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APPENDIX:

Baptism: Difficult Passages

The following verses: Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:1-7, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12, and 1 Peter 3:20-21, can be difficult passages to understand as they relate to the topic of baptism. For instance, what did Peter mean when he stated, "baptism now saves you" (1 Pet. 3:21), and "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)? And what did Ananias mean when he told the Apostle Paul, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16)? Does water baptism save a person? Does it offer its recipients a spiritual cleansing of sin as these verses seem to imply with just a superficial rendering? For if it does, then water applied to a person's body by faith becomes the agent of his salvation, and not Christ alone. But, if Christ is the sole means of salvation, then one has to revisit the passages referenced above to look at them more closely, attempting to understand them in their immediate context as well as in the context of the New Testament.

When considering these verses, it is clearly demonstrated in the Bible in many passages that salvation is the result of faith and not works. First, in the book of Acts there are examples of people who were saved and had evidenced salvation before they had been baptized (Acts 10:44-48; 16:29-33; cf. Rom. 8:9). From these examples it is obvious that water baptism was not a necessary aspect in the process of salvation. Baptism did not save them; it followed their salvation. Second, it is also clear in the Bible that it is a person's faith in Christ alone which saves him (cf. Luke 7:50; 23:39-43; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Rom. 10:13; Eph. 2:8-9), and nothing else (cf. Rom. 3:28; 4:1-9; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9); not even water baptism. For it is one's faith in Christ and not one's faith in baptism which justifies (Rom. 3:22,28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16), sanctifies (Acts 26:18; cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11), and makes a person righteous (Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Php. 3:9); not works such as baptism (cf. Rom. 3:20; 7:5; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9). Third, baptism is an act which is done as a confirmation and public profession of a person's newfound faith in Christ (Mat. 28:19; cf. Acts 2:41; 8:12, 35-37; 10:44-48; 16:29-33; 18:8; 19:3-5). It is not done to gain salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). This public profession is important in that it demonstrates a believer's willingness to declare his allegiance to Christ; for if a person will not confess Jesus before men, then Jesus will not confess him before His Father (Mat. 10:32-33). Though this is the case, one must always remember that it is only a person's faith which saves him and nothing else.

When looking at 1 Peter 3:20-21, the key to understanding this passage properly is the Greek word "*antitupos*" found in this verse. This word is translated differently in various versions of the Bible (i.e., corresponding, antitype, symbolizes, figure). The word "antitype," a literal translation of this Greek word, gives the Bible student a better understanding of the verse in context. The other words can be misleading and do not communicate as precisely the idea of this verse. Therefore, in order to interpret this verse, the reader needs to define what is meant by an "antitype" and its companion word "type."

A type in Scripture is a person, thing or event in the Old Testament which foreshadows or prefigures a future person or event in the New Testament. One example of a type is, "Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come" (Rom. 5:14). How is Adam a type of Christ? When comparing Romans 5:12 to Romans 5:15, the contrast can be easily seen: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (5:12), "much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many" (5:15). Where Adam was the type, Jesus was the antitype; the antitype being either a person or event which the type prefigures. Therefore a type in Scripture occurs first, followed by the antitype which is the realization of the type.

Another example of a type and antitype is Isaac and Jesus (Heb. 11:19). Isaac was placed on an altar as a sacrifice by his father Abraham (cf. Heb. 11:17-19) just as Jesus was made a sacrifice by His Father on a cross (1 John 4:9-10). As Abraham received back Isaac (the type; Heb. 11:19), so God the Father received back Jesus (the antitype) through the resurrection (John 20; cf. Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 6:5; Heb. 9:11; 1 Pet. 3:22).

Types/antitypes in Scripture vary in pattern (see the diagram below). In one case the type corresponds directly to the antitype (corresponding type/antitype), yet in another case the type and antitype are opposites (antithetical type/antitype). There is also a case where the type is the perfect, original pattern, and the antitype is an imperfect copy (archetypic type/antitype). And in the last case, the type is something which is similar to the antitype, where a correlation is made between them on the basis of known similarities (analogous type/antitype). Therefore, each type must be looked at separately within its context to be understood properly since not all types and antitypes are identical, nor are to be interpreted the same.

TYPE	ANTITYPE	PASSAGE
• Adam: Death reined PATTERN: antithetical type/antitype	Jesus: Life reigned	Rom. 5:14
• Isaac was offered PATTERN: corresponding type/antitype	Jesus was offered	Heb. 11:17-19
• Heavenly tabernacle PATTERN: archetypic type/antitype	Earthly tabernacle	Acts. 7:44
• Waters of the flood PATTERN: analogous type/antitype	Waters of baptism	1 Pet. 3:20-21

In the case of 1 Peter 3:20-21, Peter contrasts baptism, which he states is an antitype, with a type in the preceding verse. Therefore the Bible student must look and ac-

curately determine what the type is which corresponds to the antitype. Looking at verse 20, there are two things listed which could possibly be the type that foreshadowed baptism which Peter is alluding to, those being the ark and the water. To determine which of these two is the type, the Greek grammatical construction of verse 21 is very important because it indicates that the thing which foreshadows baptism is in the neuter gender. Of the two possibilities, the Greek word for "water" is in the neuter, whereas the Greek word for "ark" is in the feminine gender. Therefore in accordance with Peter's illustration, it was the "water" or "the waters of the flood" of Noah which is the type. The question then is, "How could the waters which were sent to destroy the inhabitants of the earth be the very thing which saved Noah and his family?" The answer is that after Noah and his family entered the ark, the flood waters which came lifted the ark and its passengers away from the destruction. Therefore it was the water (type) by means of the ark which saved the people. Corresponding to this type, the antitype of the flood waters -- baptism -- also saves according to verse 21. But how can this be when it is so clear from the Bible that salvation is the result of faith?

Considering the four patterns of types/antitypes in these verses, Peter's type/antitype is analogous in nature. The waters of the flood and the waters of baptism, though not identical, are similar. Because this is the case, when interpreting these verses, baptism must be interpreted as an analogy in relation to the flood which was an historical event. This is important because an analogy is something which is similar to, though not identical with, something else which it is illustrating. Below is a comparison of some of the similarities between Peter's type and its antitype in 1 Peter 3:20-21.

FLOOD

BAPTISM

Water meant death, judgment
(Gen. 6:5-7)

Water represents death, judgment
(Rom. 6:3-4)

Water was necessary due to sin
(Gen. 6:11-12)

Water is necessary due to sin
(cf. Acts 2:38)

Water (Gen. 6:17)

Water (cf. Acts 8:36,38)

Noah responded based on faith
(Gen. 6:22)

Believers respond based on faith
(cf. Acts 2:37-38,41)

Waters sanctified Noah and family
(Gen. 7:18-19)

Waters sanctify believers
(cf. Rom. 6:5-6)

Water cleansed the earth
(Gen. 7:21-23)

Water symbolically cleanses the believer
(cf. Acts 2:38)

Noah was saved through the waters
(Gen. 8:13-19)

Believers are saved by the waters as
an analogy (cf. 1 Pet. 3:21)

One can see from this comparison that the flood of Noah and baptism have many similarities; and this is the reason why Peter chose the flood as a type of baptism. This is also the reason Peter made the statement that baptism saves because it is a picture of what the flood of Noah did when it cleansed the earth of vile things, saving Noah and his family in the process. This too is a picture of what happens when a person accepts

Christ -- their sins are washed away and they are saved, which baptism reflects (Acts 2:38), bringing them to a newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

So how then does baptism save? It saves as an analogy. This phrase was never meant to be taken literally, for Peter's readers knew that salvation was not the result of baptism, but the result of faith alone. This fact is stated clearly in the first chapter of Peter's epistle where Peter himself said, "obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:9). Baptism is not mentioned. Other passages in 1 Peter confirm this as well -- that salvation is by faith in Christ through the Word of God (1 Peter 1:1-5,9,18-19,23; 2:24; 3:18), not as the result of baptism. Another point which further demonstrates this truth is the covenant of circumcision which God gave to Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14). The Jews had begun believing that circumcision saved a person, just as some today teach about baptism. But Paul stated clearly in the book of Romans that it was not the act of circumcision which saved Abraham, it was his faith which saved him. He was circumcised as the result of his faith (Rom. 4:9-12). His act of obedience directly reflected his desire to live righteously before God, and it was by this act that Abraham manifested his faith. This is exactly the case for new converts today when they are baptized. Peter stated in 1 Peter 3:20 that baptism is "an appeal to God for a good conscience" (a better translation of this phrase may be "appealing to God from a good conscience"). So in this act of obedience, the new believer is stating his desire to live righteously and godly, making an appeal to God. Therefore baptism is "not the removal of dirt from the flesh," this referring to the baptismal waters as a cleansing agent for a person's physical body; it is more than that. It is an "appeal" resulting from a change in a person's heart, this being the crucial element (cf. Mat. 23:25-26; Mark 7:14-23). And as Peter stated in verse 21, the salvation that a person receives is made possible through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:3,9; cf., 1 Cor. 15:16-19), not baptism.

The next passage to be considered (Col. 2:9-12) states: "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Again, the issue at hand is whether verse 12 is talking about water or Spirit baptism.

In analyzing this passage, one needs to look at the continuity of Paul's discourse in which he lists four benefits the believer receives as the result of his salvation and at the moment of his salvation. Each of these actions are something done to the believer either by Jesus or the Father as the text clearly states, but none done by man. Each aspect of what Paul is talking about is spiritual in nature. This is the reason why Paul proclaims in this passage that the man Jesus is God (cf. Php. 2:6), because "He is the head over all rule and authority;" it is He who has the right to do these things. The four actions which Paul lists are: 1) the believer is made complete in Christ (he has received all that is necessary to live for and to serve Him); 2) the believer's flesh (reference to his nature of sin; cf. Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:28-29) has been circumcised (cut away without hands) by Christ; 3) the believer has been buried with Christ in baptism (positional truth; Rom. 6:3-5); and 4) the believer has been raised up with Christ (positional truth; Rom. 6:3-5) through the believer's faith by the effort of God who raised Jesus from the dead. These four actions become a reality for the believer at the moment of his salvation, and this is the reason why the believer's burial and resurrection spoken of in verse 12 are in the past tense. The believer in Christ, when he is born again and

baptized by the Spirit of God into the family of God (1 Cor. 12:13), obtains and experiences these realities as if he has already died and rose again (Rom. 6:6-8; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 2:20; 3:1). Also, as Paul states in this verse, the believer is buried with Christ in, or by the means of Spirit baptism, "in which"¹ (a reference back to the believer's Spirit baptism) he is also raised, these both resulting from the believer's faith. Therefore because the believer is buried and raised as a result of his faith, this fact also makes it clear that the baptism spoken of in this passage is Spirit and not water baptism.

The next two passages which will be discussed are Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27. These two passages can be analyzed together due to the fact that their grammatical constructions are the same. In Romans 6:3, Paul stated: "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" In Galatians 3:27, he said: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." In both verses Paul uses the same construction, "who have been baptized into Christ." This is the same construction which is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13, where Paul said: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." The only difference in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is that Paul said, "we were all baptized into one body," instead of "into Christ" as with the other two passages, but these are synonymous connotations (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12,27; Eph. 4:12; Col. 1:24).

It is clear however that in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul is talking about Spirit baptism. In this verse, Paul says that by one Spirit all believers are baptized into (placed or positioned into) the body (of Christ). It is through this baptism that new believers enter into the body of Christ as each believer is "made to drink of one Spirit." This is not optional or a decision one makes; it is compulsory, being done to each believer without their consent. This obviously is different than water baptism. Consequently this same construction ("baptized into Christ") which is used in the Romans 6 and Galatians 3 passages, is also talking about Spirit baptism, just as is Colossians 2:12. Therefore according to these passages, when a new believer is saved, at the moment of his conversion, he is baptized into the body of Christ and being made to drink of one Spirit. It is at that moment when he is baptized into Christ's death and into His resurrection, being clothed with Christ, he obtains the ability to walk in newness of life.

In the case of Acts 2:38: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," it is obvious that Peter is talking about water baptism. The question is however, was Peter actually saying that repentance in conjunction with the act of water baptism washes away a person's sins, causing the one baptized to be forgiven? If he was stating this, then one has to answer two questions: 1) "Why does Peter say in two other passages in the book of Acts that repentance from sin comes only from Jesus (Acts 5:31; 10:43)?"; and 2) "Why does Peter not mention baptism in these two passages?" The answer is because Peter did not believe or teach that water baptism saves a person. Jesus, and not baptism, is the object of a person's faith which saves him (1 Peter 1:1-5,9,18-19,23; 2:24; 3:18).

Another problem with stating that water baptism results in forgiveness of sins is that no act or ritual can do this. Only God can forgive sins once a person asks Him (cf. Mark 2:7; Psa. 130:4; Isa. 43:25; Dan. 9:9; Mic. 7:18; John 20:20-23). Repentance between

¹The phrase "in which," though it is not present in the Russian Synod Version of the Bible, is present in the Greek text and needs to be taken into account to properly understand this passage (Col. 2:9-12).

God and man is a transaction which can only happen one way -- man asks for forgiveness and God forgives. Since baptism is the symbol of God's forgiveness after repentance is granted, it pictures perfectly the result of a person's salvation -- the sins which God has forgiven being washed away. Therefore Peter was focusing in this verse upon the issue of repentance and not baptism. Peter was telling his audience to repent, and then in response to their repentance, to be baptized "for" or because of the fact that their sins were forgiven. The word "for" is not looking forward to an objective ("the forgiveness of sins"), but it is looking backward to the result of their repentance ("the forgiveness of sins"). This then is the reason why a person is to be baptized, because his sins have been forgiven.

Acts 22:16 is another passage which needs to be considered: "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Again, as with Acts 2:38, water is the mode of baptism in this verse. In order to understand this verse, one needs to look at the salvation experience of Paul as recorded in Acts 9:17-19. This passage records: "So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened." This passage is a parallel account of the one in Acts 22.

In Acts 9, Ananias tells Paul that Jesus (whom Paul met on the road to Damascus) had sent him to Paul so that he would regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that at this time in church history, salvation and receiving the Holy Spirit were at times two separate events (cf. Acts 8:12-17; 19:1-7), though not always (cf. Acts 10:44-48). So in Paul's case, he would have first believed, and then secondly received the Holy Spirit. Actually, all indications are that Paul already believed in Jesus, being saved on the road to Damascus. This is demonstrated by the fact that in Acts 22:10 Paul is recorded as saying: "And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'" The indication that Paul was saved during his encounter with Jesus is that after Jesus identified Himself (vs. 8), Paul called Him Lord and asked Him what He wanted him to do. After Jesus told him what to do, Paul did it in obedience to Him (vss. 10-11). This would seem to be the result of Paul's salvation, especially when one considers that previously Paul had been persecuting the church (Acts 8:3; 22:7; 26:14). Also, the fact that Paul did not eat or drink for three days after his encounter seems to indicate repentance and remorse (Acts 9:9; cf. 2 Cor. 7:8-10). Therefore, it was after Paul had received the Holy Spirit and regained his sight, that he was baptized (Acts 9:17-18). How does this correspond to Acts 22:16: "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."? The phrase, "calling on His name," is an aorist participle which indicates that a past action had been completed.² Therefore this verse could correctly be translated: "Now why do you delay? Having called on His name, get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins." Ananias was not calling Paul to salvation by being baptized and believing. To the contrary, Paul already believed, and Ananias simply told Paul to be baptized as a sign that his sins had been washed away due to God's forgiveness because he had previously believed. This is the same message Peter had delivered to his audience in Acts 2:38 after they had believed. Therefore, it is at salvation when the literal, spiritual cleansing of a

²John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:418.

person's sin occurs (cf. Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 3:18). Salvation then always precedes baptism.

The last passage to be discussed is Mark 16:16, which says: "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." One thing that makes this a difficult verse is that many Bible scholars do not believe that verses 9 through 20 of Chapter 16 were a part of Mark's original text; they were added later by someone else. If they are not Mark's words, then their inspiration and authority are brought into question. Yet because they are a portion of Mark's gospel in many Bible versions, it is prudent to understand them as biblical text.

What then did the author of Mark 16:16 mean when he stated: "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved"? First, it is important to note the last phrase of this verse when attempting to understand the portion in question. There the writer stated, "but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." When considering this phrase, it becomes obvious that the focus of this verse is on what a person believes, not on baptism (there is a contrast between one who believes and one who disbelieves, not between one who is baptized and one who is not baptized). Clearly faith is the issue of this verse. Second, having established previously that it is a person's faith that saves him (Rom. 10:10-11) and not works of the flesh (Eph. 2:8-9), one again needs to view this verse from the perspective that baptism is the confirmation of a person's faith which has already been expressed (Mat. 28:19; cf. Acts 2:41; 8:12, 35-37; 10:44-48; 16:29-33; 18:8; 19:3-5). As stated earlier, this public profession is important because the new believer must declare his allegiance to Christ; for if a person will not profess Jesus before men, then Jesus will not profess him before His Father (Mat. 10:32-33). Although this is an important aspect of baptism, it is still only a person's faith that saves him and nothing else. Therefore, when looking at the whole of Scripture, if Mark did write this verse, it is safe to understand his intention that the demonstration of a person's faith should naturally follow his profession. If a person has believed and confirmed his profession by being baptized, he "shall be saved."