

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 14

Ephesians 4:5

Ephesians 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

ONE baptism. In the church and among various groups of Christians where there has been the most biblical controversy, *baptism* has been the subject. Yet Scripture clearly reveals here that there is but *one baptism*, endorsed by God, which all true believers should seek to lead others into.¹ The great reason for such dissension in the church is because the baptism that is debated and has even separated churches is the baptism of John. Yet John's baptism of water was purposed by God to be only a precursor, forerunner, and predecessor to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, which ultimately would be performed by God's Son. An early record of John's baptism is found in the gospel of Matthew. So connected is John to this baptism that he is defined in the gospels as *John the Baptist*.

Matthew 3:1–11 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

² *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

³ *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

⁴ *And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

⁵ *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

⁶ *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

⁷ *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

⁸ *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*

⁹ *And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

¹⁰ *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

¹¹ *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

What is observed here is that John's ministry was a precursor and forerunner to Jesus' ministry, which would usher in a new covenant of the Spirit and not of the

¹ *Matt. 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

letter (v. 3).² John's ministry of repentance was purposed to prepare people for the arrival of the Son of God: *The voice of one crying in the wilderness* [John], *Prepare ye the way of the Lord* [Jesus]. It is stated that John came *preaching* (v. 1) the divinely inspired message of *Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (v. 2). Ultimately John's ministry was purposed to call sinners to repentance in order that they could ready themselves for the much greater heavenly appearance of God's Son. The lesser ministry of the prophet needed to arise and publicly herald the much greater ministry of the Savior. The apostle Paul confirms the purpose of John's ministry in the book of Acts when addressing the saints at Ephesus, inquiring if those who had believed had received the Holy Ghost upon receiving John's baptism. The apostle Paul's message reveals that this baptism alone he deemed as insufficient for confirming salvation if those who believed had failed to be filled with the Holy Spirit upon receiving it. To Paul and John true salvation could be confirmed only if repentant believers received the Holy Spirit. This could occur only if there was true belief in the Holy Spirit's Sender.

Acts 19:1–6 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul hav-

2 II Cor. 3:4–6 *And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: ⁵Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; ⁶Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

3 Acts 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

Rom. 10:9–10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

John 6:28–29 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

*John 6:45–47 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. ⁴⁶Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. ⁴⁷Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. *John 3:36 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 5:24 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.

4 Acts 19:5–6 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Acts 2:38 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.*

ing passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ²He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

³And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

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

⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

The apostle revealed to these early believers that water alone cannot save, that people must sincerely and genuinely believe on the name of the Lord Jesus since it is only belief³ and undergoing the baptism of the Spirit⁴ that Jesus performs that produce true salvation. If men truly desire to be saved, it must be a spiritual baptism performed by the Son of God—not just a material baptism performed by men—for

true entrance into the kingdom of God to take place.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Acts. 19:4) John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance.—The words may fairly be regarded as giving the summary of what was actually a fuller teaching. The distinctive point in it was that the baptism of John was, by his own declaration, simply provisional and preparatory.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts. 19:4) John verily baptized—John did indeed baptize.

With the baptism of repentance—Having special reference to repentance, or as a profession that they did repent of their sins. See the notes on Matthew 3:6.⁵

Saying unto the people—The design of his preaching was to turn the people from their sins, and to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah. He therefore directed their attention principally to him that was to come, John 1:15, John 1:22–27.⁶

By reading the Acts record and John's revelation as to what sort of baptism is critical to save, it is clear that John's min-

istry was solely purposed to lead people into a much greater ministry, which is belief in the Son of God and to become spiritually baptized by Him. John's baptism was, as Ellicott wrote, "simply provisional and preparatory." As we have seen, his message was a call to repent, which is absolutely fundamental before there can be any true belief in the Savior.⁷ This is why those who came to John, the Scriptures reveal, came confessing their sins. It was also this heart of being conscious of and sorrowful for sin that demonstrated genuine repentance for it. *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins* (Matt. 3:6). What John's ministry of calling people to repentance also teaches us is that before there can be true belief in the Savior, sinners must approach the Lord in an attitude of sincere, genuine, and heartfelt regret for their sin. But to wrongly conclude that mere water or even simply repentance alone is enough to cleanse and provide entrance into heaven reveals a lack of both biblical knowledge and spiritual understanding. Any honest preacher will also confirm that he has performed water baptism on a number of people who never sincerely repented of

Acts 8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Acts 11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:44–45 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. ⁴⁵And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Isa. 32:15 Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

Ezek. 39:29 Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

5 Matt. 3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 John 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

John 1:22–27 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? ²³He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. ²⁴And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. ²⁵And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

²⁶John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; ²⁷He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

7 Luke 18:13–14 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

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their sin or truly believed upon the Savior. This has been clearly demonstrated when after undergoing John's baptism of water only, the Lord Jesus' words were neither obeyed nor adhered to.⁸ This is not an isolated incident in Christian ministry, when John's baptism is performed but the Holy Spirit is not received. However, the Scripture clearly reveals that if a person is truly born of God,⁹ through genuine belief in the Son of God, and gifted the Holy Spirit from Him, then he cannot return to a previous life of sin and will not abandon true religion or obedience to the one in Whose name he was baptized. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God* (I John 3:9). The sin spoken of here is a continuance in sin and/or a return to a life governed by it. Undoubtedly all men both will and do sin; this is why God has made provision for the forgiveness of

sin.¹⁰ Yet he who has truly been begotten of God, through receiving the Holy Spirit into his heart, has been supernaturally imparted a divine power, much stronger and more influential than the sinful flesh that once ruled him. Consequently, once a person receives God's divine nature, a life of sin cannot be reentered into, simply because the Lord's holy nature has embedded itself in the repentant person's heart and will prohibit following or returning to a life governed by the flesh. Moreover, if only water baptism is performed without reception of the Spirit, then spiritual adoption has not occurred¹¹ nor has the christened one had his sinful heart regenerated and transformed by God.¹² It is solely possession of the Holy Spirit that proves true spiritual sonship. For none are born of God, Who is Spirit, unless from Him they are given the Spirit. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you* (Rom.

8 John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

John 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

9 John 1:12–13 *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: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

I John 2:29 *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*
I John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

10 I John 2:1–2 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ²And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Isa. 43:25–26 *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. ²⁶Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.*

Acts 10:43 *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

Ps. 103:2–3 *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

Matt. 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Col. 1:13–14 *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

II Cor. 5:21 *For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

11 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

12 Ezek. 36:26 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

8:9). *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* The Old Testament has many prophecies concerning how the Spirit God would send would also be the agent used to change people's hearts.

Ezekiel 36:26–27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Ezekiel 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with

all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Sin lives within a man's heart, which is also where his spiritual defilement originates; hence, no mere external cleansing can reach where sin makes its natural abode. For this, God's Spirit, Who is righteous, must supplant a man's natural and carnal nature, which is flesh. No carnal nature, the Lord has proclaimed, can ever be justified in His sight.¹³ *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man* (Matt. 15:19–20).

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Matt. 15:19) Evil thoughts are the preparation of all other sins, and have a pernicious influence on the character. We are very much what we think. That on which our minds are fixed, that which is the chief object presented to our inward sight, shapes our disposition and life. High and noble thoughts elevate and purify; low and mean thoughts debase and pollute. The wickedness in a man springs from within; he is guilty of it. If he admits the tempter, succumbs to his seductions, it is his own will that is in fault, encouraging the evil imagination, and not at once resisting, abhorring, and repelling it. Well may we pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10); and remember the wise man's injunction, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

¹³ Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

¹⁴ Rom. 8:8 *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Rom. 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

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

Rom. 3:10–12 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Rom. 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Rom. 8:13 *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

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Similar to true circumcision, which is *one inwardly and is that of the heart*,¹⁵ Jesus' baptism of the Spirit directly affects and influences the heart. This is also why physical circumcision did not by itself prove a man a Jew if the individual's heart was never touched nor God's Word sincerely believed by him. It was also for a stiff, spiritually resistant, and uncircumcised stubborn heart that Stephen reproved the Jewish leaders in his day. *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye* (Acts 7:51).

(Benson Commentary, Acts 7:51) *Ye stiff-necked*—Inflexible and obstinate sinners, not bowing your necks to God's yoke; and *uncircumcised in heart and ears*—So that you will not hearken to instruction, or be seriously affected with it. This they immediately showed. See Acts 7:54; Acts 7:57.¹⁶ So far were they from receiving the word of God with their hearts, that they would not hear it even with their ears.

The Word of God abounds as to where sin originates, which is from within the heart of man. It is therefore this sinful heart of fallen man that must be changed before true salvation is accomplished.

Jeremiah 17:9–10 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

¹⁰*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Genesis 6:5–7 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

⁶*And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

⁷*And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

Psalm 78:8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

Romans 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Hebrews 3:7–11 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁹*When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.*

¹⁰*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*

¹¹*So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

It is worth noting and should not be omitted that there are many who take comfort in water baptism, and we would never seek to remove this spiritual comfort from them and also would never, as with the apostle Peter, *forbid water. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* (Acts 10:47). But for true sanctification of the life, the Holy Spirit must be possessed.

¹⁵ Rom. 2:29 *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

¹⁶ Acts 7:54 *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. Acts 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*

(Geneva Study Bible, Acts 10:47) [Water] Baptism does not sanctify or make those holy who receive it, but is an outward sign to the world of the profession of faith.

Jesus also demonstrated to His disciples how it would be He Himself Who would send the Holy Ghost at that time, when God had purposed He should be sent, when Christ *breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*

John 20:21–22 *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

²²*And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 20:22) *He breathed on them*—It was customary for the prophets to use some significant act to represent the nature of their message. See Jeremiah 13; Jeremiah 18, etc. In this case the act of breathing was used to represent the nature of the influence that would come upon them, and the source of that influence. When man was created, God breathed into him the breath of life, Genesis 2:7.¹⁷ The word rendered "spirit" in the Scriptures denotes wind, air, breath, as well as Spirit. Hence, the operations of the Holy Spirit are compared to the wind, John 3:8; Acts 2:2.¹⁸

Receive ye the Holy Ghost—His breathing on them was a certain sign or pledge that they would be endowed with the influences of the Holy Spirit.

This act of Jesus breathing on His disciples simulated their future promise of being given the Holy Spirit. This act by Christ paralleled God breathing into Adam, the first man, the breath of life. *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul* (Gen. 2:7). Before His ascension, Jesus gave His disciples explicit instructions that needed to be obeyed before they could receive the promised Comforter,¹⁹ Whom Jesus said would remain with them after His future departure into heaven.

Acts 1:4 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*

It is from the Lord Jesus that the disciples had first heard of receiving the Holy Spirit, and it was through the Son of God that they would ultimately be given the Holy Spirit. It was this spiritual baptism that Jesus had promised, and very soon His promise of sending the Spirit would be fulfilled.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Acts 1:4) *But wait for the promise of the Father*—For the fulfillment of the promise respecting the descent of the Holy Spirit made by the Father.

¹⁷ *Gen. 2:7* *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

¹⁸ *John 3:8* *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Acts 2:2 *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

¹⁹ *John 14:16* *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

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Which ye have heard of me—Which I have made to you. See John 14:16, John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7–13.²⁰

The timing of this outpouring of the Spirit is also biblically significant in that it occurred on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which was exactly fifty days from the feast of Passover, when Jesus was crucified as the Passover lamb. Just as Pentecost was a feast celebrating the law given to Moses—on this same biblically significant day—God through His Son poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit from heaven. The timing of the outpouring of the Spirit was purposed to reveal the introduction of a new covenant between God and man, which had begun with Jesus' death paying the debt for sin.²¹ The fifty days between

Jesus' death and the giving of the Spirit is also telling in that the number fifty in Scripture denotes freedom.²² The Year of Jubilee is also connected with the number fifty to celebrate release. This year was the completion of seven cycles of seven sabbatical years. It was a year in which debts were forgiven, slaves were freed,²³ and property restored to its original owner.²⁴ It generally occurred but once in a person's lifetime. Thus, the Year of Jubilee was a very much anticipated event for those who were either slaves or in great financial bondage. It was purposed to restore certain social and economic conditions to all Israelites. Consequently, the timing of the Holy Spirit being sent fifty days after Jesus' death, as with the Year of Ju-

20 *John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:7–13 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. ¹²I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

21 *Jer. 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

Heb. 8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Heb. 8:13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Heb. 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

22 *John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

23 *Lev. 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.*

Lev. 25:39–41 And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: ⁴⁰But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile. ⁴¹And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

Lev. 25:54 And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubile, both he, and his children with him.

Lev. 25:28 But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

24 *Lev. 25:13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.*

Lev. 25:33 And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in the year of jubile: for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Israel.

bilee, signified the sinner's complete and total release from sin and mirrored what that special and holy day was purposed to accomplish.

The historical record in Acts 2 begins to reveal the long-anticipated event of God sending His Spirit, who not only would now be given to only a few blessed individuals²⁵ but also would become available to all who believed upon the Savior.

Acts 2:1-4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

²*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

³*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

⁴*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Lev. 27:24 In the year of the jubile the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, even to him to whom the possession of the land did belong.

²⁵ *Jdg. 3:10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.*

Jdg. 6:34 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

Jdg. 11:29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. Gen. 41:38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

Exod. 31:1-3 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: ³And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,

Num. 11:25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

Jdg. 14:6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

I Sam 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

²⁶ *Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

²⁷ *Jdg. 6:21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.*

²⁸ *I Kgs. 18:20-40 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. ²¹And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. ²²Then said Elijah*

This early Christian record reveals the first occurrence of Jesus' baptizing His followers with the Holy Spirit and fire.²⁶ This fulfilled John the Baptist's prophecy of the One coming, Who was much greater than himself and Who would perform a much greater baptism of the Spirit. This baptism of fire, as symbolized by *cloven tongues like as of fire* sitting upon those who were given the Spirit, was intended to reveal the internal purification that was taking place. The *cloven tongues like as of fire* coming down from heaven symbolized God's cleansing of people's hearts and burning up sin in their lives. Fire was often used in the Old Testament to signify God's acceptance of offerings, as with Gideon's offering.²⁷ This revealed that the Lord had graciously accepted the worship being offered by those who had the Spirit. Fire was likewise connected to Elijah when he called fire down from heaven to consume his offering, and it revealed God's presence in his ministry.²⁸ It was a

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seraphim who touched Isaiah's lips with a burning coal that symbolized the purification of his sin and his speech.²⁹ Fire is also said in Scripture to be the element that will be used at the last day, when every man will be required to stand before the judgment seat of Christ,³⁰ a time of heavenly judgment when what men have done upon the earth and the works in which they have been engaged in their bodies will be tried by fire to ascertain their true worth.³¹

Ultimately the baptism of Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit radically changed the hearts and lives of the

early Christians and formed for them a completely new view of religion, whereby the inside of the sinner's heart was transformed, something that no mere form of external cleansing, even John's baptism of water, could accomplish.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Acts 2:3) cloven tongues, like as of fire, &c.—“disparted tongues,” that is, tongue-shaped, flame-like appearances, rising from a common center or root, and resting upon each of that large company:—beautiful visible symbol of the burning energy of the Spirit now descending in all His plenitude upon the Church, and about to pour itself

unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. ²³*Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:* ²⁴*And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.* ²⁵*And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.* ²⁶*And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.* ²⁷*And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.* ²⁸*And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.* ²⁹*And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.* ³⁰*And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.* ³¹*And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:* ³²*And with the stones he 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.* ³³*And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.* ³⁴*And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.* ³⁵*And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.* ³⁶*And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.* ³⁷*Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.* ³⁸*Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* ³⁹*And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.* ⁴⁰*And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*

²⁹ Isa. 6:6–7 *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*

³⁰ I Cor. 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

³¹ I Cor. 3:13–15 *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.* ¹⁴*If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.* ¹⁵*If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

through every tongue, and over every tribe of men under heaven!

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary*, Acts 2:3) *Cloven tongues*; to signify the variety of languages which the apostles should be enabled to speak, to qualify them to preach the gospel unto all nations, and to remove the obstacle which the confusion of tongues caused.

Like as of fire; which represented,

1. The light that the apostles should impart;
2. The fervent heat and zeal which they should be endowed with;
3. The gospel's spreading in the world, and carrying all before it, prevailing over all errors;
4. The purity and holiness which they and all that preach the gospel ought to appear withal.

And it sat upon each of them; remained, as far as was necessary for the founding of the Christian religion; and was not, as the gift of prophecy, bestowed only occasionally, as on Nathan, Samuel.

Once Jesus had ascended to the Father and had fully completed the redemption of man, He sent the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, to those chosen by Him^{32, i}. It is also this same Jesus Who died and is now alive, Who now holds the keys to both hell and death—so that if a man truly desires a place in heaven and an escape from hell, then only the Son of God can make it possible. Barnes' commentary on Revelation 1:18 holds great insight

regarding the present heavenly authority of Him Who died and rose again and ultimately sends the promised Holy Spirit to those who believe upon Him.

Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rev. 1:18) *I am he that liveth, and was dead*—I was indeed once dead, but now I live, and shall continue to live forever. This would at once identify him who thus appeared as the Lord Jesus Christ, for to no one else could this apply. He had been put to death; but he had risen from the grave. This also is given as a reason why John should not fear; and nothing would allay his fears more than this. He now saw that he was in the presence of that Saviour whom more than half a century before he had so tenderly loved when in the flesh, and whom, though now long absent, he had faithfully served, and for whose cause he was now in this lonely island. His faith in his resurrection had not been a delusion; he saw the very Redeemer before him who had once been laid in the tomb.

Behold, I am alive forevermore—I am to live forever. Death is no more to cut me down, and I am never again to slumber in the grave. As he was always to live, he could accomplish all his promises, and fulfil all his purposes. The Saviour is never to die again. He can, therefore, always sustain us in our troubles; he can be with us in our death. Whoever of our friends die, he will not die; when we die, he will still be on the throne.

Amen—A word here of strong affirmation— as if he had said, it is “truly,” or “certainly

³² *John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

so.” See the notes on Revelation 1:7.³³ This expression is one that the Saviour often used when he wished to give emphasis, or to express anything strongly. Compare John 3:3; John 5:25.³⁴

And have the keys of hell and of death—The word rendered “hell”—*ᾠδης Hadēs*, “Hades”—refers properly to the underworld; the abode of departed spirits; the region of the dead. This was represented as dull and gloomy; as enclosed with walls; as entered through gates which were fastened with bolts and bars. For a description of the views which prevailed among the ancients on the subject, see the Luke 16:23 note,³⁵ and Job 10:21–22 notes.³⁶ To hold the key of this, was to hold the power over the invisible world. It was the more appropriate that the Saviour should represent himself as having this authority, as he had himself been raised from the dead by his own power (compare John 10:18³⁷), thus showing that the dominion over this dark world was entrusted to him.

And of death—A personification. Death reigns in that world. But to his wide-extended realms the Saviour holds the key, and can have access to his empire when he pleases, releasing all whom he chooses, and confining there still such as he shall please.

Both life and death are in the power of Jesus Christ: the power to admit into heaven those called by God through Himself³⁸ and the authority to send to hell those who reject His divine and exalted position as Lord of both heaven and earth.³⁹ Failure to fear the Son of God and His heavenly authority is ignorance that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow. This includes not merely the saved but also all those rebellious and insubordinate to divine rule, who both have, and still do, refuse to submit to the Son of God’s heavenly authority. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth* (Phil. 2:10).

(*Matthew Poole’s Commentary*, Phil. 2:10)
Every knee should bow: bowing of the knee is meant metonymically, and metaphorically, because some of those hereafter named, from whom the homage is due, have neither knees nor tongues, yet must, either willingly or by constraint, yield subjection and obedience to the sovereign authority of Christ, here and hereafter, Matthew 11:27 28:18 John 5:22,23 Ac 3:15;⁴⁰ ... Then shall his equality with his Father, and his superla-

33 Rev. 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

34 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

35 Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

36 Job 10:21–22 Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; 22A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

37 John 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

38 Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

39 Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

40 Matt. 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

tive glory as Mediator, be manifested to all, good and bad, angels as well as men, who shall be subjected to his sovereign Majesty, as the Lord God omnipotent; the good willingly, and the bad by constraint, Isaiah 45:23 Acts 17:31 Romans 2:16 14:10,11 2 Corinthians 5:10.⁴¹

It is solely through and by way of faith in Jesus that men are saved⁴² and through rejection of Him that they remain condemned.⁴³ In Christ, God's eternal life can be found, and apart from Him *no man* will receive that internal spiritual cleansing of the Holy Spirit, which transforms the heart and proves true admittance into heaven.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Jesus' words *no man* are emphatic, and this includes all those born of the flesh who through their natural and sinful birth are unworthy of heaven.⁴⁴ When Jesus said, *No man* He meant *No man*, and God's Word is unequivocally transparent on this point. Being allowed entrance into the Father's holy presence is possible only through the Son, even as no man can see the Father beyond whom Jesus reveals Him to⁴⁵—so that if any truly desire to be saved, they must repent (of which John's baptism was indicative) and believe upon the name of Jesus Christ, which alone can

John 5:22–23 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: ²³That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Acts 3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

41 Isa. 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Rom. 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Rom. 14:10–11 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

42 John 6:28–29 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? ²⁹Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

John 3:16 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.

John 6:45–47 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. ⁴⁶Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. ⁴⁷Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 3:36 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.

Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Acts 16:13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

43 John 3:18 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.

44 Rom. 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

45 John 17:25–26 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. ²⁶And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

produce receiving the Spirit of God. This is the *one baptism* that Ephesians speaks of, baptism not of the earth nor of any material element performed by earthly men, including even John the Baptist, whom Jesus referred to when saying that of all those *born of women*, there was none greater.⁴⁶ No, this baptism, this heavenly baptism, which actually saves men, needs to descend from heaven and can be sent only from Him Who now sits in heaven.⁴⁷ It is a spiritual baptism performed not by any man or a group of men, and surely not any religious and/or human institution. Ultimately salvation is solely a work of God and can be performed only by Him.

In closing, let us consider Jesus' words that a man must be *born again* before he can enter the kingdom of God. Jesus first taught this revolutionary truth to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews who sought to understand the great importance of Christ's ministry and the breathtaking power of God demonstrated by Him.

John 3:1–8 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:*

² *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man*

can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

³ *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

⁴ *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

⁵ *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

⁶ *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

⁷ *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

⁸ *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

At first there might be seem a discrepancy in verse five when Jesus said that a man must be *born of water and of the Spirit* to be saved. But the discrepancy is handled when it is understood that the figure of speech *hendiadys* is used here, when two nouns are used but only one thing is meant.⁴⁸ The real water that

⁴⁶ Matt. 11:11 *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

⁴⁷ Ps. 110:1 *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* Mark 16:19 *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

Matt. 22:44 *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?* Heb. 10:12 *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

⁴⁸ *Hen-di'-a-dys*, from *ἕν* (*hen*), one, *διά* (*dia*), by, *δύο* (*dis*) two (from *δύο*, two). Lit., one by means of two. Two words employed, but only one thing, or idea, intended. One of the two words expresses the thing, and the other (of synonymous, or even different, signification, not a second thing or idea) intensifies it by being changed (if a noun) into an adjective of the superlative degree, which is, by this means, made especially emphatic.

The figure is truly oriental, and exceedingly picturesque. It is found in Latin as well as in Hebrew and Greek, and is very frequently used in both Old and New Testaments.

The two words are of the same parts of speech: *i.e.*, two nouns (or two verbs) always joined together by the conjunction "and." The two nouns are always in the same case. ...

would cleanse was that spiritual water that Ezekiel spoke of, which only God could provide.

Ezekiel 36:25–26 *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*

²⁶ *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

The water spoken of here, as in John's baptism, originates from the time in the Old Testament when priests would sprin-

John 3:5.—This is literally, "Except a man shall have been begotten of water and spirit." There is no article to either of the two nouns.

That only one thing is meant by the two words is clear from verses 6 and 8, where only the Spirit (the one) is mentioned.

The Lord is speaking to Nicodemus of "earthly things" (see verse 12). And as "a master in Israel," he knew (or ought to have known) perfectly well the prophecy of Ezekiel 36:25–27 concerning the kingdom (not the Church). Concerning Israel, in the day of their restoration to their own land, Jehovah had declared: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ... And I will put my spirit within you," etc.

The cleansing of that day is not to be with literal water, as in the ceremonial cleansings of the Law, but with the Spirit of God.

Hence only one thing is meant:—"Except a man be begotten of water, yes-and spiritual water too, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That spiritual water stands, by another figure (Metonymy), for the Holy Spirit Himself: as is clear from John 7:38–39: "water—(But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive ...)."

Hence there is no reference here to ceremonial or ecclesiastical water-but to that baptism of the Spirit which is the one indispensable condition of entering into the kingdom of God; a moral sphere, which includes and embraces the Church of God, here and now, as well as the future kingdom foretold by God through the prophets. ...

[Another use of hendiadys in respect to the Holy Spirit, is a verse we have already covered.]

Matthew 3:11.—"He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

First observe that there are no articles. It is ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ (*en pneumati hagiō kai puri*), with Holy Spirit and fire: i.e., with Holy Spirit, yes-and burning purifying spirit too. Not two things, but one thing: Judgment!

The contrast is with John's baptism, which was with water which mingled together the chaff and the wheat (as the water sign has done in all ages). But the new baptism of Christ should not be like that. It would separate the chaff from the wheat by burning it up, as the Baptist goes on to declare, without a break in his words: "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The "fire" in verse 11 is different from the "fire" in verse 12. In verse 11 it is a figure for purifying and cleansing; and in verse 12 it is a literal fire that is meant. But the effect of its operations are the same in each case.

The Baptist is speaking, not of the Church, but of Christ and His kingdom, as was prophesied in Isaiah 4:3–4: "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning": i.e., by spirit of judgment—His consuming.

This is the purging of the floor, and the burning up of the chaff, which the Baptist speaks of in verse 12. John only foretold it; but Christ shall do it in the day referred to in Isaiah 4:1–6

"The Spirit" is the Worker, and "the fire" denotes His operations, searching, consuming, and purifying. The day of the Lord's coming will be "like a refiner's fire ... And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver" (Malachi 3:1–4). That day "shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble (as in Matthew 3:12): and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts." Malachi 4:1 (3:19).

Bullinger, Ethelbert W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. "Hendiadys; or Two for One." *StudyLight.org*. Baker Book House, 1968, <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/eng/bullinger/h/hendiadys-or-two-for-one.html>.

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kle water on unclean persons, symbolically purifying them. *And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean* (Num. 8:7). This cleansing, this outward sprinkling with water, performed by the priests symbolized a greater cleansing of the Spirit to come. This heavenly cleansing is that which no earthly priest and surely no man can perform—but only the Lord Himself.

(*Benson Commentary*, Ezek. 36:25) *I will sprinkle clean water upon you*—The expression here alludes to those legal purifications which were made by sprinkling water upon the unclean persons: see Numbers 8:7; Numbers 19:13.⁴⁹ But the cleansing intended is plainly that of the soul, by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon men's consciences to take away their guilt, (see Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 12:24,⁵⁰) and by the grace of the Holy Spirit sprinkled on the whole soul, to purify it from all corrupt inclinations and dispositions; both which blessings are received by faith in Christ, and in the promises of God made through him: see Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:14; Acts 15:9.⁵¹

The *new heart* and the *new Spirit* promised, which would take away *the heart of stone* (v. 26), refers to the spiritual baptism that God reveals only He can perform. This is why it is stated in the prophecy, *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you*

shall be clean. I will cleanse you from also your filthiness and idols. And A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Ultimately the baptism of the Holy Spirit was connected to both water in the Old Testament and fire in the New Testament, which we now know was purposed to coincide with the coming Messiah. Yet both of those baptisms, it is declared in Scripture, must originate from God. Thus, all that Ezekiel prophesied of in the Old Testament concerning the cleansing of Israel with water was directly attributed to an act of God, just as Jesus' baptism with fire was performed by God's Son. This same truth as to how to be cleansed by God from sin is still true today. It is seen by the repetition of "I." The word is recurrent and emphatic in each of these verses, revealing that the transformation of the sinner's heart is something that only the Lord can accomplish. It is not something any man can do. It must be an act of God and cannot be accomplished by a mere ceremony, even if it is a traditional ritual and religious observance. Just as John's baptism of water can be traced back to the priests sprinkling the unclean with water, so Jesus said that a spiritual water, representative of the coming Spirit, is what would allow entrance into the kingdom of God today. To be baptized with

49 Num. 8:7 *And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.*

Num. 19:13 *Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.*

50 Heb. 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Heb. 12:24 *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

51 Gal. 2:16 *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.*

Gal. 3:14 *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Acts 15:9 *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*

water and the Spirit is to be baptized with that spiritual water whose true source is God Himself. This is the Spirit of Christ, Who also like fire will thoroughly cleanse, consume, and destroy all sin in those who have been saved by the Savior.

Because God is Spirit and not a corporeal being consisting of flesh and blood, then all union, fellowship, and intimacy with Him must be on spiritual grounds. Thus, the *one baptism* spoken of in Ephesians

is that spiritual baptism that unites the believer to God and equips him to worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. Heaven is the original of this worship, because the true source of this worship, and that which prompts it, is God's own holy nature. Not only then does Jesus' baptism of the Spirit save a man, but it also equips him to properly worship the heavenly Father *in spirit and in truth*. This is the *one baptism* Ephesians speaks of—and there is no other.⁵²

⁵² *John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

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Endnote

i Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

John 14:16–28 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

¹⁸ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

²⁰ At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

²¹ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

²² Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

²³ Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

²⁴ He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

²⁵ These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

²⁸ Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

John 14:36 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:7–15 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me;

¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.