

Christianity's Boundary-Making Bath: The New Testament Meaning of Baptism, the Sacrament of Unity

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Baptism puts us squarely into the significance of Easter, Christ, and the Christian life. When I spoke to you a year ago on the Lord's Supper in the New Testament, it was possible for me to deal at length with every passage in the New Testament that mentions the Lordly Meal. It is quite different with baptism. It is found frequently in New Testament texts—many of them. Indeed, one can say that baptism is more significant to the New Testament church than is the Lord's Supper. We can almost set up a proportion: Baptism is to the early church as the Lord's Supper is to today's church.

The Significance of Linguistic Statistics¹

The vocabulary for baptism in the New Testament is extremely rich. We turn to a brief description of that vocabulary. Let us begin with simple word statistics. βαπτίζω occurs eighty seven times in the New Testament. The verb βαπτίζω occurs merely four times in the entire New Testament: Luke 16:24, John 13:26 (twice), and Rev. 19:13. None of these passages refer to baptism, Jewish or Christian.

The verb "baptize" occurs seven times in Matthew, restricted to three passages; two times in relation to John the Baptist (3:5, 11), once of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire (3:11), three times in the story of Jesus' baptism by John (3:13-17), and finally in the so-called "Great Commission" (28:19). Mark uses the term twelve times: six times of John the Baptist, including the baptism of Jesus (1:4, 5, 8 [twice], 6:14; 24), once of Jesus' Baptism (1:9), once in an aside to explain ritual purification (7:3-4), and four times of death in 10:38-39. The final occurrence in the so-called "longer ending," a later addition to the book, is a reference to the necessity of Christian baptism (16:16). Luke's Gospel contains the term ten times: seven times of John's baptism (3:7, 12, 16 [twice], 21; 7:29-30), once of Jesus' baptism with Holy Spirit (3:16), once of ritual purification (11:38), and once of Jesus' death (12:50). Thirteen times the term appears in John: nine refer to John the Baptist (1:25, 26, 28, 31, 33, 3:23 [twice], 26; 10:40), one (1:33) refers to Jesus' baptizing in the Holy Spirit, while three (3:22, 4:1-2) refer to Jesus' baptizing—only to deny that he baptized.²

In summary, in the Gospels the term βαπτίζω refers primarily to the actions of John the Baptist. In ritual contexts the term denotes purification, whether it refers to vessels or tables, as in Mark 7, or to the forgiveness of sins, as in John the Baptist's activities. John's Gospel is the only one that speaks of Jesus himself baptizing—and then it goes out of its way to state that Jesus himself did not baptize; only his disciples did. This probably

projects the activity of the early church back into the life of Jesus. What is clear is that John's baptism is not Christian baptism prior to the existence of the church. The New Testament nowhere suggests that it is even a model for Christian baptism. It belongs to the old age.

Acts makes it clear that John's baptism is a problem when it survives into the post-Easter era of the church. Hence one purpose of Luke/Acts is to downgrade the significance of John the Baptist. The story of Paul at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-6 suggests why. Paul meets Ephesians who had never heard of the Holy Spirit, though they had been baptized with John's baptism. Paul tells them that John's baptism prepared for a future one in whom they were to believe. And then he baptized them "into the name of the Lord Jesus (ἐβαπτίσθησαν). John's baptism was not adequate.³ It clearly is not Christian baptism.

Matt 28:18-20 stands out as the *only passage that refers to baptism in the church* by disciples after the resurrection of Jesus. Nowhere does Jesus ask his disciples to baptize prior to his resurrection. In the great missionary discourses (Matthew 10, Mark 6 and Luke 9-10) their function is marked out: to preach the kingdom of God and do the Isaianic signs that Jesus himself did (cf. Matt 10:5-8 with the miracles recorded in chapters 8-9). The mission of the twelve and the seventy is the extension of Jesus' own mission to Israel. (We will return to Matt 28:16-20 later.)

Outside of the Gospels the verb *baptize* (βαπτίζω) occurs only in Acts and Paul—and even then not in all of Paul's letters. Both writers use the term frequently, as it is a significant characteristic of their theology. The verb βαπτίζω occurs twenty one times in the Acts narrative at significant junctures. In Acts 1:5 Jesus uses the term to describe the gift of the Spirit that will come on the disciples at Pentecost: ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἁγίω. This metaphoric use prepares one for the activity of the disciples throughout Acts (cf. Acts 11:16).

The first baptisms occur on Pentecost. Acts 2:38 describes the ritual act by which outsiders enter the fellowship of the apostles. Peter's words call for repentance and relate the Holy Spirit to baptism. They baptized 3000 people that day (Acts 2:41).⁴

Philip initiates the ministry to Samaritans, projected in Jesus' words in Acts 1, by proclaiming and baptizing believing men and women (8:12), including Simon (8:13). The Jerusalem Apostles, who heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God (τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) sent Peter and John to check it out (8:14). They learned that they who accepted the word had been baptized into the name of Jesus (βεβαπτισμένοι. . . εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, 8:15).⁵ The formula, baptism "into the name of the Lord Jesus" appears here for the first time, as does the tie to accepting the word. The disciples put their hands on them, and the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit (ἐπετίθεσαν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' αὐτούς καὶ ἐλάβανον πνεῦμα ἅγιον, 8:17). One theme is clear here: Acts stresses unity via continuity with Jerusalem.

Later Philip baptized the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:38) in response to his question "Look, here is water; what prevents me from being baptized?" (8:37).⁶ The text suggests that they entered a stream or pool for the baptism (κατέβησαν ἀμφότεροι εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, ὃ τε Φίλιππος καὶ ὁ εὐνοῦχος, καὶ ἐβάπτισεν αὐτόν). In Acts 9:18 Ananias baptizes Paul in Damascus in response to divine command. In Acts 10:46 Cornelius and other auditors receive the Holy Spirit as a sign to Peter that he should baptize them. Here the Spirit comes in response to Peter's sermon, not via baptism, the reverse of the sequence in Samaria. Two other points are significant. First, Peter asks whether anyone can prevent their baptism in a manner analogous to the question of the eunuch in Acts 8. Second, Baptism here is not "into," but "in the name of Jesus Christ" (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).⁷ Acts also reflects a facet of conversions outside of Palestine. When Lydia came to believe, her entire household (ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς) was baptized.⁸ The same is true of the Philippian jailor⁹ and Crispus, the leader of the Corinthians' synagogue.¹⁰

The verb βαπτίζω after the gospels occurs thirteen times in Paul (twice in Romans 6:3, ten times in 1 Corinthians, and once in Galatians). It is clear that baptism had, for some reason, great significance in Corinth—and equally surprising that it is not important in 2 Corinthians! Rom 6:3 makes clear that baptism is (ritual?) participation in the death of Jesus. 1 Cor 1:13-17 (six times!) shows the importance of baptism in Corinth; it is clear that there is a misappropriation of baptism there. Therefore Paul stressed that the baptizer is unimportant—hence the amazing statement in v.17, setting proclamation and baptism into opposition. What counts is Christ into whose name one is baptized.

1 Cor 10:1-4 lays the Old Testament basis for maintaining that ritual acts do not work automatically but demand a consequent living out of what has happened there. Paul interprets Israel's passing through the Red (Reed?) Sea as the equivalent of baptism. Verses three and four interpret food and drink in the wilderness as equivalent to the Lord's Supper, Paul's primary interest in the passage. 1 Cor 12:13 stresses baptism as unifying action.¹¹

Gal 3:26-29 draws the conclusion that baptism, since it is the same for all, removes all ethnic, social, and sexual difference in the Christian community, since all have been incorporated into Christ. One conclusion is clear from these statistics about the verb βαπτίζω. Except for Matt 28:19, the term does not refer to Christian baptism in the Gospels. Hence we must pay special attention to Acts and Paul in discussing baptism in the Christian assembly.

The noun βάπτισμα occurs twenty times in the New Testament: twice in Matthew (Matt 3:7, 21:25), both times of John's baptism; four times in Mark (Mark 1:4, 10:38-39 [twice], 11:30), twice of John's baptism, twice of Jesus' death; four times in Luke (Luke 3:3, 7:29, 12:50, 20:4), three of John the Baptist and once of Jesus' death; six times in Acts (Acts 1:22, 10:37, 13:24, 18:25, 19:3,4), always of John the Baptist's baptism; and once each in

Rom 6:4, Eph 4:5, Col 2:12, and 1 Pet 3:21. (Heb. 6:2 and 9:10 both use the term in the plural. They refer to Christian baptism only indirectly.) I simply list these passages here and discuss them below. The term βάπτισμα occurs only three times in the New Testament (Mark 7:4, Heb 6:2, 9:10), always in the plural, apparently referring each time to purificatory rites.

There are, of course, ways to refer to baptism other than through the terms formed on the stem βαπτ-. Writers use the terms *wash* (λούειν, Heb 10:22; cf. 1 Cor 6:11 for a compound verb) and *bath* (λουῦτρον, Eph 5:11; Tit 3:5) or possibly the term *seal* (σφραϊζομαι, Eph 1:13; 4:0). Col 2:11 speaks of a “circumcision not made by hands” and glosses it as baptism in the next verse. The verb καλέω and the noun κλήσις may also have a baptismal reference behind them. See, for example, 1 Thess 7-8. The proposal that 1 Pet 1:3-4:11 is a baptismal homily, if it could be proved, would enrich markedly the resources for interpreting baptism.¹²

A Short But Tendentious History of Baptism

Our cursory examination of the occurrence of terminology related to baptism is preparatory for the discussion that follows. It points out that we can practically omit attention to the Gospels, but must pay great attention to Acts, Paul, and a document that stands in the Pauline tradition, 1 Peter.

The baptism of John the Baptist, important as it is, is not the source of Christian baptism—though it influenced later Christian interpretation of baptism. It was in some sense a rite of purification (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, Mark 1:4) in preparation for the coming of Jesus, the proclaimer of the kingdom of God. John’s baptism is not the founding of a new community, but the identification of the true Israelites (sons of Abraham) who are expecting the Messiah. Thus John’s baptism was not a boundary-crossing or boundary-making event; it did not create a new Israel. John’s baptism, so far as we can tell, was not offered to non-Jews as a way of entering the elect people. It was “a one-time ‘seal’ publicly indicating a promise of *teshubah* on the part of the baptized, as well as of forgiveness of sins at the Last Judgment.”¹³ We have no knowledge of any kind of formula that John used in baptism. The New Testament nowhere suggests that he baptized in the name of the Messiah or any such formula.

John’s baptism did have characteristics that later affected the Christian interpretation of baptism.¹⁴ Acts makes clear that early Christians viewed baptism as a purification rite (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν), but like John, they did not repeat ritual baths, as is the practice in contemporaneous Judaism (at Qumran or in *miqvoth* [ritual baths] frequently found in Palestine). The language of washing found in a few instances in the epistles is evidence of the same influence. But Christian baptism is not simply the continuation of John’s baptism, as the prevalence of gentile baptism makes clear.

Jesus’ baptism at the hands of John in the Gospel of Matthew and Mark, and his self-baptism as presented in Luke (Luke 3:21-22),¹⁵ are also not Christian baptism. The gospels present it first as Jesus’ response to

John's call and next as an election narrative in which Jesus is identified as the beloved son, i.e. either as the representative of Israel (cf. Exod 4:22), as the Q temptation narrative suggests,¹⁶ or as the King-Messiah (cf. 2 Sam 7:1-14, Ps 2:7). It identifies Jesus as the one for whom John looks, the one who will baptize with Holy Spirit and fire.

The origins of Christian baptism are obscure. Or, to put it differently, early Christian baptism has affinities with a number of different cultural phenomena in the first century world. While it is not our main purpose to examine such phenomenon, one cannot simply bypass them entirely. Hans Dieter Betz has called attention to a phenomenon that is very relevant to our own time, that is, the activities of founders of new religions in the ancient world.¹⁷ One method was the founding of a new cult association—often using the language of mysteries and demanding high moral standards. (Cults in our own day often adapt the rhetoric of local culture and borrow actions, worship patterns, and the like from other religions. One thinks of Mormons calling their main cult center a tabernacle, or Islam at an earlier age lauding both Jewish prophets and Christian Jesus in their succession of prophetic figures.) Paul and earlier Christians would certainly have used cultic language and acts from Judaism and the Greco-Roman environment. An examination of the texts of the New Testament ratifies that statement. But that is not our main concern today.

It is intrinsically probable that Christians baptized from the very beginning of their history. Nowhere in the New Testament does anyone argue for its introduction. Acts, Paul, Matthew, Hebrews, etc. all assume the practice of baptism. We get only bits and pieces of the character of baptismal practice in this earliest church. Baptism occurs very soon after coming to faith in Jesus the Messiah. Baptism occurs "into (in) the name of Jesus" (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ).

Did Jesus' own practice of baptism influence the church? The evidence is highly ambiguous. John alone suggests that Jesus baptized (John 3:22-3; 4:1-2); indeed John's disciples grow jealous on his behalf, because "This fellow is baptizing and all people are coming to him." John 4:1-3 suggests that Jesus did not baptize himself, but his disciples did. One thing is clear: Jesus called his disciples (the twelve), but did not baptize them. That suggests that baptism in one sense is the counterpart to Jesus' call: "Follow me!" Both initiate the (public?) relation to Jesus. Discipleship and baptism are both responses to the invitation.

Tracing the history of baptism in the early church involves the interpretation of two major New Testament writers, Paul (in Galatians 3, 1 Corinthians, and Romans 6) and Luke in Acts, plus scattered references elsewhere. While Paul and Luke share many insights about baptism, they are not identical. We can make only a few comments on each before turning to a characterization of baptism as reflected in the entire New Testament.

Baptism: The Distinguishing Christian Rite

Baptism begins at Easter. That is to say, baptism is nothing less than a mode of participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Without that Christological-soteriological tie, baptism is meaningless. A series of passages makes that clear. Romans 6:1-11 is the starting point, and at the same time, Paul's most fully developed theological statement about baptism. Buried with Christ in baptism, we are to be raised with Christ in the future: ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν is to share the effects of death. Paul made those effects clear in Rom 3:21-31: justification for Jew and Gentile alike; in Rom 4:23-25: justification of the ungodly (*justificatio impiorum*) and life from death; and in Rom 5:1-21: peace with God and freedom from sin. All that comes in baptism into Christ's death.

Colossians repeats Paul's earlier convictions with modifications for a new situation. Where Paul had posited resurrection with Christ in the future (his eschatological reservation), Colossians speaks of it as having happened already (3:1). The author is dealing with a situation in which people think they mount to heaven via ecstatic experience. Paul opposes baptism to this as a control over rampant enthusiasm. The same view is expressed in 1 Peter 3:18-22, Heb 6:1-8 and many other places in the New Testament. To discuss baptism in any form or fashion immediately involves one in christology and soteriology. Lars Hartman made that tie very clear in an article entitled "Early Baptism—Early Christology."¹⁸ He stresses the significance of the formula εἰς τὸ ὄνομα to argue that the phrase does not mean into the ownership of (as claim Heitmüller and Billerback), but that the rite is distinguished from other similar rites by the name.

In this respect Easter becomes important. While baptism as a Christian rite begins at Pentecost, it is the resurrection of Jesus that is its basis. Jesus' resurrection, Peter proclaims in an application of Psalm 110:1, is the act by which God made him Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:32-33). Resurrection is exaltation to lordship. Easter, the exaltation of Jesus as κύριος καὶ Χριστός, is the basis for baptism. When the crowd at Pentecost asked what they should do, Peter responded: "Repent, and be baptized. . . ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. . ." (Acts 2:38-39). It is therefore not surprising that it is only after Easter that the church began to baptize—and baptize upon the basis of the Lord Jesus, as the ἐπὶ suggests. Whatever else one says about it, baptism must flow from this christological impulse.

Thus Hartman says that "the formula (baptize) into the name (of the Lord Jesus) does not only refer to the person of Jesus as the basic reference for baptism—as the gatherings of *M. 'Aboth* 2 do not refer only to God per se. . . (or the gatherings of Matt 18:20 refer only to Christ per se). Instead the basic reference and presuppositions are what the one named means in his relation to human beings."¹⁹ Baptism by John, therefore could not be Christian baptism in any sense. His baptism called people to prepare for the Messiah in the face of Yahweh. The massive evidence of the

New Testament that all Christian baptism was in the name of Jesus sharply marks off that baptism from John's baptism.

Baptism is furthermore an entrance rite. People are not born Christian but are made Christian. Baptism is the rite by which they cross the boundary between being an "outsider" and belonging to the community.²⁰ Baptism, by identifying one closely with the risen Jesus, gives one a new identity, and places one into a new community. It marks people off as belonging to a group differentiated from others. One can understand, therefore, from a sociological perspective, why Paul (and later Christians) were hostile to circumcision (cf. Gal 5:1-11). Circumcision is the entry rite into Judaism. The use of circumcision would make baptism less important, less than the basic entry rite to the Christian community, by suggesting that there was a still more central society to which only some Christians would belong.²¹ Paul's use of promise and law in Galatians underscores this, as do his words in Gal 5:1-6. In that way baptism resembled the rites by which one entered a mystery religion. It is not surprising, is it, that Christians later adopted some of the language of these religions for their own initiator rites: mystagogy, mystery, initiation, and the like? Baptism as a boundary crossing rite gave Christians immediately the look of a cult association (a *θίασος* or *collegium*); such associations often used "familial language" to describe themselves, language which appears in Christianity very early. The baptismal passages in Acts make that abundantly clear.

Hebrews (6:1-2) may let us see something of the ritual that surrounded baptism. It is the foundation for teaching about baptisms (in the plural), and the laying on of hands. Water is a significant item. Its ritual use in washings in Jewish rituals (9:10) is rejected. According to Heb 10:19-22, Jesus opens up a new way of approaching God—with boldness—initiated by baptism.

Baptism makes a boundary. The most radical interpretation of that fact is made by Hebrews on the basis of the relation of baptism to Jesus' death. If one is baptized and then becomes apostate, it is impossible to repent and return to the Christian community. Jesus died only once. To apostatize means that one holds the death of Jesus in contempt. He cannot die for you again and so enable a return to the faith (Heb 6:1-8; 10:26-31, especially v.26).

Sacramentum: Baptism has a very nuanced significance. It is formally the occasion on which one makes public confession of Jesus as the *κύριος*. The importance of this confession cannot be over stressed. But the first century context sets it into clear relief. The Latin term *sacramentum* is a technical term in Roman military language.²² It properly describes the oath a soldier swore in the presence of the gods on entering the Roman army.²³ It provided the legal basis for his service. "The recruit had, on enlistment, to take an oath, the *sacramentum*, binding himself to serve loyally and with obedience,"²⁴ "to serve the emperor and his appointed delegates and all orders unto the death and recognize the severe punishment for desertion and disobedience."²⁵ Yann Le Bohec claims "This commitment, called *ius iurandum* or sometimes *sacramentum*, had a religious aspect, and in

consequence some Christians believed that the oath-sacramentum was incompatible with the baptism-sacramentum.”²⁶

This context illuminates 1 Cor 12:1-3, a fundamental passage for interpreting baptism. Κύριος Ἰησοῦς is an acclamation, that is, a cry expressing what unites a group. The same acclamation appears in Phil 2:11, Rom 10:9, 2 Cor 4:5, and Col 2:6, and in modified form in 1 Cor 8:6. In baptism the baptizand claims Jesus as his only Lord—just as the Roman army recruit swore to recognize no other lord than Caesar. The Corinthians had apparently misinterpreted Paul’s earlier proclamation of the risen Christ to validate an acclamation that read, “Jesus be damned, Christ is Lord” (Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, Κύριος Χριστός). It was essential for Paul that the resurrected one be the very one who was crucified. Hence his words in 1 Cor 2:1-5 and the strong affirmations of 1 Corinthians 15. (There is at least one other baptismal acclamation: ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ in Gal 4:4-7 and Rom 8:15 appears to be a baptismal acclamation that derived from early Jewish Christianity.)

The acclamation denotes entry into fidelity and obedience: Κύριος Ἰησοῦς. To acclaim Jesus as Lord is to do two things, as the function of acclamations makes clear: to express the fundamental commitment that forms and unites a community, and to rule out competing commitments. If Jesus is Lord, no other can be. The concept of the renunciations in the baptismal liturgy is thus a development of the acclamation.²⁷ Eph 4:4-6 contains a more developed baptismal acclamation in verse 5: εἰς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἐν βάπτισμα. The formulation is striking. The three genders of “one” unite three ideas that are closely related: the lordship of Jesus, fidelity to him (πίστις is also a military term that can mean oath of fidelity), and the one baptism in which one acclaims this Lord.

Hence baptism is in its earliest form baptism into (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα),²⁸ in (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι) or upon (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι) (the Lord) Jesus. “Into the name,” probably the earliest formulation, is at first glance puzzling.²⁹ One needs to ask how this relates to the homologia or acclamation that is used in baptism and also to ask how it is related to the phrase “into Christ.” Does it mean dedication of a person to the heavenly Kyrios (as Heitmüller claims), as if deposited to the Lord’s account, or does it imply that the (ritual) death in baptism is somehow initiation into Jesus’ death or a sacrifice of the person to Jesus? (Cf. *M. Zebah* 4.6, which uses the phrase that a sacrifice has to be offered “into the name of the Name.” $\square\psi\eta\eta\ \square\psi\eta\eta$).³⁰ Hartman rejects this interpretation because the context also says it is also to be offered “into the name of the offerer.”

In 1 Pet 3:18-21, we also see baptism as a purification rite. This marvelous passage makes a unique application of the Noah story.³¹ The author inserts vv.19-21 into an early creedal tradition about Jesus’ enthronement through resurrection (note the three participles: θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι, πορευθεὶς εἰς οὐρανόν. This creedal statement stresses the three cardinal events that lead to Jesus’ lordship.) Just as the flood waters saved Noah and his family, so baptism now saves, not as a moving from the

realm of flesh to the realm of spirit, but the request for a good conscience before God (cf. 1 Pet 4:6—though not as translated in the RSV.) Luther rightly based his baptismal prayer on this passage. Similar concepts of the removal of sin can be found in 1 Cor 6:11; Tit 3:4-7; Heb 6:1-2; 10:19-22.

Baptism in Acts, as W.F. Flemington has said, is a “curiously complicated” piece of evidence.³² In part that is because the understanding of baptism is imbedded in a narrative context, whose features sometimes bear resemblance to an ancient novel.³³ John’s baptism is not Christian baptism: Acts 1:5 records the words of the departing Jesus. Acts 11:15-16 gives Peter’s report of the baptism of Cornelius. There is finally the curious narrative of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28; no baptism or Spirit) and of the disciples of John in Acts 19:1-7, underscoring the significance of the Spirit for baptism in Acts.

The evidence in Acts about the relation of baptism and the Holy Spirit is quite contradictory. There is the account of the Samaritan mission of Peter and John in Acts 8:12-16, described above. Add to that the strangeness of the Cornelius story, in Acts 10:44-48 and 11:15-18. A second Pentecost occurs, and the Spirit comes, without the laying on of hands or baptism. That leads to *glossalalia* and to the baptism of a Roman Centurion. Yet curiously Acts 11:15-18 makes no mention of baptism, only of the spirit. Here Peter seems to oppose water baptism and Spirit baptism! Perhaps the strangest incident of all occurs in Ephesus, in Acts 19:1-7. When Paul asks disciples in Ephesus if they have received the Holy Spirit, they respond that they did not know anything about a Holy Spirit. Their baptism in John was not adequate. When they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, then the Holy Spirit came on them and they did the deeds of the baptized: spoke in tongues and prophesied.

The Corinthian church understands the concept of power in baptism in a unique manner. Baptism conveys security (1 Corinthians 10), power (1 Corinthians 4), and status (the party divisions in 1 Corinthians 1-4 based in part on their baptizers). Spiritual gifts were used to express superiority, not to edify (1 Corinthians 12-14). In response Paul gives one of his most enigmatic statements in 1 Cor 1:17, understandable only in terms of the situation: “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to proclaim good news.”

In 1 Corinthians the congregation felt it was already living a transformed life as life already in the state of resurrection (1 Cor 4:8, etc.). They already spoke the language of heaven (tongues of angels, 13:1) and had mystical experiences of heaven. And they validated this with a baptismal acclamation that Paul had to fight (1 Cor 12:1-3). It is not surprising that Paul stresses the crucified Christ and “other Christians as the ones for whom Christ died” (1 Cor 8:11).

Paul refers to another odd Corinthian practice in 1 Cor 15:29: Baptism over the dead.

He refers to a practice that he calls “baptism for the dead.” This was a ceremony that was apparently being practiced by some in Corinth, presumably by people in the church. Paul’s argument is that such a practice

makes absolutely no sense if there is no resurrection of the dead. If there is no resurrection, *then* why are people baptized for the dead?

It may well be that this is the most difficult verse in the entire Bible. There have been more than forty interpretations proposed. That, in itself, is instructive, for, as Gordon Fee points out, "when there is such a wide divergence of opinion, no one knows what in fact was going on" (Fee, 1 Cor., NICNT, 763). Although it is a great disappointment to some, I think we must be honest and agree with that assessment. We simply do not know to what it was that Paul refers. (Which means that there isn't much need to know all forty-plus interpretations! They are all based on guesswork and an assumption that we *can* know the details which neither the biblical text nor extra-biblical material have recorded!)³⁴

No other church in the New Testament, in the early history of the church, "nor in any orthodox Christian community in the centuries that immediately followed; nor are there parallels or precedents in pagan religion to baptism over the dead." This is a genuine idiosyncrasy in the history of the church, known and practiced by some in the Corinthian community.³⁵

Baptism as Socializing Agent: Baptismal Relationships

Baptism is a socializing act of power, because it is baptism into Christ and conveys the Spirit, and therefore it establishes community. Baptism into Christ is baptism into a new Lord's rule, into a new situation, into a new relationship with God. It is also baptism into the *σῶμα Χριστοῦ*. 1 Corinthians is the text that most explicitly spells out the significance of baptism as socializing act.

Thus, just as baptism puts us into a new relationship with God, it also puts us into a new society, a society whose reality we are called to realize. Paul cites an apparent baptismal formula in Gal 3:28-29.³⁶ In baptism one puts on Christ. That means that each person "in Christ" now bears the value of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 8:11). The old distinctions based on ethnicity (Jew or Greek), social status (slave or free) or biological chance (male or female) no longer apply, "for you are all one in Christ!" In what sense? In the sense that all are equal. Baptism is the great leveler in the church, for all go alike through death in the water to be formed new "in Christ." All patterns of differentiation disappear (Gal 3:25-29). 1 Corinthians is the parade example of life in community; one needs to consider its discussion of unity, of marriage, of spiritual gifts and the Eucharist to see how this life in the body of Christ works its way out. 1 Corinthians speaks against individualism (12:10, 12-13) and against worship in other cults. The evaluation of the other sets the boundary on individual liberty (8:11; cf. Rom 15:1-13). Both passages in Paul show how Christian community affects everyday life in relation to meat offered to idols, the weaker, the brother, lawsuits, etc. It is also anti-experiential in favor of a controlled emotional life. There is no use of the verb "I like. . ." in the New Testament.

In 1 Corinthians 1:12-13 Paul's first argument against factionalism is that they were all baptized into Christ, not into Paul (or Cephas or Apollos), and

he grounds his appeal for the use of varied spiritual gifts in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:4-27) in the baptismal acclamation "Jesus is Lord" (12:3). The Ephesians' great appeal for unity puts the baptismal acclamation at the center (Eph 4:4-6). But one cannot stop here. Eph 4:7-16 is realistic as it speaks of growing into the full measure of the stature of Christ. Like Paul in 1 Corinthians, this later Paulinist moves from baptism to life in community.

Ephesians 5:25-27 uses baptism as if it were the ceremonial bath before a wedding—and ties it to the action of Christ over against the church. Baptism becomes the basis for urging husbands to love their wives. What happened to the individual here is transferred to the church, the *grex baptizatorum*. Ephesians 1:13-14 and 4:30 use the "seal of the Spirit": In him you also, who have *heard* the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and *have believed* in him, were *sealed* with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the *guarantee of our inheritance* until we acquire possession of it, to the *praise of his glory*.³⁷ "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were *sealed* for the day of redemption" (Eph 4:30). All of this is an expansion of the initial *berachah*. Baptism is the source of all good gifts. It confers a changed status; like a change of clothing (4:22-24), baptism leads to a whole new way of life (cf. Col. 3:8-11, where its social implications are laid out).

Baptism and the Life of Discipleship

Baptism is "in remissionem peccatorum" (Acts 10:43,48; 16:31-32). In Luke 24:47 Jesus tells the disciples that "repentance and the forgiveness of sins be preached in his name to all the nations" (cf. Matt 28:18-20), a note that also sounds in Romans 6.

Baptism is radical change, as radical as death. "Shall we continue in sin that grace might overflow?" God forbid. Baptism is death to the lordship of sin, a call to a new way of life; Rom 6:4 reminds us that we have been buried with Jesus by baptism into death, with the purpose that we should live a new life (ἵνα . . . καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατῶμεν; see also 1 Cor 6:11). "Through Baptism Christians are so included in the Christ event that they belong irrevocably to Christ."³⁸ But Paul breaks the absolute analogy of baptism and Christ's death/resurrection. One does not first get a gift of life from Jesus (or justification) and then decide to serve Christ or God. Those who are free from sin (ἐλευθερία) are at once slaves of God (Rom 6:18), so sin cannot rule in them. Freedom imposes slavery: "Because I am free from all, I have made myself a slave of all" (1 Cor 9:19). The freedom of baptism is not freedom of choice, not freedom to please oneself. One can be a slave to one's own passions (6:12). One becomes free in Christ through baptism by coming under the Lordship of Christ and God. 1 Cor 3:21-23 describes freedom as "belonging to Christ." Baptism works a change in Lordship. The first imperatives in Romans come after 6:12.³⁹ Therefore, New Testament ethics is consistently the call to live as the baptized.

Such is the case in Romans 12, which calls for a metamorphosis of life. Indeed, life is so radically altered that the stuff of life becomes the locus of

worship. The dichotomy of human existence (Rom 7) changes. The whole person is altered. One's mind is transformed to approve what pleases God (Rom 12:2) and the body (12:1; cf. 1 Cor 6:11; Eph 4:1-6, 4:30, etc.). Even worship is no longer done in holy places at holy times. One presents one's body as a living sacrifice, set apart, an offering acceptable to God, the worship that corresponds to the basic *logos* of the faith (Rom 12:1-2).

Colossians speaks in the same way. Col 2:11-15 imports baptism into the discussion, and that becomes the basis for the parenthesis in 3:1-4:6. The language of the ritual becomes the symbol of life: kill (3:5), "put off, strip off" (3:9), and "clothe yourselves" (3:10 and 12). Such new clothing is what leads to the unifying *ἀπεραι* of Col 3:12-17, including the functions of worship and the presupposition of the social relations catalog of 3:18-4:1.

1 Peter is a letter that looks back to the "single event of conversion-initiation."⁴⁰ The letter is bathed in earlier Christian traditions, many of them shared with the Pauline school. 1 Peter 3:17-22 is the central passage. The baptismal material is inserted into a confessional framework (3:18 and 22). Baptism saves as Noah was saved—by water. But not water as agent that purifies of itself, but water that relates to a clear conscience. Baptism is a water rite that deals with an *ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν*. It points the baptized to action, to Jesus as the Lord who is also modeled in the hymnic passage that opens it. It too gets its power from the resurrection of Jesus (1:3, 3:21) and his exaltation to Lordship.⁴¹ 1 Pet 4:1 moves immediately to action. And this hope even sees in the need for apologetics an opportunity for proclamation (2:12, 3:16, 4:14-16). The basis is laid earlier in the text. The opening *berachah* uses the language of rebirth to a living hope that reflects the baptismal (1:3), while later he talks of purification that gives rebirth (1:23).

I have left what many regard as the foundational text for Christian baptism to the last, the great conclusion to the Gospel of Matthew. It can in some ways serve as a summary of this entire presentation. Mission is based in the Lordship of Christ. I will make a series of points about this passage (Matthew 28:18-20). First, this narrative is, formally, an enthronement formula: elevation, proclamation, acclamation. Jesus now has all authority in heaven and on earth, that is throughout the created universe (28:18). He has become the *κοσμοκράτωρ*, as Caesar is *αὐτοκράτωρ* in the Roman world. He has advanced beyond what is affirmed in Matt 11:15-17.

The next point is a grammatical truism but with strong implications. The main verb in the narrative is *μαθητεύσατε*, not baptize. Jesus is concerned about his disciples. It is the consequence of having him as Lord (*οὖν*). Note that he says this to *disciples* (*μαθηταί*), not apostles. Matthew has no concept of ordained clergy (see Matt 23:8-12). They are to make disciples as they live out their lives (*πορευθέντες*). Matthew gives this responsibility to all disciples.

Thirdly, the two participles *βαπτίζοντες* and *διδάσκοντες* are instrumental participles; that is, they describe the means by which disciples disciple (Matthew does make a verb of it) others. They form an *hendiadys*; that is, the two belong together and really make up one concept.

Next, baptizing obligates one to teach practical ways of realizing discipleship. Disciples are to observe everything Jesus has commanded (διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν). For Matthew that means teaching others the five great discourses in the first Gospel. The contemporary implication is that Matthew regards evangelism and teaching as more important than worship. Or, to put it more dramatically, Matthew does not have a cultic interpretation of baptism. (Aside: I do need to make one or two provocative statements to prevent you from simply assuming that you are biblical!) In fact, Matthew worries a great deal about the formalization of discipleship, of it becoming a burdensome religion. (Read Matt: 11:25-30 in light of Sirach 51 and Matthew 23.)

The fifth point may engender even more discussion. I am aware of the claim by some Lutheran theologians—Robert Jensen and Carl Braaten first and foremost—that Matt 28:19 gives us the New Testament name of God: “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” I regard that as philological nonsense with some unfortunate side effects. The phrase is not a name. It is a Syrian liturgical formula that developed after Jesus’ resurrection. The New Testament, everywhere but in this passage, stresses that baptism is in, upon, or into the name of Jesus as Lord. The Matthaean formula is an expansion that is christologically formed.

Baptism is part of the obligation to missionize in the period before the close of the age. That is, Matthew holds that the primary occupation of the Christian community is missiological, not liturgical.

Baptism Post Matthew: Didache and Justin Martyr

The New Testament nowhere gives us more than a glimpse of the cultic practice of baptism. Baptism occurs in handy water with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36), in the Gangites River with Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), and elsewhere simply in cities (Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, etc.). We get our first indication of baptismal practice in the Didache:⁴²

7.1 περὶ δὲ τοῦ βαπτισματος, οὕτω βαπτίσατε· ταῦτα πάντα προεῖποντες βαπτίσατε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος· ἐν ὕδατι ζῶντι. 2. ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἔχης ὕδωρ ζῶν, εἰς ἄλλο ὕδωρ βάπτισον· εἰ δ' οὐ δύνασαι ἐν ψυχρῷ, ἐν θερμῷ. 3. ἐὰν δὲ ἀμφοτέρω μὴ ἔχης, ἔκχεον εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν τρεῖς εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος. 4. πρὸ δὲ τοῦ βαπτισματος προνυστευσάτω ὁ βαπτίζων καὶ ὁ βαπτιζόμενος καὶ εἴ ἄλλοι δύνανται· κελύ(σ)εις δὲ νηστεύσαι τὸν βαπτιζόμενον πρὸ μιᾶς ἢ δύο.⁴³
9:5 μηδεὶς δὲ φαγέτω μηδὲ πιέτω ἀπὸ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὑμῶν, ἀλλ' οἱ βαπτισθέντες εἰς ὄνομα κυρίου· καὶ γὰρ περὶ τούτου εἶρηκεν ὁ κύριος· μὴ δώτε τὸ ἅγιον τοῖς κυσί.

Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.61, is the second witness.

“Ὁν τρόπον δὲ ἀνεθήκαμεν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ καινοποιηθέντες διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐξηγησόμεθα, ὅπως μὴ τοῦτο παραλιπόντες δόξωμεν πονηρεῦν τι ἐν τῇ ἐξηγήσει. 2. ὅσοι ἂν πεισθῶσι καὶ πιστεύωσιν

ἀληθῆ ταῦτα τὰ ὑφ' ἡμῶν διδασκόμενα καὶ λεγόμενα εἶναι, καὶ βιοῦν οὕτως δύνασθαι ὑπισχνῶνται, εὐχεσυσσὶ τε καὶ αἰτεῖν νηστεύοντες παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν προημαρτημένων ἄφεςιν διδάσκονται, ἡμῶν συνευχομένων καὶ συνηστευόντων αὐτοῖς. 3. ἔπειτα ἄγονται ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἔνθα ὕδωρ ἐστί, καὶ τρόπον ἀναγεννήσεως, ὃν καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ ἀνεγεννήθημεν, ἀναγεννῶνται· ἐφ' ὀνόματος γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὄλων καὶ δεσπότης θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου τὸ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι τότε λουτρὸν ποιοῦνται. 4. καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς εἶπεν. ἂν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. 5. ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἀδύνατον εἰς τὰς μήτρας τῶν τεκουσῶν τοὺς ἀπαξ γενομένους ἐμβῆναι, φανερὸν πᾶσιν ἐστί. 6. καὶ διὰ Ἡσαίου τοῦ προφήτου, ὡς προεγράψαμεν, εἴρηται, τίνα τρόπον φεύξονται τὰς ἀμαρτίας οἱ ἀμαρτήσαντες καὶ μετανοοῦντες. 7. ἐλέχθη δὲ οὕτως· λουσασθε, καθαροὶ γένησθε, ἀφέλετε τὰς πονηρίας ἀπὸ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, μάθετε καλὸν ποιεῖν, κρίνατε ὄρφανῶ καὶ δικαιοῦσατε χήραν, καὶ δεῦτε καὶ διαλεχθῶμεν, λέγει κύριος· καὶ ἐὰν ὧσιν αἱ ἀμαρτία ὡς φοινικοῦν, ὡσεὶ ἔριον λευκανῶ, καὶ ἐὰν ὧσιν ὡς κόκκινον, ὡς χίονα λευκανῶ. 8. ἐὰν δὲ μὴ εἰσακούσητέ μου, μάχαιρα ὑμᾶς κατέδεται· τὸ γὰρ στόμα κυρίου ἐλάλησε ταῦτα. 9. καὶ λόγον δὲ εἰς τοῦτο παρὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐμάθομεν τοῦτον. 10. ἐπειδὴ τὴν πρώτην γένεσιν ἡμῶν ἀγνοοῦντες κατ' ἀνάγκην γεγεννήμενα ἐξ ὑγρᾶς σπορᾶς κατὰ μίξιν τὴν τῶν γονέων πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἐν ἔθεσι φαύλοις καὶ πονηραῖς ἀνα(σ)τροφαῖς γεγόναμεν, ὅπως μὴ ἀνάγκη τέκνα μηδὲ ἀγνοίας μένωμεν ἀλλὰ προαιρέσεως καὶ ἐπιστήμης, ἀφέσῳς τε ἀμαρτιῶν ὑπὲρ ὧν προημάρτομεν τύχωμεν, ἐν τῷ ὕδατι ἐπονομάζεται τῷ ἐλομένῳ ἀναγεννηθῆναι καὶ μετανοήσαντι ἐπὶ τοῖς ἡμαρτημένοις τὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὄλων καὶ δεσπότης θεοῦ ὄνομα, αὐτὸ τοῦτο μόνον ἐπιλέγοντος τοῦ τὸν λουσόμενον ἄγοντος ἐπὶ τὸ λουτρόν. 11. ὄνομα γὰρ τῷ ἀρρήτῳ θεῷ οὐδεὶς ἔχει εἰπεῖν· εἰ δὲ τις τολμήσειεν εἶναι λέγειν, μεμνηε τὴν ἄσων μανίαν. 12. καλεῖται δὲ τοῦτο τὸ λουτρον φωτισμός, ὡς φωτιζομένων τὴν διάνοιαν τῶν ταῦτα μανθανόντων. 13. καὶ ἐπ' ὀνόματος δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ σταυρωθέντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ ἐπ' ὀνόματος πνεύματος ἁγίου, ὃ διὰ τῶν προφῆτων προεκήρυξε τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν πάντα ὃ φωτιζόμενος λούεται. . .65. ἡμεῖς δὲ μετὰ τὸ οὕτως λούσαι τὸν πεπεισμένον καὶ συγκατατεθειμένον ἐπὶ τοὺς λεγομένους ἀδελφοὺς ἄγομεν. . .44

What do these passages suggest? The Didache (ca 95 CE) reflects the growth of cultic practice. Both baptiser and candidate are to fast before the rite, the candidate for two or three days. The reason for the fast is not clear. It may have been to underscore the serious, decisive character of the step the candidate was taking, the character of the community she or he was entering, or the ritual cleansing of the person. More significant is the use of the “trinitarian formula” in a form identical to that of Matthew 28:19. This identity supports the suggestion that Matthew reproduces the formula of the (Antiochian) Syrian church in his Gospel. (He did a similar thing with

the Lord's Prayer—and the textual tradition shows that the Syrian doxology also entered the Matthaean text.) The concern for the use of living water, i.e. water open to the sky in river or lake, enabled the full ritual bath symbolizing death and new life; cold, not warm, because of its refreshing character. Ritual begins to reflect meaning.

Justin Martyr deserves a similar examination.⁴⁵ He reflects the development of liturgical practice. First those who are to be baptized must be persuaded and believe that what Christians teach is true and seek to live according to that teaching. Then, as they pray and fast with Christians, they ask God for forgiveness. They receive washing “in the name of God the Father and Master of all, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.” This washing is called illumination (φωτισμός). Justin's text demonstrates how the church is ritualizing baptism about the year 160 CE—and reversing the order of Matthew to first instruction, then baptism. The term “enlightened” supports this change.⁴⁶

Baptism played a central role in the life of the earliest church, a role we tend to give to the Lord's Banquet, as important in the life and thought of the church as the Eucharist is to us. Baptism earns a place in the Nicene Creed; the Eucharist is nowhere mentioned.

Baptism is related to Jesus in a preeminent manner. Matthew 28:18-20 is the only passage in the New Testament using the trinitarian formula. Baptism in the name of Jesus (only) is the norm in the New Testament. Therefore, from a New Testament perspective, the insistence on the trinitarian formula is overpressing the evidence. Without Jesus, no baptism is Christian.

Baptism is tied essentially to the teaching function of the church, not because it asks for instruction prior to baptism, but because the New Testament expects parenesis to follow baptism, not precede it. Parenesis was fundamentally instruction in the meaning of baptism for on-going life in obedience to God. Some colleagues of mine worry that we are no longer giving adequate instruction in the faith to adults who become members of the Lutheran church. And to some degree I share their concern. But I would not be worried about it if we followed the New Testament practice of instruction in the living out of our baptism in the dusty turmoil of life in our very demonized world.

So as you go, disciple people by baptizing and teaching. Immanuel will be “God with us” as you do, as the last words of Matthew promise.

notes

¹ Statistics based on W.F. Moulton and A.S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*. 5th ed. revised by H.K. Moulton, Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1978.

² John 3:22-23

³ It is striking that Jesus and John as adults do not meet in Luke. John is in prison before Jesus is baptized (Luke 3:19). The infancy narratives of John and Jesus are written to show the superiority of Jesus over John. That pre-

pares for Acts 19:3-5.

⁴ It is interesting that Paul's sermon in Acts 22:16 includes an appeal very close to Peter's. This is the last use of the verb βάπτισαι in Acts.

⁵ The phraseology is reminiscent of Acts 2:41.

⁶ Years ago Oscar Cullmann suggested this question was a part of early Christian baptismal ritual. See *Baptism in the New Testament*, SBT 1. London: SCM Press, 1950:71-80. He points to the use of the term διακωλύω in Acts 8:36, 10:47, 11:17, Matt 3:13-14, and Gospel of the Ebionites in Eiphanius 30.13.

⁷ See also Acts 10:46-48

⁸ Acts 16:15

⁹ Acts 16:33

¹⁰ Acts 18:8

¹¹ In 1 Cor 15:29 Paul uses an *ad hominem* argument based on baptism over the graves of deceased ancestors (twice).

¹² Made by H. Windisch, then modified by H. Preisker in H. Windisch, *Die katholische Breife*, HNT, 15; 3rd ed., Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1951:76-77, 82.

¹³ Hans Dieter Betz, "Transferring a Ritual: Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Romans 6," *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pederen, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995:101.

¹⁴ See Betz, 100-103.

¹⁵ John, according to Luke 3:19-20, is in jail at the time of Jesus' baptism.

¹⁶ Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.

¹⁷ Betz, 86-100, calls attention to the founding of new cult associations, the work of Timotheos of Athens and Manethon in founding the cult of Sarapis under Ptolemy I Soter (305-283 BC), the introduction of Eleusinian mysteries near Alexandria, Mnasistratos in founding the Andanian mysteries, Methapos of Athens in founding the mysterie of the Kabeiri at Thebes (he is τελετης δὲ καὶ ὀργίων [καὶ] παντοίων συνθέτης), Alexander of Abonouteichos, and others.

¹⁸ Lars Hartman, "Early Baptism—Early Christology," pp.91-201 in *The Future of Christology: Essays in Honor of Leander E. Keck*, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe and Wayne A. Meeks, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

¹⁹ Hartman in *The Future of Christology*, 194-195.

²⁰ See Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, New Haven: Yale, 1983 chapter 2: "The Formation of the Ecclesia," 74-110, for a description of such boundary making. See also Howard Clark Kee, *Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980:74-99.

²¹ I do not mean to suggest that this is the main or only reason why Paul would not support circumcision. But Paul is concerned about maintaining the unity and equality of all members of the church in Romans, as Rom 3:21-31 makes clear.

²² See the article by Erich Sander, "Sacramentum," *Der Kleine Pauly* 4.1489-90, and J.B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 BC-AD 235*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984; reprint, 1996.

²³ See Cicero, *De officiis* 1.11.36

²⁴ Webster, Graham, *The Roman Imperial Army*. 3rd ed., Totowa: Barnes & Noble, 1985.

²⁵ Webster, 120.

²⁶ Yann Le Bohec, *The Imperial Roman Army*, New York: Hippocrene Books; London: B.T. Batsford, 1989:74.

²⁷ I wish the *LBW* had retained Luther's triple "I renounce" to balance the triple

act of confession to the Trinity! It would be literarily much more effective.

²⁸ Lars Hartman, "Baptism," *ABD* 1.586, calls attention to the strangeness of this idiom. It was "not otherwise used in normal Greek, except for the language of banking, in which it referred to the account/name 'into' which a sum of money was placed." The very strangeness of the idiom suggests that it was highly important.

²⁹ Note that Paul uses the phrase in 1 Cor 1:13: "Were you baptized into the name of Paul?"

³⁰ Hartman, *ABD*, 586.

³¹ Noah appears elsewhere in Matt 24:37-37 and the parallel in Luke 17:26-27 as a warning figure in an "eschatological correlative." 2 Pet 2:5 also uses the story to warn against heeding false prophets. He is mentioned in Luke's genealogy (3:36) and appears in the heroes of faith in Heb 11:7.

³² W.F. Flemington, *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*, London: S.P.C.K., 1953.

³³ Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

³⁴ E-mail from Rodney J. Decker, Calvary Theological Seminary, in the Biblical Greek Discussion group on the Internet, 21 April 1995.

³⁵ Gordon Fee, *1 Corinthians*, NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987:764.

³⁶ See the extensive discussion in Hans Dieter Betz, *Hermeneia: Galatians*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979:181-85. James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*. BNTC, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993:201, suggests that this liturgical formula is possible, but not compelling.

³⁷ Eph 1:12-14

³⁸ Wolfgang Schrage, *Ethics*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988:175. See also Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*, San Francisco: Harper 1996:32-36.

³⁹ Schrage, 176.

⁴⁰ J.D.G. Dunn, *Spirit*, 215, n.2

⁴¹ Schrage, 270.

⁴² In addition to the *Didache* and Justin Martyr, one should consult Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, the *Diascalia Apostolorum*, and Tertullian, *De baptismo*. They show the development of the baptismal rite.

⁴³ Cited from Hans Lietzmann, *Die Didache*. KIT 6. 6th ed., Berlin: Verlag Walter De Gruyter, 1962.

⁴⁴ I cite the text from Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten*, Göttingen: Vandoeck und Ruprecht, 1914:70-1. There is an excellent annotated translation by Leslie William Barnard, *St. Justin Martyr: The First and Second Apologies*, translated with introduction and notes, *Ancient Christian Writers* 56, New York/Mahway: Paulist Press, 1997.

⁴⁵ See Andre Benoit, *Le Baptême Chrétien au second siècle: La Théologie des pères*, Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1953, for some guidance in this regard, or any one of the standard histories of doctrine in the early church.

⁴⁶ L.W. Barnard's *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought*, Cambridge: University Press, 1967, is a useful introduction to Justin's theology. His discussion of baptism is on pp.136-142.