

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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## A PLEA FOR NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIANITY

Part Two - Seven "Ones" of the Church

Number 6 - "One Baptism" (#2)

by Ted J. Clarke

### INTRODUCTION

Our last issue discussed the original meaning of the word "baptism" as it is defined in the Greek-English Dictionaries (Lexicons) of New Testament (NT) words. We discovered that the meaning of the Greek words *baptizo* and *baptismos*, which are commonly translated baptize and baptism in our English versions of the Bible, mean "to dip, submerge, immerse, overwhelm."

We also noted that the failure to properly translate this group of words into the original meaning has confused Bible readers and perpetuated serious religious error when it comes to the subject of baptism as taught in the Scriptures. Nowhere does the Bible authorize sprinkling or pouring water over the head of a person and calling that baptism. Bible baptism is an immersion, completely covering the individual. Baptism is identified as a "burial with Christ" in Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12. **One does not bury a person by sprinkling or pouring a small amount of water over that person's head!** A true burial is an immersion into a tomb or grave, a complete covering over. In like manner Bible baptism is an immersion in water. While all who have studied the original meaning of the words agree on these definitions, many denominations believe that they have the right to change what God inspired to be written, in order to make baptism more convenient. Passages such as Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; and Revelation 22:18-19 show that no one has the right to change what God has caused to be written.

This lesson continues our discussion by looking at the various baptisms mentioned in the NT and the purpose for the "one Baptism" given by God. We will be seeking to understand what is the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5.

### SIX BAPTISMS REDUCED TO "ONE"

There are six baptisms mentioned in the NT, but the apostle Paul said that at

the time he wrote Ephesians 4:5 [about A.D. 62] there was **only "one baptism"** which was valid. We can discover that "one baptism" by a process of elimination. The first "baptism" which is spoken of in the NT is the baptism performed by John the Baptizer (immerser). Mark 1:4-5 says, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," and those who were baptized "were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." However, John's baptism was preparatory to Christ's coming and was not valid after the cross of Christ. When the apostle Paul found some disciples in Ephesus who had been baptized with John's baptism after Christ's death, burial and resurrection, he baptized them again "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-5). While the baptism performed by John was once valid, it is no longer proper and cannot be the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5.

John the Baptizer mentioned two additional baptisms that were to be administered by the Lord Himself. In Matthew 3:11 John said, "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 Spirit, and with fire." Holy Spirit baptism was a second type of baptism and was a promise of Christ to His apostles. "John indeed baptized with water; but ye [Christ's twelve apostles] shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (cf. Acts 1:2-8). That baptism came on the apostles in Acts 2:1-4 and equipped them to preach the gospel in Christ's name and to confirm by miraculous power that they were speaking what God inspired them to say (cf. John 14:26; 16:12-15). If you will carefully read Acts 1:26 through 2:47, you will note that **only the twelve apostles received this Holy Spirit baptism**. The pronoun "they" of Acts 1:26 refers to the twelve apostles. The same pronouns "they" and

"them" and "these" in Acts 2:1-14 refer only to the twelve apostles. Holy Spirit baptism is mentioned again in Acts chapters 10 and 11, where it was received by the Gentile household of Cornelius. The Holy Spirit fell on them directly from heaven by the administration of Christ (10:44-48). As Peter was telling other Jewish Christians what happened, he said, "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 Spirit" (11:16-17). These are the only two recorded cases of Holy Spirit baptism in the NT. The apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit as representatives of the Jews, and the household of Cornelius received Holy Spirit baptism as representative of the Gentile nations. Peter used the fact that the Gentiles received Holy Spirit baptism, directly from Christ in heaven, as proof that God had chosen them to be saved as well as the Jews (Acts 11:15-18). These are the only two recorded incidents of Holy Spirit baptism in the NT. In all other cases of imparting miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit, the people receiving the miraculous gifts of the Spirit had the hands of an apostle laid upon them, rather than receiving the Holy Spirit directly from heaven. In fact, Acts 8:14-18 shows that this was the rule rather than the exception. Remember, Holy Spirit baptism was administered by Christ, not by the apostles or any other man. Since there are only two recorded cases of Holy Spirit baptism, it is not the "one baptism" which Paul indicates is for every believer (Ephesians 4:5).

The baptism of "fire" is a third type of baptism and one that John said Christ was to administer (Matthew 3:11). This baptism is an immersion in fire as punishment for those who refuse to believe and obey Christ as Lord. John the Baptizer referred to punishment by fire in verses on both sides of Matthew 3:11. After warning in verse 8 to bring forth "fruits worthy of repentance," John said that "every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire" (verse 10). In verse 12, John warns that

(Continued on page 2)

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*(Continued from page 1)*

Jesus "will throughly purge his [threshing] floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Therefore, in the context of this section of Scripture the "baptism of fire" cannot be anything other than immersion in fire as punishment for the unbelieving and unfaithful. In the gospel accounts "fire" from God is always used for judgment and punishment, never as something desirable (cf. Matthew 5:22; 7:19; 13:40, 42, 50; 18:8-9). This baptism of fire is immersion into the punishment of fire as in: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). This is yet future, so neither is it the "one baptism" of which Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:5.

A fourth type of baptism mentioned in the NT is the baptism of suffering and death which both Christ and the apostles experienced (Mark 10:38-39). Although the text does not specifically say "baptism of suffering and death," the Scriptures make it plain that this is that to which Christ referred. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus told His disciples, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death" (Mark 14:34). In verse 36 Jesus prayed to God, "Father...take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." Since "baptism" and "cup" in

Mark 10:38-39 refer to the same thing, only using different figures, Christ spoke of His being "baptized" [immersed] in suffering and death and having to drink the "cup" of suffering and death. The apostles likewise experienced and immersion [baptism] into suffering and death as they carried out Christ's commission to preach His gospel to all the world (Acts 5:40-41; 12:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). As far as we know from the Bible and history, every apostle (with perhaps the exception of John) suffered a violent death brought on from preaching the gospel of Christ. But this is not the baptism to which every believer is subject, so neither is it the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5.

The fifth type of baptism mentioned in the NT refers to an Old Testament event. The apostle Paul said that all the Israelites "were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). This refers to the exodus and passing through the Red Sea when the cloud was overhead (Exodus 14:13-31). It is worthy of notice that the definition of baptism as an immersion or covering over is borne out in this event. The cloud (made of water) was overhead with a wall of water on both sides. Thus, Paul said they were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Since this refers to a past event in the OT, it is not the "one baptism" Paul mentions.

**THE "ONE BAPTISM" OF EPHESIANS 4:5**

This leaves us with only one remaining baptism spoken of in the NT. This is the baptism of the Great Commission. When Jesus was ready to ascend back to heaven following His resurrection, He commanded His apostles, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20). The account of this event in Mark 16:15-16 has Christ say, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Please note the following. First, the apostles were to be the administrators of the "one baptism." The apostles were to teach and baptize, then teach those whom they baptized to do the same teaching and

baptizing. This insures that the teaching of the gospel of Christ and baptizing of believers will continue. The one baptism is not a direct act of any member of the Godhead (Father, Son, or Holy Spirit), but an action performed by a person upon another person. Second, this one baptism is to last until Christ comes. Jesus told the apostles to teach and baptize and to see that the same teaching was continued, noting that He would be "with you" in upholding that teaching and practice "even unto the end of the world." Third, the proper subjects for baptism were those who were old enough to be taught and understand what the gospel is about. One must be taught and "believe" before one can be properly baptized. Therefore, infants are excluded from being baptized. Baptism is for those able to believe and then be baptized. Fourth, one must be baptized with this "one baptism" in order to be saved from sin. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). He did not say that one who believes is saved and then should be baptized, but that is a perversion of Christ's teaching that many men set forth! Christ put faith and baptism **before** salvation. Fifth, the "one baptism" is one that is to be done in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that is by the authority of the Godhead. In other passages we are told to baptize in the name of Jesus, which also means by His authority, which He claimed in Matthew 28:18 (cf. Acts 2:38; 19:5 et al.). Sixth, since the "one baptism" is one that one person can administer to another, that can only be baptism [immersion] **in water** in the name of Jesus Christ, to a believer who is willing to repent of sins and confess that Jesus is Lord and Christ (cf. Acts 2:36-38).

The book of Acts is a history of the apostles carrying out the Great Commission Christ gave to them in the passages we noted above. The baptism of John was not valid after the cross (Acts 19:4-5); Holy Spirit baptism was administered by Christ and limited to the apostles and house of Cornelius (Acts 1:5-8; 11:15-18); the baptism of fire is also administered by Christ and not for all men (Matthew 3:10-12; Revelation 20:15); the baptism of suffering and death was related to Christ and His apostles and not to all men (Mark 10:38-39); the baptism into Moses was an OT event and not for the Christian age (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). The only baptism left to be the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5 is water baptism. Please notice how the book of Acts verifies this

claim. The baptism of Acts 2:38, while not specifically said to be water baptism, can be no other. In Acts 8:35-39 immersion in water is clearly the baptism of the Great Commission, for Philip was only doing that which he was taught by the apostles, who had baptized on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. In Acts 10:47-48, when the apostle Peter was certain that God had authorized salvation for the Gentiles as well as the Jews, he asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these [Gentiles] should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we [Jews]? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the same apostle who had preached Acts 2:38 and commanded baptism to the believing Jews. Thus we can be certain that the baptism of Acts 2:38 was water baptism, the same to which Peter commanded the Gentiles to submit in Acts 10:47-48. When Peter spoke of Noah and the waters of the flood which saved his family, he also said of the waters of baptism, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us" (1 Peter 3:20-21).

**CONCLUSION**

Water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, when administered to a believing person who has repented of sin, will save that person's soul through the blood of Christ. This is the age lasting baptism of the Great Commission and the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5. Next month we will consider some objections to the teaching set forth in this article that baptism has an essential role in our salvation.

**CHILDREN  
RESPECT YOUR PARENTS**

by David Macy

When the famous Bathsheba came into the presence of her son Solomon, even though he was the mighty king of Israel, he arose from his throne and bowed before his mother, treating her with honor and respect. He showed how much he honored and respected his mother by seating her on the throne at his right hand.

Talk about what our country needs. One of the primary things we need is children honoring and respecting their parents like they did in the olden days and in the "good old days" in the USA. A nation cannot continue to be honorable and strong if this is absent. Children honoring their parents and an honorable nation are in-

separable and people eventually see this whether they want to or not.

"And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, 'Let me I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee.' And he said unto him, 'Go back again: For what have I done unto thee?' " *I Kings 19:20*. When Elisha began to follow the great prophet Elijah, he asked permission to kiss his father and mother first, and the permission was promptly granted. Again and again in the Bible we see great men of God showing the utmost respect for their parents, and this is one of the primary things that made them great and so abundantly blessed by the Lord with talents, successes, honor, and sometimes even great wealth and riches.

"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: But his mother kept these sayings in her heart." *Luke 2:31*. When Jesus was a child He honored and obeyed Joseph and Mary, His step father and mother. After His amazing discussion with the doctors of the law in the temple, He went home with his parents to Nazareth and was completely subject to them, like a twelve year old boy, and all children who are still in the home, should be. He was God's son with knowledge and understanding beyond the knowledge and understanding of any other twelve year old who ever lived, but this did not puff Him up, make Him rebellious, or keep Him from being in total submission to His humble but righteous parents.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." *Luke 2:32*. Jesus grew in every area. In other words He was a model child. This would not have been possible if He had been stubborn and rebellious and determined to have His own way. So submission and respect does always come before real honor and accomplishment. A child first honors his parents throughout childhood, like Jesus did, and when he becomes an adult he is often honored again and again because he did it God's way. Jesus grew intellectually, physically, and in divine favor. The benefits of truly honoring one's parents cannot be adequately described in words, but we know they are remarkable and wonderful.

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*A happy family is but an earlier heaven.*

**REBUKES TO EXCUSES**

*"And they all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18).*

**I CAN'T** - *"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).*

**I HAVEN'T GOT TIME** - *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God..." (Matt. 6:33).*

**GET SOMEONE ELSE** - *"Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).*

**IT CAN'T BE DONE** - *"With God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).*

**I AM TOO TIRED** - *"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31).*

**I KNOW I OUGHT TO BUT** - *"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).*

**I WILL SOME OTHER TIME** - *"Now is the accepted time" (II Cor. 6:2)*

**I MAY FAIL** - *"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).*

**I DON'T LIKE TO** - *"For even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:3).*

**LET THEM HELP THEMSELVES** - *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2)*

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Recently we have been receiving quite a number of calls and letters stating that various readers have received a bundle of papers with different names and addresses in addition to the reader's name. Somewhere along the line the Post Office has failed to open the bundle and distribute the papers to the individual names and addresses as they are supposed to do. **If that has happened to you in the past or happens in the future, will you please inform us?** We are trying to find out why this is happening so frequently in so many places. We need to know where this is happening so we can notify the Post Office responsible what they need to do to correct the problem. We are using a mailing program that is approved by the Postal Service and should not be experiencing this difficulty, but we are. Our local postmaster is working with us to correct the problem, but we need your help. Please let us know if this has ever happened to you and include your name and address so we can know the area involved.

Also, if we can impose upon you to do so, please take the following action. If you receive a bundle of papers which have additional names and addresses besides your own, please remove your paper from the bundle, and take the rest of the papers back to the Post Office window which serves your area. Explain to the postal worker what the problem is and ask him to see that the other papers are forwarded to the individual addresses. You do not have to put any additional postage on any of the papers! We have already paid to see that they get delivered and the Post Office is responsible to carry out their job. If the postal person gives you any difficulty, ask for a Consumer Service Card and explain the problem on the card and mail it. You will not have to put postage on this card either. The Consumer Service Department will require the postmaster of that Post Office to answer the complaint in writing and correct the problem.

We are doing our best to see that every reader receives his or her paper every month, but this is a problem which cannot be solved without your help. If you do not receive your paper please let us know and we will send you your missing issues. If you receive a bundle of names in addition to your own, please take them to the Post Office and ask them to forward them. Be sure to let us know also and we will try to prevent that from happening again. Thank you for your patience and your help.

- Ted J. Clarke, editor

### WE LIVE IN A PERFECT WORLD

by Daniel Wolfram

Perfect world? How can one say that we live in a perfect world when there is so much crime, violence, poverty, war, suffering, and death?

**A PERFECT WORLD MAKES US PERFECT.** Paul commanded, "Be perfect..." Does that mean faultless? No. It means complete. How do we obtain this perfectness? Listen to Peter: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect...*" (1 Peter 5:10; see also James 1:2-4). The perfectness does not come unless there is suffering. This world is ideal for that!

**A PERFECT WORLD HELPS US GO TO HEAVEN.** Christ is in Heaven. One day, Christians will be "joint heirs" with Him. But we will only be joint heirs "if so be that we suffer with Him" (Romans 8:17). The disciples of Christ were exhorted to "continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). There is no better place to experience such suffering and tribulation than our world. We live in a perfect world, perfectly designed by God to cause us to seek for and attain eternal salvation in Christ.

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*We should be wise with the burdens of life! Take them before the Lord and leave them there, before they take us under.*

*In your darkest hour, remember that He who holds the whole world in the palm of His hand is watching and is able to deliver.*

*About all the world has to offer is temporary tranquilizers in one form or another to keep the mind off the condition of the heart. Trust Christ for real peace of mind and heart.*

*Faith becomes effective when it becomes active. Take it out of the talking and thinking stage and put it to work practically, quickly and prayerfully.*

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### GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

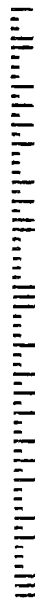
### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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