18 October 1756, 2:128).

vii While a significant number of modern Presbyterian and Reformed groups would object to the term *baptismal regeneration*, John Calvin, essentially the founder of Presbyterian and Reformed churches, declared that “God, regenerating us in baptism, ingrafts us into the fellowship of his Church, and makes us his by adoption . . . whatever time we are baptized, we are washed and purified . . . forgiveness, which at our first regeneration we receive by baptism alone . . . forgiveness has reference to baptism” (*Institutes*, 4:17:1, 4:15:3, 4). Calvin, expositing the Reformed position, declared, “We assert that the whole guilt of sin is taken away in baptism, so that the remains of sin still existing are not imputed. That this may be more clear, let my readers call to mind that there is a twofold grace in baptism, for therein both remission of sins and regeneration are offered to us. We teach that full remission is made . . . by baptism . . . the guilt is effaced [and] it is null in regard to imputation. Nothing is plainer than this doctrine” (1547 *Antidote to the Council of Trent*, Reply to the 1st Decree of the 5th Session). Reformed confessional statements affirm that “Baptism . . . is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of [one’s] ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins . . . by the right use of this ordinance the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Article 28). This essentially teaches baptismal regeneration, whether or not its proponents like the term. If infant baptism “seals” both regeneration and the remission of sins, and confers grace, then infants who are baptized are born again. The Reformed *Second Helvetic Confession* states that “to be baptized in the name of Christ is to be enrolled, entered, and received into the covenant and family, and so into the inheritance of the sons of God . . . to be cleansed also from the filthiness of sins . . . God . . . adopts us to be his sons, and by a holy covenant joins us to himself . . . all these things are assured by baptism. . . . We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that newborn infants of the faithful are to be baptized” (Article 20). Calvin likewise condemned the “Anabaptists . . . [who] refuse baptism to infants, because [they say] infants are incapable of understanding that mystery which is denoted by it. We, on the other hand, maintain that since baptism is the pledge and figure of the forgiveness of sins and likewise of adoption by God, it ought not to be denied to infants whom God adopts and washes with the blood of His Son” (John Calvin, *Commentary* on Matthew 19:14).

Presbyterian and Reformed confessions either affirm baptismal regeneration or, at best, do not require the children of believers to ever come to a point where they see themselves as lost, hell-bound sinners and turn to Christ in repentance and faith. As “covenant children” they are assumed to be saved already, and so grow up religious but lost. The Reformed often teach that it is a “sin against God’s covenant . . . that covenant, baptized, Reformed young people are made the objects of an ‘evangelism’ that treats them as unsaved sinners who must be saved by accepting Christ. If this is what is meant by the conversion of the child, Reformed parents and the Reformed church reject it in the name of the covenant of God sealed to their children in infancy” (pg. 21-22, *The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers*, David J. Engelsma, South Holland, IL: Evangelism Committee, Protestant Reformed Church, n. d.). The idea that young children, infants, or even preborn children, who are yet unable to discern between right and wrong (Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 7:16; Jonah 4:11; Romans 9:11) and who “have not known any thing” (Deuteronomy 31:13; cf. Ecclesiastes 6:5) can be born again (a consequence of believing the gospel, John 1:12) and be converted is false. In Ephesians 2:1-3 Paul tells the church at Ephesus, which certainly had infants and young children in it (cf. Ephesians 6:1), that “we all” who are now made alive in Christ at one time were “children of wrath,” conducting ourselves “in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” Since infants unable to know right from wrong cannot serve sinful lusts in their minds, and all those made alive in Christ at one time conducted themselves in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, men are only born again after they have reached an age where they are able to so conduct themselves. The Reformed argue that John the Baptist and Jeremiah were regenerated in the womb because the former leaped when Mary came to visit (Luke 1:44; cf. Luke 1:15 and endnote 37) and the latter was known by God in the womb (Jeremiah 1:5). Someone who does not have a presupposed theological conclusion he wishes to defend at all costs knows that leaping, whether in the womb or

elsewhere, or having God know about one and have a plan for one's life, is very far from the new birth—indeed, one can have far more than these things without regeneration (Matthew 13:20-21). The Reformed simply need to justify the human tradition and abominable heresy of infant baptism that they retained when they left Catholicism. See endnotes 11, 12, 90, 127, 128, and 133).

viii Since Jesus Christ promised that “the gates of hell shall not prevail” against His church (Matthew 16:18), and Jesus Christ has “glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end” (Ephesians 3:21), true churches have existed from the days of Christ until today. Since the Lord Jesus promised that these congregations would practice baptism “always, *even* unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19), as well as the other church ordinance, the Lord's supper, “till He come” (1 Corinthians 11:26), true churches have continued in the Biblical doctrine of baptism and the Lord's supper and have always rejected the error of baptismal regeneration. True doctrine and practice has received a variety of labels over the centuries, but in modern times is found among the churches denominated “Baptist.” See endnote 16.

ix Roman Catholicism affirms that its traditions are equal in authority to Scripture: “The sacred and holy, ecumenical, and general Synod of Trent . . . [declares that] both saving truth and moral discipline . . . are contained in the written books [of the Bible], and the unwritten traditions . . . the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand; (the Synod) following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety, and reverence, all the books of the Old and of the New Testament . . . as also the said traditions, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals . . . and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession. . . . But if any one . . . knowingly and deliberately condemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema [condemned to hell]” (pg. 18-19, *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, trans. J. Waterworth, London: Dolman, 1848). Other false religions, such as Mormonism and liberal or modernistic Protestantism, also attempt to undermine the sufficiency of the Bible, despite the explicit affirmation of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that “Scripture . . . [can make] the man of God . . . perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works,” and thus is the only authority required for faith and practice. Every word of the Bible is as certainly God's Word as if one heard Him speak audibly from heaven (2 Peter 1:16-21), which requires that Scripture contain no errors of any kind from Genesis to Revelation. Furthermore, God has promised to preserve every word He inspired (Psalm 12:6-7; Matthew 5:18; 24:35, etc.), and keep each of them available to every generation of believers until the end of the world (Matthew 4:4; Isaiah 59:21; Matthew 28:20). Therefore, God's inspired words have not been corrupted or lost (although men have tried, cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:2, Jeremiah 36:23). Furthermore, God's people immediately received Scripture when it was given by inspiration (John 17:8)—the Bible did not “become inspired” because of a church council hundreds of years after the completion of the canon. Biblical writers knew that their compositions were inspired Scripture (Exodus 34:27; Jeremiah 36:2; 1 Corinthians 7:40; Revelation 1:11, etc.), and the people of God received them as such. For example, the gospel of Luke was recognized as Scripture equal to the books of Moses immediately after its composition; in 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul affirms the equality of both as “scripture” (cf. Luke 10:7; Deuteronomy 25:4). The first five books of the Bible, written by Moses, were accepted as canonical immediately (Joshua 1:7-8), as were the other Old Testament books (cf. Daniel 9:2). Peter and his audience recognized “Paul . . . in all *his* epistles . . . [are the] scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15-16); thus, the fourteen Pauline letters were already collected and received as inspired during Peter's lifetime. Positive references to “tradition” (2 Thessalonians 2:15) refer to that which found its way into the Bible; “traditions” not found in Scripture are uniformly condemned (Matthew 15:3, 6; Mark 7:9, 13; Colossians 2:8; Titus 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18).

x The Christian receives both forgiveness of all sin and perfect righteousness as his legal standing before God. These gifts from God do not mean, however, that after conversion he will not sin again (cf. 1 John 1:8, 10). When he does sin, however, his legal standing remains unchanged, for he was “perfected forever” (Hebrews 10:14) upon believing, but he loses practical fellowship with his heavenly Father, which he can regain by confessing his sin (1 John 1:9). He also will receive less heavenly reward, although his eternal future in the kingdom of God remains certain: “He shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved” (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). God does not cast the sinning Christian out of His family. Rather, He chastises him (Hebrews 12:5-8) and withholds from him the experience of His presence and His full blessing.

xi Proponents of infant baptism often argue that entire households received the ordinance in Scripture, such households must have had infants in them, and therefore infants are the proper subjects of baptism. The fact that not one of the examples of household baptism in Scripture even hint at the presence of infants should be enough to dispose of this argument. However, an examination of the relevant particular passages provides conclusive evidence that no infants were in the households baptized.

When the Philippian jailer's household was baptized (Acts 16:33), all its members had previously heard the word (v. 32), and the whole household had believed (v. 34). Obviously, no infants were immersed. When Lydia and her household were baptized, it is extremely unlikely that any infants were present, for she was from Thyatira, a very long distance from Philippi where she was converted (Acts 16:14-15, cf. v. 40), even apart from the fact that

she was not married. Thus, her household would almost surely have consisted of servants (cf. Genesis 17:23) old enough to believe. One who would use this passage to prove infant baptism is reading into Scripture his predetermined views. When the household of Stephanas was baptized (1 Corinthians 1:16), its members “addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints” (1 Corinthians 16:15). Infants require a lot of ministry, but they certainly do not perform all kinds of Christian ministry themselves! Thus, in every instance of household baptism in Scripture, it is evident that no infants received the ordinance.

Acts 8:5-12 specifically states that only “men and women” (*andres te kai gunaikes*, v. 12) were baptized, not infants. It is also alleged that 1 Corinthians 7:14 supports infant baptism. However, it would only establish that the children were “holy” because they received infant baptism if unbelieving spouses, who the verse affirms are holy just like the children, were also universally baptized, but this obviously did not take place. The verse actually teaches that one believer in a household sets the house apart for the special care of God from the moment of the individual’s conversion (cf. Genesis 39:5; also note the perfect tense of *hagiadzo* in 1 Corinthians 7:14). The “unbelieving husband” is “sanctified by the wife,” not by baptism, and likewise the unbelieving wife by her husband, and so, by implication, are infants who are yet without faith. This sanctification happens immediately upon the conversion of one member, not subsequently upon the baptism of infants or any other members of the household. Since infant baptism is entirely absent from the Bible, those who practice it add to Scripture and so violate it, offering God false worship (Leviticus 10:1-2; Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Matthew 28:19-20; Revelation 22:18-19).

Some of the Protestant Reformers are on record in opposition to infant baptism and in favor of believer’s baptism; for example, Ulrich Zwingli had stated, “Nothing grieves me more than that at present I have to baptize children, for I know it ought not to be done,” and “if we were to baptize as Christ instituted it then we would not baptize any person until he has reached the years of discretion; for I find it nowhere written that infant baptism is to be practiced” (see pgs. 198-199, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, Leonard Verduin (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964). However, the Reformers failed to abolish infant baptism but followed the pattern of Catholicism by persecuting those who rejected it.

For more on the Bible and infant baptism, see “Infant Baptism,” pgs. 468-491 in *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches*, Edward T. Hiscox, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, n. d. See also endnotes 12, 13, 127, 128, and 133.

^{xii} Indeed, the Greek word “baptize” (*baptidzo*) means “immerse” (see *baptidzo*, pg. 529-530, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964)—the word for “sprinkle” is *rantidzo* (cf. Hebrews 9:21), and “pour” is *keo* (cf. Acts 2:17, *ekkeo*, “pour out,” Job 29:6 LXX, “pour,” *keo*), and neither word is used for the ordinance. Roman Catholicism continued to practice immersion widely for over a millennium before switching, several centuries ago, to pouring. Eastern Catholicism still practices immersion. The founders of the Protestant denominations knew that New Testament baptism was immersion. Luther stated, in his sermon on baptism in 1518, that “baptism is . . . when we dip anything wholly in water, that it is completely covered over. . . . it should be thus, and would be right . . . [for] the child or any one who is to be baptized, [to] be completely sunk down into the water, and dipt again and drawn out” (*Opera Lutheri*, I. 319, Folio ed., quoted on pg. 108, Christian, J. T., *A History of the Baptists*, vol. 1, Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1922.). Calvin wrote that “it is evident that the term *baptise* means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the primitive Church” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4:15:19, trans. Henry Beveridge). Commenting on Acts 8:38, “they went down into the water,” Calvin wrote, “Here we see the rite used among the men of old time in baptism; for they put all the body into the water.” John Wesley, commenting on Romans 6:4, states that the “ancient manner of baptizing [was] by immersion” (*John Wesley's Notes on the Old and New Testaments*, 1767, electronic ed. Sulu D. Kelley, 1997, quoted in the *Online Bible* software by Ken Hamel). Unfortunately, neither Roman Catholicism nor the main Protestant denominations determined to practice what their founders knew the Bible teaches on this subject. For extensive proof that Biblical baptism is necessarily by immersion, see pgs. 386-444, “Christian Baptism,” in *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches*, Hiscox, and pgs. 18-167, *Baptism in its Mode and Subjects*, Alexander Carson (5th rev. ed., Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1860; elec. acc. <http://books.google.com>). See also endnotes 13, 101, 127, and 133. It should be noted that the quotes above do not mean that the Protestant leaders cited did not attempt to make any allegedly Biblical arguments against the exclusive use of immersion in baptism.

^{xiii} The phrases “into the water” and “out of the water” in Matthew 3:13-18 and Acts 8:36-38 do not technically denote the actual act of immersing the individual being baptized under water, but the fact that one who wished to receive baptism had to actually enter into a body of water to be immersed in it. Had sprinkling or pouring qualified as baptism in Acts 8:36-38, there would have been no need for Philip and the eunuch to have left the chariot they were riding in and descended into the middle of a body of water. A few drops from a water jug in the chariot would have sufficed. Only if the eunuch was immersed is the narrative explicable and reasonable.

Similarly, the Lord Jesus would not have needed to descend into the waters of the Jordan river with John the Baptist for baptism unless the Savior of the world was immersed.

It also deserves mention that Christian baptism is the baptism of John the Baptist, since some who believe in baptismal regeneration deny it. The New Testament dispensation began with John, not on the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts (Mark 1:1-4; Matthew 11:13; Luke 16:16; Matthew 11:5; Mark 8:35)—otherwise Jesus Christ did not preach New Testament doctrine, the four gospels are not for Christians, the apostles, who were obviously saved before the book of Acts (Luke 10:20), were not Christians, and other equally absurd conclusions follow. John the Baptist, like a New Testament preacher, proclaimed the Deity of Christ (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3), His substitutionary death (John 1:29), the doctrine of repentance (Matthew 3:2), the terrors of hell (Matthew 3:10-12), and the work of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). He rejoiced in Christ's bride, the church (John 3:29; Ephesians 5:32). He required confession of sin (Matthew 3:6) and evidence of salvation (Matthew 3:8) from candidates for baptism, so he baptized only believers, not infants. He immersed, not sprinkled or poured (Mark 1:5, John 3:23), and his baptism pictured Christ's coming death, burial, and resurrection (John 1:31). The Baptist immersed with God's authority (Matthew 21:24-27), just as the church has that authority today (Matthew 28:18-20). The apostles received John's baptism (Acts 1:22) but were never "rebaptized" when some supposedly different Christian baptism originated—nor were any other converts ever "rebaptized." When Christ commanded His church to go into all the world, preach, baptize, and disciple converts (Matthew 28:17-20; Mark 16:15-16), He spoke to those who had received John's baptism and were familiar with no other kind.

The alleged support for a distinction between John's baptism and Christian baptism in Acts 19:1-7 is invalid. The individuals of Acts 19 were spurious "converts," not real disciples of John the Baptist. They did not believe in the Trinity, and so were unsaved (John 17:3), for they had never even heard of the Holy Spirit (19:2), although John preached about Him (Matthew 3:11). Their spurious discipleship is indicated by the fact that the plural word "disciples," *mathetai*, is nonarticular in 19:1—unlike every single one of the 25 other references in the book of Acts to the word (1:15; 6:1-2, 7; 9:1, 19, 26, 38; 11:26, 29; 14:20, 22, 28; 15:10; 18:23, 27; 19:1, 9, 30; 20:7, 30; 21:4, 16). Paul does not tell these "disciples" that John's baptism has passed away and Christian baptism has now been inaugurated; he tells them what John the Baptist really said (19:4), upon which they believed John's message as expounded by Paul and submitted themselves to baptism (19:5-7). Note that a truly born-again man with John's baptism is not "rebaptized" in the immediately preceding context (18:24-28), simply instructed in the further developments of truth (for the fact that the gospel dispensation began with John does not mean that everything about God's new method of dealing with people was instantly perfectly developed). Acts 18:24-9:7 supports, not undermines, the fact that Christian baptism is John's baptism. See also endnotes 16, 38, 54, 80, and 82.

^{xiv} Some have argued that the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40 demonstrates that baptism is not a public profession of faith, alleging that he was alone with Philip. However, the text never states the eunuch was alone. It is not at all likely that one who held a high governmental office, as did this man (8:27), would travel without a retinue of servants. Indeed, it is unlikely that anyone, regardless of position, would risk the dangers of travel from Ethiopia to Jerusalem and back alone (8:27). If the eunuch were alone, he would have had to be driving his own chariot (8:28), a questionable thing, especially in light of his position—and, while driving, be reading Isaiah the prophet (8:28, 30)! The fact that the eunuch commanded someone else to make his chariot stand still (8:38) also makes it extremely clear that he had servants with him. Furthermore, to assert that Philip and the eunuch were alone assumes that there was nobody else at the water where they stopped (8:36), although a place with water is the natural stopping point for travelers along a road through a desert (8:26), and early writings of post-apostolic Christianity suggest that this baptism took place near a village south of Jerusalem near Hebron, so the presence of others at the water is natural. Furthermore, even if one accepts that this high governmental official was traveling alone from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, and driving his own chariot while reading a scroll, and commanding a phantasm instead of a servant to stop his chariot, and that nobody else had stopped by the water along the highway southward through the desert, Philip, as one with the office of evangelist (Acts 21:8), which is what is commonly called a church-planter or missionary today, had authority from the church at Jerusalem (Acts 21:8; 6:5; cf. 13:1-4) to baptize. Just as a missionary in a foreign nation does not need to travel back to his sending church to have others present when he baptizes his first convert, but baptism is still a public church ordinance, so Philip, as an evangelist sent from the Jerusalem church, was her representative to the eunuch. In a very real way, then, the church was present at the eunuch's baptism because of Philip's position and delegated authority. Furthermore, the nature of baptism as a public testimony of faith in Christ is not limited to the moment of its performance. Baptism, including that of the eunuch, identifies one with Christ for the rest of his life. The example of the Ethiopian eunuch does not at all undermine baptism's status as a testimony of faith in Christ.

^{xv} The word *church* (Greek, *ekklesia*) means *assembly* (cf. Acts 19:32, 39, 41, where *ekklesia* is translated so) or *congregation*. Christ's churches, which are God's sole institution for His work in this age (1 Timothy 3:15), are assemblies of justified individuals (1 Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 1:2) who have been Scripturally baptized. A Biblical church is an independent and autonomous assembly unaffiliated with any sort of hierarchy (although it may

choose to work with other congregations to advance the cause of Christ without binding ecclesiastical ties), under the authority of Christ, the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23). Each assembly has ultimate power over its membership and other decisions (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5). The only church officers are pastors and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3). “Pastor” or “shepherd” (*poimen*), “elder” (*presbuteros*), and “bishop” or “overseer” (*episkopos*) refer to the same office; in 1 Peter 5:1-2, the elders (*presbuteros*) are to “feed” (*poimaino*) the flock (*poimnion*), taking the “oversight” (*episkopeo*). In Acts 20:17 and 20:28, Paul addresses the “elders” (*presbuteros*) of the church at Ephesus and exhorts them to take heed to the “flock” (*poimnion*) over which the Holy Spirit made them “overseers” (*episkopos*). In Titus 1:5-7, each of the “elders” (*presbuteros*) is a “bishop” (*episkopos*). There is no special office of “priest” in the New Testament; Christ is the great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14) and every believer is a priest (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6); religious leaders who call themselves priests and claim to offer sacrifices deny Christ’s one completed sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10-14; 9:8-14). Additionally, the New Testament maintains no clergy/laity distinction—indeed, the people of God are called His “heritage” (*kleron*, from *kleros*, “clergy,” 1 Peter 5:3; cf. Deut 9:29, LXX, *kai houtoi laos sou kai kleros sou*, “And these are thy people and thy portion.”). All religious systems that make bishops/overseers and elders/presbyters into distinct offices, that establish a hierarchy where church officials are not chosen by the congregation but are appointed in a top-down manner, that do not maintain congregational independence, or that employ priests, popes, patriarchs, archbishops, monks, cardinals, metropolitans, rectors, archdeacons, friars, or other “clergy” that are nowhere mentioned in Scripture, are not Christ’s churches, but imposters. It is likewise worthy of mention that the Lord Jesus said to call no man “Father” in the sense of a spiritual office (Matthew 23:9) and the Bible reserves the title “reverend” for God alone (Psalm 111:9). Bishops/overseers are also explicitly seen to be married and raising children (1 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 1:5-6), while “forbidding to marry” is “depart[ing] from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1-3; cf. 1 Corinthians 9:5; Hebrews 13:4). The idea of requiring a celibate clergy is, therefore, demonic. See also endnotes 12, 16, 53, and 124.

^{xvi} Christ started His church during His earthly ministry (Matthew 18:17) and promised that His assembly would, from that time, overcome the powers of hell (Matthew 16:18). Since it was “added unto” on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41, 47) with the conversion of three thousand men, it was obviously already in existence before that day—it is hard to add to something that does not already exist. This initial congregation established other churches, which proceeded to start further assemblies, the descendants of which have continued to this very day. Christ promised that “the gates of hell shall not prevail” against His congregations (Matthew 16:18), but He would be with them “always, *even* unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20, cf. 1 Corinthians 11:26), since God would get “glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages” (Ephesians 3:21). Consequently, there has never been a day since Christ started His church that faithful assemblies of believers have not been upon the earth. Therefore, any religious organization or denomination that originated in a period subsequent to the first century cannot be the church that Jesus founded. In addition to the unscriptural practices of Catholicism, it is evident historically that this religion evolved over a period of centuries and has very little resemblance to the church the Lord Jesus started (see endnote 52); it therefore cannot be the true church of Jesus Christ. The various Protestant denominations, such as Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and Presbyterianism, came into existence c. 1,600 years too late to be the church Jesus founded, and the various splinter groups that have emerged since the Reformation, such as Methodism, the Pentecostal denominations (Assemblies of God, Church of God in Christ, etc.), the denominations springing from Alexander Campbell (Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, etc.), Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventism, and the Watchtower Society also negate any claim to be Christ’s church by their origin, as they do by their anti-Biblical doctrines. However, assemblies that believed and practiced the Bible, as do good Baptist churches today, have maintained a continual existence under a variety of names (Anabaptists, Waldenses, Donatists, Novatians, Cathari, Christians, etc.) from the first century to the present. Baptists certainly did not originate at the time of the Reformation, as the following quotations demonstrate: 1.) Cardinal Hosius (Catholic, a member of the Council of Trent, A. D. 1560): “If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and boldness of which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer and surer than that of the Anabaptists since there have been none for these twelve hundred years past, that have been more generally punished.” This Catholic prelate, living at the time of the Reformation, admitted that the Baptists had been around since A. D. 360. Of course, allowing them an origin any more ancient would make his position very uncomfortable. 2.) Mosheim (Lutheran, A. D. 1755), said, “The true origin of that sect which acquired the name of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion . . . is hid in the remote depths of antiquity, and is consequently extremely difficult to be ascertained.” 3.) Dr. J. J. Durmont & Dr. Ypeig (Reformed writers specifically appointed by the King of Holland to ascertain if the historical claims of the Baptists were valid), concluded in A. D. 1819 that they were “descended from the tolerably pure evangelical Waldenses. . . . They were, therefore, in existence long before the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. . . . We have seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists . . . were the original Waldenses; and who have long in the history of the Church, received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community

which has stood since the Apostles; and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrine of the gospel through all ages.” 4.) Alexander Campbell (founder of the “Disciples of Christ” and “Church of Christ” denominations, A. D. 1824): “I would engage to show that baptism as viewed and practiced by the Baptists, had its advocates in every century up to the Christian era . . . clouds of witnesses attest the fact, that before the Reformation from popery, and from the apostolic age, to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and the practice of baptism have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced.” See pgs. 83-96, *A History of Baptists*, John T. Christian, vol. 1 (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1922), and *History of Baptists*, G. H. Orchard (Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1987), pgs. iii-xxiv, for the original sources of the quotations here listed, and further information. Quotations and other evidence from non-Baptist or anti-Baptist authors of like effect could be greatly multiplied (e. g., the Reformed writer Leonard Verduin stated, “No one is credited with having invented the Anabaptism of the sixteenth century for the simple reason that no one did. . . . There were Anabaptists, called by that name, in the fourth century.” pg. 189-190, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965). Baptist historians naturally affirm their own succession as well. The historical fact that Baptist churches have existed from the first century to the present confirms the truth, established by their Biblical doctrine and practice, that they are the churches founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, all other “churches” are guilty of schism and division from the Lord’s true assemblies, and have no Divine authority to baptize, carry on the work of God, or exist at all. See also endnotes 8, 12, 13, 15, 38, 40, 52, 53, and 124.

xvii

Some baptismal regenerationists, recognizing the problem which faces their theological dogma because of the unchanging nature of the gospel and the lack of baptism in the Old Testament, state that forgiveness by means of baptism is a “new and living way” (Hebrews 10:20) to receive salvation. However, the contrast in Hebrews 10 is between the typical sacrifices of the Mosaic system and their fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ. This contrast, elaborated in 10:1-18, constitutes the basis (“therefore,” v. 19) for the affirmation of 10:19-22. The “new and living way” to “enter into the holiest” is “by the blood of Jesus,” by His offered “flesh” (that is, through His sacrificial death and shed blood offered on the cross, rather than by Mosaic sacrifices). Jesus’ sacrifice, not baptism, is the “new and living way,” and it is contrasted with Mosaic sacrifices, not with the means through which Old Testament believers found forgiveness. Animal sacrifices have never taken away sin (Hebrews 10:4); the sins of the ages before the incarnation of the Lord Jesus were forgiven on the basis of His coming death (Romans 3:25). The Old Testament believers saved by faith in the coming Messiah (Romans 4:1-8; Genesis 15:6; John 8:56-58; Psalm 32:1-2, etc.). Consider also that the one true message of salvation is called “the gospel,” not “a gospel,” and it receives this designation in the Old Testament era (Hebrews 4:2), during the earthly ministry of Christ (Mark 1:15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10), and at all times after His ascension (Acts 20:24; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 3:6; Philippians 1:5).

xviii

Compare Genesis 41:40, where this verb (*nashaq*) is translated “be ruled.”

xix

Just as New Testament era believers “may know that [they] have eternal life” (1 John 5:13), that is, have confident assurance that their sins are forgiven, they are free from condemnation, and they will enter the presence of God, so Old Testament saints possessed assurance of salvation: “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psalm 17:15). “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” (Psalm 73:24-26). “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” (Job 19:25-27).

xx

See Appendix #1 for a refutation of the argument for salvation by works based on the city of Jericho.

xxi

Hebrews 11 also clearly establishes that saving faith is more than simple intellectual knowledge. Old Testament saints (the word “saint” means “holy one” or “set-apart one” and refers to all the people of God, alive and in glory, not to a special class of dead believers only; cf. Deuteronomy 33:3; 1 Samuel 2:9; Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 14:33; 16:1), according to Hebrews 11:13, saw the promises of God (that is, they had intellectual knowledge of them), “were persuaded of them” (they accepted the promises were true), and “embraced them” (they trusted their souls to these promises and the Christ offered in them). Saving faith still has these three aspects: intellectual understanding, acceptance of the truth of God’s promises, and actual trust or reliance upon Christ as offered man in the gospel. A man who reads that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16), but does not acknowledge that it is true, has intellectual understanding but not saving faith. One who reads such a verse and accepts it as true has intellectual knowledge and conviction of the veracity of God’s Word, but not saving faith. Only he who reads such a verse, accepts that it is true, and then places his full confidence in Christ alone to save him has saving faith. Note that Hebrews 11:13 also mentions that saving faith results in works; it states that the saints “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” One is justified by faith alone apart from works, but justifying faith will

always manifest itself in works, for those who trust their eternal souls to Christ will also characteristically trust Him for day-to-day practical holiness.

xxii Abraham is called the father of church age believers, and his justification by faith is the centerpiece of the argument of Romans 4 and Galatians 3-4 for justification by faith in this age. Since “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. . . faith *was* reckoned to Abraham for righteousness . . . [and] the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Romans 4:3, 9, 16), then “know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham . . . they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Galatians 3:7, 9). Romans 4:20-5:1 makes this comparison very explicit and exact: since Abraham “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform . . . therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 4:20-5:1). One must baptize Abraham before he can get the New Testament to teach baptismal regeneration.

xxiii It is important to be clear about what the word “saved” means in reference to a believer. The moment a lost sinner comes to Christ in repentant faith, he is saved, in the sense that he is justified; all of his past, present, and future sins are removed, and the righteousness of Christ is credited to him, so that God judicially views him as perfectly righteous (Romans 5:1). At the moment of justification, God also positionally sanctifies the believer; that is, He sets him apart as His own (Hebrews 10:10, 14; Jude 1). A child of God, therefore, “has been saved” from the penalty of sin. At the moment of justification God also begins a work in the Christian of progressive sanctification (2 Timothy 2:21), of growing more and more holy, which will continue for the entirety of his life; in this sense, the child of God “is being saved” from the practice of sin, having been delivered from its power when God gave him a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17) at the time of his justification. Furthermore, when God’s people on earth, at the return of Christ or at death, are taken to be with their Lord, they receive glorified, perfect bodies (Romans 8:30), and, at that time, “will be saved” from the presence of sin. The living child of God on earth today is, then, in one sense, already saved (justified, 2 Tim 1:9). In another sense, he is being saved (progressively sanctified, Philippians 2:12). In a third sense, he is not yet saved (glorified, 1 Peter 1:5). Anyone who ever places his faith in Christ immediately receives justification (Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”), is positionally sanctified, and begins to be progressively sanctified (Acts 26:18, “they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”), and is certain of future glorification (Romans 8:30, “whom he justified, them he also glorified.”). All who ever participate in justification are also certain of sanctification and glorification. If one is delivered from the penalty of sin, he will be progressively delivered from the practice of it, because the power of sin was broken when he was converted, and he will ultimately be freed from sin’s presence. In a particular verse, the word “saved” may have any one of these senses (or even refer to physical deliverance, Psalm 18:3, among other further uses of the word). The context will make it clear in what sense the word “saved” is used.

The erroneous claim that an alleged “Greek continuous tense” is employed in verses predicating salvation only upon faith is refuted in Appendix 1.

xxiv The counterargument that one is only “begotten” of God, but not “born” of God at the time of faith, is refuted in endnote 45.

xxv His household believed as well, Acts 16:34. Note the discussion and demonstration that faith was also requisite for the household to receive salvation in Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), pg. 402.

xxvi The reader is encouraged to re-read these twenty texts and substitute a form of the word *baptism* for *believe* in each verse. It should be clear how strange and unlike Scripture the verses sound with such a substitution, since no such promises are found in the Bible for “whosoever” is immersed in water.

xxvii For the argument that this verse, in conjunction with the next, affirms baptismal regeneration, see the analysis of Galatians 3:27 in the section “‘Proof-texts’ for baptismal regeneration examined.”

xxviii If John the Baptist was the greatest person ever born, he was greater than Jesus’ mother, Mary. The Bible knows nothing of the adoration or worship of Mary. She was a godly woman who had the tremendous privilege of being the mother of the Messiah but was by no means sinless, since she offered a sin offering for her uncleanness (Luke 2:24; Leviticus 12:2-8) and shared the need of all other people (Romans 3:10-12; 5:12, 19) for a Savior from hell (Luke 1:47). She was not a perpetual virgin (and virginity is not more honorable than marriage, Hebrews 13:4), for her husband Joseph “knew her not till she had brought forth” Jesus, her “firstborn” (Matthew 1:25; Luke 2:7), after which God blessed her marriage with many children (Matthew 13:55-56; John 7:5 + Psalm 69:8; Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 9:5; Galatians 1:19). Praying to her, or trusting in her intercession to receive any sort of blessing from God, is a grave error, for she does not have special access to Him (Matthew 12:46-50, cf. Luke 11:27-28) and the

only mediator between God and man is Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). Furthermore, while she was redeemed (Luke 1:47) and is certainly in heaven with other dead believers, since she is still a human, not God. With millions of people praying to her all over the world at the same time, she could not possibly understand all of them at once. Like all other humans, she could only hear one person at a time—even if she wanted to hear prayers, which she does not, the odds of getting through to her would be just about zero. Since God is all-knowing and everywhere-present, prayers are properly addressed to Him, for He can hear and answer any number of them at once. Praying to Mary or other dead people treats them as if they were God and is idolatry.

xxix Although John was the greatest of men born of women, the “he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater” clause indicates that the most lowly person in heaven possesses greater exaltation than the greatest believer who is still on the earth, not yet having passed on to glory.

xxx “Made thee whole” is *sesoken*, the perfect tense of the verb *sodzo*, “to save.” Christ is saying that the man was “made whole” or “saved” spiritually, not simply healed physically. *Sodzo* in the perfect tense always refers to spiritual salvation. Sometimes the person who was saved was also healed physically, and sometimes not. The verb in the perfect appears in Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; Acts 4:9 (cf. 3:8-9, 16, 19), and Ephesians 2:5, 8. *Hugies* is the word specifically for physical healing (Matthew 12:13; 15:31; Mark 3:5; 5:34—note the contrast in *Thugater, he pistis sou sesoken se; hupage eis eirenen* (“Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace”—spiritual salvation) and *kai isthi hugies apo tes mastigos sou* (“and be whole of thy plague”—physical healing); Luke 6:10; John 5:4, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15; 7:23; Acts 4:10). Furthermore, Luke seventeen contrasts the physical healing of all ten lepers (17:12-14) with the saving faith of the one, who, when “healed” (*iaomai*), also “glorified God, and fell down at [Christ’s] feet, giving him thanks” (v. 15-16). Ten lepers were “cleansed” (*katharidzo*), but only one was saved spiritually and “returned to give glory to God” (v. 18). Therefore Christ said to this one, employing second-person singular pronouns to contrast his spiritual salvation with the physical healing of the ten, “Thy faith hath made thee whole” (v. 19). It is noteworthy that the marginal reading on Mark 10:52 in the 1611 KJV indicated that “made thee whole” could also be rendered “saved thee,” a translation also sometimes actually adopted within the text of the Authorized Version (Luke 7:50; 18:42; cf. Ephesians 2:5, 8).

xxxi Christ prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). The antecedent of the pronoun “them” in the verse is the Roman soldiers, the “they” who crucified Him (v. 33), and the “they” who “parted his raiment, and cast lots” (v. 34). Christ’s prayers are always answered (John 11:42), so these whom He prayed for would certainly be forgiven. The centurion was saved in Luke 23:47, for he recognized who Jesus was and “glorified God,” something only saved people can do (cf. Romans 8:8). Matthew 27:54 mentions both his conversion and those of the other soldiers who participated in the crucifixion.

xxxii This thief saw himself as a sinner deserving condemnation (“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,” Luke 23:40-41), recognized Christ’s sinlessness (“this man hath done nothing amiss,” v. 41) and knew Jesus was the Messiah (cf. v. 35, 39). He repented (“Lord,” v. 42), and trusted in Him (“remember me when [not “if”!] thou comest into thy kingdom [an event requiring His resurrection and exaltation by the Father to rule and reign, and presupposing a sovereign purpose of God in the cross, which the dying thief could well have connected with what Christ has already said, namely, “Father, forgive them”; consider also the theme of substitution seen in v. 35-37, 25],” v. 42—what a statement to make to a man who is crucified next to you!). Those baptismal regenerationists who try to get around this man’s salvation apart from baptism by the weak counterargument that it was a different dispensation since Christ had not yet died (as if that would alter the nature of the “everlasting gospel,” Revelation 14:6), should note that the Lord Jesus died before the thief did (John 19:32-34). The Roman soldiers were also saved without baptism (see endnote 31) after Christ’s death.

xxxiii More extensive analysis of the Apostle Paul’s conversion will be found in the section “Other Reasons to Believe in Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism,” and in the discussion of Acts 22:16 contained in the section “‘Proof-texts’ for Baptismal Regeneration Examined.”

xxxiv “Begotten” and “born again” are synonymous. See endnote 45.

xxxv In Acts 10:45, “they of the circumcision which believed were astonished . . . because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.” “Then answered Peter . . . [these] have received the Holy Ghost as well as we” (Acts 10:46-47). “And as I [Peter] began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them [Gentiles of Acts 10], as on us [Jews] at the beginning [Acts 2]. Then I remembered the word of the Lord . . . ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. . . . God gave them [Gentiles] the like gift as he did unto us [Jews] who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 11:15-17). Acts 2:38 is examined below in the section “‘Proof-texts’ for Baptismal Regeneration Examined.”

xxxvi Desperate to avoid the force of this passage, some baptismal regenerationists make the wild assertion that the receipt of the Spirit in Acts 10 took place before faith, alleging Acts 11:15, “and as I began to speak,” as support. This allegation is invalid for many reasons. 1.) In Acts 11:4-17 Peter simply summarizes the events of Acts 10—his statement does not mean that the Spirit was received before the Gentiles believed. The passage gives what happens

in order (11:4), but it clearly leaves things out; if Acts 11 is exactly what happened, then Peter never preached a sermon at all, for “as I began to speak” (11:15) is his summary statement of the entire message, which he does not mention further in chapter 11. 2.) If it did mean that the Spirit was received before faith, it would also have to mean that the Spirit was received “as [Peter] began to speak,” before he preached any of his sermon, right as the very first word began to come out of his mouth. 3.) Peter stopped preaching in Acts 10:43-44 because his audience began to speak in tongues; he no longer had a quiet group. If the Spirit had been received before faith as the first word came out from Peter’s lips, or even at any point prior to his words in 10:43, the apostle would have been attempting to be heard by a large group of people, all of whom were also speaking at the same time in tongues. The reader who thinks it is possible to preach a sermon to a group of people who are all speaking in different languages at the same time should try it sometime and see how successful he is. Peter would almost surely have preached a much longer message than that given in v. 34-43 if he had not been interrupted by this unexpected work of the Spirit; he did not spend the time required to travel over fifty miles from Joppa to Caesarea (cf. Acts 10:23-24) to speak for about one minute (the time it takes to say 10:34-43); the interruption of tongues so shortly into his message would certainly enable the apostle to say he was interrupted as he began to speak. 3.) This pre-belief view would contradict everything else seen in the book of Acts and the New Testament about the ministry of the Spirit. 4.) When Peter explained the events of Acts 10 to Jewish believers, he said that “God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare [Cornelius and those with him] witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:7-11). The apostle affirms that God, who knows the heart, gave Cornelius and his fellow Gentiles the Holy Spirit as a witness that they believed and had purified their hearts by faith. His words are nonsensical if his auditors received the Spirit before they believed. 5.) In Acts 11:17, the aorist participle *pisteusasin* (“who believed”) is dependent upon the aorist verb *edoken* (“[God] gave”), indicating a simultaneous giving of the Spirit and believing (cf. pg. 624, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel Wallace). The only possibility consistent with Greek grammar is believing prior to God’s giving the Spirit. A baptismal regenerationist who contends that the Spirit was given before the belief flatly contradicts the grammar of Acts 11:17. 6.) Acts 10:44 states that Peter’s audience was baptized with the Spirit “while Peter yet spake these words [that is, the words of v. 43, which promise salvation by faith].” After he pronounced the promise of salvation by faith, “the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (v. 44), for they believed in Christ at that moment. Acts 10:33-48 clearly teaches that the Spirit fell on them after they “heard” the message of v. 34-43, not before they believed the message or heard the sermon. That baptismal regenerationists will make an incredibly poor argument like “the Spirit came on Cornelius before he heard the message” illustrates their desperation in light of the devastating implications of Acts 10 for their heretical theology.

xxxvii

Some baptismal regenerationists attempt to avoid the fact that the indwelling Spirit is only for the already saved in the church age because the angel Gabriel stated that John the Baptist would “be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15). They argue that John the Baptist was indwelt by the Spirit in his mother’s womb, but he obviously had not yet believed the gospel and been saved, so people who are still lost, not having been baptized, can receive the Holy Spirit. This argument ignores the fact that the permanent indwelling of the Spirit is unique to the post-Pentecost (Acts 2) era. Before Christ’s resurrection and His sending of the Spirit (John 16:7) in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came upon men to empower them for acts of service (cf. Judges 6:34, 11:29, 14:19, 2 Chronicles 15:1, etc.), but He did not permanently indwell the saints (cf. 1 Samuel 16:14, Psalm 51:11). The promise of the permanent indwelling of the Spirit, the “gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38), began on that first post-ascension Pentecost. John the Baptist was obviously born far before this time, when “the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified,” before the current age when “they that believe on [Christ] should receive . . . the Holy Ghost” (John 7:39). Luke 1:15 simply meant that the Spirit was at work on John the Baptist in relation to his ministry as the forerunner of the Messiah even from the womb. Indeed, the “filling” predicted in Luke 1:15 could well refer to the time when John “leaped in [his mother’s] womb” upon the coming of Mary, pregnant with the Savior (1:41). The record in Luke 1 in no way undermines the fact that the permanent indwelling of the Spirit is only for believers after Acts 2, as stated in many passages, and it therefore in no way undermines the fact that Cornelius and all those with him believed and received the Spirit before baptism and were consequently saved before they received the ordinance.

xxxviii

Some advocates of baptismal regeneration, such as those affiliated with Alexander Campbell in the “Church of Christ” and many Oneness Pentecostals, affirm that the church started in Acts 2 and the gospel was first preached at that time. They could attempt to get around the argument against baptismal salvation from the gospel of John by affirming that the events recorded in that book took place prior to Pentecost and Acts chapter two. However, this attempt to counter the nature of John’s gospel overlooks the fact that the Apostle wrote his gospel far after the day of Pentecost, probably c. A. D. 95. Consequently, the statement in John 20:31 that his book was written that men might have life through faith in Christ is unquestionably true for individuals in the church age.

Furthermore, if the gospel of Campbellism and likeminded baptismal regenerationist denominations was first preached in Acts 2, then it is “another gospel” (cf. Galatians 1:8-9) than that of the Lord Jesus and the apostolic churches, for the Savior (Mark 1:15; Luke 20:1) and His apostles (Luke 9:6) preached the gospel well before Acts 2, and this pre-Acts 2 gospel was to go to the whole world after Christ’s resurrection (Matthew 24:14; 26:13), and by the command of the risen Lord was to be preached to every creature (Mark 16:15). Since the apostles were saved before Acts 2, and they preached the gospel before Acts 2, a “gospel” of baptismal regeneration that only started on the day of Pentecost would lead to the conclusion that believers today cannot be saved the way the apostles were, and they cannot preach the gospel the apostles preached.

Furthermore, the idea that the church started on Pentecost is entirely false. No verse anywhere states that the church began on that day. The Lord referred to His church twice in the gospels (Matthew 16:18; 18:17), without any indication whatever that it did not yet exist. Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, had the church as His bride before Pentecost (John 3:29; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-33). “God hath set . . . in the church, first apostles” (1 Corinthians 12:28; cf. Ephesians 2:20), but the Lord appointed the apostles far before Pentecost (Mark 3:13-19; Matthew 10:2-4). Christ sang in the midst of the church (Hebrews 2:12), but His only recorded singing took place at the institution of the Lord’s supper (Matthew 26:30)—an ordinance given to the church before Pentecost (Matthew 26:26-31; 1 Corinthians 11:2, 17-34). Before Pentecost Christ was the shepherd/pastor of His church (John 10:14), which was already His flock (a term for the church; Matthew 26:31; Luke 12:32; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:2-3). He then appointed Peter to pastor or shepherd His first assembly after His resurrection but still before Pentecost (John 21:15-17). His church had a business meeting (Acts 1:15-26), a membership roll (Acts 1:15), a treasurer (John 12:6; 13:29), baptism (John 4:1-2), the Lord’s supper (Matthew 26:26-31), church discipline (Matthew 18:15-18), the power to bind and loose (Matthew 18:17-18), and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) before Pentecost, when, obviously already extant, it was “added unto” (Acts 2:41, 47). On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 the church simply received the permanent indwelling of the Spirit and public recognition as the new institution for the age (cf. Exodus 40:35; the tabernacle; 2 Chronicles 7:1; Solomon’s temple; Ezekiel 43:4-5; the Millennial temple).

In relation to the only really significant objection to a pre-Pentecost foundation of the church, the question of how the assembly could begin before the official inauguration of the New Covenant with the death of Christ, Dr. Ron Totttingham wrote, “[The objectors ask how] could you have a ‘new program’ (church) until you have the shedding of the ‘the blood of the covenant,’ of He who is the Life and Head of a ‘new and living’ institution? . . . Hebrews 9:14-18 . . . What is the answer which those . . . would give . . . who would hold that Christ established the first Church during His personal ministry upon earth[?] . . . The New Testament Church [was not] ‘of force’ [Hebrews 9:17] until after the Resurrection. Even Christ still went to the temple [during His earthly ministry]. . . . Hebrews nine only states that the covenant of the Levitical ordinances lasted until the . . . Blood of Christ was shed. . . . The New Testament Church could not be ready for service at its [Spirit] ‘baptism’ at Pentecost unless it was built, or ‘framed,’ prior. Who ever heard of moving into a house [cf. 1 Peter 2:5] (the Holy Spirit moved upon and into the church at Pentecost) without a floor, frame, and more? . . . How then could the church begin before the New Covenant began? By being built [by] the Master Himself during His own personal ministry upon the earth. Then when he died as Testator of the New Covenant, His church of the New Testament (covenant) was ready and waiting to be ‘baptized’ [with] the Holy Spirit and begin [its] ordained service” (*The Door-Step Evangel*, 24:2 (March-April 2008) pgs. 1ff. (pub. Empire Baptist Temple/Great Plains Baptist Divinity School, Sioux Falls, SD)).

For the assertion that John 3:5 supports baptismal regeneration, see the analysis of the verse in the section “‘Proof-texts’ for baptismal regeneration examined” below. See also endnotes 13, 16, 54.

^{xxxix} Christ’s prayer for the elect in John 17 also guarantees that all true believers will characteristically obey the Bible (v. 6, 8) be radically different from the world (v. 6, 14, 16), grow in holiness (v. 17, 19), and both grow in the knowledge of God and have the Father’s love in them (v. 26). All who are ever saved from the penalty of sin are also freed from bondage to sin. Not only do baptismal regenerationists nullify the promises of John 17 concerning the elect’s certain eternal glory, their doctrine denies the Words of the One who created all things by speaking them into existence by affirming that ones who are (allegedly) born again through baptism can still characteristically live for the devil just like the unsaved. The Omnipotent One declares that believers “are not of the world” and undertakes to “sanctify them,” but baptismal regeneration requires that He fails to accomplish His purpose.

^{xl} Alexander Campbell’s sects (the Christian Church, Church of Christ, and others) often argue that they are the true religion because they call themselves “Christians” instead of names (allegedly) not found in the Bible, such as “Baptist.” (Yet see the title given to the first Baptist, one John, the greatest man ever born; Matthew 3:1; 11:11, 12; 14:2, 8; 16:14; 17:13; Mark 6:14, 24, 25; 8:28; Luke 7:20, 28, 33; 9:19; see also endnotes 13, 28, 29). However, Campbellites are not the kind of Christians found in the Bible, for Agrippa could have become a Christian without receiving baptism, while the disciples of Campbell become “Christians” only through baptism. It should be noted as well that the term “Christian” (meaning “Christ-follower”) was not given the people of God by Christ or the apostles, but years after the start of the church by unconverted Gentiles (Acts 11:26), on whose lips we also see the term in the other two references to the word in Scripture. In Acts 26:28, the pagan king Agrippa calls Paul a

“Christian,” and in 1 Peter 4:16, a persecutor makes a believer suffer “as a Christian.” Believers accepted this designation, initially given in mockery by unbelievers, and became known as Christians. The descendants of the church established by Jesus Christ received their various other names (such as Waldenses, Cathari, Donatists, and Anabaptists) in the like fashion. The enemies of the Lord’s churches called them “Anabaptists,” meaning “re-baptizers,” because of their practice of immersing converts, although they might have already been “baptized” in their infancy. Eventually the prefix “ana” dropped off, and the modern designation “Baptist” came into existence. The designations “Baptist” and “Christian” were thus both given in the same manner—unbelievers originated the label, and the people of God accepted it. Those who insist upon exclusively using the designation “Christian” or similar explicitly stated Biblical titles and affirm that all will be damned who do not follow their practice confuse the gospel and are in deep error. They would do well to study the term “Christian” in Scripture more carefully. More importantly, they would do well to see that salvation is through faith in Christ, not through claiming a particular name.

For the argument that the name “Christian” is ordained of God because “were called” in Acts 11:26 is *chrematidzo*, which can signify “impart a divine message” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (BDAG), 3rd ed., rev. & ed. Frederick William Danker, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000; def. #1), it should be noted that the word can also signify simply “to take/bear a name/title (as so and so), to go under the name of” (BDAG def. #2) without any implication of the receipt of a Divine message. Note this latter use in Romans 7:3, where “shall be called” is *chrematidzo*. Even Alexander Campbell stated that “sectarian names are generally given in the way of reproach; thus the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, most probably in derision; yet it was a very proper name” (pg. 128, *Campbellism: Its History and Heresies*, Bob L. Ross). The use of *chrematidzo* simply to signify “to take/bear a name/title” was common in the *Koiné* Greek of the New Testament era. Acts 11:26 is much like the statement in Josephus, “[T]hey said that they were Hebrews, but had the name of (*chrematidzo*) Sidonians, living at Shechem” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.8.6.344). Note also: “The Roman emperors also were, from their nativity, called (*chrematidzo*) by other names, but are styled Caesars.” (*Antiquities* 8:6:2:157); “[A]ll Syria, by the means of Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, underwent the reverse of that denomination (*chrematidzo*), of Savior, which he then had.” (*Antiquities* 12:1:1:3); “He was called (*chrematidzo*) a lover of the Grecians.” (*Antiquities* 13:11:3:318); “[T]hey also gave them this farther privilege, that they should be called (*chrematidzo*) Macedonians.” (*Wars of the Jews*, 2:18:7:488). Compare Philo: “[B]eing the sons of concubines, [they] derive their name (*chrematidzo*) from the inferior sex, that of the women.” (*On the Unchangeableness of God*, 121); “[H]e might call it (*chrematidzo*) the temple of the new Jupiter, the illustrious Gaius” (*On the Embassy to Gaius*, 346). Further representative uses of *chrematidzo* are found in Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 2:2:5:27; 4:11:1:630; *Against Apion*, 2:3:30; Philo, *On Rewards and Punishments* 61. In accordance with this fact, not only standard New Testament and *Koiné* Greek lexica like BDAG but the standard classical Greek lexicon and Christian/patristic Greek lexicon evidence that no requirement for supernatural revelation is involved in the uses of *chrematidzo*. The *Greek-English Lexicon* of H. G. Liddell & R. Scott, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996, 9th ed.), notes that *chrematidzo* can mean “to take and bear a title or name, to be called or styled so and so,” along with many other uses besides that minority of instances where supernatural revelation is involved. The *Patristic Greek Lexicon* ed. G. W. Lampe (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007, 20th ed.), defines the word as to “be called by a name or title . . . call, name” among various other uses. Campbellites or others who affirm that the use of *chrematidzo* in Acts 11:26 proves that a special Divine authority was given to the word *Christian* are clearly in error.

Some Campbellites argue that Isaiah 62:2 states the church shall “be called by a new name,” so the name “Christian” must be used or men are damned. However, Isaiah is speaking of Jerusalem and Israel, not the church (v. 1, 6-7), when the city and nation shall be restored in the future millennial kingdom. The new “name” is not “Christian,” but “Hephzibah” (v. 4).

Even if the designation “Christian” had been given by special Divine ordination, which it was not, Baptists freely accept and employ it. They simply do not use it exclusively, just as the first century believers certainly did not, even after its introduction. Indeed, the word *Christian* never appears on the lips of believers in Acts, although they employed other self-designations (e. g., “disciples,” 15:10; “brethren,” 15:23; “flock,” 20:28-29, the “way,” 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14) See also endnote 16.

Many in the “Church of Christ” denomination originating with Alexander Campbell also insist that only the name “Church of Christ” appear as the designation for an assembly in its place of meeting—they will even condemn their fellow denominationalists in the Disciples of Christ and Christian Church organizations to hell for wearing the wrong label. The “Church of Christ” (*Iglesia ni Cristo*) denomination founded early in the 20th century by Felix Y. Manalo (who makes the hen-pecked claim that the “ravenous bird” mentioned in Isaiah 46:11 is not Cyrus the king of ancient Persia, but he himself, who would start his denomination in the “east,” the Philippines!) also affirms that nobody can be saved who is not a member of its group, bearing the one true name, “Church of Christ.” Both sects allege this despite the fact that the phrase “Church of Christ” does not appear anywhere in the Bible, unlike, for

example, the phrases “church of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15) or “church of the firstborn” (Hebrews 12:23). The closest parallel to the phrase these sects affirm is essential to salvation is “churches of Christ” in Romans 16:16, where, with a possessive genitive, the Redeemer’s ownership or possession of His churches is affirmed. Campbell, however, translated this phrase as “the congregations of Christ” in his *Living Oracles* version of the New Testament. His version actually completely removed the word *church* from the Bible. Perhaps his modern day followers should exclusively use the phrase “congregation of Christ” for each of their assemblies and places of meeting, and condemn to hell all who use the words “church of Christ” instead. Then again, this phrase (were it ever found in the New Testament) would read in Greek as *ekklesia tou Christou*, so perhaps only these three Greek words on a church sign, not the English “Church of Christ” or “Congregation of Christ,” are the true keys to heaven.

xli The “called” in this manner are the saved. See 1 Corinthians 7:22; Galatians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 5:24; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:15; 2:9; 5:10.

xlii “If Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14). Faith in Christ would not save if Christ had not risen from the grave. Since He did rise, faith in Him is not in vain, but it saves. 1 Corinthians 15:2 demonstrates that Paul preached justification by faith.

xliii The Old Testament had spoken of Christ’s substitutionary death and resurrection (cf. Isaiah 52:13-53:12), and “all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43; cf. Psalm 2:12). Justification by repentant faith in Christ is both an Old and New Testament doctrine. Paul here ties his gospel to the Old Testament, where nobody, of course, received baptism.

xliv The fact that divisions in the church at Corinth (1:15) is the context of these statements does not change their incongruous nature for baptismal regenerationists.

xlv Some baptismal regenerationists affirm, amazingly, that one is begotten of God before one is born of God (by baptism), typically based upon a misinterpretation of John 1:12. Those who insist upon such a distinction make certain individuals children of the devil, although begotten by God, despite the fact that the one who begets a child is obviously his father. Apart from this incongruity, the Greek verb *gennaō* is used both for verses with the English word *begotten* and the English word *born*. It is translated by some form of *beget* forty-nine times, and some form of *be born* thirty-nine times. In 1 John 5:18, *gennaō* is translated “born” once and “begotten” once. Someone reading the New Testament in Greek in the first century (or today, for that matter) would see no difference between the two terms whatsoever; they are Biblically identical. This baptismal regenerationist argument manifests either a terrible ignorance or a worse duplicity.

xlvi The phrase “born out of due time” translates the Greek *ektroma*. With this word in 1 Corinthians 15:8, “Paul refers to himself, but the event in question is the appearance of Jesus to Paul, evidently on the road to Damascus. The reference, therefore, would seem to be his being born as a Christian[,] [his] spiritual birth” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, eds., New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1989, 2nd ed.).

xlvii If baptism is administered to take away sin, rather than as a good work for those already right with God, why did the sinless Savior submit to it?

xlviii Some baptismal regenerationists attempt to use the phrase “washing of regeneration” to prove their doctrine. See the analysis of Titus 3:5 in the section “‘Proof-texts’ for Baptismal Regeneration Examined” for a refutation.

xlix For a refutation of the argument that men are saved by good works, just not by Mosaic regulations, see the division of the book entitled: “The verses that say we are not saved by works only refer to Moses’ law. We are saved by works, just by other kinds of works,” within the section “Miscellaneous Arguments Against Justification by Faith Alone Refuted.” For the abuse of John 6:29 to support salvation by works, and a refutation of other weak arguments sometimes advanced against justification by faith, see Appendix 1.

¹ Only two Biblical texts can, with any sort of plausibility, be misconstrued to affirm that at the point of initial forgiveness only past sins are removed, rather than all sin. The first is 2 Peter 1:9: “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” The last part of the verse is used to allege that one is only initially forgiven for past or “old” sins, not all sins, including future ones. However, an examination of the context contradicts this idea. At the moment of faith, God gives His new child “all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3), so that, partaking “of the divine nature,” (v. 4b), he is freed from “the corruption that is in the world through lust” (v. 4c). He is therefore to give diligence to grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (v. 5-7), so that he is “neither . . . barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 8). The Christian who fails to grow as he ought is “blind” and unable to “see afar off” and “hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” because he has forgotten that he was delivered from the power of and bondage to his “old sins,” those which characterized his

former lifestyle. The purging of v. 9 relates not to the penalty of sin, but its enslaving power. The believer who struggles with his pre-conversion sins has forgotten that God has freed him from their control.

The other verse is Romans 3:25, “remission of sins that are past.” However, this speaks of the sins of generations past, of those before the coming of Christ (contrast “at this time,” v. 26). God “hath set forth [Christ] *to be* a propitiation,” gave Him to die to appease Divine wrath, and in this manner the Father “declare[d] his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” That is, He evidenced that He was righteous to remit the sins of those who lived in times before the coming of Christ through His forbearance, since the Lord Jesus was going to come to actually take care of sin (Hebrews 9:22-10:14). The verse means that those who lived in past ages, before Christ died, had their sins forgiven on the basis of His blood. It has nothing whatever to do with the notion that Christians only have pre-conversion sins removed when they are saved, an idea in radical antithesis to everything else Paul affirms in the book of Romans about justification. Neither 2 Peter 1:9 nor Romans 3:25 undermine the definite Biblical truth that upon believing in the Savior all one’s sins, past, present, and future, are gone and one is eternally reckoned as righteous as the Son of God himself (2 Corinthians 5:21), since Jesus’ righteousness is made legally his own (1 Corinthians 1:30). See also endnote 71.

li Some who believe that salvation can be lost affirm that this passage shows that nothing can make a believer fall into condemnation, but that he can himself fall away by his own choice. However, since believers are created “creature[s],” they cannot make themselves become lost (which they would not want to do in any case). Also, this attempt to explain away the passage does not take either the “death” and “life” statements seriously—for since nothing in his life or at the time of death can separate him, his own actions are necessarily included. Nor are the time qualifications taken seriously. Nothing “present” or “to come” can separate a believer from God, including his own present or future decisions to sin.

lii Campbell affirmed that it was his “honor to have given to the world the first example in modern times, of a great community made up of accessions from all communities, meeting on the Bible alone” (*Campbell-Rice Debate*, pg. 506, cited in *Barr-O’Dowd Debate*, pg. 41, a reprint of the written debate originally held in 1946 in both the Baptist *Rock of Ages* periodical, editor Vernon L. Barr, and the Campbellite “Sound Words,” edited by John O’Dowd). If the denominations originated by Campbell were “the first example” of organizations of their kind in centuries, they cannot be the Lord’s churches, since He promised His assemblies continued succession from the first century to His second coming (Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 3:21). Campbell wrote in his book, *The Christian System*, that the “meaning of [the church] has been buried under the rubbish of human traditions for hundreds of years. It was lost in the dark ages, and has never been, till recently, disinterred . . . since the Grand Apostasy was completed, till the present generation, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has not been laid open to mankind in its original plainness, simplicity, and majesty” (cited pg. 430, *A History of the Baptists*, John T. Christian, vol. 2, Texarkana, TX: Bogard Press, 1926). If his religious organization and its gospel originated in his generation, having not existed for centuries previously, it is not Christ’s church, and its gospel is not Christ’s gospel.

The denominations Campbell originated affirm that one must believe baptism remits past sins at the time he is immersed. Someone who does not believe this doctrine when he receives the ordinance is still lost. However, none of those associated with the founding of the “Church of Christ,” “Disciples of Christ,” “Christian Church,” and the like denominations—whether Alexander Campbell, his father Thomas Campbell, Barton W. Stone, or Walter Scott—were ever baptized in order to obtain the forgiveness of their sins. (See *Campbellism: Its History and Heresies*, Bob L. Ross, 5th ed. (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), pgs. 24-29, 44-45, 51-53, 57-61, 74-76, for extensive documentation.) Their own denominational descendents, then, must affirm that their founders are in hell.

Furthermore, Alexander Campbell himself did not believe that baptism was absolutely necessary for the salvation of men, and he repeatedly and regularly taught so. Consequently, his denominational descendents in the “Church of Christ” denomination and others must view their founder as a heretic and a false teacher. On various occasions Campbell wrote, “I observe, that if there be no Christians in the Protestant sects . . . and therefore no Christians in the world except ourselves [in Campbell’s new sect] . . . for many centuries there [would have] been no church of Christ, no Christians in the world; and the promises concerning the everlasting kingdom of Messiah [would] have failed, and the gates of hell have prevailed against his church! This cannot be; and therefore there are Christians among the sects[.] . . . [W]ho is a Christian? I answer, everyone that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will. . . . There is no occasion, then, for making immersion, on a profession of the faith, absolutely essential to a Christian—though it may be greatly essential to his sanctification and comfort. . . . [There are] Christians in all denominations[.] . . . [Among] the different Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodistic, and Baptist sects . . . [t]here are, no doubt, many . . . disciples of Christ” (see “The Lunenburg Letter: An Incident in the History of the Interpretation of Baptism,” Glenn Paden. *Restoration Quarterly* Vol. 2:1 (1958) 13-18 for original sources. cf. http://www.acu.edu/sponsored/restoration_quarterly/archives/1950s/vol_2_no_1_contents/paden.html#). Elsewhere Campbell wrote, “But who is a Christian? I answer, Every one that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the

Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to the measure of the knowledge of his will. . . . I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven. . . . Should I find a Pedobaptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith [Campbell's new sect], I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I would be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians. . . . I do not substitute obedience to one commandment [baptism] for universal or even for general obedience. And should I see a sectarian Baptist or Pedobaptist more spiritually minded, more generally conformed to the requisitions of the Messiah, than one who precisely acquiesces with me in the theory or practice of immersion as I teach, doubtless the former, rather than the latter, would have more cordial approbation and love as a Christian. So I judge, and so I feel. . . . There is no occasion, then, for making immersion, on a profession of the faith, absolutely essential to a Christian" (*Millenial Harbinger*, September 1837, pgs. 411ff., acc. pgs. 133-135, *The Millenial Harbinger*, Alexander Campbell, co-ed. W. K. Pendleton, A. W. Campbell & Isaac Errett. Bethany, VA: Pub. A. Campbell, 1862. Series V, Vol V. elec. acc. <http://books.google.com>. cf. "The Gospel and Water Baptism: A Study of Acts 2:38, Lanny Thomas Tanton, *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Spring 1990) pgs. 27-52). The "heresy" of Campbell that the unimmersed could be Christians is yet another reason his denominational descendents must affirm that their founder is in hell.

liii Apart from this specific dilemma, all church groups which originated at any time after the first century with Christ face a similar difficulty. What authority did Luther have to begin Lutheranism, Henry VIII to found Anglicanism, or any other of the Reformers to originate their denominations over a millennium and a half after Christ founded His church? The Roman Catholic church, and the Eastern Catholic groups, seek to avoid this dilemma by alleging their historical continuity with first century Christianity. In addition to the vast differences between their doctrines and Scripture, which demonstrate the invalidity of their claims, history demonstrates their continual doctrinal metamorphosis, so that their supposed historical ancestors practiced a religion radically different from their own. Consider how many centuries after Christ the following current Catholic teachings originated (cf. pgs. 7-9, *Roman Catholicism*, Loraine Boettner, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1989. Some dates approximate):

Prayers for the dead instituted, A. D. 300

General introduction of infant "baptism," A. D. 400

Priests began to wear special clothing, A. D. 500

Prayers offered to Mary, dead saints and angels, A. D. 600

Bishop of Rome assumed the title of Pope, A. D. 607

Power of Popes over civil government, A. D. 750

Worship of the cross, images, and relics established, A. D. 788

Marriage of Priests forbidden, A. D. 1079

Rosary beads invented, A. D. 1090

Sale of Indulgences proclaimed, A. D. 1190

Sacrifice of the Mass established, A. D. 1215

Auricular confession of sins to a priest proclaimed, A. D. 1215

Worship of the bread used in the Mass declared, A. D. 1220

Purgatory asserted, A. D. 1439

Tradition held equal to Bible, A. D. 1545

Apocryphal books added to the Bible, A. D. 1546

Immaculate conception of Mary affirmed, A. D. 1854

Infallibility of the Pope asserted, A. D. 1870

Bodily assumption of Mary to heaven affirmed, A. D. 1950

Mary proclaimed the "Mother of the Church" A. D. 1965

Only Baptist churches avoid the problem of a human founder since they have none other than the God-Man, Jesus Christ. See endnotes 15, 16.

liv Baptismal regenerationists who affirm that the church started and the gospel was first preached in Acts 2 are monumentally inconsistent when they employ this passage and John 3:5 to prove their position, as both of these verses refer to a period before the first Pentecost. Why would the Lord Jesus Christ rebuke a man (John 3:10-12) for not knowing about salvation by means of a baptism (supposedly the teaching of John 3:5) not yet instituted? See also endnotes 13, 16, 38, 62.

lv "Sometimes the apodosis [the "then" part of a conditional statement] *may* be true without the protasis [the "if" part of a conditional statement] being true [Qualification #1], [but] the apodosis *must* be true when the protasis is true. . . . If A, then B ≠ if B, then A (converse not necessarily true) [Qualification #2]. . . . If A, then B ≠ if non-

A, then non-B (reverse not necessarily false) [Qualification #3]. . . . If A, then B *does not deny* if C then B (condition not necessarily exclusive or condition not necessarily causal) [Qualification #4].” (pg. 687, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel Wallace). In relation to Mark 16:16, this syntactical and logical fact means that “If believe and are baptized then saved” does not require “if not baptized, then not saved,” nor does it deny “if believe and not (yet) baptized, then will be saved.” (Mark 16:16a alone also does not prove “if not believing, then not saved”—however, unlike the situation with baptism, 16:16b does so, stating “he that believeth not shall be damned.”) Although only one is required to demonstrate the point, all four of the above qualifications for conditional clauses relate to the illegitimate conclusions drawn from Mark 16:16a by advocates of baptismal forgiveness: Qualification #1, the apodosis “be saved” may be true without the “be baptized” statement in the protasis having taken place. Qualification #2, “if baptized, then saved” does not require the converse, “if saved, then (already) baptized.” Qualification #3, the reverse of the statement, “if not baptized, then not saved” does not follow. Qualification #4, the “be baptized” statement is not necessarily a causal or exclusive condition; baptism may not be the cause of salvation, but something else, such as an evidence of it. If all of the above conclusions are more than we can determine from Mark 16:16a, what proper deductions can be made from the statement? The only thing we can legitimately conclude is exactly what it says, namely, that if one believes and is baptized he will be saved, which is perfectly harmonious with justification by faith, because if all who believe are justified and will be glorified, then all who believe and get baptized will also be saved. See also endnotes 23, 56, 57, 59, 125.

^{lvi} “Mark 16:16 . . . may illustrate another point about conditions. As you recall, the two conditions in the protasis do not necessarily bear the same relation to the apodosis. One might be cause, the other might be ground or evidence. If that is the case here, ‘If you believe’ is the cause and the fulfillment of the apodosis depends on it; ‘and are baptized’ is the evidence of belief and the apodosis does *not* depend on it for fulfillment. This would explain the following sentence: ‘The one who does not believe shall be condemned’” (pg. 688, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Wallace).

^{lvii} The point may be clarified by a comparison of Mark 16:16 in the Word of God with the *Book of Mormon*, 3 Nephi 11:33-34. The Bible says “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16), making no assertion whatever about the fate of the unbaptized. The *Book of Mormon*, by contrast, has its “christ” affirm that “whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.” Unlike the Bible, the *Book of Mormon* actually states that the unbaptized are lost. Baptismal regeneration is consistent with Mormonism, but not with Scripture.

^{lviii} Consider the further analysis of the conversion of Cornelius and those with him in Acts in the section above, “New Testament Examples Teach Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism.”

Note as well that the “them” referenced in “working with *them*” in Mark 16:20, although italicized in the King James Bible, is required by the Greek syntax of the verse. The participle *sunergountos* is dependent upon *ekeinoi* . . . *ekeruxan*, and the *sun* refers to the *ekeinoi*, the “they” in the English of the first portion of the verse.

^{lix} It should be made explicit that the word “saved” in Mark 16:16 refers to glorification, not justification (see endnote 23 for the senses of the word “saved.”). The second half of the verse contrasts the “shall be saved” of v. 16a with “shall be damned.” Future or ultimate salvation and future or ultimate damnation are contrasted. Present justification and forgiveness of sin is not compared to a present lack of forgiveness. One is not “saved” in the sense that he is made perfectly holy in the presence of God either at the moment of belief or of baptism. This glorious deliverance from sin, this salvation, only takes place at the return of Christ or at death. Mark 16:16, however, affirms that all who believe and are baptized are certain of such eternal heavenly glory, and so requires the eternal security of all baptized believers. It consequently contradicts the doctrine of the great body of baptismal regenerationists.

^{lx} Mark 16:16b, of course, says nothing about failing to do good works; it says “he that believeth not” shall be damned. Even if the verse did allow for transition from a saved to an unsaved state, which it does not (see endnote 61), it would condition the loss of salvation only upon ceasing to believe the gospel, not upon faltering in righteous actions, the position of the overwhelming majority of baptismal regenerationists.

^{lxi} Certain baptismal regenerationists attempt to dodge this problem by arguing that “he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16b) is not accepted by those who affirm justification by faith alone and eternal security, since an unbeliever can become a believer and so not be damned, despite the “shall.” Careful consideration of Mark 16:16 refutes this counterargument. The verse contains three aorist participles, the first two following the same article and describing the same individual (*ho pisteusas kai baptistheis*: “He that believeth and is baptized”), while the third in the second half of the clause describes a second type of person (*ho . . . apistesas*: “he that believeth not”). The immediate context, v. 15, demonstrates that the belief and baptism or unbelief of v. 16 relates to the wholehearted receipt or rejection of the gospel message. “[H]e that believeth not” is one who has heard the gospel preached but chooses to reject it, not someone without knowledge of the truth or a child too young to understand it. The contrasting participles (“the believing/unbelieving one”) compare those who exercise saving faith, an

irrevocable commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord, and those who make an equally irrevocable and final decision to spurn Christ. Those who reject the gospel in this way indubitably “shall be damned” (16:16b). Having refused the Holy Spirit’s call to salvation through the preaching of the gospel until He abandoned them to their unbelief, they are unable to be saved, for no one can believe in Christ without the Spirit’s convicting work (John 6:44; 12:39; Romans 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:3). These have committed the unpardonable sin (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:29; Hebrews 6:4-8). Their damnation is absolutely certain (Mark 16:16b; cf. the aorist articular participles designating unbelievers in 2 Thessalonians 2:12; Jude 5), as certain as the eternal glory of those who receive the gospel and consequently possess the divine nature, which will evidence itself through fruits such as baptism (Mark 16:16a). Furthermore, since the Spirit convicts all who hear the gospel (Isaiah 55:11; John 16:8-13; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Ephesians 6:17), God is sovereign over the time of man’s death (Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6), and the Spirit draws no one to Christ in hell, all those who reject the gospel and die unconverted have been given over to their unbelief and other sins, and have thus sinned beyond the possibility of pardon. Every man either responds to the light God gives him (John 1:9; 12:32) until he comes to saving faith or resists the light until given over to his sin; the group of the noncommitted dwindles over time to leave, at death, only the regenerate and the unpardonably hardened.

The idea that one can flip-flop from the “he that believeth” to the “he that believeth not” side and back again is foreign to the wording of the verse; the aorist participles, as confirmed by the context, indicate the point actions of receiving the gospel, baptism, and rejection of the gospel, not iterative or repeated actions. “The aorist participle in itself is, of course, merely punctiliar action . . . in the . . . part[iciple] . . . the aorist is always punctiliar” (pgs. 859, 864, *A Grammar of The Greek New Testament In the Light of Historical Research*, A. T. Robertson, Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934.). Baptism is a one-time point action, as is the belief which shares the Greek article of Mark 16:16a (cf. the aorist articular participles for belief in Luke 1:45; Acts 4:32; Hebrews 4:3), while the unbelief of 16:16b possesses the same quality. Nobody passes from the state mentioned in one half of the verse to the other. Furthermore, the “shall be saved” of Mark 16:16a also presents an absolute certainty. When describing a promise in Scripture, *sodzo* in the future tense is always a guarantee in its twenty-five other appearances (Matthew 1:21; 9:21; 10:22; 24:13; Mark 5:28; 8:35; 13:13; Luke 8:50; 9:24; John 10:9; Acts 2:21; 11:14; 16:31; Romans 5:9, 10; 9:27; 10:9, 13; 11:26; 1 Corinthians 3:15; 1 Timothy 2:15; 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:18; James 5:15, 20). The six other Scriptural references to *katakrino* in the future tense, “shall be damned” in Mark 16:16b, also speak of a certain future event (Matthew 12:41, 42; 20:18; Mark 10:33; Luke 11:31, 32). None of these *sodzo* or *katakrino* verses present one moving from the possession of salvation or condemnation to any other state.

It is also not possible to affirm that the constative quality of many aorist participles allows for unmentioned transitions from the state of belief to unbelief and back again, providing justification only upon one’s spiritual state at the time of death. On the contrary, belief is necessarily temporally prior to baptism in 16:16a, demonstrating that the promise of future salvation to the one who undergoes the point actions of believing and receiving baptism is possessed during life, not relegated to deathbed belief or unbelief. Verse 17 supports this affirmation, while also undercutting any attempt to make the participles of verse 16 merely gnomic. Since signs follow “them that believe” (*tois pisteusasi*, another aorist participle), those who have trusted in the gospel promises receive the guarantee of v. 16a during life.

Mark 16:16 pledges eternal security to all who believe the gospel and submit to baptism. Despite all attempts to nullify it, the stubborn fact remains that this favorite text of many advocates of water salvation does not teach their doctrine at all.

^{lxii} Baptismal regenerationists who affirm that the church and the gospel began at Pentecost should not use this verse. See endnote 54.

^{lxiii} Some have attempted to assert the identity of the birth of water and the birth of the Spirit on the basis of the lack of the preposition *ek* (translated “of”) between the word “and” (*kai*) and “the Spirit” (*Pneumatōs*). This lack explains the italicization of the second “of” in the verse. Four verses in the Bible other than John 3:5 employ the order *ek*—noun—*kai*—noun: Matthew 23:25 (*yemousin ek harpagēs kai akriasias*, “full of extortion and excess,” two different sins), Luke 2:4 (*dia to einai auton ex [ek] oikou kai patrias Dabid*, “because he was of the house and lineage of David,” the use closest to synonymous), Romans 3:30 (*dikaiōsei peritomen ek pisteos, kai akrobustian dia tes pisteos*, “shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith,” a use radically different, although with a different syntactical emphasis), and Hebrews 7:12 (*ex [ek] anagkēs kai nomou metathesis ginetai*, “there is made of necessity a change also of the law,” another example of radical difference with different syntactical emphasis). These Biblical examples evince that noun substantives following *ek* and *kai* possess no necessary identity because the word *ek* is not repeated after the *kai*. Furthermore, those who suggest that “born of water” and the birth of the Spirit refer to the same event on account of the lack of the repetition of *ek* neglect to mention that the construction they argue John 3:5 should contain to distinguish the births, *ek*+noun+*kai*+*ek*+noun, does not appear in any verse in Scripture whatever. The KJV is correct in its rendering “born of water and of the Spirit,” differentiating the two births. An examination of the 52 verses where (a total of 57 times) *en*, followed by

kai within three words, governs two entities, also supports the KJV's disjunction between a birth of water and one of the Spirit in John 3:5. See Matthew 3:11; 4:16; 11:21; 17:21; Mark 9:29; Luke 1:17, 75, 79; 3:16; 4:36; 7:25; 10:13; 21:25, 34; 24:19; John 4:23-24; Acts 2:46; 16:2; 26:20; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 11:27; 12:12; Ephesians 1:8; 4:24; 5:9; 6:4,18; Colossians 1:9; 2:18, 23; 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 8; 4:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 13, 17; 3:8; 1 Timothy 2:2, 7, 15; 5:17; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:2; Titus 3:3; Hebrews 11:38; 2 Peter 3:11, 18; 2 John 1:3; Revelation 1:9; 14:10; 18:16. Disjunctive examples in Greek outside of the NT include Exodus 28:8 (LXX) and 1 Clement 25:2.

lxiv

Just as physical birth is something that takes place at a particular point in time, so spiritual birth is a point action; one passes from spiritual death to spiritual life at a particular moment in time. An individual who claims to have become a Christian over the course of several months or years, or who affirms that he has always been one, or who cannot identify a particular time when he was converted, is yet without the new birth.

lxv

Verse fifteen could well be a reference to the process of birth itself. The wife's fertility and the fecundity of the marriage relationship are definitely in view contextually.

lxvi

In "ancient Near Eastern literature the word 'water' can be and is used as a *terminus technicus*, or at least a well known circumlocution for . . . child bearing . . . or the act of giving birth itself. Sometimes water is a circumlocution for . . . amniotic fluid, or for the process of birth itself from the breaking of the waters to the actual delivery . . . this can be substantiated from a wide variety of literature from the ancient Near East" (pg. 156, Ben Witherington III, "The Waters of Birth: John 3:5 and 1 John 5:6-8," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989), 155-160). Witherington gives examples of the use of "water" for physical birth from literature produced around the time of the gospel of John, such as the pseudepigraphical 4 Ezra 8:8, where we "hear the following addressed to God. 'And because you give life to the body which is now fashioned in the womb, and furnish it with members, what you have created is preserved in fire and water, and for nine months the womb that you have fashioned bears your creation which has been created in it.' Here it seems clear that the reference is to the amniotic fluid which surrounds the fetus while in the womb" (Witherington, pg. 157). He also demonstrates that "this imagery was widely used of procreation and birth well before the NT era"; for example, in "Old Babylonian the amniotic fluid is called 'water of bearing' (*me hali*) or simply 'water' (*mu*)," and "the Hebrew verb *HYL* (*halum* in Akkadian), usually translated 'to give birth,' literally means or denotes the rupturing of the amniotic sac or membrane" (pg. 157-158). Witherington concludes: "There seems little doubt that a reference to 'being born out of water' [that is, John 3:5] could easily have been understood to mean physical birth which ensues after a woman's 'waters' break. . . a satisfactory interpretation of both Johannine texts [John 3:5 and 1 John 5:6-8] in light of both the ancient Semitic and Near Eastern texts, and contemporary and somewhat later material" (pg. 158, 160). Further relevant references not mentioned by Witherington include Josephus' reproduction of an (alleged) prayer of the prophet Elisha concerning *gennetikon hudor*, "prolific water" (*War* 4:8:3:463; the Greek is, of course, similar to John 3:5's *gennethe ex hudatos*) in the context of God giving a "succession of children." The adjective *gennetikos* signifies "generative, productive . . . of men or animals, able to procreate" (*Greek-English Lexicon*, H. G. Liddell & R. Scott). One notes also that the Targum on Job 38:8 specifically speaks of the water of the womb (*myn rchma*). The Targum Niofiti on Numbers 12:12 refers to "[T]he offspring that is made in the womb of her mother for nine months, in water and in fire[.]" Compare 4 Ezra 8:8's reference to the womb as the place of "fire and water." The Targum Yerushalmi II on Numbers 12:12 connects the womb, physical birth, and water as well, adding a reference to proceeding out of the watery womb at the end of nine months. See also R. Fowler, "'Born of water and the Spirit' (Jn. 3:5)," *Expository Times*, 82 (1970-1) 159, and D. N. Spriggs, "The Meaning of 'Water' in John 3:5," *Expository Times* 85 (1973-4) 149-150.

lxvii

Nicodemus later stood up for Christ (John 7:50-52) and assisted in His burial (John 19:39). John strongly implies that he was saved. If Nicodemus had been told in John 3:5 that baptism was needed for salvation, one wonders why the apostle John did not consider the record of Nicodemus' baptism (assuming he was baptized) important enough for inclusion in a book composed to show people how to receive eternal life (John 20:31).

lxviii

Every subsequent reference in John's gospel is also disregarded. A man born only once, "of the flesh" or "of water," cannot enter into the kingdom of God because of the sin nature (Jeremiah 17:9) passed down to him through natural generation. (He is also Scripturally worthy of condemnation because of the imputation of Adam's sin, Romans 5:12-19, and his commission of subsequent sins of his own, Ecclesiastes 7:20.) As a result of the sin nature, one only born of the flesh "cannot please God" (Romans 8:8). Indeed, "[E]very imagination of the thoughts of [such a person's] heart [is] only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5), and it is as impossible for him to do good as it is for an Ethiopian to change his skin color or a leopard his spots (Jeremiah 13:23; cf. Job 14:4). Thus, left to himself, such a person would never even seek after God (Romans 3:11; cf. John 6:44, 65). If something good is to come to him, it must, therefore, originate entirely outside of himself, for he is rotten and evil to the core. Therefore the new birth is a supernatural recreation "of the Spirit" (John 3:5, 6, 8, etc.), a birth "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). The first birth, as a physical birth with the implication of sinfulness in the sons of Adam, appears in subsequent references in John 8:41-44, where Christ turns the Pharisees' accusation on its head, in John 9:2, 19, 20, 32, 34, where the physical blindness of this man's first birth is used to

make a point about spiritual blindness in the first birth, and in John 16:21; 18:37, where the physical birth of the sinless Christ, the second Adam, is in view. The first birth is always physical birth, and the second birth a supernatural working of the Spirit apart from any power in man.

^{lxix} For the assertion by some baptismal regenerationists that being “born” of God is different from being “begotten” of God, see endnote 45.

^{lxx} Some baptismal regenerationists affirm that the Holy Spirit is received immediately after baptism. Others add requirements not found in Acts 2:38 by any stretch of the imagination; for example, Oneness Pentecostalism makes speaking in tongues after baptism a necessary sign of the receipt of the Spirit (see “Salvation, the Spirit, and Tongues,” pgs. 197-213, *Oneness Pentecostals & The Trinity*, Gregory A. Boyd, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992). Roman Catholicism teaches that “the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation [which generally takes place years after infant baptism] is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost,” so that what Peter preached in Acts 2:38 is received only after a bishop “anoint[s] the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism . . . together with the laying on of the minister’s hand and the words . . . ‘Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit’” (sections #1302, 1320, pgs. 330, 333, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Mahweh, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994). Apparently Peter’s promise “ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” to his audience upon complying with Acts 2:38 would have been better stated as “ye shall only receive the gift of the Holy Ghost if, continuing faithful for some time after baptism, ye speak in tongues/get oil put on your forehead by a properly ordained bishop [or priest if it is an extreme emergency and you may die without the seal of the Holy Spirit] and submit to other ritualistic requirements.” See also endnotes #82, 115.

^{lxxi} It is noteworthy that most baptismal regenerationists believe that baptism only forgives past sins, not all sin, but Peter never makes this qualification in Acts 2:38. Would not “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ in order to receive the forgiveness of past sins,” or “in order to receive the forgiveness of some sins,” have been more appropriate? See also endnote #50.

^{lxxii} Some who reject baptismal regeneration hold other views on the verse. For Acts 2:38 to function as a proof-text for advocates of forgiveness by baptism, they must prove the text teaches the ordinance is administered “in order to receive” remission of sins. Opponents of baptismal salvation do not need to prove anything from Acts 2:38. They simply must show that it can reasonably mean something other than that baptism is a prerequisite to forgiveness. Having accomplished this, the verse can no longer be used as a proof-text to (attempt) to negate the immense numbers of verses that clearly promise eternal life to all believers.

^{lxxiii} This statistic was obtained by a search of the Greek *Textus Receptus* using *Accordance* Bible software. The same figure is given on pg. 357 of *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel Wallace (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996).

^{lxxiv} In the best (and the standard) New Testament lexicon, BDAG, (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (BDAG), 3rd ed., rev. & ed. Frederick William Danker, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), the preposition *eis* has ten listed main definitions, with twenty-nine subheadings classifying different senses under the main headings.

^{lxxv} “*Eis* . . . [can be] use[d] . . . causally [as] ‘on account of,’ . . . Matthew 12:41 . . . [In] Matthew 10:41 . . . the sense here called for is a causal one, for which the preposition *eis* is suitable, just as the Semitic equivalent *le* admits not only a final but also a causal sense” (para. 98, 106, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples*, Maximilian Zerwick. Eng. ed. Joseph Smith. Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963). *Eis* can mean “because of” (pg. 103, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1957). Concerning “*eis* . . . some contexts would certainly suit a causal sense: Matthew 3:11, *because of repentance* . . . 10:41; 12:41=Luke 11:32 *metenoesan eis to kerugma Iona*: they repented *because of* the preaching of Jonah . . . Acts 2:38 *be baptized eis aphenin ton hamartion, on the basis of* . . . Acts 7:53; Romans 4:20, *on account of* the promises of God, Abraham did not waver . . . Romans 11:32 God has imprisoned all *because of disobedience* . . . Titus 3:14, to maintain good works, *because of the compelling need of them*; Hebrews 12:7 [v. l.], you are enduring *because of discipline* . . . 1 John 5:10” (pgs. 266-267, 18:4:1c, Moulton, J. H. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908-76. Vol. 3 (1963): *Syntax*, by Nigel Turner). See J. R. Mantey, “The Causal Use of *Eis* in the New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70 (1951) pgs. 45-48, and “On Causal *Eis* Again,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70 (1951) pgs. 309-311. In addition to quoting Matthew 3:11; 12:41; Acts 2:38, and other inspired texts as examples of a causal (“because of”) use of *eis* in the New Testament, Mantey provides evidence from uninspired Greek, such as Genesis 4:23 (LXX): *Andra apekteina eis trauma emoi kai neaniskon eis molopa emoi*, “I killed a man *for* [on account of] wounding me, and a young man *for* [on account of] striking me.” Mantey also mentions contemporary secular Greek examples such as Lucian, *The Dead Come to Life*, Vol. III, 12: *ta hremata panu hetairika, kai epainoumene hupo ton heraston eis kallos echaire*, “Her words are always those of a courtesan, and she delighted in being praised by her lovers *for* [because of] her beauty.” B. H. Carroll provides evidence “from Aristophanes: ‘To jeer at a man *eis* his rags’ . . . [f]rom Plato . . . ‘To differ from one *eis* virtue.’ . . . [He concludes,] the meaning of *eis* in Acts 2:38 is . . . with reference to remission

of sins. I am willing to risk my scholarship on that” (pgs. 81-82, *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, sec. 8, “The Theory of Baptismal Regeneration (concluded): Acts 2:38,” elec. acc. AGES Digital Software Library vol. 11, B. H. Carroll Collection. Rio, WI: 2006). Indeed, the “illustrations of . . . [the usage of *eis* as] because of . . . are numerous in the N. T. and the *Koiné* [Greek outside of the Bible] generally” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, A. T. Robertson, Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1960, note on Acts 2:38). See also endnotes #76-81, 100.

^{lxxvi} The preposition *eis* can signify “to” and convey a meaning of “in order to” (e. g., Colossians 1:29), although this usage is hardly the predominant or majority one. However, it is not enough for the baptismal regenerationist to show that the word may signify “in order to” in a few (see endnote #78) of its 1,767 appearances. He must prove that it can signify nothing other than “in order to” in Acts 2:38. If he does not prove this sense is required in the verse, it does not establish his position.

^{lxxvii} Some baptismal regenerationists attempt to support their view that *eis aphasin hamartion* in Acts 2:38 (“for/on account of the remission of sins”) means “in order to obtain” the remission of sins by cross-referencing Matthew 26:28, which states that Christ shed His blood *eis aphasin hamartion*. However, this comparison of texts overlooks a number of facts. The shedding of blood by Christ, not our baptism, is in view in Matthew’s gospel. There are two other instances (aside from Acts 2:38 and Matthew 26:28) where the *eis aphasin hamartion* construction appears in the New Testament—Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3. In both of these instances, the phrase is used in connection with baptism (unlike in Matthew 26:28) and signifies “on account of the remission of sins.” (See endnote #81.) To use Matthew 26:28’s *eis aphasin hamartion* to support the idea of baptism “in order to” obtain remission of sins in Acts 2:38, while ignoring the sense of Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3, where the word *baptism* is actually used with the phrase, is faulty exegesis. Furthermore, “remission of sins,” *aphasin hamartion*, is promised elsewhere in Scripture to all who believe. Acts 10:43 states, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (*aphasin hamartion*).” Acts 26:18 likewise reads, “[T]hey may receive forgiveness of sins (*aphasin hamartion*) and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

^{lxxviii} It is worth mentioning that, although the KJV translates *eis* forty-eight different ways, it never renders the preposition as “in order to.” Indeed, even Alexander Campbell’s own Bible version, the *Living Oracles*, only manages to render *eis* as “in order to” in eleven out of its 1,767 appearances—and this eleven includes a number of verses with an *eis* + *to* + infinitive construction entirely unlike Acts 2:38. Nevertheless, Campbell did remember to make Acts 2:38 one of the 0.6% of references in his own Bible version where *eis* is rendered “in order to.”

^{lxxix} In addition to the very obvious Matthew 3:11, it is hard to see how “in order to” can fit many other Biblical texts. Is Matthew 28:19 “in order to” obtain the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? (Compare *eis* used with baptism and “name” in Acts 8:16; 19:5.) Is Mark 1:9 “in order to” obtain the Jordan river? Is Acts 19:3 “in order to” obtain John’s baptism? Is 1 Corinthians 1:13 (also 1:15) “in order to” obtain the name of Paul? Is 1 Corinthians 10:2 “in order to obtain” Moses? The only remaining verses containing *eis* and baptism can at least as easily signify “with respect to,” “on account of,” or one of the other senses of *eis*. Not one verse must signify “in order to” obtain (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3, 4; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). See also endnotes #75-77, 81, 100.

^{lxxx} Further evidence that John’s baptism was not “in order to” the forgiveness of sins comes from the lack of Pharisaical challenge to his ministry on that account (cf. Matthew 3:7). Christ did claim the power to forgive sin (although He did not baptize, John 4:2—note that the Lord Jesus did “make” disciples before having them baptized, evidencing that one is not made a disciple by baptism, but is one previous to it), and the Jewish religious leaders contended with Him on that ground (Matthew 9:3; Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21; 7:49). They did not make a similar challenge to John because his baptism was not a means for the receipt of forgiveness. It was an evidence that pardon had already been received.

Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, when describing John’s baptism, stated that it was performed on account of already forgiven sin, not in order to obtain forgiveness. “John, who was called the Baptist . . . was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins, but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18:5:2:117). Similarly Eusebius, the first known writer in Christianity to compose a church history, slightly altered the statements of Josephus but agreed with his conclusions, writing: “John who was called the Baptist . . . said that baptism would prove acceptable . . . only in those who used it not to escape from any sins but for bodily purity, on condition that the soul also had been previously cleansed thoroughly by righteousness” (*Ecclesiastical History*, I. XI:5, cited in Loeb Classical Library ed., trans. Kirsopp Lake, pg. 81). While neither the writings of Josephus nor of Eusebius are inspired Scripture, of course, if John publicly proclaimed that his baptism was a prerequisite to forgiveness, would not the ancient historical record have indicated, rather than contradicted, this view? See endnote #13.

lxxxii John's "baptism of repentance for (*eis*) the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3) was not one administered "in order to" obtain remission by baptism but "on account of" remission already received by repentance and faith in the Savior (Acts 19:4-5). The genitive construction "baptism of repentance" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4) is a result/reason construction, meaning "baptism [result] on account of repentance [reason]," similar to the phrases "work [result] of faith [reason], labour [result] of love [reason], and patience [result] of hope [reason]" (1 Thessalonians 1:3; cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:11; Hebrews 6:10) or "obedience [result] of faith [reason]" (Romans 16:26). (Compare the discussion of the genitive of production/producer on pgs. 104-106 of Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, and the genitive of source or origin analyzed on pgs. 109-110, which Wallace says "stresses cause," that is, reason. The connection between production/producer and reason/result can be seen, not only in the texts above, but in verses such as 1 Peter 1:3, "sanctification of the Spirit" or Galatians 3:13, "curse of the law"; cf. also Galatians 5:22; 2 Corinthians 11:26. Note, outside the NT, texts such as 1 Clement 50:5, "harmony of love," or Amos 6:12; Sirach 45:11 (LXX); or Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation* 2:68.) Baptism is one of the "works meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20) that follows receiving the gospel. The record of John preaching "I indeed baptize you with water unto (*eis*) repentance" (Matthew 3:11) is simply a statement explaining the summary phrase that John preached a "baptism of repentance for (*eis*, on account of) the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Since the phrase "a baptism of repentance" is a result/reason genitive construction indicating that baptism is a result of repentance, Matthew 3:11 means that John baptized with water "on account of" or "as a result of" repentance, defining *eis* in the text as "on account of/because of" repentance. One notes further that even apart from this strong syntactical evidence from related passages, the natural and obvious sense of Matthew 3:11 is *eis* in the sense of "on account of" in any case.

lxxxii Peter's use of *kathos kai*, "even as," in Acts 10:47; 15:8 provides further support for the fact that the Holy Spirit was received before baptism in Acts 2:38. Peter explains that in the same way that the Holy Spirit was given before baptism in the account of Acts 10:43-48, the Jews who responded to the gospel in Acts 2:38 likewise received the Spirit before baptism. Compare the other uses of *kathos kai* in the New Testament (Luke 6:36; 11:1; 24:24; Acts 2:22; 10:47; 15:8; Romans 1:13; 15:7; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 9-10, 33-11:1; 13:12; 14:34; 2 Corinthians 1:14; 11:12; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 4:4, 17, 32; 5:2, 25, 29; Colossians 1:6-7; 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 3:4; 4:6, 13; 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 5:6; 2 Peter 1:14; 3:15).

While the fact that Peter preached the receipt of the Spirit upon repentance, and before baptism, in Acts 2:38; 10:47 & 15:8 refutes all versions of baptismal regeneration, it is especially worthy of note as a response to the Oneness Pentecostal doctrine that people do not receive the Holy Spirit until after they have received anti-Trinitarian Oneness baptism and spoken in tongues. Acts 2:38 promises the Spirit before baptism, and far before the time advocated by Oneness doctrine. The Bible also teaches the doctrine of the Trinity, that the one and only God has existed from eternity in three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 1:1-4). Furthermore, even before the gift of tongues, the miraculous ability to speak in known foreign languages, ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8; cf. "1 Corinthians 13:8-13 and the Cessation of Miraculous Gifts," R. Bruce Compton. *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 9 (2004) 97-144), it was never for all believers (1 Corinthians 12:30), and certainly was not a prerequisite to justification. Additionally, in Acts 19:2 the aorist participle "believed" (*pisteusantes*) is dependent upon the aorist verb "received" (*elabete*), and the verse indicates (consider also the use of *ei* in the question) that Paul assumed that the Holy Spirit was received instantaneously upon believing (that is, with temporal simultaneity but logical subsequence to faith), not at some later period when some sort of second blessing took place. "[W]hen the aorist participle is related to an aorist main verb, the participle will often be contemporaneous (or simultaneous) to the action of the main verb" (pg. 624, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel Wallace). Paul's question to these professed disciples assumed the reality of an immediate receipt of the Spirit at the moment of faith. "[In Acts 19:2] there is no question about what happened *after* believing; but the question rightly relates to what occurred *when* they believed. . . . [The verse could be rendered] rightly, 'Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?'" (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Marvin Vincent, vol. 1, note on Acts 19:2, elec. acc. in AGES Digital Software Library, Classic Commentary collection). The post-believing coming of the Spirit in miraculous power recorded in Acts 19:6 employs a different Greek word (*erchomai*) than that generally used for the simple receipt of the Spirit as in verse 2 (*lambano*). The word in verse 2, when employed after the historical event of Spirit baptism ceased by Acts 19, always refers to the receipt of the Spirit at the moment of faith. This use is universal in the epistles (Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 3:2, 14, cf. the prediction in John 7:39). In contrast, the word in Acts 19:6 is never used in the New Testament of the believer's receipt of the Spirit at the moment of faith and regeneration.

The Oneness Pentecostal idea that "the one name of Matthew 28:19 is Jesus, for Jesus is the name of the Father . . . the Son . . . and the Holy Ghost . . . the name of Jesus was orally uttered as part of the baptismal formula . . . the name Jesus was orally invoked at baptism" (*The Oneness of God*, David K. Bernard. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1995, Chapter 6, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," elec. acc.) is entirely erroneous and heretical, and it cannot be sustained Scripturally. If one must, as Oneness Pentecostalism affirms, employ the correct words at the

time of baptism or salvation is impossible, which words should be employed? Those of Acts 2:38, “in [*epi*] the name of Jesus Christ”; those of Acts 8:16 and 19:5, “in [*eis*] the name of the Lord Jesus”; or those of Acts 10:48, “in [*en*] the name of the Lord”? Since there are three different groups of words, with three different prepositions employed (*epi*, *eis*, and *en*), and three different endings (“Jesus Christ,” “Lord Jesus,” “Lord,”—note that the last does not even have the name “Jesus” at all), which set constitutes the magic words without which salvation is impossible? Would it also not be very unfortunate that, whichever of the three sets of words one determines is the true one, every person the apostles and first century Christians baptized employing the two “wrong” sets of words was eternally damned? How many of the first century Christians must have missed heaven because they did not know which of the various sets of words were the magic keys to heaven! How unfortunate, indeed, how misleading it is that Luke, writing under inspiration, does not give the slightest hint that either Acts 2:38, or 8:16, or 19:5, or any other verbal formulation whatsoever, is essential to salvation! What errors the apostles made as well in allowing all those baptized in Acts into church membership, whichever set of words are recorded in connection with their baptism, although the two-thirds with the wrong formula were not truly saved! Or is it not rather obvious that the Oneness Pentecostal notion that a certain set of words is essential to salvation cannot be sustained in the book of Acts or elsewhere in Scripture? Since there is no consistent set of words recorded in Acts in connection with baptism “in the name of” the Lord, and so Acts is not giving a specific set of words that must be employed without sinning and facing eternal damnation, what does the “name” terminology really mean?

Baptism is “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38), not because Jesus is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, nor because the words “in the name of Jesus” or some similar non-Trinitarian formula was uttered when the ceremony was performed, but because baptism is performed with Christ’s authority. The Lord Jesus, who has all authority or power (Matthew 28:18), commanded that baptism be performed with the Trinitarian formula of Matthew 28:19. When this is done (and other requirements for baptism are met, such as that the person being baptized is a believer, not an infant), the baptism is performed with Christ’s authority, that is, in His name. When Baptist churches employ the Trinitarian formula the Lord Jesus commanded for use until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20), they are baptizing in Jesus’ name.

The fact that “in the name of” means “with the authority of” is evident in Scripture. Several examples, out of many, will be given. In Deuteronomy 18:5-7, the Levites were “to minister in the name of the LORD.” Unlike the other tribes, they had Jehovah’s authority to do their Levitical work. They did not go around all day long repeating His name in a sort of mantra. Their ministrations in the tabernacle and temple, teaching the Law to God’s people and completing other work, was done with Divine authority, hence “in His name.” In 1 Samuel 25:9, “when David’s young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.” David’s young men came to Nabal with David’s authority and gave Nabal a message from David. They did not come to Nabal and say, “David, David, David, David.” In 1 Kings 18:32, Elijah “built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.” Elijah built the altar with Jehovah’s authority (1 Kings 18:36). The point was not that he repeated the Tetragrammaton over and over again. In Esther 3:12, “the king’s scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king’s lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and *to* every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king’s ring.” The letter had the authority of king Ahasuerus, so all men in his empire needed to pay attention. The words of the letter were not “Ahasuerus, Ahasuerus, Ahasuerus.” In 2 Thessalonians 3:6, Paul wrote, “[B]rethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” The apostle commanded the church at Thessalonica with Christ’s authority. Paul wrote under inspiration, and the command to practice church discipline was given by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20. In Acts 4:7, the elders of Israel asked Peter what authority the apostle had for his message. Their question was, “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?” In Luke 24:47—which sets the background for the use of “in the name of” formulae in Acts, since Luke wrote Acts as the continuation of his gospel (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-4) and the preaching in Acts was in fulfillment of the command given in Luke 24 (cf. Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15)—“repentance and remission of sins should be preached in [Christ’s] name among all nations.” That is, the Lord Jesus gave authority to the church to preach repentance and remission of sins, and so this preaching was done as recorded in the book of Acts. “In the name of” means “with the authority of” in Scripture.

Acts 19:1-7 demonstrates that the formula given in Matthew 28:19 was employed by the apostolic churches, corroborating that Trinitarian baptism is actually baptism with Christ’s authority (Acts 19:5). When Paul found people who claimed to be “disciples” (v. 1) who had “not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” (v. 2), the apostle, in shock, asked “Unto what then were ye baptized?” Since the churches were “baptizing . . . in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19), employing the Trinitarian formula in their baptismal ceremony, Paul asks these alleged “disciples” how they could have been baptized and never have heard of the Holy Ghost, when He is mentioned in the baptismal ritual itself. Paul’s question would not make any

sense if the baptismal ceremony employed a formula such as “I baptize you in the name of Jesus.” How would that formula be a guarantee that all baptized disciples had heard of the Holy Ghost? Trinitarians correctly explain Paul’s mental process as, “How could these people be disciples in Christian churches—they have not even heard of the Holy Ghost, but He is mentioned in the act of baptism itself! ‘Unto what then were ye baptized?’” Oneness Pentecostals would have made Paul think, “How could these people be disciples in Christian churches—they have not even heard of the Holy Ghost—now He isn’t mentioned in the act of baptism, since only the word “Jesus” is used in the formula. However, I’ll ask them what they were baptized unto anyway, as if that related to what they had just said somehow.”

Very early documents in church history demonstrate that even around the end of the first century baptism was administered employing the Trinitarian formula. Near the end of the first century, it was written: “Now concerning baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Didache 7:1). “For those things which the prophets announced, saying, ‘Until He come for whom it is reserved, and He shall be the expectation of the Gentiles,’ have been fulfilled in the Gospel, [our Lord saying,] ‘Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’” (Ignatius to the Philadelphians, chapter 9). Some decades later, declarations like the following are found: “For the law of baptizing has been imposed, and the formula prescribed: ‘Go,’ He saith, ‘teach the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’” (Tertullian, *On Baptism*, Chapter 13). In contrast, no extant patristic writer or ancient document says anything like “we should not baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, but in the name of Jesus Christ” or anything remotely similar. True churches in the earliest centuries of Christianity employed the Trinitarian baptismal formula (as even proto-Catholicism did).

When Biblical churches employ the Trinitarian formula in baptism, they are baptizing in Jesus’ name, just like the first century churches did. Oneness Pentecostals that employ the phrase “in the name of Jesus” when immersing people but believe the idolatrous heresy that Jesus is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit do not have any authority from God for their practice—they are the ones who do not really baptize in the name of Jesus Christ. See also endnotes #13, 70, 115.

lxxxiii “of you” (*humon*), is a second person pronoun in the genitive case. It is a partitive genitive (see pgs. 84-86, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Wallace) indicating the group from which each person was derived.

lxxxiv Ephesians 4:26-27 is an example:

Be ye angry (2nd person plural imperative)

and sin not (2nd person plural imperative)

[do] not . . . let go down (3rd person singular imperative)

the sun (nominative singular noun)

upon your wrath

neither give place (2nd person plural imperative)

to the devil.

Compare Joshua 6:10 (LXX, trans. Brenton):

And Joshua commanded the people, saying,

Cry not out (2nd person plural imperative)

nor let any one hear (3rd person singular imperative)

your voice, until . . . the time to cry out, and then

ye shall cry out (2nd person plural future indicative).

lxxxv A good number of the more thoughtful advocates of baptismal regeneration, recognizing that Scripture gives the power to wash away sin to the blood of Jesus, affirm that it is indeed His blood, not baptism, which washes sin away. However, they add that the blood only washes the sinner at the time he is baptized. Such an admission negates any possible value for Acts 22:16 as a proof-text for baptismal regeneration, for it concedes that the washing from sin mentioned in the verse is not literally, but only representatively or figuratively, the action of baptism.

lxxxvi As Alexander Campbell, commenting on Acts 22:16, said in his debate with McCalla, “The blood of Christ, then, really cleanses us who believe from all sin. Behold the goodness of God in giving us a formal proof and token of [forgiveness in] . . . baptism. . . . The water of baptism, then, formally washes away our sins. The blood of Christ really washes away our sins. Paul’s sins were really pardoned when he believed, yet he had no solemn pledge of the fact, no formal acquittal, no formal purgation of his sins, until he washed them away in the water of baptism” (see pg. 75, *Campbellism: Its History and Heresies*, Bob Ross; quote from pg. 116, *Campbell-McCalla Debate*). It is unfortunate that the “Church of Christ” and other denominations Campbell started reject his sound statement on Acts 22:16.

lxxxvii The verb is *apolousai*, an aorist imperative middle, 2nd person singular verb. [I]n our literature [it is found] only [in the] middle [voice], ‘wash something away from oneself, wash oneself’” (*apolouo*, pg. 117, BDAG). Note that “be baptized” in the verse also translates the middle voice *baptisai*; Here alone in the New Testament, out

of 80 appearances (30 active, and 47 passive) of the verb, is the middle voice form used for Christian baptism (cf. Mark 7:4; 1 Corinthians 10:2 for the other two middle uses). The verse emphasizes Paul's acting upon himself; he is arising, having himself baptized, and washing away his own sins. Compare Job 9:30, LXX (the only appearance of the verb in the Greek Old Testament): "For if I should wash myself (*apolousomai*, middle voice of *apolouo*) with snow, and purge myself (*apokatharomai*, middle voice) with pure hands." A. T. Robertson discusses Acts 22:16 underneath the heading of the "direct or reflexive middle" (pgs. 807-808, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934). Compare also Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.5.6.163, where the middle voice is used for a man who "went as he was, without washing himself" (*hos eichen mede apolousamenos*). Also note the middle voices in Josephus, *War* 2.8.9.149-150, "it is a rule with them to wash themselves (*apolousesthai*) . . . they must wash themselves (*apolousesthai*)." Also Philo, *Laws* 3:89 ("washed themselves," *apolousontai*).

^{lxxxviii} The word is *lousanti*, an aorist active participle. Christ does the washing, and the believer is the one washed. The sense is "to cause to be purified, cleanse" (*louo*, pg. 603, BDAG).

^{lxxxix} The word "chosen" (*ekloges*) in Acts 9:15 is translated "elect" in all its other appearances in Scripture (Romans 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Peter 2:10).

^{xc} Jeremiah 1:5 has been alleged to evince that salvation is not a prerequisite to a call to preach, since God said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Since Jeremiah had not yet believed and so been converted when he was in the womb, it is argued that a call does not have to precede conversion, so the fact that Paul was called to preach on the road to Damascus does not indicate that he was justified before his baptism. However, this counter fails to undermine Paul's pre-baptismal conversion. Jeremiah 1:5 refers to God's eternal sovereign plan for Jeremiah: He "knew" him even before formed in the belly, for God "declar[es] the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done" (Isaiah 46:10), and "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1:11). The Lord therefore knew Jeremiah even before the foundation of the world. God also had "sanctified" Jeremiah, meaning that He had chosen him for his prophetic office in His unfathomable counsel. Jehovah also "ordained" him a prophet to the nations, in that He "gave" (the translation of the KJV margin for "ordained") him to them in his timeless purposes. God knew and ordained all things in eternity past, including His purpose to call certain men to preach. However, this eternal call was revealed to Jeremiah in time (Jeremiah 1:1-10). At a particular moment "in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign" (1:1), God revealed to Jeremiah His eternal purpose, stating, "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant" (1:10). At this point in Jeremiah's life, when he consciously received God's call to preach (cf. the uses of the verb translated "set" here, *paqad* in the Hiphil, in Genesis 39:4-5; 41:34; Numbers 1:50; 2 Kings 7:17; Jeremiah 40:11), he was certainly already a child of God. God also certainly knew from eternity, and therefore from the time that Paul was in the womb (Galatians 1:15), what His plan was with the apostle, including his conversion and call to preach on the Damascus road. This fact does not prove that Paul was justified from eternity any more than Jeremiah was. However, at the time of his conscious reception and response to the Lord's call as he traveled to Damascus, the apostle was certainly already a child of God, just as Jeremiah was at the time of his reception and response to God's call. For Jeremiah 1:5 to undermine the evidence of Paul's pre-baptismal salvation from his call to preach, the verse would need to state that Jeremiah consciously received and responded to such a call before he became a child of God. However, the verse does nothing of the kind. One also wonders how many ministers in denominations advocating baptismal regeneration would themselves affirm that they were called to the ministry while yet unbaptized and confessedly children of the devil.

^{xc} Consider also that in Acts 22:16, "calling on the name of the Lord" employs an aorist participle which, of necessity, refers to time that is either antecedent or simultaneous to the verb "wash away." In either case, further evidence that Paul's prayers were accepted by God before the completion of the ceremony of baptism is provided. If the calling is prior to the time of baptism, Paul's justification prior to his immersion is clear (cf. Romans 10:13). If the calling is temporally simultaneous with the figurative washing associated with the baptismal ceremony (cf. pgs. 1113-1114 A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934), for the aorist participle of coincident action), Paul's prayers are still accepted before the time when, according to the theology of baptismal regeneration, he literally rises to new life as he comes out of the baptismal water. If one can pray and be heard by God as he goes into the waters of baptism, as he is placed under water, and while he is under water, he must of necessity be regenerated prior to the time that baptismal regeneration affirms he literally rises to new life and becomes a new creature by ascending out of the water. Thus, the aorist participle "calling" in Acts 22:16, whether antecedent or simultaneous action, confirms what is clearly stated in Acts 9:11—Paul's prayers were acceptable to God before the time baptismal regeneration alleges one obtains new life by rising out of the waters of baptism.

xcii Paul called on the Lord, and so was certain of heaven, before his baptism. Note that the “shall be saved” promise of Romans 10:13 guarantees eternal security for all who can (since they were justified upon believing, v. 14) truly pray to God.

xciii At this point, the apostle is called “Saul.” This is his designation in Acts before his conversion (Acts 7:58, 8:1, etc.), during his time with the disciples at Damascus (9:19, 22, 24), during his later journey to Jerusalem (9:26), his ministry at Antioch (11:25-26), his service assisting the financial needs of the brethren in Judea (11:29-30, 12:25), his later ministry and call to church planting out of the church at Antioch (13:1-2), and during part of his first missionary journey (13:7). When he confronts Elymas the sorcerer (13:8), the book tell us that “Saul . . . is also called Paul” (13:9), and in all subsequent time periods in Acts he is designated as “Paul” (13:13, 16, 21, 43, 45, 46, 50; 14:9, 11). Since both names refer to the same person, this composition generally employs “Paul” as his more common and better recognized name.

xciv Since, in Acts, the phrase “men and brethren” (*andres adelphoi*) is used for unregenerate Jews (Acts 2:29, 23:1, 6, cf. 7:2, 22:1), and Jewish Christians twice address unsaved Jewish contemporaries as “brethren” (*adelphoi*, 3:17, 23:5), baptismal regenerationists have asserted that Ananias’ designation of Paul or Saul as “Brother Saul” does not prove that he was yet saved, only that he was a fellow Jew. However, the evidence of the verse is not so easily avoided. The strong majority usage of *adelphos* in Acts is for Christians (6:3; 9:30; 10:23; 11:1, 12, 29; 12:17; 14:2; 15:1, 3, 22, 23, 32, 33, 36, 40; 16:2, 40; 17:6, 10, 14; 18:18, 27; 20:32; 21:7, 17; 22:5; 28:14, 15), and believers in Acts never employ the articular form, “the brethren” (*oi adelphoi*), for unsaved Jews, only for fellow Christians (9:30, 10:23, 11:1, 12:17, 14:2, 15:1, etc.). In the epistles, 47 out of the 49 times the word “brother” (*adelphos*) appears in the singular, it refers to Christian brethren (the other two are physical brothers, Galatians 1:19, 1 John 3:2), and “brother” is never used for fellow Jews. Every time “brother” appears as a title (that is, not designating one with the same mother and father) with an associated name in the Bible, as it does in Ananias’ designation of Paul as “Brother Saul,” it refers to Christian brethren (e. g., “Quartus a brother,” Romans 16:23, “Sosthenes our brother,” 1 Corinthians 1:1, “Timothy our brother,” 2 Corinthians 1:1, “Titus my brother,” 2 Corinthians 2:13, “Tychicus, a beloved brother,” Ephesians 6:21, “Epaphroditus, my brother,” Philippians 2:25, “Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother,” Colossians 4:9, etc.). Finally, the singular form of “brother” that Ananias used for Saul in Acts 9:17, 22:13 (Greek vocative, *adelphē*), is only used for saved people in Acts and the rest of Scripture (Luke 6:42 (cf. v. 20); Acts 9:17; 21:20; 22:13; Philemon 7, 20). Since the strong majority usage of “brother” in Acts is Christian brethren, saints in Acts employ the articular form “the brethren” only for fellow believers, the singular form of “brother” in the epistles refers almost exclusively to Christian brethren, and never to fellow Jews, the word “brother” as a title, with a name, is only used for Christian brethren in the Bible, and the exact form of *adelphos* that Ananias employed with Paul is only used in the Bible for saved individuals, the fact that Ananias addresses the unbaptized Paul as “Brother Saul” does indeed demonstrate that the apostle was already justified.

xcv Note that his question was not “what must I do to be saved?” but “what wilt thou have me to do?” The Lord’s answer was not “what you must do is be baptized to have your past sins forgiven,” but “Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do” (22:10). While it certainly was Paul’s duty to be baptized (22:16), the plural “all things” necessarily points to more than baptism, which was this was not the emphasis of Christ’s statement at all. The main point of the Savior’s statement was His call of Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles (9:15, 22:15, 26:16-18), which would include suffering for Christ (9:16), testifying of his view of the resurrected Lord (26:14-15), etc. To argue, as some baptismal regenerationists do, that since in Damascus it would be told Paul what he “must do” (Acts 9:6), one “must” be baptized to be forgiven ignores the contextual significance of the statement to the apostle’s entire future ministry to the Gentiles, not merely his baptism. The phrase “must do” in Acts 9:6 proves that baptism washes away sin just about as much as it proves the existence of little green men on the moon.

xcvi Note that these believers were still worshipping in synagogues (v. 19). Is it likely that all of them were baptized (John 9:22)?

xcvii See the discussion of Acts 26, Galatians, and 1 Corinthians in the section “Other reasons to believe in justification by faith alone, not by baptism.”

xcviii *apethanomen te hamartiai*, second aorist active of *apothnesko*, “to die.”

xcix Romans 6:2, *apethanomen te hamartia*, “are dead to sin” or “died [with reference to] sin,” provides contextual support for a rendering of *eis* as “with reference to” in Romans 6:3-4, as it is a “dative of reference/respect [with reference to] . . . instead of the word *to*, supply the phrase *with reference to* before the dative . . . illustrations [of this use include] . . . Romans 6:2 [and] Romans 6:11” (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, pgs. 144-146).

c It is noteworthy that the baptismal regenerationists who so vehemently insist upon *eis* signifying “in order to obtain” in Acts 2:38 (“*eis* the remission of sins”) cry out for a sense of penetration or literal entry into Christ in Romans 6:3-4. Obviously one is not baptized “in order to obtain” Jesus Christ’s death in Romans 6:3-4, for Christ

died nearly two thousand years ago and His death is a historical fact that is in no way contingent upon anyone submitting to baptism. Therefore the advocates of salvation by baptism argue *eis* signifies “penetration into” in this passage. However, in Acts 2:38 one cannot possibly penetrate into the remission of sins, so a meaning of “in order to obtain” remission of sins is insisted upon for *eis*. If, in either Acts 2:38 or Romans 6:3-4, *eis* conveys any other of the twenty-nine subheadings with different ideas listed in the Greek lexicon BDAG for its 1,767 appearances in the New Testament, the case for remission of sins through baptism in these passages is obliterated. Happily, the defender of justification by faith can appeal to vast numbers of clear, unambiguous passages to support his view, rather than hanging his hope for eternity upon a particular sense of a preposition with a very broad range of meaning in a handful of texts, as the baptismal regenerationist must do. Note that *eis* signifying “on account of” or “with reference to” in Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:3-4 makes sense in both passages (Acts 2:38, “be baptized . . . with reference to/on account of the remission of sins,” and Romans 6:3-4, “baptized with reference to/on account of Jesus Christ . . . baptized with reference to/on account of his death . . . buried with him by baptism with reference to/on account of his death”). It certainly fits better with the other passages where the verb *baptize* is used with *eis*. For example, in 1 Corinthians 10:2, “baptized unto (*eis*) Moses” can hardly mean “baptized in order to obtain Moses” or “baptized in order to penetrate into Moses,” but “baptized with reference to Moses.” See also endnotes #74-79.

ci Note that only immersion pictures death, burial, and resurrection. If sprinkling and pouring are acceptable pictures of burial, one wonders why the graveyards for denominations that practice “baptism” in these modes are not filled with bodies with a little dirt sprinkled or poured on their heads, rather than completely covered with earth. It seems that at funerals all know that burial requires immersion, but at baptisms many find a way to deny it. See also endnote #12.

cii *Dedikaiotai*, Perfect passive indicative, third person singular of *dikaioo*. The implication, supported clearly elsewhere in Scripture, is that this “freeing,” this judicial or legal freedom from sin, took place at a particular time in the past but possesses abiding results; once justified and freed from sin, one remains so and will certainly enter eternal glory (Romans 8:30). “The perfect . . . unites in itself as it were present and aorist, since it expresses the continuance of completed action . . . the perfect is both punctiliar and durative” (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934, pg. 893).

ciii The nineteen references are: Acts 19:4: “Believe on (*eis*) him . . . on (*eis*) Christ Jesus”; Acts 20:21, “repentance toward (*eis*) God, and faith toward (*eis*) our Lord Jesus Christ”; Acts 24:24, “the faith in (*eis*) Christ,” Romans 6:3, “baptized into (*eis*) Christ”; Romans 16:5, “firstfruits of Achaia unto (*eis*) Christ”; 1 Corinthians 1:9, “called unto (*eis*) the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ”; 1 Corinthians 8:12, “ye sin (*eis*) against Christ”; 2 Corinthians 1:21, “he which stablisheth us with you in (*eis*) Christ”; 2 Corinthians 11:3, “the simplicity that is in (*eis*) Christ”; Galatians 2:16, “even we have believed in (*eis*) Jesus Christ”; Galatians 3:17, “the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in (*eis*) Christ”; Galatians 3:24, “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto (*eis*) Christ”; Galatians 3:27, “baptized into (*eis*) Christ”; Ephesians 5:32, “I speak concerning (*eis*) Christ and (*eis*) the church”; Philippians 1:10, “ye may be sincere and without offence till (*eis*) the day of Christ”; Colossians 2:5, “steadfastness of your faith in (*eis*) Christ”; Philemon 6, “every good thing which is in you in (*eis*) Christ Jesus”; 1 Peter 1:11, “it testified beforehand the sufferings of (*eis*) Christ”; and 2 Peter 1:8, “neither be barren nor unfruitful in (*eis*) the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

civ Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; John 1:12; 2:11, 23; 3:15-16, 18, 36; 4:39; 6:29, 35, 40, 47; 7:5, 31, 38-39, 48; 8:30; 9:35-36; 10:42; 11:25-26, 45, 48; 12:11, 36-37, 42, 44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; 17:20; Acts 10:43; 19:4; Romans 10:10; 1 Timothy 1:16; James 2:19; 1 Peter 1:21; 1 John 5:10, 13.

cv The verses are as follows: Romans 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1-2, 39-9:1; 12:5; 15:17; 16:3, 7, 9-10; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 4, 30; 3:1; 4:10, 15, 17; 15:18-19, 22, 31; 16:24; 2 Corinthians 2:14, 17; 3:14; 5:17, 19; 12:2, 19; Galatians 1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:14, 26, 28; 5:6; 6:15; Ephesians 1:1, 3, 10, 12, 20; 2:6-7, 10, 13; 3:6, 11, 21; 4:32; Philippians 1:1, 13, 26; 2:1, 5; 3:3, 14; 4:7, 19, 21; Colossians 1:2, 4, 28; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 4:16; 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:14; 2:7; 3:13; 2 Timothy 1:1, 9, 13; 2:10; 3:12, 15; Philemon 1:8, 23; 1 Peter 3:16; 5:10, 14; 1 John 5:20.

cvi Romans 14:14; 16:2, 8, 11-13, 22; 1 Corinthians 1:31; 4:17; 7:22, 39; 9:1-2; 11:11; 15:58; 16:19; 2 Corinthians 2:12; 10:17; Galatians 5:10; Ephesians 1:15; 2:21; 4:1, 17; 5:8; 6:1, 10, 21; Philippians 1:14; 2:19, 24, 29; 3:1; 4:1-2, 4, 10; Colossians 3:18; 4:7, 17; 1 Thessalonians 3:8; 4:1; 5:12; 2 Thessalonians 3:4; Philemon 1:16, 20; Revelation 14:13.

cvi Matthew 10:32; 13:57; Mark 6:3; Luke 12:8; 23:22; John 1:4; 6:56; 7:18; 10:38; 13:31-32; 15:5; 18:38; 19:4, 6; Acts 17:28; Romans 1:17; 1 Corinthians 1:5; 2:11; 12:9; 2 Corinthians 1:19-20; 5:21; 13:4; Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; 2:16; 4:21; Philippians 3:9; Colossians 1:16-17, 19; 2:6-7, 9-10, 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 1 John 1:5; 2:5-6, 8, 27-28; 3:5-6, 9, 24; 4:13, 15-16.

cvi Matthew 10:32; 11:6; 26:31; Mark 14:27; Luke 7:23; 12:8; 22:37; John 6:56; 10:38; 14:10-11, 20, 30; 15:2, 4-7; 16:33; 17:21, 23; 2 Corinthians 11:10; Galatians 2:20.

cix Matthew 26:33; Luke 3:22; John 17:21, three references.

cx John 3:21; Romans 2:17; 5:11; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 3:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Timothy 6:17; 1 John 4:15-16; Jude 1:1.

cxii John 14:10-11, 20; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 John 2:24; Jude 1:1—seven references.

cxiii John 14:13; Hebrews 1:2; 1 John 2:24; 5:11, 20—five references.

cxiv Matthew 3:11; 12:28; 22:43; Mark 1:8, 23; 5:2; 12:36; Luke 1:17; 2:27; 3:16; 4:1; John 1:33; 4:23-24; Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:21; Romans 1:9; 2:29; 8:9; 9:1; 14:17; 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11, 20; 12:3, 9, 13; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 2:18, 22; 3:5; 5:18; 6:18; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:12; Jude 1:20; Revelation 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10—forty-six references.

cxv Compare the “bookends” of being “in Christ” which are found in Romans 8:1 and 8:39; the chapter contrasts those in Christ with those who are not.

cxvi 1 Corinthians 12:13 is often viewed as a reference to Spirit baptism. Baptism with the Spirit was synonymous with Christ’s sending of the Comforter (John 14-16). It took place on Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 2:1ff.), with similar events to that with the Jews in Acts 2 taking place with the Samaritans of Acts 8, the Gentiles within Canaan in Acts 10, and the Gentiles outside the Promised Land in Acts 19 (cf. 1:8). Christ baptized with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to authenticate the church as His new temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Timothy 3:15) or place of worship (cf. Exodus 40:34-35, the tabernacle, 1 Kings 8:10-11, Solomon’s temple, and Ezekiel 43:4-5, the future Millennial temple). In every reference to Spirit baptism in the Bible (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16) Christ is the One who baptizes, and the medium of the baptism is the Spirit; as John baptized in the medium of water, Christ would baptize in the medium of the Spirit. If 1 Corinthians 12:13 dealt with the baptism with the Holy Ghost, the verse would, in contrast, would make the Spirit the baptismal agent (“by one Spirit”), without reference to the medium. “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” refers to the Spirit, who indwells all believers (Galatians 4:6), leading Christians to submit to water baptism, which places them in the body of Christ, the assembly (1 Corinthians 12:27; 1:2; the church at Corinth, in the context of 12:13, is the “one body.”). By the time Paul wrote Ephesians, there was only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5). (The reference in Hebrews 6:2 to “baptisms” does not in any way undermine the teaching of Ephesians 4:5, since the doctrines in Hebrews 6:1-2 are Old Testament beliefs that Paul calls the Hebrews to go on from, and the Greek word rendered “baptisms,” *baptismos*, speaks of Old Testament ceremonial immersions, not Christian baptism, in Hebrews 6:2 and all other texts where it occurs in the New Testament—see Mark 7:4, 8; Hebrews 6:2; 9:10.) Since water baptism is to continue until Christ’s return (Matthew 28:18-20), Spirit baptism was a completed historical phenomenon by the time of the composition of Ephesians, or there would have been two baptisms, not one. While all believers today are immediately indwelt by the Spirit at the moment of the new birth (Romans 8:9; John 3:6; cf. Acts 19:2), nobody has received Spirit baptism for nearly two thousand years. A detailed examination of the Biblical doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, *Spirit Baptism: A Completed Historical Event*, by Thomas Ross, is available at <http://faithsaves.net>. See also endnotes #70, 82.

cxvii Some might assert that since the church is metaphorically referred to as the “body of Christ,” (1 Corinthians 12:27), and one is baptized to join the church, one must be baptized to be “in Christ.” However, the Bible never connects the saving relationship of being “in Christ” and the metaphor of unified service in the church (note 1 Corinthians 12:13-27; Romans 12:4-6ff.) as the “body of Christ” in this fashion. Therefore, this argument is unsupported by Scripture and invalid.

cxviii See the analysis of the conversion of Cornelius and those with him in the section “New Testament Examples Teach Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism” above.

cxix *Pepoithamen*, the perfect active indicative first person of the verb *peitho*, translated “trust” in Matthew 27:43; Mark 10:24; Luke 18:9; 2 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 2:24; Hebrews 2:13; 13:18.

cxvii It should be specifically pointed out as well that while the New Testament never says one is baptized *en* Christ, men do believe *en* Christ. Note the following texts: “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe (*pisteuete en*) the gospel” (Mark 1:15); “Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in (*pisteos en*) his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25); “For ye are all the children of God by faith in (*pisteos en*) Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26); “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in (*pistin en*) the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints” (Ephesians 1:15); “Since we heard of your faith in (*pistin . . . en*) Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints,” (Colossians 1:4); etc.

cxviii A refutation of the argument that one is baptized “into” (*eis*) Christ to get “in” (*en*) Christ is found in the analysis of Romans 6:3-4 as an alleged proof-text for baptismal regeneration.

cxix Matthew 6:25; 22:11; 27:31; Mark 1:6; 6:9; 15:17, 20; Luke 12:22; 15:22; 24:49; Acts 12:21; Romans 13:12, 14; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54; 2 Corinthians 5:3; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:24; 6:11, 14; Colossians 3:10, 12; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Revelation 1:13; 15:6; 19:14. Note as well that out of thirty-two instances of *enduo* in the earliest patristic writings, not one refers to the legal act of justification, even in writers with very poor theology. The verb is almost always used metaphorically for various aspects of righteous living (for example, 1 Clement 30:3

states, “Let us clothe ourselves in concord, being humble and self-controlled.”), while a few instances refer to literally putting on clothing. See 1 Clement 30:3; Ignatius to Polycarp 1:2; Epistle of Barnabas 3:2; Shepherd of Hermas 20:2; 22:8; 26:2; 27:4; 34:8; 39:7, 10; 42:1, 4; 43:4; 44:1; 45:4; 61:2, 4-5; 65:3; 75:1; 79:4; 86:5; 90:2-4, 8; 92:1; 101:2; 106:3. Furthermore, the pre-Christian use of “put off the man” by the skeptic philosopher Pyrrho of Elis relates to a change of life—when Pyrrho failed to act in accordance with his convictions, “In shame Pyrrho admit[ed that those who pointed out his inconsistency were] right, but by way of excuse he sa[id]: *clalepon estin ton anthropon ekunai*, ‘it is difficult to put off the man.’” (pg. 185, “Observations on a Pauline Expression,” P. W. Van Der Horst. *New Testament Studies* 19:181-187). Neither Scripture nor the documents of the earliest patristic writings nor the relevant records of pre-Christian philosophy connect the legal act of justification with the terminology of “put on” and “put off.”

cxxii

Compare the metaphor of the *toga virilis* ceremony discussed in endnote #123.

cxxiii

Some baptismal regenerationists affirm that one is “saved by faith” at the moment of baptism and that none but such as are baptized are saved by faith. This is a perversion of language—“saved by faith” obviously does not mean “saved by baptism.” Furthermore, this argument is only utilized when convenient for misinterpreting a passage such as this one; discussing Mark 16:16, such baptismal regenerationists argue in a contradictory fashion that faith does not equal baptism but must precede it, and that faith really does not save. Discussing Galatians 3:26-27, however, where it is convenient to equate the two, “children of God by faith” really is said to signify “children of God by baptism.” One can prove anything if he handles the Bible with this sort of carelessness.

Some justify equating salvation by faith with baptism in Galatians 3:26-27 by mentioning that the Greek word *gar* (English “for”) is found between the two verses. Either ignorant of or deliberately misrepresenting the Greek language, they argue that *gar* necessarily introduces a cause or reason, so that Paul tells the church at Corinth “ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” only because “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” despite the fact that “put on” is not justification terminology. This argument from *gar* misrepresents the Greek conjunction. 1.) *Gar* appears 1,067 times in the New Testament and signifies a great variety of things, many of which do not suit baptismal regenerationists’ allegations here at all. One cannot simply assume a significance of *gar* that supports one’s doctrinal position and then use the assumption to prove that very doctrine. Furthermore, when *gar* is causal, the cause can relate to the greater context rather than to the immediately preceding statement (e. g. Romans 2:24). Stating that the Greek word *gar* in Galatians 3:27 provides definitive evidence that one does not have saving faith until baptized distorts the range of meaning for the word. 2.) This argument ignores the fact that more than one *gar* appears in the context. Galatians 3:24-28 reads:

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. For (*gar*) ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For (*gar*) as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female:

for (*gar*) ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gar appears three times in v. 26-28. Henry Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978, reprint ed.) states as a use of the word, “When in successive statements *gar* is repeated twice or thrice, or even four or five times . . . one and the same thought is confirmed by as many arguments, each having its own force, as there are repetitions of the particle” (cf. BDAG, “[*G*]*gar* . . . is sometimes repeated . . . to introduce several arguments for the same assertion”). Thus, when *gar* is found in consecutive verses, the word does not have to indicate that successive arguments each give the reason for their immediate predecessor. If *gar* in the passage fits the quoted use, then “ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” confirms that “after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster,” and “as many of you as have been baptized” also confirms that believers are no longer under the schoolmaster, rather than proving that they are somehow only saved by faith after baptism.

A Pauline allusion to the *toga virilis* ceremony—which is suggested by Paul’s references to the *paidagogos* (“schoolmaster,” 3:24) and to “tutors and governors” (4:2) in the section from 3:19-4:7—is consistent with this view of the successive *gar* particles in 3:24ff. At “the time appointed of the father” (4:2), which at different periods of Greco-Roman culture and in accordance with the view of the father varied from fourteen to twenty, a youth would pass from his state as a child to a new position as an adult, at which point he would be free from the *paidagogos* or “schoolmaster.” This change was represented by a ceremony in which the dress of the adult, the *toga virilis*, was assumed by the youth as a representation of his new position. Although one reached the accepted age of adulthood before the *toga virilis* ceremony took place, it formally and outwardly represented the transition. Paul teaches that one must first be adopted as a son of God by faith (v. 26) and then publicly announce this new state through baptism (v. 27). Similarly, “youths with the [newly acquired] toga of manhood [the *toga virilis*] were introduced publicly as citizens . . . [although the] rite itself did not confer Roman citizenship but only proclaimed and registered the Roman citizenship into which the boy had already been born” (pg. 258, “Coming of Age and Putting on Christ: The *Toga Virilis* Ceremony, Its Paraenesis, and Paul’s Interpretation of Baptism in Galatians,” J. Albert Harrill. *Novum Testamentum* XLIV, 252-277). When “justified by faith” one is free from the “schoolmaster” of the law (v. 24-26),

but this transition is formally and outwardly represented by baptism. Both the *gar* of v. 26 and of v. 27 illustrate that “after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (v. 25). Believers are free from the schoolmaster because they are the children of God by faith (v. 26), and they are free from the schoolmaster because, as the *toga virilis* ceremony represented the transition from immaturity under a schoolmaster to maturity, they have put on Christ in baptism (v. 27). Since both the *gar* of v. 26 and of v. 27 prove the point made in v. 25, the assertion by advocates of baptismal regeneration that “for” in v. 27 gives the cause of v. 26, so that one is only a child of God upon being baptized, is incorrect. For more on the *toga virilis* and related issues, in addition to the work by Harrill already cited, see *The Significance of Clothing Imagery in the Pauline Corpus*, Chong-hun Kim (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2004), pgs. 92-95; “Coming of Age in Rome: The History and Social Significance of Assuming the *Toga Virilis*,” F. Dolansky (M. A. thesis, University of Victoria, Canada, 1999); *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990) on Galatians 3-4; “The Pedagogical Nature of the Law in Galatians 3:19-4:7,” Richard N. Longenecker, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25:1 (Mark 1982), pgs. 53-61. Tertullian alludes to the *toga virilis* ceremony as acceptable and non-idolatrous in his *On Idolatry*, chapter 16 (Note also Augustine, *City of God* 4:11). In any case, the idea of Galatians 3:27 as a “metaphor . . . of putting on a uniform . . . [is accepted by various writers and is] an early instance of an idea common in later baptismal theology” (pg. 56, *The Seal of the Spirit*, G. W. H. Lampe (London: S. P. C. K., 1967, 2nd ed.).

^{cxxiv} It deserves mention that the New Testament “church” (Greek *ekklesia*) always refers to a local and visible assembly or congregation of the people of God. The doctrine of a universal visible or invisible “church” composed of all believers is not found in the Bible. Comparisons of the church to a body (1 Corinthians 12:27), a temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17), and a bride (1 Corinthians 11:2) demonstrate that it is a local, visible institution, for bodies, temples, and brides are all very local and visible. No reference to the “church” or *ekklesia* necessarily refers to anything universal; the word appears in Matthew 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:47; 5:11; 7:38; 8:1, 3; 9:31; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:3-4, 22, 41; 16:5; 18:22; 19:32, 39, 41; 20:17, 28; Romans 16:1, 4-5, 16, 23, 27; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 4:17; 6:4; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16, 18, 22; 12:28; 14:4-5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33-35; 15:9; 16:1, 19; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 8:1, 18-19, 23-24; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Galatians 1:2, 13, 22; Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23-25, 27, 29, 32; Philippians 3:6; 4:15; Colossians 1:18, 24; 4:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:1, 4; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15; 5:16; Philemon 1:2; Hebrews 2:12; 12:23; James 5:14; 3 John 1:6, 9-10; Revelation 1:4, 11, 20-2:1; 2:7-8, 11-12, 17-18, 23, 29-3:1; 3:6-7, 13-14, 22; 22:16. Every NT reference to *ekklesia*, along with material in the LXX and in classical writers, is examined and commented on in the study *Ecclesia*, by B. H. Carroll. (Emmaus, PA: Challenge Press, n. d.); note also *Landmarks of Baptist Doctrine*, Robert Sargent, vol. 4 (Oak Harbor, WA: Bible Baptist Church Publications, 1990), pgs. 481-542. The great majority of verses refer to particular assemblies. The few references to the church generically do not suggest or by any means necessitate a universal meaning; verses such as Ephesians 5:23 do not imply that there is only one universal church any more than they do a universal husband or wife, or than 1 Corinthians 11:3 teaches the existence of a universal man who is the head of a universal woman. The doctrine of Eastern and Western Catholicism that their denomination is the universal (“catholic”) church, that of traditional Protestantism of a universal, invisible church made up of all believers, and the related universal church doctrines held by many other baptismal regenerationist groups, are therefore false. See also endnotes #15, 16, 52, 53.

^{cxxv} The fact that Christ “is the saviour of the body,” the church (v. 23), cannot prove that those not in the church are not saved; a positive affirmation does not prove anything about its opposite. “If you can read this sentence, you can see” does not prove that if you cannot read this sentence, you cannot see; you could not know how to read English or not like small print. “If you mailed in your tax return, you paid your taxes” does not mean that if you did not mail it in, you did not pay them; you could have sent the returns electronically or had a tax company do the work for you. Furthermore, if this verse proved that only the church is saved, then Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the Old Testament saints, all infants and children not old enough to submit to baptism, and all the people who will live in the future Millennial kingdom will have no Savior and so must be condemned. See also endnote #55.

The use of aorist tense verbs and participles in Ephesians 5:25-27 for Christ’s love, giving Himself, sanctifying, and cleansing the church does not indicate that the cleansing is through the point action of baptism, any more than at the time of a person’s baptism Christ gave Himself to death on the cross. Rather, the Lord Jesus showed His dying love through His one completed sacrifice. From this sacrifice flow all His salvific works, such as justification, positional and practical sanctification, and the future glorification of all the redeemed. All these blessings are consequences of His substitutionary atonement, and consequently His one act of self-sacrifice on the cross is emphasized in the aorist tenses of His loving, giving Himself, sanctifying, and cleansing of the church. The verbs for Christ’s love and giving Himself to die are stated in the aorist tense because they are viewed as a “snapshot” summary action. Present tense verbs are used for the continuing action of love husbands are to feel for their wives (v. 25, 28) in the comparison. Compare the uses of the aorist of *hagiadzo* for the process of progressive sanctification in John 17:17, and the aorist of *katharidzo* in 2 Corinthians 7:1.

^{cxxvi} One may note again the incongruity that baptismal regenerationists bury a living man in order to kill him. How much better to bury a man in baptism who is already dead to sin!

cxxvii The verse certainly makes it clear that dipping or immersion, not sprinkling or pouring, is the proper mode of baptism. The fact that those who submit to it are spiritually circumcised (already justified, v.11) and can exercise faith (v. 12) also demonstrates the unscriptural nature of infant “baptism.” See endnotes 11, 128.

cxxviii Proponents of infant baptism have often argued for their position by equating their rite with the Old Testament ceremony of circumcision. However, neither Christ nor the apostles ever stated that the one replaced the other. The literal act of Old Testament circumcision is by no means paralleled to baptism, or to the new birth and spiritual circumcision, in the Bible. Nor does the fact that literal Old Testament circumcision was a picture of regeneration, while baptism also pictures regeneration, mean that the two are identical. Both Abraham’s offering of Isaac in Genesis 22 and the Passover ceremony of Exodus 12 picture the saving work of Christ (Hebrews 11:17-19; 1 Corinthians 5:7), but Abraham’s act of faith in Genesis 22 was hardly the first Passover. The many Jewish Christians (and others, Acts 16:3) after the cross and Pentecost who received both literal circumcision and baptism obviously did not think that the one ceremony replaced the other, nor did the multitudes of circumcised Jews who were baptized by John or by Christ’s disciples in the time before the cross when both literal circumcision (Colossians 2:14) and baptism (Luke 7:30) were ordinances ordained by God. The true “circumcision . . . [are those who] worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3), not all infants that have had water poured on them or sprinkled on their heads. One also wonders why, since only male babies were circumcised, baby girls also receive infant baptism in the denominations that practice it. Furthermore, the church is never said to be the equivalent of the nation of Israel, nor do any of the seventy references in the New Testament to the word *Israel* speak of believing Gentiles or Gentile church members, while a variety of texts specifically contrast the two groups (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:32; Galatians 6:16 distinguishes Christian Gentiles, “as many as walk according to this rule,” from Christian Jews, “the Israel of God.”). Baptism adds a believer to the membership of the church authorizing the ordinance (1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:41, 47), but Jewish children were considered part of the nation of Israel and were nationally in covenant with God even before their circumcision (Deuteronomy 29:11-12; Joshua 5:5 evidences that the infants or “little ones” of that text were uncircumcised). Most advocates of infant baptism do not affirm that babies are church members in the New Testament era simply by being born, even before the application of water in infant baptism (some Reformed paedobaptists, however, do argue in this way), but if a parallel to membership in the nation of Israel is to be sustained, they would have to argue so.

Colossians 2:11-12 is sometimes alleged to equate baptism and spiritual circumcision, but there is no proof that it does so—the spiritual circumcision “without hands” of v. 11 is specifically contrasted with the literal circumcision of the body, not to baptism (compare Ephesians 2:11). As indicated above, baptism is very much an act performed with one’s hands, while spiritual circumcision or regeneration is “without hands.”

The only potentially reasonable attempt at proof in the entirety of Scripture for the affirmation that spiritual circumcision is baptism would be the assertion that the participle “buried with” (*suntaphentes*) in Colossians 2:12 is dependent upon the verb “ye are circumcised” (*perietmethete*) in Colossians 2:11. However, the passage does not definitively equate the two actions or make them identical. The fact that two things are related—as are receiving a new heart in spiritual circumcision and the outward testimony or picture of regeneration in baptism—does not establish an identify between the two. *Suntaphentes* could be an example of an aorist participle of subsequent action (cf. 132, 142-146, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, Earnest Burton. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1923-1925; pg. 614 n. 2, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Wallace), or Paul could be viewing the *perietmethete* and *suntaphentes* as simple snapshot actions that took place in the past and are closely associated, so that, although the (possibly telic) participle could be considered as loosely temporally simultaneous with the verb gramatically, none the less the simple snapshot nature of the aorist tense could allow for an earlier spiritual circumcision followed by an outward testimony to that fact in baptism (cf. Acts 25:13 and the relationship of the participle “salute/greet,” *aspasamenoi*, to the verb “came,” *katentesan*, or 1 Peter 3:18 and the relation of the participle “made alive,” *zoapoiethes*, to the verb “suffered,” *epathe*; also 1 Timothy 1:12; Acts 10:3; 11:13). In context, Paul proves that believers are complete in Christ (2:10). They are spiritually circumcised (2:11) and baptized as the outward evidence of regeneration (2:12), forgiven (2:13-14) and free from legal ordinances (2:14-15). Since they are complete in Christ and are identified with Him (2:10-15), they are not to return to Jewish ceremonialism (2:16ff.). Believers are spiritually united to Christ and spiritually circumcised before they are symbolically buried and raised with Christ in baptism. Paul’s argument does not require either baptismal regeneration or the equation of spiritual circumcision and baptism in Colossians 2.

Furthermore, those who are buried with Christ in baptism in Colossians 2:12 are believers, people who have already had their sins forgiven, not infants who are supposedly baptized as an alleged counterpart to circumcision in Israel. They are people who have already have faith, as Colossians 2:12 itself affirms. They had received Christ (v. 6) and had all their trespasses forgiven (v. 13), and Paul rejoiced in their steadfast faith (v. 5). Paul longed to see them “that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding” (v. 2). Infants would not have their hearts knit together in love and have the riches

of the full assurance of understanding if Paul came to see them. They do not even know their right hands from their left (Jonah 4:11)—how could they have “the full assurance of understanding” concerning the deep truths of the gospel? Those baptized in Colossians 2:12 were old enough to choose to celebrate Jewish holy days and feast days or to refrain from doing so. They were not to allow anyone to judge them based on their choice (v. 16). They were also to refuse to listen to the beguiling words of false teachers (v. 4, 18). The commands of Colossians chapter two are ridiculous if applied to infants. Colossians 2:12 speaks of those who have already been spiritually circumcised, who have already become believers, being immersed in baptism. It gives no support at all to infant baptism, nor does it establish any equivalence between the Jewish ceremony of circumcision and the church ordinance of believer’s immersion.

Furthermore, history does not support an argument for infant baptism from circumcision. “There is a silence in the early patristic references to infant baptism concerning the analogy between circumcision and baptism. . . . [N]ot until the mid-third century that this analogy first occurs as an argument for infant baptism. Furthermore, the citing of Colossians 2:11-12 does not occur in this connection until the mid-fourth century” (“Colossians 2:11-12: The Circumcision/Baptism Analogy, and Infant Baptism,” J. P. T. Hunt. *Tyndale Bulletin* 41.2 (1990) 227-244).

The New Testament, using Abraham as the Christian’s pattern (Romans 4:23-25), also states that circumcision was a “seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised” (4:11). Thus, even if circumcision were equivalent to baptism, faith would be a prerequisite, and baptism would not be the means of attaining justification, but only a token of a previously received “righteousness of faith.” (See Romans 4:1-25.) A parallel between circumcision given to all the physical seed of Abraham and baptism given to the spiritual seed of Abraham would restrict baptism to believers, since “they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7).

The use of the word “seal” (*sphragis*) in Romans 4:11—for the already justified and already believing Abraham—by no means supports the Reformed sacramental notion that infant baptism is a vehicle conveying saving grace and that through baptism grace is “conferred by the Holy Ghost” upon the elect (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Article 28). Since Romans 4:11 is the only verse in Scripture that could with any plausibility be used to support the Reformed view, its advocates argue from this text that circumcision is a “seal” of grace, that their sacrament of infant baptism is equivalent to circumcision, and that, therefore, infant baptism seals or conveys grace to their infants. This argument breaks down at many points. First, the verse does not say that circumcision was a seal of grace to Jewish male infants. While circumcision was a “sign” by nature, it is not affirmed to have been a “seal” to all, but only personally to believing Abraham, who received it when he had already been justified by faith. A recognition of this distinction in Romans 4:11 explains the Old Testament use of the word *sign* or *token* (Hebrew *’oth*) in connection with circumcision (Genesis 17:11) but the complete absence of references in the Old Testament to the ceremony as a “seal.” Second, the New Testament does not equate circumcision with baptism or state that the latter replaces the former. Third, the Biblical immersion of believers has nothing to do with the ceremonial application of water to infants that Catholics and Protestants claim is baptism. Fourth, a seal is a visible mark or impression evidencing the authority of the one who authorizes the seal to the genuineness or correctness of whatever is witnessed to by its presence. However, baptism does not leave a visible mark upon those who receive it, and it is not administered to single individuals by Divine authority—the authority given the church to administer baptism is general (Matthew 28:18-20). No man can put marks upon the elect of God which shall authoritatively certify that they are His, and neither baptism nor the Lord’s Supper authenticate one’s personal election to himself or to others; such authentication is given to the regenerate individual himself by the presence of true faith and the manifestation of that faith in a changed life, as taught in 1 John (cf. 5:13). Unlike the ordinance of baptism, the “seal” of circumcision given to Abraham was indeed a visible mark and was applied to the individual man Abraham by direct Divine authority. Circumcision was a seal to Abraham, but to nobody else. Finally, when advocates of Reformed theology and other Protestants speak of baptism as a “seal” or vehicle of grace, they use the word in a sense entirely absent in Scripture. None of the appearances of the word “seal” (*sphragis*) in the New Testament indicate that grace is conveyed through a “seal” (Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 9:2; 2 Timothy 2:19; Revelation 5:1-2, 5, 9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 7:2; 8:1; 9:4). Those who think that infant baptism was the instrument of their receiving forgiveness, those who think that they received the sacrament as confirmation and evidence that they were already regenerated in the womb, and those who think they had water applied to them in infancy as evidence that they were certain to be regenerated in the future unless they consciously rejected the “sacrament” and its efficacy are underneath a terrible spiritual delusion. They will certainly be damned unless they recognize that their unbiblical religious ceremony did nothing beneficial for them, admit they are still lost, and then repent and believe the gospel.

Indeed, baptism is not even a “sign” in the sense regularly employed in Reformed theology. The ordinance is indeed a sign of what Christ did and suffered, but it is not a “sign” promising that any saving work will be done in the one who receives it—yet it is in this latter sense that the Reformed generally speak of the ordinance as a “sign.” See also endnotes 11, 12, 13, 81, 127, 133.

cxxix

See the analysis of Romans 6:3-4 as a proof-text for baptismal regeneration above.

cxxx The verb is *sunthapto*.

cxxxi Some attempt to avoid the fact that baptism is not the “putting away of the filth of the flesh” by affirming that Peter simply means that baptism does not remove physical dirt upon the body, rather than signifying that baptism does not save from spiritual uncleanness. This attempt to avoid the meaning of the passage fails for the following reasons: 1.) Peter said “filth of the flesh,” (an attributive genitive) identifying the filth with the ungodly, fleshly nature that controls the lost (cf. Romans 8:8), not “filth upon the flesh,” which would suit an equation of “filth” with physical dirt and “flesh” simply with the body. 2.) The word “filth,” *hrupos*, although not used elsewhere in the New Testament, is always used in the Greek Old Testament of spiritual filthiness (Job 9:31 (cf. v. 29-30); 11:15; 14:4; Isaiah 4:4). 3.) The word is used in the apostolic patristic writers for spiritual filthiness (1 Clement 17:4; Epistle of Barnabas 11:11) but never of simple dirt on one’s body. Philo (*On the Change of Names (Mutatione)* 48, ref. Job 14:4) only uses the word for spiritual filthiness. 4.) The noun *hrupos* in 1 Peter 3:21 shares an etymological root with the verb *hrupoo*, found only in Revelation 22:11 in the New Testament, where it refers to spiritual filthiness. Josephus uses the closely related verb *hupaino* (found in the Byzantine and modern critical text in Revelation 22:11 instead of the inspired *Textus Receptus* reading) only of spiritual filthiness (*Contra Apion* 1:24:220). The very closely related noun *huparia* is only used in the New Testament of spiritual filthiness (James 1:21). None of these nouns or verbs are used in either the New Testament or the closely related sets of *Koiné* literature examined above for simple dirt on the body. Compare the definition of *hrupos* as “moral and intellectual pollution” and of *hrupoo* as “[to] defile, be filthy” in Lampe’s *Patristic Greek Lexicon*. No literal references to the removal of dirt are listed in Lampe for *hrupoo*—it is only defined as spiritual filthiness. The metaphorical use of *hrupos* is dominant in Lampe, while a sense of physical dirt particles being removed is not in view in any of the examples written out in the definition. (The definition in BDAG for *hrupoo* as a “dark viscous juice” (cf. the example in Barnabas 8:6, which is appropriately placed under this category in BDAG, and is listed in definition #1 in Lampe) is, of course, relevant to neither the proponent or opponent of the view that 1 Peter 3:21 refers to physical dirt instead of spiritual defilement.)

cxxxii Some might dispute the KJV rendering of *eperotema* as “answer.” The word can have more than one sense, and since 1 Peter 3:21 is the only place in the New Testament where this noun appears, an analysis of other Biblical passages that employ the word is not possible. However, in extrabiblical Greek the word could mean an “answer to inquiry put to higher authority” (*Greek-English Lexicon*, Liddell, H. G. & Scott, R., New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996, 9th ed.). “The papyri show that the noun *eperotema* was at times used in a technical sense to denote the question-and-answer process . . . in usage this term . . . came to include the response. . . . In view of this question-and-answer usage of the noun, the rendering in the Authorized Version, ‘the answer of a good conscience toward God,’ is quite acceptable. The believer’s acceptance of baptism is his answer to the Spirit’s questions stirring his conscience and resulting in his conversion. His answer is given out of ‘a good conscience,’ a conscience purified by the blood of Christ and assured of personal acceptance with God. His baptism is his answer to the work of God in his heart, bearing witness before the world to what God has done for him.” (“Selected Studies from 1 Peter, Part 2: The Suffering and Triumphant Christ: An Exposition of 1 Peter 3:18-22,” D. Edmond Hiebert, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139:554 (April 1982) pg. 156-157). Compare the use of *eperotesis* in the *Letter of Aristeas* 122.

cxxxiii Note that this clause demonstrates the fallacy of infant baptism. Infants can hardly be baptized as the answer of their good conscience toward God. See also endnotes #11, 128.

cxxxiv See the analysis of Romans 6:3-4 as an alleged proof-text for baptismal regeneration and its discussion of 1 John.

cxxxv Consider that this verse demonstrates that one who has his conscience purged by the blood of Christ has it cleansed once and for all. Once saved, always saved.

cxxxvi “Answer of a good conscience,” *suneideseos agathes eperotema*, is a subjective genitive construction that could be rendered “a good conscience’s answer” (see pgs. 113-116, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*). It is clear that the good conscience is possessed before baptism. Even if one wished to dispute the rendering of the KJV of *eperotema* as “answer,” and argue for “inquiry” or “appeal” as the sense of the word, it would still be “a good conscience’s inquiry/appeal” and so affirm that the good conscience was possessed prior to the administration of the ordinance.

cxxxvii *Diasodzo* appears eight times in Scripture: Matthew 14:36, “made perfectly whole” (physical healing); Luke 7:3, “heal” (physical healing); Acts 23:24, “bring . . . safe” (Paul’s physical safety escaping Jerusalem to get to Felix the governor); Acts 27:43, “the centurion, willing to save Paul” (a Roman soldier saving Paul from slaughter by the other soldiers); Acts 27:44, “escaped . . . safe to land,” (surviving a shipwreck); Acts 28:1, “they were escaped” (likewise a reference to the shipwreck); Acts 28:4, “escaped the sea” (a final reference to the shipwreck—note that these last four uses of the word occur in a six verse section, and they all deal with escape from drowning in water—as does the next and final reference); 1 Peter 3:20, “eight souls were saved by water” (surviving Noah’s flood in the ark). The verb appears 69 times in the LXX (in both the canonical books and the Apocrypha) and it likewise never once signifies salvation from sin (Genesis 19:19; 35:3; Numbers 10:9; 21:29; Deuteronomy 20:4;

Joshua 6:26; 9:15; 10:20, 28, 30, 37, 39; 11:8; Judges 3:26, 29; 12:4-5; 21:17; 1 Samuel 19:10, 17-18; 20:29; 22:1, 20; 23:13; 2 Samuel 1:3; 2 Kings 10:24; 19:30; Ezra 9:14-15; Job 21:10, 20; 22:30; 29:12; 36:12; Proverbs 10:5; Ecclesiastes 8:8; 9:15; Isaiah 37:38; Jeremiah 8:20; Ezekiel 17:15; Daniel 11:42; Hosea 13:10; Amos 2:15; 9:1; Micah 6:14; Jonah 1:6; Zechariah 8:13; 1 Maccabees 4:26; 9:46; 2 Maccabees 1:25; 3:38; 8:27; 11:12; 4 Maccabees 2:14; 4:14; 17:22; Wisdom 14:5; 16:11; Sirach 34:12; 46:8; Baruch 6:10, 54, 57-58).

cxxxviii *Diasodzo*, BDAG.

cxxxix This is a far more common word, appearing 110 times in the New Testament. BDAG classifies the great majority of the verses where it appears under either “to preserve or rescue from natural dangers and afflictions, save, keep from harm, preserve, rescue,” the first meaning listed, or “to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction, save/preserve from eternal death” (*sodzo*, BDAG).

cxl It appears that Peter’s only other use of *sodzo* in his epistles, 1 Peter 4:18, refers to non-spiritual salvation as well. One could paraphrase the verse, with its present passive indicative (“are being saved/delivered”) verb form, as “if the righteous are barely delivered [*sodzo*] from the fiery trials they endure on earth to purify and purge them, how will the ungodly expect to escape the eternal judgment of God?” Compare Peter’s use of *sodzo* for physical healing in Acts 4:9 (cf. John 11:12; Acts 27:20, 31).

cxli See the analysis of Galatians 3:27 in the section “‘Proof-texts’ for Baptismal Regeneration Examined” above.

cxlii The word “figure” is *antitupon*, “antitype,” which means “pertaining to that which corresponds to something else, corresponding to” or “copy, antitype, representation” (BDAG, *antitupos*). The only other verse in Scripture that contains this word is Hebrews 9:24, where the objects in the earthly “holy places made with hands” are “the figures (*antitupa*) of the true [heavenly reality].”

cxliii A refutation of the notion that one is “in Christ” by means of baptism is found in the analysis of Romans 6:3-4 as a “proof-text” for baptismal regeneration above.

cxliv Baptismal regenerationists would do well to substitute the word “baptism” for “believe” and “faith” in verses that predicate salvation upon the latter and see how unlike anything actually in Scripture the verses then sound. Where does the Word of God speak of “precious baptism,” or of being “kept by the power of God through baptism unto salvation,” or of “receiving the end of your baptism, even the salvation of your souls”?

cxlv Peter also affirmed forgiveness before baptism in Acts 2:38. See the analysis of the verse as a supposed proof-text for baptismal regeneration above.

cxlvi The *erga de me eche*, “and have not works,” represents a continuing action through its combination of *me* and the present active subjunctive *eche*; “faith which continues to produce no works is dead.” One could paraphrase v. 14 as, “What does it profit, my brothers, though a man keeps on saying he has faith, but keeps on having no works? Can that kind of faith save him?”

cxlvii *He pistis sosai auton*; “the article *he* here is almost demonstrative [meaning “that”] in force as it is in origin, referring to the claim of faith without works just made.” (James 2:14, *Robertson’s Word Pictures*, A. T. Robertson). This Greek article in this verse is anaphoric, that is, it “points back to a certain kind of faith as defined by the author” (pg. 219, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*), that is, to the faith of the man who claims to believe yet has no works. This kind of faith, a faith that does not manifest itself in works, is the topic in view throughout the passage, as the continued anaphoric use of the article with “faith,” *he pistis*, demonstrates (see v. 17, *he pistis*, v. 18, *ten pistin sou/mou*, v. 20, *he pistis*, v. 22, *he pistis* (2x), v. 26, *he pistis*).

cxlviii As in v. 14, the *me erga eche* represents a continuing action, “if it keep on not having works.”

cxlix The word “justify” is clearly used in the sense of appearing righteous before man (cf. Luke 16:15; 10:29), as well as in the sense of being declared righteous by God (cf. Romans 3:28; 8:33).

cl A variation of this argument affirms that one is not saved by works of man’s devising, but by works that God has ordained. This is an even weaker contention than the main position refuted in this section, for, in addition the arguments made in this section, circumcision, dietary laws, and other ceremonial regulations were clearly established by God, not thought up by man, but they do not save or help to save (Galatians 6:15). Note also that the “works” Christians are commanded by God to perform for His glory (Ephesians 2:10), not some other actions of their own devising, are the “works” that do not save or help save (Ephesians 2:9).

cli See “The Old Testament Teaches Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism” above, in the section “Specific Reasons the Scriptures Oppose Baptismal Regeneration.”

clii “[I]f there had been a law given . . . then righteousness should have been” is a Greek second class conditional clause, indicating that no law that can give life has ever been given. “The second class condition . . . is appropriately called the ‘contrary to fact’ condition” (pg. 694, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Wallace).

cliii Note the identification here of “the law” with all “scripture,” not that given to Moses alone.

cliv Compare Romans 1:18-3:19, where Paul, after introducing the matter of his letter, shows the guilt of the Gentile (chapter 1), the Jew (chapter 2), and all (chapter 3) before explaining in detail the remedy for sin—justification by faith (Romans 3:20-5:21).

clv See the discussion of James 2 earlier in this section.

clvi A study of the 110 uses of the verb *pisteuo* (“believe”) in John’s gospel and his epistles also reveals a definite distinction in his use of the aorist tense (found in 12:42) and the present (12:46) and perfect tenses. (The sample size for the imperfect (six verses) and future (five verses) is too small to make generalizations.) John uses *pisteuo* in the aorist mainly for the receipt of revelation from God as true; sometimes this reception is saving, sometimes not. The aorist is also used for the deepening of faith in those already converted, of faith in the Bible by saved persons, of acceptance of a statement as true, and of the world’s recognition that disciples are genuine by their mutual love. (See John 1:7; 2:11, 22-23; 4:21, 39, 41, 48, 50, 53; 5:44; 6:29-30; 7:31, 48; 8:24, 30; 9:18, 36; 10:38, 42; 11:15, 40, 42, 45; 12:38, 42, 47; 13:19; 14:29; 17:8, 21; 19:35; 20:8, 29, 31; 1 John 3:23.) By contrast, *pisteuo* as a present participle is always used for justifying faith (John 1:12; 3:15-16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47, 64; 7:38-39; 11:25-26; 12:44, 46; 14:12; 20:31; 1 John 5:1, 5, 10, 13). Similarly, as a simple present tense verb, *pisteuo* is almost always justifying faith (John 1:50; 3:12; 4:42; 5:38, 47; 6:36, 64; 8:45-46; 9:35, 38; 10:25-26, 37-38; 11:26; 12:36, 39, 44; 14:1, 10-11; 16:9, 30-31; 1 John 4:1; 5:13). John never uses the present tense for a reception of revelation that falls short of saving faith, unlike his clear use of the aorist for such an action. *Pisteuo* in the perfect tense embodies, in Johannine writings (John 3:18; 6:69; 8:31; 11:27; 16:27; 20:29, 1 John 4:16; 5:10) and elsewhere in the New Testament (Acts 15:5; 16:34; 18:27; 19:18; 21:20, 25; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 3:8), something close to the essence of saving faith’s character and results. In accord with the nature of the Greek perfect, saving faith begins with a point action (initial trust in Christ) and it possesses abiding results (once saved, always saved). One is supernaturally born from above and irrevocably made a new creature in God’s family. The perfect tense is used in John’s writings and in the rest of the New Testament (except for two verses where personal justification is not in view at all, 1 Corinthians 9:17, Galatians 2:7) for saving faith. While accepting the fact that Jesus is the Messiah is a prerequisite to saving faith (note the aorist subjunctive preceding the present participle in John 20:31), simple recognition of this fact is not in itself sufficient to bring eternal life. To receive eternal life, one who has assented intellectually to the facts of Jesus’ Person must then actually trust in Him as Lord and Savior in the sense John meant with his use of the present and perfect tenses. Note the interplay in John 12:36-47:

36 While ye have light, believe (*present tense, saving faith*) in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. 37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not (*imperfect, here lack of saving faith*) on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed (*aorist, receiving the report as true*) our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe (*present infinitive, saving faith*), because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. 42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed (*aorist, believing that He really did miracles, etc., but not the supernatural faith associated with the new birth and eternal life*) on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. 44 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth (*present participle, saving faith*) on me, believeth (*present indicative, saving faith*) not on me, but on him that sent me. 45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. 47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, (*aorist subjunctive, receive the words as true*) I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

Enemies of justification by faith alone who attempt to use John 12:42 to support their doctrine must ignore the context of the verse and John’s use of the word “believe.”

clvii The perfect tense form of “believe” in v. 31 (*pepisteukotas*) demonstrates that the aorist “believed” (*episteusan*) in v. 30 denotes saving faith in many of those hearing Christ. All those “Jews which believed on him” in v. 31-32 had saving faith; it is possible that those who “believed” or received as true what Christ said in v. 30 constituted a larger group, out of which those in v. 31-32 had savingly believed, or that the two groups were synonymous.

clviii Christ stated that they “are” (present tense) His disciples indeed “if” they continue (v. 31). Perseverance is evidence of already possessed saving faith, not a precondition to it. If they presently were the Lord’s disciples, then they would continue; if they did not, they never were His disciples. The “if . . . then” clause is an evidence/inference Greek third class conditional clause, so “the relation the protasis [the “if” section of the condition] [has] to the apodosis [the “then” section of the condition] is that of ground, or evidence . . . for example, ‘If she has a ring on her left hand, then she’s married.’ Notice that the protasis is not the cause of the apodosis. In fact, it is often just the

opposite” (pg. 683, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Wallace). The third class condition, rather than a first class condition, is employed in the passage because the evidence of continuance was not yet present; this accords with the greater framework of Biblical evangelistic methodology. Christ’s admonition to His new converts is good to give to any newly professed believer in the Lord; he should know what a “disciple indeed” looks like and have assurance of salvation promised him if he evidences himself as such (1 John 2:29; 3:7; 5:13). Also, since the Lord said some in his audience were already His disciples (“are . . . disciples indeed”), although they had not been baptized, an unbaptized individual can be Jesus’ true disciple (a truth taught in John 4:1 as well). This undermines baptismal regeneration.

clix In v. 39, Christ’s reply is a Greek second class conditional, “the assumption of an untruth for the sake of argument” (pg. 694, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Wallace). The Lord’s statement shows that the children of Abraham do the works of Abraham. Such works do not make them into children, because they cannot do Abraham’s works until they are already his children. Rather, the works evidence that Abraham’s true children are indeed genuine. The verse parallels v. 30-32; the continuing in Christ’s Word mentioned in v. 31 is an evidence of justification, not a prerequisite to it. Verse 39 provides strong evidence that the audience for Christ’s speech in v. 34ff is different from that of v. 30-32. The shift from the Greek third class conditional in v. 31 to the second class in v. 39 indicates that those addressed in the latter text are certainly not Abraham’s children or those who do his works, unlike those in v. 30-32.

clx This verse is another second class conditional, again showing that the audience of v. 30-32 differs from those addressed in v. 42.

clxi The unsaved or natural man “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14; cf. Matthew 13:15; Romans 8:7). John 8:47 presents the ability or inability to hear God’s Word as a manifestation of the presence of a saved or lost state, respectively, rather than a means to attain regeneration.

clxii The perfect tense “not known” (*ouk egnokate*) in v. 56 would also be strange for those who possessed what is described in v. 30-32.

clxiii The verb “commit himself” is *episteuen*, an imperfect active indicative form of *pisteuo*, the same word rendered “believed” (*episteusan*, aorist indicative active) in v. 23.

clxiv Note the use of the aorist tense. See endnote #156 for the significance of the verb tenses of *pisteuo*.

clxv See the analysis of John 3:5 in the section “‘Proof-texts’ for baptismal regeneration examined” above.

clxvi The Lord is the “Son of man,” so He is fully human. However, while on earth speaking to Nicodemus, He was at the same time “in heaven,” for He is the omnipresent God. As a perfect man, He “came down from heaven,” but as God the Son, He was still “in the bosom of his Father” (1:18). The blessed conjunction of the Son of God’s two natures, human and Divine, in His one Person, is seen in John 3:13’s phrase, “the Son of man which is in heaven.” Christ explained to Nicodemus who He was, because eternal life requires an understanding of the nature of the true God (17:3). Other verses that testify to Christ’s omnipresence include Matthew 18:20, 28:20, Ephesians 1:23, 3:17, John 6:56, 14:23, 17:23, Romans 8:10, and Colossians 1:27. Those who wish to question the genuineness of the “which is in heaven” clause in 3:13 should consider that it is in 99.9% of extant manuscripts and every ancient version (see the note on John 3:13 in *Textual and Translational Notes on the Gospels*, Jay P. Green, Sr. Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace, 1994; accessed through Online Bible software by Ken Hamel), and perhaps question the validity of their questionings and simply trust the preserved Word of God, the King James Bible and its Greek and Hebrew *Textus Receptus*. See endnote #1.

clxvii The distinction between a recognition that Christ can do miracles and saving faith is also found in John 4:50-53. The man Christ spoke to first “believed the word that Jesus had spoken” (v. 50) about his son’s healing, but did not yet believe in Christ Himself. In v. 53 he “himself believed [on Christ savingly], and his whole house.” Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24) similarly believed in the great miracle working power of the apostles of Christ (v. 13), and even submitted to baptism (which demonstrates that the ordinance does not work *ex opere operato*, that is, effect some sort of spiritual transformation simply because of its enactment, as taught by the Roman Catholic version of baptismal regeneration). Simon even offered to purchase the apostles’ ability to do miracles (v. 13, 18). However, he had never truly repented and believed the gospel (v. 20-24).

clxviii The great body of modern baptismal regenerationists intellectually assent to the truth that Christ can do miracles, as did those in John 2:23. Despite this recognition, they are still dead in their sins and in dire need of placing their faith in Christ alone for salvation.

clxix See the earlier sections “The Old Testament Teaches Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism,” and “New Testament Examples Teach Justification by Faith Alone, not by Baptism.”

clxx The major and most apparently plausible arguments have been dealt with already in the text. Several further arguments are sometimes made by opponents of the Scriptural gospel of justification by faith alone that should not be ignored, but are weak and shallow enough that they are appropriately separated from the main body of the book. See Appendix #1 for a refutation of eight further miscellaneous arguments against justification by faith.