

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION EXAMINED

- I. THE DOCTRINE OF “BAPTISMAL REGENERATION” DEFINED:
- A. *Baptismal Regeneration* Is the Doctrine (teaching) that a Person Is not Saved (not born again) until He Has Been Baptized in Water.
 - B. The Teaching of *Baptismal Regeneration* Is usually Based on the following eight Verses: Mark 16:16, John 3:5, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 4:5 and 1st Peter 3:21a.
 - C. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that a Person Is Saved by Grace through Faith. However, They Define Salvation by Grace through Faith as, “an active response which includes obedience to the word of God.” By Doing This, They Make Faith and Obedience Inseparable.
 1. Using Acts 2:38 as a proof text, they say that obedience to the word of God includes both repentance and water baptism as the right response to hearing and believing the gospel.
 2. The main verses they use to teach that faith and obedience are inseparable are Hebrews 5:8-9, 2nd Thessalonians 1:8, 1st Peter 4:17, and Romans 10:16.
- II. THE BASIC BELIEFS OF THOSE WHO TEACH THE DOCTRINE OF “BAPTISMAL REGENERATION” ARE:
- A. They Believe that Water Baptism Is the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:4-6 that Will Save a Person.
 1. They claim that when a person has been buried and raised with Jesus Christ by water baptism (Rom 6:3, 6) he has been obedient to the word of God.
 2. They say that when a person is buried by water baptism (Col 2:12-13), it results in a “newness of life” (Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:17).
 3. They teach that water baptism is the means of regeneration, a vehicle for grace, which is essential for the forgiveness of sins and needed for salvation.
 - B. They Believe that There Are Blessings Received from Water Baptism (Eph 1:3).
 1. They claim that when a person is baptized in water, he is placed into Jesus Christ and into His death (Rom 6:3-4).

2. They say that when a person is baptized in water, he is placed into Christ's body and is made a partaker of the one Spirit (1 Cor 12:12-13).
 3. They claim that when a person is baptized in water, he becomes saved and becomes a child of God (Gal 3:26-27; 4:6).
 4. They say that when a person is baptized in water, he puts on Christ (Gal 3:26-27).
 5. They claim that when a person is baptized in water, he becomes a new creature in Christ (John 3:3-5; 2 Cor 5:17).
 6. They say that when a person is baptized in water he gains access to the blood of Christ, which was shed at His death (Rom 5:9-10), and the blood of Christ is then able to forgive (take away) his sins (Rom 6:3; Col 1:14).
 6. They claim that only after a person is baptized in water, in the name of Jesus Christ, does he receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
 8. They say that when a person is baptized in water (the washing of regeneration), he is washed clean from his sins and born again by the Holy Spirit (Acts 22:16; Tit 3:5-6; John 3:5).
 7. They claim that when a person is baptized in water, he contacts the blood of Christ and is put into the Church (the Body of Christ) (1 Cor 12:13; Acts 2:47).
- C. They Believe that before a Person Can Receive the Blessings from Water Baptism:
1. He must first believe strongly in Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16).
 2. He must then repent of his wrong doings (thoughts, words and deeds) (Acts 2:38).
 3. He must also confess his faith in Christ (Acts 8:36-38).
 4. He must finally be baptized in water to be put into Christ (Rom 6:3).
- D. They Believe that if a Person Is not Baptized in Water:
1. He can believe, repent, confess Christ and still remain out of Christ (still be lost) (John 12:42-43; Jas 2:19).
 2. He is rejecting God's counsel to be baptized into Christ (Luke 7:30).
 3. He is not being obedient to the word of God (the gospel) and cannot be saved by faith alone (Jas 2:24).
- E. They Believe every Verse in the Bible that Mentions the Word "baptism" Is
- a. Command to Be Baptized in Water (Mat 28:19; Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27).
- F. They Point Out that no One Is Ever Commanded to Be Baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 22:16; 1 Pet 3:21).

III. THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE THE DOCTRINE OF “BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.”

- A. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Do not Understand that there Is a Difference between a Jew Being Baptized in Water **before** He Can Receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:36-38) and a Gentile Being Baptized in Water **after** He Has already Received the Gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:44-47).
- B. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Assume that Water Is Involved every Time the Words “baptism” and “baptized” Appear.
1. In **Matthew 20:20-23** the words *baptism* and *baptized* are not a reference to water baptism because:
 - a. Jesus Christ had already been baptized in water in Matthew 3:13-17 and there is no record of Him ever being baptized in water again.
 - b. Christ’s disciples were already baptized in water (John 1:35-37; Acts 19:1-4; John 3:22-23).
 - c. John the Baptist told those he was baptizing in water that Christ would later baptize them either with the Holy Ghost (if they were saved) or with fire (if they were lost) (Mat 3:1, 5-6, 11).
 2. In **Romans 6:3-4** the words *baptized* and *baptism* are not a reference to water baptism but to the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5.
 - a. This is the baptism of the Holy Ghost mentioned in Matthew 3:11 by which the Holy Spirit places a believer into Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12:13).
 - b. Water baptism is only a type, figure or likeness of the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Rom 6:1-8; 1 Pet 3:18-21).
 3. In **Galatians 3:27** the word *baptized* is not a reference to water baptism but to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Gal 3:26; 4:6). The context of Galatians three is receiving the Holy Spirit by faith and not by water baptism (Gal 3:2-3, 5, 14).
 4. In **Ephesians 4:5** the word *baptism* is not a reference to water baptism but to the baptism of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor 12:13), which is found in Matthew 3:11. This is the baptism that saves and is set apart from the other baptisms (Heb 6:1-2).
 5. In **Colossians 2:12** the word *baptism* is not a reference to water baptism but to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is received by faith (Gal 3:2-3, 5, 14, 26-27).
 6. In **1st Peter 3:20-21** the word *baptism* is not a reference to water baptism but to the baptism of the Holy Spirit that places a believer into Jesus Christ.
 - a. The passage containing the context of these two verses begins in verse 18 and ends in verse 22.
 - b. In this passage, there is no mention of anyone’s sins being washed away by water baptism.

- c. The baptism mentioned in verse 21 is said to be a figure of (a type of) what saved Noah and his family from the judgment on sin, during the flood of Genesis chapters 6 through 8.
 - 1) The eight people who were saved from the judgment on sin (the flood) were neither baptized in water nor got wet (v.20).
 - 2) Being placed into water did not save the eight people. However, they were saved by being placed into the ark and shut in by God (Gen 7:13, 16), just as believers in the present Church Age are saved by being placed into the Body of Christ and shut in by God the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:12-13; Eph 1:12-13).
 - 3) Those who were not saved from the judgment on sin were immersed in water and drowned (Gen 7:19-24).
 - d. In verse 21, the answer of a good conscience towards God (being made free from the guilt of sin) is received at salvation when the blood of Jesus Christ purges a believer's conscience and washes away his sins (Heb 9:14; Rev 1:5).
 - e. Water baptism is an **outward** physical expression of the **inward** spiritual experience of the baptism of verse 21, which places a believer into Jesus Christ (Rom 2:28-29).
 - 1) The inward spiritual experience of receiving the Holy Ghost takes place before the outward experience of water baptism (Acts 10:44-47).
 - 2) Jesus Christ also used water as an outward expression of an inward experience in John 13:3-11. If the water in John 13 actually washed away sin, then Judas Iscariot would have been made clean (vs.10-11).
 - 3) The baptism of the Holy Spirit places a believer into Christ, where he dies, is buried, and is raised again *spiritually* with Christ (1 Cor 12:13; Rom 6:1-11; Gal 3:26-27).
 - 4) The water baptism of the believer is only a type, figure, or likeness of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that places him into Christ (1 Pet 3:21-22; Rom 6:5).
 - 5) Being baptized in water *does not* put away the filth of (sins of) the flesh (see 1 Pet 3:21 & cf. Rev 1:5), but the baptism of the Holy Spirit *does* put away the sins of the flesh (Col 2:8-14).
 - 6) Being baptized in water is the answer of (the act of) a saved person with a good conscience towards God (Acts 8:36-37; 10:47), and not the act of a lost person who is about to get saved by being baptized in water (Tit 3:5).
- C. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Replace the Word "water" With the Words "water baptism" as in John 3:1-6.
- 1. The context of this passage begins in verse 1 and ends in verse 21.
 - 2. The subject of this passage is a contrast between physical and spiritual births (vs.5-6).

3. There is no mention of, or reference to, water baptism in the context of this passage (vs.1-21).
 4. The water that is mentioned in this passage refers to a man's physical birth (v.6), just as it does in Genesis 1:20, Psalm 68:26, Proverbs 5:15-18, Isaiah 48:1 and Job 38:8.
 5. The Bible also uses the word *water* to refer to the Holy Spirit as in John 7:38-39.
- D. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Refuse to Accept the Fact that a Believer Is Baptized into Jesus Christ (puts on Christ) by the Holy Spirit.
1. A believer in the Church Age is baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit and not by water baptism (Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:12-13; Gal 3:26-27).
 2. A believer in the Church Age does not have to be baptized in water to be saved (placed into Christ) (Acts 10:44-48).
- E. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Think that the Words "baptize" and "baptism" only Mean either Being Washed or Being Immersed (dipped) in "Water."
1. The Jews who were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor 10:1-2) were not washed by, immersed in, or gotten wet with water (Exo 14:21-29).
 2. John the Baptist said that he baptized with water but that Jesus Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Mat 3:11; John 1:29-30).
 - a. Notice that the word "baptize" is used not only with *water*, but also with **the Holy Ghost** and with **fire** in Matthew 3:11.
 - b. John did not baptize with water for salvation, but he did baptize the Jews to manifest (reveal) the Messiah (Jesus Christ) to the nation of Israel (see John 1:29-31 & cf. John 4:24-25).
 3. The baptism mentioned in Colossians 2:8-13 is clearly not a reference to water baptism, just as it is not in Romans 6:3.
 - a. Notice that there is no mention of water in Colossians 2, but there is in Matthew 3:11.
 - b. Notice also that there is no mention of anyone baptizing someone in Colossians 2, but there is in Matthew 3:11.
- F. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Combine Ephesians 4:5 with 1st Corinthians 12:13 and then Claim that the "one baptism" that Saves, Mentioned in Ephesians 4, Is Water Baptism.
1. They first insert the word "water" before the word "baptism" in Ephesians 4:5 and then combine it with 1st Corinthians 12:13 to produce the following private interpretation, "We were all put into the Body of Christ (saved) by the Holy Spirit because we were obedient to get baptized in water, and were made to drink into that one Spirit by our water baptism."

2. However, the Bible says that believers are baptized into (put into) the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit when they receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (John 1:12; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:13).
 3. There is more than one baptism (Heb 6:1-2), but there is only one baptism that saves (Eph 4:5). This one baptism that saves is **the Baptism of the Holy Spirit** and not “water baptism” (1 Cor 12:13).
- G. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Use Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27, 2nd Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 1:3 and 2nd Timothy 2:10 to Teach that Water Baptism Saves a Believer and Puts Him into Jesus Christ.
1. They make Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 *mean* something other than what the verses *say* by adding the words “in water” after the word “baptize” in both verses, and then claim that it is water baptism that saves instead of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 2. They use 2nd Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 1:3 and 2nd Timothy 2:10 to show that a believer is in Christ. They also combine these three verses with Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 to prove that it is water baptism that puts the believer into Jesus Christ and saves him instead of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 3. However, the Bible says that after someone believes on Jesus Christ, he is saved (Acts 16:30-31). The Holy Spirit baptizes (puts) that believer into Christ (Rom 6:3-4) and seals him (Eph 1:13) without the physical act of water baptism.
- H. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Do not Know what “Regeneration” really Means in the present Church Age.
1. Regeneration means, “a spiritual rebirth or conversion (salvation)” (Tit 3:5).
 2. Salvation (regeneration) in the present Church Age has nothing to do with water baptism according to Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 13:9; Rom 15:15-16; Acts 9:10-18).
 - a. The gospel that Paul preached in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 was that a person must believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for his sins in order to be saved (Rom 10:8-10).
 - b. Paul was sent to preach the gospel and not to baptize anyone, indicating that water baptism is not a part of the gospel that saves (1 Cor 1:14, 17-18).
 - c. According to Paul, anyone who preaches any gospel in the present Church Age other than the gospel that he preached to the Gentiles in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 is cursed (Gal 1:6-9).
- I. Some People Believe in *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Do not Understand Dispensations.

1. The word “dispensation” is defined as, “a period of time in God’s dealings with man” (Eph 1:10; Col 1:25). These dealings change with each dispensation, and several dispensations have a period of overlap with other dispensations.
2. The dealings of God with man in two separate dispensations are shown by what believers are required to do after being healed.
 - a. In the Dispensation of Law, after a believer is healed, he is required to show himself to a Jewish Priest and give an offering for his healing as required by the Law of Moses (Luke 5:12-14).
 - b. In the Dispensation of the Church Age, after a believer is healed, he is not required to **do** anything for his healing (Jas 5:14-15; 1 Thes 5:18).
3. There are seven dispensations and one transitional period (a time of change from one thing to another) in the Bible.
 - a. The **first** dispensation is the Dispensation of Innocence, found in Genesis 1:26 to 3:7. There is no mention of water baptism in this dispensation.
 - b. The **second** dispensation is the Dispensation of Conscience, found in Genesis 3:8 to 8:19. There is no mention of water baptism in this dispensation.
 - c. The **third** dispensation is the Dispensation of Human Government, found in Genesis 8:20 to Exodus 19:20. There is no mention of water baptism in this dispensation.
 - d. The **fourth** dispensation is the Dispensation of Law, found in Exodus 19:20 to John the Baptist (Luke 16:16). There is no mention of water baptism in this dispensation.
 - e. The next dispensation would have been the Dispensation of the Kingdom Age if the Jews had not rejected Jesus Christ as their King and Messiah (savior). The Kingdom Age was offered by Jesus Christ between Matthew 3:2 (the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry) and Matthew 27:50 (the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ – John 19:12-16). Water baptism during this time was a sign of, or proof of, one’s repentance (Mat 3:11) and a revealing of the Jewish Messiah to the nation of Israel (John 1:29-31).
 - f. Following the rejection of the Dispensation of the Kingdom Age, there was a “Transition Period” (a time of change) from the rejected Kingdom Age to the Dispensation of the Church Age. This *Transition Period* is found in Matthew 27:50 (from the death of Jesus Christ) to Acts 7:56-58 (the second rejection of the Kingdom Age). This period of transition overlaps into the beginning of the Church Age (Acts 2:1).
 - 1) During this period, water baptism for the nations (the Gentiles) is in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Mat 28:19).
 - 2) During this period, water baptism for the Jews (the nation of Israel) is in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36-38).

- 3) After this *transition period*, there is no difference between Jewish believers and Gentile believers in Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13) and water baptism for all nations is in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Mat 28:19).
 - g. The **fifth** dispensation is the Dispensation of the Church Age, found in Acts 2:1 to Revelation 4:1. The beginning of this dispensation overlaps with the transition period.
 - 1) During this overlap, water baptism was necessary for the Jews to receive the Holy Ghost (to get saved) (Acts 2:36-38).
 - 2) After this overlap, when the first Gentiles got saved, water baptism was not necessary for them to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:44-47).
 - h. The **sixth** dispensation is the Dispensation of the Great Tribulation Period, found in Revelation 4:2 to Revelation 19:21. There is no mention of water baptism in this dispensation.
 - i. The **seventh** dispensation is the Dispensation of the Kingdom Age, also called “the Millennium,” found in Revelation 20:1-9. There is no mention of water baptism in this dispensation.
 4. After examining the *Seven Dispensations* and the *Transition Period*, water baptism is found in only three places:
 - a. It is mentioned in the preparation for the Dispensation of the Kingdom Age, where water baptism was a sign of (a proof of) repentance (Mat 3:11) and a revealing of the Jewish Messiah to the nation of Israel (John 1:29-31).
 - b. It is mentioned in the Transition Period, where water baptism was necessary for the Jews to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:36-38).
 - c. It is mentioned in the Dispensation of the Church Age, where water baptism is an outward expression of an inward experience. The inward experience of receiving the Holy Ghost (getting saved) takes place before the outward expression of water baptism (Acts 10:44-47; 16:30-33).
 5. Only in the **Transition Period** was there baptismal regeneration and it only applied to Jews who had repented of crucifying their Messiah (Acts 2:36-38).
- J. Some People Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* because They Combine Romans 10:16; 2nd Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:8-9 and 1st Peter 4:17, and then Claim that Faith and Obeying the Gospel Are Necessary for Salvation in the Church Age. Their Gospel Is Found by Combining 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 with Acts 2:38.
1. They believe that “obeying the gospel” is a three part process: (1) believing in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, (2) repenting by turning away from sin and turning to God, and (3) being baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ.

- a. The Bible teaches that *obeying the gospel* in the Church Age includes (1) believing in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for your sins (1 Cor 15:1-4), and (2) confessing to God that you receive (accept) Christ as your personal savior (John 1:12; Rom 10:9-10).
 - b. Saving repentance is not an act of obedience but a change of mind, being so sorry about your sins against God that a decision is made to change your ways. It is a turning away from your own works for salvation, a turning to God, and a placing of your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (Heb 6:1; Acts 20:21; 2 Cor 7:10).
 - c. Being baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ is not part of *obeying the gospel* in the present Church Age according to the Apostle Paul, who was not sent to baptize anyone, but he was sent to preach the gospel (1 Cor 1:14-18; 15:1-4).
2. They take Romans 10:16, 2nd Thessalonians 1:8, Hebrews 5:8-9 and 1st Peter 4:17 out of context in order to prove that faith and *obeying the gospel* is necessary for salvation. They do not realize that there is more than one gospel in the Bible.
 - a. The “gospel” (good news) mentioned in Romans 10:15-16 is the Gospel of Peace which was preached to the nation of Israel in Isaiah 52:7.
 - 1) The word “they” in Romans 10:16 refers to the Jews (Isa 52:1-7) and not to anyone living in the Church Age.
 - 2) The Jews failed to obey the Gospel of Peace in Isaiah 52:7 when they refused to believe what was preached (Isa 53:1).
 - 3) This Gospel of Peace is not the gospel preached in the Church Age (1 Cor 15:1-4; Eph 2:8-9).
 - b. The *gospel* mentioned in 2nd Thessalonians 1:8 is the gospel that will be preached at the end of the Dispensation of the Great Tribulation Period (cf. Rev 14:6-7), the Time of Jacob’s Trouble (Jer 30:1-9), and is not the gospel preached during the present Church Age.
 - 1) The context of 2nd Thessalonians 1:8 is found in verses 7 through 10, which refers to the second Coming of Jesus Christ (Mal 4:1-3; Mat 3:11-12; Eze 20:45-48; Rev 19:11-15).
 - 2) *Obeying the gospel* mentioned in 2nd Thessalonians 1:8 (that will be preached during the Tribulation Period) is to fear God, glorify Him, keep His commandments, and have faith in Jesus Christ (Rev 14:6-12).
 - c. The *obedience* mentioned in Hebrews 5:8-9 is not the obedience of the gospel by the believer, but the obedience of Jesus Christ to God’s will, which is applied to those who believe in Christ (Rom 5:17-19; Heb 10:4-10).
 - 1) *Obedience* for a believer in the Church Age is “the obedience of faith” from the heart (Rom 6:17; 16:25-26), and not a physical act of obedience (Acts 15:7-9, 11).

- 2) Church Age *obedience* is to obey from the heart the teaching of salvation by grace through faith alone (Eph 2:8-9; Acts 15:9, 11; Rom 10:8-13).
- d. The term *Gospel of God* mentioned in 1st Peter 4:17, is a general reference to any good news of God. The context of this verse is found in verses 12 through 19. Peter is here comparing the judgment of a believer at “the Judgment Seat of Christ” with the judgment of a non-believer (those that obey not the gospel) at “the Great White Throne Judgment.”
 - 1) **Believers** will be judged for their works of obedience to receive rewards and not for salvation (1 Cor 3:11-15) at *the Judgment Seat of Christ*.
 - 2) **Non-believers** will be judged for not believing the gospel that was preached to them (Rev 20:11-15) at *the Great White Throne Judgment*.

IV. THE TRANSITIONAL BOOK OF ACTS IS THE BIBLE BOOK THAT IS MOST OFTEN USED FOR PROOF TEXTS BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE DOCTRINE OF “BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.”

- A. The Book of Acts, up to Acts 7:56-58, Covers the Transition Period from the Rejected Dispensation of the Kingdom Age to the Beginning of the Dispensation of the Church Age.
- B. The Transition Period Itself Overlaps the End of the Dispensation of Law, the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:16-17), and the Beginning of the Dispensation of the Church Age, the New Testament (Acts 10:1-16; 15:1-11; Eph 2:11-16).
- C. After Jesus Christ (the King of the Kingdom Age) Was Rejected and Crucified, the Kingdom Age Was Offered once again because of the Intercession of (the stepping in of) Jesus Christ (Luke 23:34; John 11:21-22, 41-42).
- D. Both the King and the Kingdom Age Were Rejected a second Time by the Jewish leaders in Acts 6:12 and 7:1-2, 51-58.
- E. Following the second Rejection of the King and the Kingdom Age in Acts 7:56-58, there Began a Transition (a time of change) from God mainly Dealing with the Nation of Israel (Mat 10:5-7; 15:21-24; Acts 11:19) to God mainly Dealing with the Gentile Nations (Mat 28:19-20; Acts 11:1-18; 15:1-11; 18:1-6).

- F. During this Transition Period, there Was a Definite Separation between the Jewish Believers and the Gentile Believers (Acts 10:28; Gal 2:11-13; Eph 2:11-13) that Overlapped into the Early Church Age (Acts 21:17-25; 1 Cor 7:17-20, 24).
- G. Salvation (receiving the Holy Ghost) during the overlapping Transition Period Was not always the same, but Changed. These Changes Prove that there Was a Transition from one Dispensation to another. These Changes Are Seen throughout the Book of Acts.
1. Salvation for the Jews at the beginning of the Transition Period was by grace (Acts 13:43), through faith (Acts 20:21), by works of keeping the Law (Acts 10:25-28; 11:1-18), and by water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36-38).
 2. Salvation for the Jews near the end of the Transition Period is by Grace, through faith alone, without works, without keeping the Law, and without water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 15:1-11).
 3. Salvation for the Gentiles during the Transition Period is by grace, through faith alone (Acts 15:9, 11), before being baptized in water (Acts 8:36-38; 10:44-47; 16:30-33).
- H. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 2:36-42 Applies to a Person in the present Church Age in Order for Him to Be Saved.
1. They wrongly approach this passage without dealing with the context, the question, or the answer to the question.
 - a. The *context* of this passage is found in Acts 2:1-47.
 - 1) The Apostle Peter (v.14) was speaking to Jews and Jewish Proselytes in Jerusalem at the beginning of the Transition Period (vs.5, 7-10, 22).
 - 2) Peter was telling the Jews that they have crucified their Messiah, Jesus Christ (vs.22-36).
 - b. The *question* in this passage is found in verse 37. After hearing Peter tell them that they had crucified their Messiah, the Jews asked the question “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”
 - c. The *answer* to the Jews’ question of “What must we do (now that we realize that we have crucified our Messiah)?” is found in verse 38. They were told, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
 2. When dealing with this passage, they do not take the following facts into consideration:
 - a. The Jews did not ask in Acts 2:37, “What must we do to be saved?” like the Gentile jailer did in Acts 16:30. The words “to be saved” are added by them to the question in Acts 2:37 to make it match the question in Acts 16:30.

- b. The answer to the Jews' question given in Acts 2:37, which is found in Acts 2:38, does not match the answer given to the question in Acts 16:30, which is found in Acts 16:31.
 - c. The Jews were required to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ in order to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:38. However, the Gentiles received the Holy Ghost **before** they were baptized in water in Acts 10:44-47.
 - d. The word "for" has many meanings and does not always mean, "in order to get."
 - 1) In Acts 2:38 the word *for* means, "because of" and not "in order to get something," just as it does in 1st Corinthians 15:3.
 - 2) The word *for* in Acts 2:38 does not mean "in order to get something" because Jesus Christ had already died and sins were already remitted by His blood at the cross (Mat 26:26-28; Rom 3:24-26; Heb 9:22). Therefore, Sins are not remitted by being baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ, but are remitted by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
 - 3) In Luke 5:12-14 the word *for* occurs twice in verse 14 and does not mean, "in order to get" either time. The first time it is used, it means "because of" due to the fact that the leper was already cleansed (healed) of his leprosy by Christ (v.13). The second time it is used, it means "as."
- I. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 8:5-13 Proves that a Person Must Be Baptized in Water in Order To Be Saved in the Church Age.
- 1. They wrongly approach this passage by not considering that the word "they" in verse 12 refers to the people of Samaria (v.9), half-Jews (2 Kgs 17:24-41), who were expecting their Jewish Messiah to come and restore the kingdom (John 4:7-9, 12, 25, 28-29, 39).
 - 2. They do not realize that it was necessary for these half-Jews to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12), just as the Jews were in Acts 2:38, to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- J. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Use Acts 8:26-39 to Prove that Water Baptism Is Necessary for Salvation in the Church Age.
- 1. They do not take into consideration that the Ethiopian eunuch did not ask, "What must I do to be saved?" (v.36).
 - 2. They overlook the fact that the eunuch was not baptized in water to be saved, but was baptized in water because he was already saved by confessing that Jesus Christ was the Son of God (vs.36-38 & cf. Rom 10:9-10).
 - 3. There is no mention of the eunuch being baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ or receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost in this passage.

- K. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 9:1-18 Proves that a Person in the Church Age must Be Baptized in Water to Be Saved.
1. They wrongly approach this passage without taking the following facts into consideration:
 - a. That Saul (a Jew) accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah when he called Jesus “Lord” in verse 6, after Christ had identified Himself to Saul in verse 5.
 - b. That Saul was already considered to be a believer in Christ by Ananias (a Christian disciple) in verse 17. This is clear because Ananias laid hands on Saul and called him “brother” *before* Saul was baptized in water in verse 18.
 - c. That Saul received the Holy Ghost when he believed that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and called Jesus “Lord” in verse 6 (1 Cor 15:1-4; Rom 10:9-0; Eph 1:13). Saul was not *filled* with the Holy Ghost until *after* hands were laid on him and he was baptized in water (Acts 9:17-18).
 2. They do not take into consideration that Saul, a Jew, was baptized in water for outward physical purification (John 3:25-26; Num 19:1-12) *after* his sins were washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:5; 1 John 1:7).
- L. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 10:25-48 Proves that a Person in the Church Age must Be Baptized in Water to Be Saved.
1. They do not take into consideration that Cornelius was not a Jew, but a Gentile (vs.1, 25-29), who received the Holy Spirit *before* he was baptized in water (vs.44-47).
 2. They do not take into consideration that the water baptism of Cornelius is different from the water baptism in Acts 2:36-38, where the Jews received the Holy Ghost **after** they were baptized in water.
 3. They do not realize that Cornelius was saved (received the Holy Ghost) after he heard about and believed in Jesus Christ (vs.36-44; Eph 1:13), not after he was baptized in water (vs.45-47).
 4. They overlook the fact that Peter (a Jew) baptized Cornelius (a Gentile) in the name of “the Lord” (v.48) and not in the name of “Jesus Christ.” This was done by Peter in obedience to Christ’s command in Matthew 28:19 to baptize all nations (Gentiles) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The word “Lord” refers to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost:
 - a. God the Father is called *Lord* in Matthew 11:25 and Exodus 6:2.
 - b. God the Son is called *Lord* in John 20:26-28 and 9:35-38.
 - c. God the Holy Ghost is called *Lord* in 2nd Corinthians 3:17-18 (Acts 5:3-4).

- M. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 16:12-15 Proves that a Person in the Church Age must Be Baptized in Water to Be Saved.
1. They assume that Lydia was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ before she was saved. However, there is no mention of her being baptized in any name.
 2. They overlook the fact that Lydia was a Gentile and not a Jew. It is clear that she is not a Jew because she did not worship God in the local synagogue on the Sabbath with the Jews and proselytes (vs.13-14).
 3. They also overlook the fact that Lydia was baptized in water only *after* getting saved, when she attended to (applied herself to) the gospel that she heard preached by the Apostle Paul (vs.9-10, 14-15).
- N. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal regeneration* Claim that Acts 16:25-34 Proves that a Person in the Church Age must Be Baptized in Water to Be Saved.
1. They do not take the following facts into consideration:
 - a. That the Philippian jailer was a Gentile (vs.19-23) who, in verses 31 and 32, heard Paul's gospel of 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 and not Peter's gospel of Acts 2:38.
 - b. That the jailer asked what he had to do to be saved (v.30) and was told that all he needed to do was to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..." (see v.31 & cf. Acts 15:7-11).
 - c. That this Gentile jailer was baptized in water *after* he believed on Jesus Christ (v.33), just like the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:36-38 and like Cornelius in Acts 10:44-47.
 2. They do not take into consideration that in this passage there is no mention of anyone being baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ (v.33).
 3. They do not take into consideration that in this passage there is no mention of anyone receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, as in Acts 2:38, because there are no unbelieving Jews present.
- O. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 18:4-11 Proves that a Person in the Church Age must Be Baptized in Water to Be Saved.
1. They do not take the following facts into consideration:
 - a. The Apostle Paul preached in a synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) (v.4).
 - b. There were only Jews and Jewish converts (proselytes) listening to Paul's preaching (vs.4-6).
 - c. The Gentiles (vs.6-8) who believed on the Lord in verse 8 were baptized in water **after** they believed, just as in Acts 8:36-38 and 10:44-47.

2. They do not take into consideration that there is no mention of the Gentiles being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (v.8) or of any Gentile receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, as in Acts 2:38.
- P. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 19:1-7 Proves that a Person in the Church Age must Be Baptized in Water, in the Name of Jesus Christ, to Be Saved (to receive the Holy Ghost).
1. They overlook the fact that what happened in this passage (near the end of the transition when God stopped dealing mainly with the nation of Israel and started dealing mainly with the Gentile nations) does not match what happened in Acts 2:36-41.
 - a. In Acts 19 the Jewish disciples of John the Baptist had already repented, but had not been baptized in the name of Jesus (v.4).
 - b. These Jewish disciples did not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until *after* they were baptized in water, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and not until *after* the Apostle Paul had laid hands on them (vs.5-6).
 - b. In Acts 2 the Jews repented, were baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost *without* the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38, 41).
 2. They also overlook the fact that speaking in tongues was a sign (the evidence) that these Jews had received the Holy Ghost (were saved) (1 Cor 14:21-22; 1:22).
- Q. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Acts 22:1-16 Proves that a Person in the Church Age must Be Baptized in Water to Be Saved.
1. They do not take into consideration that in this passage the Apostle Paul, a Jew, was telling other Jews about his own conversion to Christianity, that took place in Acts 9:1-18.
 2. They do not take into consideration that when Paul was saved, he was a Jew who was required to be baptized in water, in the name of Jesus, as proof that he had repented for his part in crucifying his Messiah, Jesus Christ, (Acts 2:36-38).
 3. They do not take into consideration that Paul (Saul) had already accepted Jesus Christ as his “Lord” (Acts 22:7-10), *before* he went to the house of Ananias. This is clear because Ananias laid hands on Saul and called him “brother” *before* he was baptized in water (Acts 22:13; 9:17-18).
 4. They do not take into consideration that a Gentile believer, in the Church Age, has his sins washed away with the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:5), by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11), when he is saved (receives Jesus Christ by faith) (John 1:12; Eph 2:8-9; 1:13), not by water baptism.
 5. They do not take into consideration that in the beginning of the Church Age the Jews still connected water with physical purification and physical birth, but not with salvation.
 - a. Water is connected with *purification* of the flesh (the body) in Numbers 19:1-12, Mark 7:1-8 and John 2:6.

- b. Water is connected with *physical birth* in Genesis 1:20, Job 38:8, Psalm 68:26, Proverbs 5:15-18, Isaiah 48:1 and John 3:3-6.
- 6. They do not take into consideration that in Acts 22:16 when Ananias (a Jewish disciple of Christ) said, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,” he was referring to physical purification (John 2:6; 13:3-11) and not to salvation (Heb 9:22; Rev 1:5).
- 7. They do not take into consideration that purification of the heart for both the Jewish and Gentile Believers is said to be by *faith* (Acts 15:8-11) and not by water baptism.
- 8. They do not take into consideration that Ananias was not talking about Saul getting saved in Acts 22:16 because he already considered Saul to be a Christian brother in verse 13. Ananias connected water with purification of the flesh and not with salvation, just as Jesus Christ connected water with purification and not with salvation in John 13:3-10.
- 9. They do not take into consideration that Saul was born again (1 Cor 15:8) and was washed with the “washing of regeneration” by the Holy Ghost (Tit 3:5; 1 Cor 6:11) three days before he was baptized in water (Acts 9:8-9, 17-18). The *washing of regeneration* is not water baptism but the Holy Ghost regenerating the believer, giving life to his dead spirit (Eph 2:1, 5), by washing away his sins with the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:5; 1 John 1:7).

V. THERE ARE OTHER VERSES THAT ARE USED FOR PROOF TEXTS BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE DOCTRINE OF “BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.”

- A. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16 Prove that a Person in the present Church Age must Be Baptized in Water to Be Saved.
 - 1. They do not take into consideration that Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:14-18 are dealing with two different appearances, two different commissions, and two different baptisms of Jesus Christ, after His resurrection.
 - 2. These are two different **appearances** because:
 - a. In Mark 16:14 Christ appears to the apostles while they are eating in Jerusalem (Luke 24:33-43).
 - b. In Matthew 28:16 Christ appears to the apostles on a mountain in Galilee, which is a Sabbath's Journey from Jerusalem (Acts 1:1-12).
 - 3. These are two different **commissions** because:
 - a. In Mark 16:15-16 Christ commissions the apostles to *preach* the gospel to every creature and to baptize everyone who believes the gospel, but there is no mention of teaching in this commission.

- b. In Matthew 28:19 Christ commissions the apostles to *teach* all nations and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, but there is no mention of preaching the gospel in this commission. Believers, not unbelievers, are taught *after* they have accepted the preaching of the gospel (get saved) (Acts 11:26; 14:21; Col 2:6-7; 1 Cor 2:11-14).
 - 4. These are two different **baptisms** because:
 - a. The baptism in Mark 16:16 is a Jewish water baptism, like the baptism in Acts 2:36-38, which is followed by Jewish Apostolic Signs:
 - 1) The casting out of devils (Mat 10:5-8).
 - 2) Speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:22; 1:22)
 - 3) Handling of serpents (Acts 28:3-5).
 - 4) Laying on of hands and healing of the sick (Mat 10:5-8; Acts 28:8).
 - 5) Drinking of deadly things without harm (Mark 16:18).
 - b. In Matthew 28:19 the baptism is a Gentile water baptism for believers because this commission is to *all nations* (Luke 12:29-30) and not to the nation of Israel (1 Chr 17:21; Psa 57:9; Num 23:9).
- B. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Luke 7:30 Proves that a Person Who Is not Baptized in Water Has Rejected God's Counsel to Be Baptized into Jesus Christ and, therefore, Can not Be Saved.
 - 1. They do not take into consideration that the context of this verse is Luke 7:18-30.
 - 2. They do not take into consideration that the baptism of verse 30 is the baptism of repentance preached by John the Baptist (v.29; Mark 1:4).
 - 3. They do not take into consideration that John's reason for baptizing was to reveal the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to the nation of Israel (John 1:29-31), and not to be saved.
 - 4. They do not take into consideration that John's water baptism was a baptism of repentance and not a New Testament Believer's Spirit baptism (Mat 3:11-12; 1 Cor 12:13).
- C. Those Who Believe in the Doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration* Claim that Titus 3:5-6 Proves that a Person in the Church Age Is Regenerated (spiritually reborn; converted) by Water Baptism.
 - 1. They do not take into consideration that the word "washing" does not always mean to wash (to cleanse) by water.
 - a. In Ephesians 5:25-26 Jesus Christ washes the Church (the Body of Christ) by the word of God (John 15:3; Psa 119:9), and not by water.
 - b. In Revelation 1:5 Christ washes the sins of believers in His *blood* (Rev 7:14; 1 John 1:7), and not in water.

2. They do not take into consideration that in the phrase “by the washing of regeneration” that it is the regeneration by the Holy Ghost (being born again) (1 Cor 6:11) which gives life to the believer’s dead spirit (Eph 2:1, 5) and washes away his sins with the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:5; 1 John 1:7), and not with water baptism.
3. They do not take into consideration that in the phrase “and renewing of the Holy Ghost” it is the Holy Spirit who is renewing the regenerated believer day by day (2 Cor 4:16; Col 3:9-10), and not the Holy Ghost being renewed daily.

VI. THE DOCTRINE OF “BAPTISMAL REGENERATION” IS A DAMNABLE HERESY.

A. The Term “damnable” Defined:

1. The word *damnable* comes from the root word “damn,” which has two meanings.
2. The first meaning of the word *damn* is “to sentence someone guilty and worthy of punishment” as in Romans 14:23.
3. The second meaning of the word *damn* is “to sentence someone to eternal punishment in hell” as in Mark 16:16.

B. The Term “heresy” Defined:

1. The word *heresy* has two meanings.
2. The first meaning of the word *heresy* is “an opinion, doctrine, or practice contrary to truth or the Bible.” Nevertheless, God allows heresies to force Christians to study the Bible in order to bring out the truth (see 1 Cor 11:18-19 & cf. 2 Tim 2:15; 3:15-17).
3. The second meaning of the word *heresy* is “a sect, party, or religious group which has broken away from an established belief” as in Acts 24:5 and 14.

C. The Term “damnable heresy” Defined:

1. The meaning of the term is “a teaching which is contrary to the Bible that will condemn someone (declare him guilty) for believing it,” as in 2nd Peter 2:1.
2. A *damnable heresy* that is either believed or taught by a saved person will result in only a loss of his rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ and not a loss of his salvation (1 Cor 3:9-15).
3. A *damnable heresy* that is believed by a lost person for salvation will keep him from being saved and will result in his being sentenced to eternal punishment in hell at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15).

D. *Baptismal Regeneration* Is a *damnable Heresy* because It Teaches that Water Baptism Is Necessary for Salvation in the present Church Age, which Is Contrary to what the Bible Says.

1. Salvation in the Church Age, according to the Bible, is by faith alone and not by works of righteousness of any kind according to the Apostle Paul (Tit 3:5; 2 Tim 1:9).
 - a. The word “faith” means, “a belief in someone or something” (Heb 11:1, 6).
 - b. Paul said that a person is saved by faith alone without any mention of water baptism in Ephesians 2:8-9.
 - c. Paul also said that belief (faith) in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and confessing (accepting) Him as savior are the only requirements to be saved (1 Cor 15:1-4; Acts 16:30-31; Rom 10:9-10; John 6:28-29).
 - d. Paul again said that a person is saved and sealed by the Holy Ghost after he believes the gospel (Eph 1:13; 4:30; Gal 3:14), and not after being baptized in water.
 - e. Paul said that a person is justified (made legally free from the penalty of sin) and counted (considered to be) righteous by faith, and not by his works (Rom 4:1-5).
 - f. Paul also said that works should be a part of every believer’s life *after* salvation (Eph 2:10; 2 Tim 3:14-17; 1 Cor 15:58; Tit 2:13-14).
 - g. Works of righteousness, including obedience to commands (such as being baptized in water, loving one another, assembling together, etc.), deserve a reward or payment (Col 3:23-25; 2 John v.8; 1 Cor 3:11-15).
 - h. Paul again said that salvation is a free gift (Rom 5:16-18), not a reward or payment for works of righteousness (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 6:23b; Tit 3:5).
 2. Water baptism in the Church Age, according to the Bible, is not necessary for salvation (1 Cor 1:17-18; 15:1-4), but is a responsibility for every believer *after* being saved (Acts 16:30-33).
 - a. Jesus Christ was baptized in water (Mat 3:13-16) and is our example (1 Pet 2:21).
 - b. All new believers in the early Church Age were baptized in water *after* believing on Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36-41; 8:36-38; 10:44-48; 16:30-33; 1 Cor 1:14-17).
 - c. Christ commanded Church Age Believers to be baptized in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Mat 28:18-20).
- E. *Baptismal Regeneration* Is a *damnable Heresy* because It Makes the Power of the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ Dependent on Water Baptism for Salvation.
1. The Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness) of sins (Heb 9:22; Lev 17:11).
 - a. The blood of Christ, not water baptism, remits sins (Mat 26:26-28).
 - b. The blood of Christ, not water baptism, cleanses (washes away) the sins of a believer (1 John 1:7; Rev 1:5).
 - c. The blood of Christ, not water baptism, makes propitiation with God (regains the good will of God) for a believer (Rom 3:24-25).

- d. The blood of Christ, not water baptism, justifies (declares to be righteous and worthy of being saved) and saves a believer from wrath (Rom 4:24-25; 5:1, 8-9).
 - e. The blood of Christ, not water baptism, eternally redeems a believer (frees him by paying a price) (1 Pet 1:18-9; Heb 9:11-12; 1 Cor 6:19-20; Acts 20:28).
 - f. The blood of Christ, not water baptism, makes peace between God and a believer (Col 1:19-21).
 - g. The blood of Christ, not water baptism, sanctifies (sets apart by making free from sin) a believer (Heb 13:12).
2. Nowhere in the Bible does it ever say that anyone is eternally lost if he is not baptized in water (Luke 23:39-43; Mark 16:16). However, without the blood of Christ no one can ever be saved (Heb 9:11-28).
- F. *Baptismal Regeneration Is a damnable Heresy because It Is not the Gospel Preached by the Apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 for a Believer in the Church Age.*
- 1. In 1st Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul states that the gospel he preached was the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins.
 - 2. In 1st Corinthians 15:1-2, Paul said that if anyone believed any gospel other than what he preached, he believed in vain (without the desired result of salvation).
 - 3. In 1st Corinthians 1:14-18, Paul states that he was not sent to baptize anyone in water, but that he was sent to preach the gospel. Since Paul was not sent to baptize anyone in water (v.17), but was sent to preach the gospel of 1st Corinthians 15:1-4, water baptism is not a part of the saving gospel in the present Church Age (Acts 16:30-31; Eph 1:13; Rom 10:9-10, 17).
 - 4. In Galatians 1:8-9, the Apostle Paul said that anyone who preached any other gospel than what he preached in 1st Corinthians 15:1-4 was to be cursed (damned).