

Chapter Six

“How Does The Lord Add to the Church?”

“THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST: ITS GROWTH”

To restate, believer baptism is a Church ordinance. It also accomplishes more than simply providing a public declaration of one’s new relationship with Jesus Christ by faith. Believer baptism also brings the baptized believer into close association with other Christians in the Church that authorizes his baptism as a Church member.

You may remember that I did not verify what I previously asserted about baptism. Let me now deal with water baptism, the immersion of a believer by the authority of a Church of Jesus Christ, as how a convert to Christ becomes a Church member. Before plunging into that consideration, I will briefly present the basis Baptists have in Scripture for insisting that all real Christians should be members of a New Testament type Church of Jesus Christ.

Already established is the Scriptural basis for Church membership and the three proofs showing the Scriptural basis for Church membership. Here they are in the order they are found in the New Testament. *First*, in Matthew 18.15-20 the Lord Jesus Christ prescribes the steps an individual Church member takes to deal with someone who has seriously sinned against him and to what lengths he should go if the offender refuses to repent. Such an approach is not practically possible unless both individuals are members of the same Church. Churches are autonomous and exercise only internal congregational authority over their members. *Next*, there was the Apostle Paul’s initially unsuccessful attempt to join himself to the Church in Jerusalem following his conversion to Christ, Acts 9.26. *Third*, there was Paul’s directive to the Church in Corinth to exclude from membership the young man sexually involved with his father’s wife, First Corinthians 5.5.

Thus, it is clear that in order to address an individual’s sin within a congregation, Matthew 18.15-20, in order to join a congregation as the Apostle Paul did, Acts 9.26, and in order to exclude someone from a

congregation's membership for refusing to repent of a heinous sexual sin, First Corinthians 5.5, there is no contesting that Church membership exists in the New Testament.

Membership is undeniably interwoven into the fabric of the New Testament. Christians are shown to be active members of Churches of Jesus Christ. A professing Christian who stands aloof from the discipling and disciplining ministry of a Church has some serious explaining to do at the Judgment Seat of Christ. One simply does not see Christians in the New Testament who are not members of a Church.

Concerning disciple-making, consider the Great Commission to make disciples found in Matthew 28.18-20:

- 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
- 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:
- 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

This passage shows us what we are to do, what our goal in evangelism is to be: to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Notice also Ephesians 4.11-12, where we see how the Great Commission is fulfilled in the life of a believer who has been saved, baptized, and is a member of a Church:

- 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
- 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

In Paul's letter written to this Church, we see that Christ had given gifted men the job of perfecting (or equipping)¹ saints to do the work of the ministry, so the body of Christ will be built up spiritually and numerically. The ministry of the gifted men for the benefit of the saints is exercised within the Church congregation, to Church members, with their ministry efforts

¹ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 531.

outside the congregation understood to consist of efforts along with other Church members to bring sinners to Christ and subsequently to the obedience of believer baptism and Church membership.

With Christians in the New Testament being recognized as Church members by all honest readers of the Bible, the question for us is precisely how does someone become a Church member? Of course, one becomes a member of the Roman Catholic Church when one is christened in a Roman Catholic ceremony as an infant. One becomes a member of the Greek Orthodox Church when one is immersed in a Greek Orthodox ceremony as an infant. The same is true for Protestant denominations such as Anglicans (who are Episcopalians), Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and various Reformed denominations. Some operation referred to by those groups as baptism is performed on infants without the intelligent consent and cooperation of those infants. That noted, the Bible contrariwise clearly shows that not only is actual baptism immersion in water, but it is also the immersion in water of someone who is intelligently and persuasively confessing Christ as his personal Savior.²

Keep in mind that we are aware of Luke's account of the Apostle Paul attempting to join the Jerusalem Church and his attempt being initially thwarted owing to his past violence against Christians and their fear of him. Therefore, there is no denying that someone converted to Christ and baptized

² See the following great works dealing with the whole matter of baptism in the Word of God:

- Kevin Bauder, *Baptist Distinctives And New Testament Church Order*, (Schaumburg, Illinois: Regular Baptist Books, 2012),
- Alexander Carson, *Baptism: Its Mode And Subjects*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, reprinted from the 1853 fifth American edition),
- Thomas Jefferson Conant, *The Meaning And Use Of Baptizein*, (London: The Wakeman Trust, 2002 reprint of the 1864 edition of The American Bible Union),
- John Gill, *Gospel Baptism*, (Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., 2006),
- Erroll Hulse, *Baptism & Church Membership*, (Leeds: Reformation Today Trust, 2002),
- Erroll Hulse, *The Testimony Of Baptism*, (Haywards Heath Sussex: Carey Publications, 1982),
- Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public: Why Baptism Is Required For Church Membership*, (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015),
- Adoniram Judson, *Christian Baptism*, (Laurel, Mississippi: Audubon Press, reprinted from the 1846 fifth edition)
- Fred Malone, *The Baptism Of Disciples Alone*, (Cape Coral, Florida: Founders Press, 2003),
- Henry Morris III, *Baptism: How Important Is It?* (Denver, Colorado: Accent Books, 1978)

elsewhere can join a Church in a different location as Paul was eventually able to do. However, is that the most common way a Christian becomes a Church member? Let us keep Acts 2.47 in mind as we consider this question:

“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

This statement should settle the question that it is the Lord who adds to the Church. Our concern at this point is precisely how, or by what means, does the Lord accomplish this adding of someone to His Church?

The Lord adds members to His Church in two ways:

First, SCRIPTURALLY BAPTIZED BELIEVERS JOIN CHURCHES

The Apostle Paul is the first example of a baptized believer joining a Church that was not the congregation that authorized his baptism. I previously called attention to this episode in Paul’s early Christian life, but it bears repeating. Acts 9 records the efforts of the zealous Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, traveling toward Damascus when he was intercepted by the appearance of the glorified Christ and was subsequently converted and baptized, Acts 9.18. Upon recovering from his physically demanding encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, the newly baptized convert to Christ began preaching in the synagogues in Damascus and stirring up the ire of the Jews, causing him to flee for his life to Jerusalem. Acts 9.26-30 shows us what happened in Jerusalem:

- 26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join³ himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.
- 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.
- 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.
- 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

³ For an explanation of the word ‘join’ see Masters, pages 11-12.

³⁰ *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

It is clear from this passage that the Church in Jerusalem eventually took the man who would become known as the Apostle Paul in and then when the need arose dispatched him to his hometown of Tarsus to protect his life.

The Jerusalem Church was not the only Church in existence at this time. Persecution scattered Jewish believers in Christ. When they left Jerusalem (such as in Damascus where Saul was baptized), they organized other Churches of Jesus Christ. The clearest picture of other congregations forming is the example provided by Luke in the city of Antioch in Acts 11.

Some Jewish believers fled Jerusalem and lived among Jewish people in other cities, bringing their kinsmen to Christ, such as took place in Damascus. However, other Jewish Christians fled to such cities as Antioch, which were far more cosmopolitan and in which Jewish people were far more likely to mingle with Gentiles. Of course, they also proclaimed the Gospel to them, and many Gentiles in Antioch turned to the Lord, Acts 11.20-21. When the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem heard about this they sent trusted Barnabas to Antioch, and many more Gentiles were subsequently converted to Christ, Acts 11.22-24.

However, Barnabas knew Saul, who had been born and reared in Tarsus among the Gentiles, was a man far more suited than he was for ministry among the Gentiles. So he went to Tarsus and fetched Saul to come and work with him in ministry in Antioch, Acts 11.25-26. It is important to notice that Christians in Antioch are never explicitly referred to as a Church until after both Barnabas and Saul partnered to serve God there. The logical question is how the Church in Antioch was constituted? The only reasonable answer is that those already saved and baptized in Jerusalem joined the Antioch Church, which Barnabas and Saul organized, in much the same way the Apostle Paul had joined the Jerusalem Church.

Thus, while there is room in the New Testament for Scripturally baptized believers in Jesus Christ joining Churches, some very important considerations must be seriously pondered:

First, nothing in the New Testament intimates, however slightly, that the Lord should be any less involved in adding someone to a Church in our day as He was so described in Acts 2.47. Therefore, it makes no sense at all

for someone to leave a Church voluntarily following his addition to that Church by the Lord Himself. The tragic common modern practice of someone deciding to join a Church and subsequently deciding to leave a Church, apart from strong evidence in his life of God moving him to do so, is entirely unwarranted and has proven to be spiritually disastrous to so many who move from Church to Church.

Next, we should take note that the reason the Apostle Paul left Damascus, where he was baptized and was presumably involved in the congregation's ministry and activities, was persecution and threats against his life. The reason he departed Jerusalem's Church for his hometown of Tarsus was, again, threats against his life. The reason believers settled in Antioch was persecution that forced them out of Jerusalem for fear of their lives, Acts 8.1:

“And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

Thus, the changing of one's Church membership was a matter of great seriousness and should not be caused by concerns so trivial and inconsequential as job opportunities, promotions, transfers, or the pursuit of more favorable weather. Neither should Churches be left, nor another Church joined in the same city, for reasons of personality conflict, more attractive youth ministries, more sophisticated music ministries, or any other such thing.

A subsequent chapter will present overwhelming evidence that when someone is a Church member, he is a member of a living spiritual body, and that both he and that congregation will suffer if any parting of ways is not orchestrated by God in His providence or by God in His calling of that individual to another place of service.

Most Church members have no awareness of what indications God would provide to someone as evidence He is moving them to another Church. Many people who leave their Church foolishly go somewhere else without any idea of whether there is a good Church anywhere near their new location. Why would God remove someone from their present Church except

to add them to another Church, unless it is to help start another Church? This is something most people never consider.

To restate: The New Testament shows that sometimes a saved and Scripturally baptized believer who is in one Church is providentially moved by the Lord and added to another congregation's membership. However, the likelihood of that happening in the early days of Christianity was relatively small. The modern-day Church-hopping phenomenon so sadly seen today is completely unjustifiable.

Next, SCRIPTURALLY QUALIFIED BELIEVERS ARE BAPTIZED INTO CHURCHES

In Matthew 28.18-20 we find the version of the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ that is most familiar to those who read the Bible:

- 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
- 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:
- 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

It is clear from a consideration of the passage that the command our Lord gave was to His disciples (the first group designated as "them," verse 18, and then as "ye," verse 19), not to those who were being evangelized, not to those who were being made disciples (who were designated by the word "nations" in verse 19, and by the word "them" in verses 19 and 20). Thus, the directive to baptize is not given to the hopeful convert. It was the apostles and by extension the Church, Christians in Churches who are seeking to fulfill the Great Commission, who are directed to baptize qualified "them." Them who? Those who have recently become believers in Jesus Christ and who after their baptism will begin the process of being taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded.

The Great Commission is predicated upon something of a line being drawn between them and us. *We*, which is to say members of a Church of

Jesus Christ, are to teach all nations (another way of referring to them). *We* are to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (if they have become qualified through the new birth to be baptized). Then we are to begin teaching them.

No command directed to *them* is found in this passage. The command found in this passage is directed to us, initially, the apostles and others who comprised the 120-member Church when it was in Jerusalem before Pentecost, and, later, people like us in other Churches who resulted from the fruitful ministry of the Church in Jerusalem.

Thus, the Great Commission envisions two different processes separated by an event. The *first* process is evangelism. I say process because evangelism takes time. During this process of disciple-making the Church of Jesus Christ is engaged in going, and by implication declaring the Gospel to people, to bring sinners to Christ. The *final* process engaged in during the disciple-making the Church of Jesus Christ is charged with is the process of teaching all things whatsoever Christ has commanded us. The *first* process, evangelizing the lost, typically takes far more time than many present-day Christians realize. The *final* process, teaching all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, also takes time, a great deal of time, since it is a process that ends when the believer has passed from this world to the next.

Baptism is an event that is bracketed by two usually lengthy processes. The first process is evangelism that results in conversion and takes place before baptism. After baptism is the second process, the teaching, and training of the Christian. Teaching and training are so much more than simply imparting information. They involve equipping the believer to serve His Savior. Teaching and training Christians in fulfillment of the Great Commission, referred to throughout the New Testament, are properly accomplished within and by the Church of Jesus Christ. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers are given to congregations by the Savior, and it is within those congregations that gifted men properly engage in the process of ministry to Christians who are members with them of Churches.

This chapter, however, is not so much concerned with either the process of evangelism or the process of teaching and training, but with the event that separates the two, which is believer baptism. The difficulty for us in arriving at a clear understanding of believer baptism lies with how the

word baptism in its various forms is used in the New Testament. Therefore, I propose to review those five ways in which the word baptism is used before zeroing in on the two that are most problematic and important to our right understanding of God's Word as it speaks to the Church of Jesus Christ:

First, let's review the various baptisms mentioned in the New Testament. *John's baptism* is the immersion in water of spiritually qualified baptismal candidates by John the Baptist and also by his disciples. In Matthew 3.1-8, we are provided not only a narrative related to John's baptism but also, the qualifications he insisted on for those he immersed in water:

- 1 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.

What is commonly referred to as *Christian baptism* is the immersion in water of spiritually qualified baptismal candidates by the authority of the Church of Jesus Christ or a Church's designee.⁴ My conviction is that John the Baptist's baptism and Christian baptism in obedience to Christ are essentially the same, though I will treat them as being different at this time.

⁴ I dispute the notion that John's baptism was not Christian baptism or that Christian baptism is in any appreciable or significant way different than John's baptism. See John Gill's sermon "*Baptism: A Public Ordinance of Divine Worship*" in *Gospel Baptism*, page 65.

We see an example of Christian baptism with the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8.35-38:

- 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.
- 36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
- 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

What is commonly referred to as *the baptism of the Holy Spirit* was predicted by John the Baptist, Matthew 3.11, and was seen on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2.1-13. In reading both the prediction and fulfillment, please take note of the fact that unlike the two previous baptisms, no one is left wet following the baptism of the Holy Ghost, since it is not a literal immersion in water, but a figurative baptism:

Matthew 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 [Jesus Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

Now read the record of a fulfillment of the Baptist’s prediction occurring 3½ years later:

- Acts 2.1-13: 1 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.
- 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.
- 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.
- 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?
- 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?
- 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,
- 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,
- 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.
- 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?
- 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

Fourth, there is what might be termed *the baptism of Christ's suffering*, Matthew 20.20-23. Again, you will notice that no reference is made in the passage to anything like literal baptism, to anything like an immersion in water. Instead, the word baptism was used by the Savior in a figurative sense to refer to immersion in suffering:

- 20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.
- 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

- 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.
- 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

Finally, in First Corinthians 10.1-2, we have what is referred to as *the baptism unto Moses*, which clearly was not a literal immersion in water at all, but a figurative baptism, describing the exodus of the nation of Israel, with them following the Shekinah glory of God and crossing over dry shod between the parted waters of the Red Sea, which incidentally did not result in any Israelite getting wet:⁵

- 1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;
- 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

A case can be made for five baptisms found in the New Testament. Of the five, two are literal immersions in water, John's baptism and Christian baptism in obedience to the Great Commission. The other three baptisms are other than literal. The baptism unto Moses had to do with the experiences of the children of Israel during their exodus. The baptism of Christ's suffering had to do with our Lord's passion and the suffering of those who are Christ's followers (but which is most definitely not a literal immersion in water). The baptism of the Holy Ghost predicted by John the Baptist with fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost was real but not literal. None of those 120 believers who were baptized in the Holy Spirit were immersed in anything to get physically wet. For our purposes, I will set aside any further consideration of the baptism of John, the baptism of Christ's sufferings, and the baptism unto Moses as not having any significant bearing on our present subject of interest, which is the Church of Jesus Christ and how members are added to the Church by means of believer baptism.

⁵ On this whole topic of Israel's Exodus, I highly recommend G. M. Matheny, *Exodus: The Route, Sea Crossing, God's Mountain* (Xulon Press, 2014).

This leaves for our consideration the literal immersion in water of the Christian that is mentioned in the Great Commission. This is the event that takes place between the two processes, evangelism of the lost and the teaching and training of the saved, as well as what is commonly referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or Spirit baptism.

Let us now take up our consideration of Spirit baptism, or what John the Baptist by inspiration of the Holy Spirit described in Matthew 3.11:

“He [Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire.”

Spirit baptism is immediately differentiated from Christian baptism in several ways that will be corroborated in the passages where the baptism of the Holy Spirit is recorded: *First*, with Christian baptism, the medium is actual water, while the baptism of the Holy Spirit plainly features the medium (for lack of a more suitable word) of the Spirit of God. *Second*, with Christian baptism, one result is the subject gets wet, while with the baptism of the Holy Spirit no one gets wet. *Third*, with Christian baptism, Christians do the baptizing, the immersing of a Christian in obedience to Christ’s command.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit features no obvious obedience by Christian disciples but is an event that took place without apparent means that resulted in Spirit baptism occurring.⁶ That is, there is no instance in the Bible of a believer obeying God and proceeding to baptize anyone in the Holy Spirit. It simply did not happen that way. *Fourth*, Christian baptism is an act of simple obedience performed by an individual that is witnessed by other individuals, that immersion in water also attesting to the professed spiritual condition of the subject being baptized.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is, according to John the Baptist, a sign that authenticates (or verifies) the messiahship of Jesus Christ (“he [which is to say the Messiah] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire”). *Fifth*, Christian baptism is performed by a

⁶ The frequently misunderstood laying on of hands is shown by the following verses to signify identification and nothing more, despite what individuals might have thought at the time: Exodus 29.10, 15, 19; Leviticus 4.15; 8.14, 18, 22; 16.21; 24.14; Numbers 8.10, 12; 27.23; Deuteronomy 34.9; II Chronicles 29.23; Mark 5.23; 6.5; 16.18; Acts 6.6; 8.17, 19; 13.3; 19.6; 28.8; I Timothy 4.14; 5.22. In some instances, laying on of hands refers to violent apprehension: Matthew 21.46; 26.50; Mark 14.46; John 7.30, 44; 8.20; Acts 4.3; 5.18.

believer on behalf of the congregation in obedience to the Great Commission, while the baptism of the Holy Spirit is predicted by John the Baptist to be performed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Christian baptism focuses the bystander's attention on the person being immersed, while the baptism of the Holy Spirit focuses the bystander's attention on the Lord Jesus Christ, identifying Him by the sign of Spirit baptism as the Messiah of Israel.

We now look to the only four places in the New Testament that record such baptisms of the Holy Ghost; Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10, and Acts 19:

- Acts 2.1-13:
- 1 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.
 - 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.
 - 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.
 - 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?
 - 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?
 - 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,
 - 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

- 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.
- 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?
- 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

Here are several observations of features in this passage that will be common with subsequent baptisms of the Holy Spirit: *First*, unsaved Jewish people were present; in this case, thousands of them. The presence of Jewish people on this occasion is crucial because the baptism of the Holy Spirit was declared by John the Baptist to be how unsaved Jewish people could verify that the Lord Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. Thus, it is a sign. Concerning a sign one must be mindful of First Corinthians 1.22:

“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.”

Next, the crucial ingredients of a sign such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit are *always* the senses. On the Day of Pentecost the affected senses were the audience’s hearing (the sound of wind to gather the multitudes and the sound of languages heard by the assembled masses) and the audience’s visual observation (cloven tongues as of fire), not to mention the ability of the Galileans the multitudes witnessed speaking languages they could not previously have learned. Unsaved Jewish people were gathered to witness the event and the exhibition of foreign languages spoken by those who had not learned them reminded the Jewish audience of a historical event they would all be mindful of, the invasion of the dreaded Assyrians, Isaiah 28.11-12, and the prediction that God would speak in judgment to His people using foreign languages:

- 11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.
- 12 To whom he said, This is the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.⁷

⁷ See footnotes for Isaiah 28.11 and 12 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 994.

- Acts 8.14-18: ¹⁴ Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:
- ¹⁵ Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:
- ¹⁶ (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)
- ¹⁷ Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.
- ¹⁸ And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.

Clearly, from verse 16 we see the much smaller group of half Jewish half Gentile Samaritans who had trusted Christ were baptized in water. However, how do we know they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that it was a sign just as was the previous case in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, though admittedly on a much smaller scale?⁸ Notice that Luke is careful to inform us that Simon *saw* that the Holy Ghost was given, impossible for anyone to witness unless witnesses could attest to what happened due to accompanying signs. Were Jewish people present? Samaritans were half Jewish, so presumably yes. Thus, once more we see that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was something that could be seen, using accompanying signs in fulfillment of John the Baptist's prediction. Luke made no mention in this passage of anything audible taking place, such as the gift of tongues. However, that does not mean unlearned foreign languages were not spoken, only that no record was made of them being spoken. I am not alone in supposing that tongues were then present, though not recorded by Luke.⁹

- Acts 10.44-46: ⁴⁴ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

⁸ The events of Acts 8.14-18 and 19.1-7 are nowhere identified as the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" but are presumed to be for this discussion.

⁹ See footnote for Acts 8.17 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1648 and Darrell L. Bock, *Acts - ECNT*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), page 332.

- 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

This passage is related to the Apostle Peter's trip from Joppa to Caesarea to minister to the Roman centurion named Cornelius. Take note that Cornelius was a Gentile, so we now have the baptism of the Holy Ghost fulfilled with Jewish people in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, then later with half Jewish Samaritans in Samaria, and now with those who were fully Gentile. Additionally, the baptism of the Holy Spirit in each place occurred in connection with the Apostle Peter's ministry, featuring speaking in tongues, foreign languages not previously learned. Though direct attention is not called to them by Luke, Cornelius' relations with the Jewish community makes it almost certain that unsaved Jewish people were in attendance when the Apostle Peter arrived, and this third baptism of the Holy Ghost took place.

- Acts 19.1-7: ¹ And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,
- ² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
- ³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.
- ⁴ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
- ⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

- 6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.
- 7 And all the men were about twelve.

This passage is the only record of the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurring in connection with the Apostle Paul's ministry and without the Apostle Peter.

That those men Paul encountered described themselves as disciples of John the Baptist strongly suggests they were Jewish men. That they had never heard of the Holy Spirit makes it likely that #1, they were unsaved and, #2, they were not directly disciples of John the Baptist, who most definitely preached about the Holy Spirit. Separated by distance and time from John the Baptist (remember, his ministry had lasted only a couple of years), these men were disciples of disciples of disciples who suffered the ignorance of a severely distorted version of the Baptist's genuine message.¹⁰

At any rate, Paul dealt with them, and twelve from among them trusted Christ. Those twelve were then immersed by the Great Commission (what we refer to as believer baptism). Then the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place for the last recorded time in the New Testament, at which time they did (not surprisingly) speak in tongues.

May I summarize at this point? I begin with a question: How many times must a prediction be fulfilled for the prediction to be fulfilled? Only once. However, throughout approximately thirty-five years, John the Baptist's Matthew 3.11 prediction was fulfilled four times in the New Testament book of Acts, and associated with the ministries of two apostles of Jesus Christ.

In each case, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a sign that featured observable phenomena, visible to the eyes and audible to the ears of Jewish witnesses. As well, a closer examination of each event will reveal that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was also either preceded by or followed by the immersion in water of believers in Jesus Christ. I point this out to show that the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not in any way supplant or replace the baptism in water of believers. Water baptism is a Christian Church ordinance

¹⁰ A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels For Students of the Life Of Christ*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), pages 15, 30-84 and Edward Reese, *The Reese Chronological Bible*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1977), pages 1261, 1308.

commanded by Christ that is in effect throughout the Church age. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a supernatural event performed by the Lord Jesus Christ on a relatively small number of Christians in fulfillment of a prediction made by John the Baptist as a means of identifying Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel to Jewish people. Literal baptism is ongoing, while figurative baptism has been fulfilled.

We now review what is accomplished by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and what is not accomplished by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Virtually all Protestant theologians are convinced the baptism of the Holy Ghost that took place in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost brought the universal invisible church into existence.¹¹ I read from the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, a portion from the article titled PENTECOST:

The almost universal opinion among theologians and exegetes is this: that Pentecost marks the founding of the Christian Church as an institution. This day is said to mark the dividing line between the ministry of the Lord and the ministry of the Spirit. The later Dutch theologians have advanced the idea that the origin of the church, as an institution, is to be found in the establishment of the apostolate, in the selection of the Twelve. Dr. A. Kuyper holds that the church as an institution was founded when the Master selected the Twelve, and that these men were “qualified for their calling by the power of the Holy Spirit.” He distinguishes between the institution and the constitution of the church. Dr. H. Bavinck says: “Christ gathers a church about Himself, rules it directly so long as He is on the earth, and appoints twelve apostles who later on will be His witnesses. The institution of the apostolate is an esp. strong

¹¹ John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, General Editors, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1983), page 357 and G. Campbell Morgan, *The Acts Of The Apostles*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), page 24.

proof of the institutionary character which Christ gave to His church on the earth” (*Geref. Dogm.*, IV, 64).¹²

I find myself in agreement with Dutch theologians Kuyper and Bavinck, not the great majority.

Here is how the matter has been explained to me by Protestants: There is (they say) an invisible universal body of Christ that was brought into existence on the Day of Pentecost with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Subsequent additions to the invisible universal body of Christ after Pentecost have been accomplished using each sinner trusting Christ and at that moment is then baptized into the body of Christ (the invisible one, of course) by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

That seems to sound good, except for two questions no Protestant seems to address: *First*, what about the three subsequent baptisms of the Holy Spirit, in Acts 8, Acts 10, and Acts 19? If the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2 brought the universal invisible church into existence as is claimed, what was accomplished by the three other baptisms of the Holy Spirit that were recorded?¹³ *Second*, if each of the baptisms of the Holy Spirit recorded in the book of Acts was accompanied by signs, at what point did the baptism of the Holy Spirit (which was predicted to be a sign, remember?) stop being accompanied by visible and audible signs? And if it is no longer accompanied by signs, can it still be maintained that it is a baptism of the Spirit? Or is what is called the baptism of the Spirit these days (but which is not accompanied by signs) be something else altogether?

I have been around a great many sinners who have come to Christ, yet on none of those occasions have I seen or heard anything, even when conversions occurred in the presence of unsaved Jewish people. Therefore, I thoroughly dispute as fiction the proposition that all Christians are baptized

¹² James Orr, Editor, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol IV*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), 2318-2319.

¹³ Did the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost constitute the universal invisible body of Christ with Jewish believers only, with Samaritan and Gentile believers added subsequently in Acts 8 and 10? How then were the 3,000 added to the universal invisible body on Pentecost when only the 120 who were already believers were baptized in the Holy Ghost? Many questions but no answers from those who embrace the universal invisible body of Christ view.

in the Holy Spirit when they trust Christ, or at any time after that. I also dispute the existence of the invisible universal body of Christ, since, without any such thing as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there is no means by which someone coming to Christ would gain entrance into the supposed invisible universal church apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Consider, as well, Ephesians 4.5: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” It is a very simple verse. The question is what is referred to by the phrase one baptism? I read Harold W. Hoehner, Distinguished Professor of New Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary commenting on this verse:

One baptism may refer to water baptism, the outward symbol of the inward reality, or it may refer to a believer’s identification with Christ and His death (Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:27). It seems unlikely that this refers to the latter. Spirit baptism, because it is in the triad of elements that pertain to Christ, the second Person of the Trinity. Also nothing in the broader context (Eph. 4:1-16) suggests that this is the Spirit’s baptism. If it refers to water baptism, then the idea is that by this single act believers demonstrate their spiritual unity.¹⁴

Next, Andrew T. Lincoln, writing in the Word Biblical Commentary:

“The one ‘baptism’ is water baptism, the public rite of confession of the one faith in the one Lord.”¹⁵

The point that I seek to establish is that my conviction that Ephesians 4.5 refers to believer baptism by immersion in water is not an isolated conviction held only by marginalized commentators, even though it is, admittedly, not the majority view.

What Ephesians 4.5 does establish, however, if the baptism referred to in that verse by the Apostle Paul is believer baptism, is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is no more. Consider that in Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10, and Acts 19 there were two baptisms existing, one being the immersion in water of a convert to Christ and the other being the baptism of the Holy Spirit

¹⁴ Walvoord & Zuck, page 633.

¹⁵ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians, World Biblical Commentary Volume 42*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1990), page 240.

experienced by some Christians (it was never “all believers who were present at the events” in any case). However, near the end of Paul’s ministry, when he wrote his letter to the Ephesians, the baptism of the Spirit was no more. Considering the transitional nature of the book of Acts and the age-long directive of Christ’s Great Commission, it is no surprise to me that Christ’s intent for this entire era in which we live is for believers to be baptized by immersion in water according to His command. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, was for the limited purpose of authenticating the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth and no longer provides a needed function.

Of course, Protestants also teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the occasion of the Church’s empowering, as well as the occasion of the Church’s constituting. Really? Then why were only the 120 so “empowered” on the Day of Pentecost and not also those who came to Christ that day? I ask again, “If there is then no Spirit baptism, how are believers then added to the universal invisible church as Protestants insist?” They are not, because the invisible universal body of Christ simply does not exist. The invisible universal body of Christ was not constituted on the Day of Pentecost. Neither was the invisible universal body of Christ empowered on the Day of Pentecost. The 120 were baptized in the Holy Spirit in front of thousands of witnesses to attest to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel. To what then do all believers, the 120 *and* the 3,000 subsequently converted, belong as a consequence of their new birth? The household of faith, which is also the family of God.¹⁶

I now address the question of what is accomplished by the baptism of the believer in water. Three important consequences of the immersion of the believer in Jesus Christ in water in compliance with His directive in Matthew 28.18-20 are prominent in the New Testament: *First*, (and this is not in order of importance), when the Church of Jesus Christ baptizes a convert to Christ, the congregation is obeying the Great Commission. This is obvious, and such compliance with Christ’s directive is recorded in the book of Acts and referred to elsewhere. However, the meaning of a believer’s baptism, publicly proclaiming one’s identification with and benefit from the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is explained in Romans 6.1-7:

¹⁶ Galatians 6.10; Ephesians 3.15

- 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
- 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection:
- 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
- 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

The believer who is baptized thereby proclaims that he has died with Christ in His death on the cross and risen with the newness of life with Christ in His glorious resurrection from the dead, this being pictured by immersion down into the water and rising from the water. *Next*, when a Church of Jesus Christ baptizes a convert to Christ, the baptism is a public proclamation of his identification with Christ that does provide a kind of salvation for him, First Peter 3.18-22:

- 18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
- 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
- 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.
- 21 The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
- 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

About the baptism referred to in verses 21-22, Charles Spurgeon wrote,

“Noah’s deliverance in the ark, and our baptism, are figures of salvation. Both represent a living burial, a passage from the old world into the new, by death and resurrection.”¹⁷

John Gill wrote,

“... in baptism persons make a public confession of God, and openly put on Christ before men: the sense seems plainly this; that then is baptism rightly performed, and its end answered, when a person, conscious to himself of its being an ordinance of Christ, and of his duty to submit to it, does do so upon profession of his faith in Christ, in obedience to his command, and ‘with’ a view to his glory; in doing which he discharges a good conscience towards God: and being thus performed, it saves....”¹⁸

Thus, we see that in this the *only* verse in the entire New Testament that declares that baptism saves, we learn what baptism saves someone from. “Baptism does not save from sin, but from a bad conscience.”¹⁹

Finally, when the Church of Jesus Christ baptizes a convert to Christ, his baptism is how he becomes a member of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the Church of Jesus Christ, which is the local congregation. Remember, since it is established that there is no longer any basis for maintaining that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an ongoing miraculous phenomenon, and since what many these days call the baptism of the Spirit bears none of the earmarks of a sign (no Jewish people typically witness to it, and there are no accompanying visual or audible indications), what we are about to read *must* be baptism in water of believers in Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 12.1-13:

¹⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Devotional Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

¹⁸ John Gill, *The Baptist Commentary Series Volume I, John Gill's Exposition Of The Old And New Testaments, Vol 9* (Paris, Arkansas: the Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., reprinted 2006), page 565.

¹⁹ Walvoord & Zuck, page 852.

- 1 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.
- 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.
- 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, *that* no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.
- 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
- 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
- 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.
- 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
- 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
- 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
- 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:
- 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.
- 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.
- 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Let us not be so naive as to deny the Spirit is the key figure in this passage. That does not mean, however, that Paul is here referring to Spirit baptism. In verses 1-3, Paul drew attention to his readers' ignorance about spiritual matters. In verses 4-11, the apostle showed the role of each of the Divine Persons in ministry; gifts bestowed by the Spirit, ways of serving bestowed by the Lord, and operations bestowed by God. To paraphrase, the Savior decides each Church member's ministry, the Father decides each

Church member's effectiveness, while the Spirit gives to each believer the spiritual gift(s) possessed and used in service. "Paul implies that no single individual alone is likely to receive the full range of possible gifts. The *full* range of gifts can be found only in Christ or in the Church *as a whole*. This is *one reason among others why the individual needs the church.*"²⁰

A question naturally arises. How are believers in Christ placed into the Church of Jesus Christ? How do they arrive where they must be so they can then use their gifts, in the area of ministry the Lord assigns, and with the effectiveness God grants? We know the Lord added to the Church in Acts 2.47, so we take for granted that He still does so. But how did the Lord add folks? Acts 2.41:

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."

The Lord added to the Jerusalem Church using the baptism of newly saved converts to Jesus Christ. Do you think He would work things in the same fashion in Corinth? Keeping in mind that the baptism of the Holy Spirit requires Jewish witnesses and perceptive (which is to say visual and/or audible) phenomena, and that by the time Paul writes to the Ephesians such a thing was no more, let us consider how Christians come to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ, according to First Corinthians 12.13:

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Keeping in mind that capitalization and punctuation were not used in the original texts of Scripture, the commands and capital letters are the interpretations of the translators. Therefore, let us seek to understand First Corinthians 12.13 without punctuation or capitalization.

Three keywords are in the first phrase of the verse under consideration, with two possibilities meant by each word. Thus, there are only eight hypothetical interpretations for us to consider:

²⁰ Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical And Pastoral Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), page 197.

1. "For by one Spirit are we all Baptized into one Body."
2. "For by one Spirit are we all Baptized into one body."
3. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body."
4. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."
5. "For by one spirit are we all Baptized into one Body."
6. "For by one spirit are we all Baptized into one body."
7. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one Body."
8. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body."

If the capitalized Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit and the lower case spirit refers to spirit in the sense of a frame of mind or collective attitude, if the capitalized Baptized refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and lower case baptized refers to immersion in water, and if the capitalized Body refers to the universal invisible body of Christ with the lower case body representing the local and visible congregation, then the eight hypothetical possibilities can be paraphrased as follows:

1. "For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body."
2. "For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body."
3. "For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body."
4. "For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body."
5. "For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body."
6. "For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body."
7. "For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body."
8. "For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body."

May I suggest that the context of the entire twelfth chapter of First Corinthians demands that, since Paul was addressing the larger issue of spiritual gifts in chapters 12-14, we can conclude interpretations 5-8 that are

listed below are not correct paraphrases of what Paul meant? This is reflected below:

1. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
2. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body.”
3. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
4. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body.”
5. “For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
6. “For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body.”
7. “For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
8. “For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body.”

Thus, whatever Paul sought to communicate to his readers, we can be sure that in this verse he was referring to something that is accomplished by the Spirit of God, not actions resulting from a singular attitude held by many. Focusing our attention now on options 1-4, let us ask if options 1 and two are thought to be correct. Does the Holy Spirit perform Spirit baptism? Not according to John the Baptist, who insisted the Lord Jesus Christ would perform Spirit baptism, Matthew 3.11. Thus, the only two viable paraphrase options for a correct understanding of First Corinthians 12.13 are 3 and 4.

1. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
2. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body.”
3. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
4. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body.”

5. “For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
6. “For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body.”
7. “For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
8. “For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body.”

What then are we left with for interpretation options? Only two. Either the Holy Spirit immerses believers in water, thereby incorporating them into one invisible universal Body, or the Holy Spirit baptizes by immersion in water and by that ordinance incorporates those baptized into one local congregational body.

Do you believe water baptism places someone into the invisible universal body of Christ? I am not persuaded there is anything in God’s Word that would support such a position. However, I am persuaded that the Holy Spirit of God does (using human instruments complying with the dictates of Scripture) immerse believers in water as the way of making them members of the local congregation body which is the Church of Jesus Christ. See in bold below:

1. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
2. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body.”
3. “For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
4. **“For by one Holy Spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body.”**
5. “For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one universal invisible Body.”
6. “For by one spirit are we all Spirit Baptized into one local congregation body.”
7. “For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one universal invisible Body.”

8. ~~“For by one spirit are we all water baptized into one local congregation body.”~~

As the great theologian, Sherlock Holmes used to say, after a fashion, when the impossibilities are removed, leaving only the difficult to accept, then the difficult to accept must be the truth. I am convinced First Corinthians 12.13 is the Apostle Paul’s explanation of how the Lord adds converts to the Church.

The Lord Jesus Christ was predicted by the Baptist to perform Spirit baptism. However, this verse deals with a baptism performed by the Spirit of God, which, since it is not Spirit baptism (something, again, only the Lord Jesus Christ does), it must by the process of elimination be water baptism.

This lengthy chapter may be somewhat jarring to many readers, for two different reasons:

First, there are people with very strong Baptist convictions who abhor the notion that sometimes God’s plan is for a member of a good Baptist Church to separate from that Church for joining another Church within which to serve God. However, there is no doubt whatsoever that the Apostle Paul did that very thing on three separate occasions before embarking on his career as a Church planter and writer of inspired New Testament epistles. Converted and baptized following his Damascus Road encounter with the glorified Christ, he left Damascus and joined the Church in Jerusalem, was subsequently sent to Tarsus, where he presumably joined a congregation in that city and then joined Barnabas in organizing and leading the Church in Antioch. Thus, there can be no doubt that a Church member, with prayerful caution and consideration of God’s will for his life, can join another Church. It should be asked, Can or should a Christian do such a thing without his Church’s consent? That is properly the subject of another book dealing with considerations of God’s Word.

Second, I have shown (convincingly, in my opinion) that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by visual and audible manifestations, and that an event that does not feature audible and visual manifestations is *not* the baptism of the Holy Spirit! I have also shown that, while the Lord Jesus Christ was predicted by John the Baptist to baptize in the Holy Spirit, the means by which the Lord adds members to the Church is the Holy Spirit

using human instruments to accomplish His will of immersing converts in water, believer baptism, thereby making them members of a Church of Jesus Christ.

I suggest to you that this only makes sense when you consider two facts: *First*, on the Day of Pentecost, there were two baptisms, one literal and one figurative, the literal being believer baptism in water and the figurative being the baptism of the Holy Spirit. No one present on the Day of Pentecost experienced both baptisms. In Acts chapters 8, 10, and 19 we again see two baptisms, one in water and the other in the Spirit. However, by the time the Apostle Paul wrote his prison epistle to the Ephesians near the end of his life, he wrote in the fourth chapter,

- 4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
- 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
- 6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Who would suggest that the only remaining baptism connected to the Christian faith is not believer baptism by immersion in water in obedience to the Great Commission? Is the Great Commission no longer in effect? Perish the thought! Therefore, by the process of elimination, the baptism Paul addressed in Ephesians 4.5 must be believer baptism by immersion in water.

The *second* consideration has to do with a recognition of the roles performed by the three Persons of the Triune Godhead. John the Baptist declared that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism featuring the Spirit of God as the medium into which some believers were immersed, was performed by the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way as to authenticate Him as the Messiah of Israel.

That is not what happens when a Christian is immersed in water in obedience to the Great Commission. Though the human instrumentality is clearly seen to be a Christian who is authorized by his Church to immerse another Christian, it is rightly understood to be the Spirit of God's activity when that person is being led by the Spirit to do the Spirit's will, and that is what we are being told in First Corinthians 12.13.

One can become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ by joining that Church, so long as the Christian is coming to that Church from another Church. However, the most common method of becoming a Church member is when a new Christian is immersed in water, believer baptism. Performed by the authority of that Church to discharge the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, the baptized Christian becomes a Church member and is thereby qualified to be taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded.

In conclusion, let me address a question I have been asked concerning why so much of Protestantism reflects inconsistently what the Word of God teaches about baptism, Spirit baptism, and particularly First Corinthians 12.13. There are several considerations concerning what I think contributes to errors in properly understanding these issues:

First, I think there is the undue influence of Protestant theology from the earliest days of the Protestant Reformation and the theological differences the early Reformers had with Roman Catholic counter-Reformation theologians. The entire matter of Rome's erroneous assertion that the Catholic Church is the *visible* universal body of Christ versus Protestantism's equally erroneous insistence that they were the *invisible* universal body of Christ carries through to this very day. Though these have been important features of religious debate, neither position is found in Scripture.

Second, and connected to the first consideration, is the meaning of baptism and the meaning of Spirit baptism. Protestants are only recently and grudgingly admitting that baptism must be and can only be believers' immersion in water (and certainly not the sprinkling of infants). They still do not admit to the full meaning of baptism. As to Spirit baptism, there seems to have been to date no recognition by Protestants of the significance of Spirit baptism as an authenticating sign of Christ's messiahship and of Him being the Administrator of Spirit baptism. Therefore, it is no wonder to me that First Corinthians 12.13 is misinterpreted by those who fail to recognize and admit that Christ was predicted by John the Baptist to administer Spirit baptism, and that Spirit baptism has never been the universal experience of all Christians.

Thus, for centuries, truths taught in God's Word have been misunderstood and therefore not properly applied except by those who have never been Protestants, namely Baptists (and not all of us, by the way).