

Baptism The Preparation of the Way.

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Preface

Christian Baptism is a rite celebrated in many congregations, as the initiation to membership. Although I was Christened in my teenage years and then confirmed by the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, I had scant knowledge of its relevance to the Christian faith. It had become mere tradition passed down from one generation to the next and one was expected to follow your cultural heritage.

A standard Liturgy was used for conformity amongst the various parishes in the Diocese of Southern Africa. The Priest would read this to a congregation and the initiate as part of the common faith being celebrated by the church.

At the end of all this, one was none the wiser of the why and wherefore of the need to be baptized, other than it playing a role as the first step toward being a partaker of the sacrament of Holy Communion. Infant Baptism would obviously leave one with no knowledge of why his parents promised on their behalf to bring a child up in the Christian faith. In this scenario the obligation rest's upon the parents to inform the infant and instill in the child a sense of devotion to the Lord.

Through Tradition Christianity becomes a mystery to many and its rules and regulations merely a part one has to play to become a member of civilized society. Many only attend church to witness three events in their lives the first being a Christening, the second a marriage and the third a funeral. Some may interpose this with being a witness to the confirmation of a member of their family.

Baptism is also celebrated by other congregations of the various denominations that claim to have a traditional Christian Faith. Even the more recent growth of Pentecostalism incorporates this rite as part of its modern tradition. They also see it as a necessity and urge their followers to be baptized. They may quote a few scriptures to support this, yet they all fail to explain why they hold this view. Their main argument is normally weighted in favor of immersion as opposed to sprinkling. This of course stems from the Baptist congregations, whose founders originally made a stand against infant baptism and sprinkling.

I myself having first been sprinkled in my teen years, the later in my thirties was immersed; subsequently fell prey to the followers of William Branham, who made an emphasis on using the name of Jesus when administering their tradition. They claimed my Baptism was invalid because the rite was not exercised properly, yet they had no understanding of its purpose or reason either.

There is a veritable quagmire out there amongst these sub divisions of the followers of Christianity.

This small treatise is my attempt to bring to light some clarity as regards why John the Baptist introduced this rite to the Christian Faith.

God in a Eternal Relationship with Mankind

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The Bible is primarily a record of God's relationships with mankind. It is divided primarily into two major subsections known as the old and the New Testament. Correctly understood the word testament should be used as that which describes a contract in writing known as a covenant between two parties. Thus the two major Covenants contained in the scripture is the reason for the division of the sixty six books into these major subsections.

The Lord God of the divine cannon of the scriptures is a God who deals with his people through a Covenant relationship. The Scriptures now entirely completed contain in writing the obligations of the parties to the Covenant. Contractually God is always the first party in the Covenant and his people the second Party. Because God is immutable (not subject to change or failure) he always fulfills what he plans to do in his covenant relationship with his people. His people being weak and vacillating (mutable) are subject to failing to keep the conditions of the contractual relationship. God purposed from the foundation of world to bring mankind into an everlasting covenant relationship with him, that he might have a people to worship and adore him. In order to demonstrate his immutability he gave Abraham the promise of bringing him and his offspring into an everlasting covenant relationship with him. Through Moses God gave Israel the Covenant of the Law as a precursor to the everlasting Covenant of Grace and Truth.

The Law of Moses contained both Blessing and Cursing. Blessing followed total obedience and the curse fell on the disobedient. Through the history of the children of Israel we discover their continuous failure to fulfill the conditions of the Legal Covenant A state of perfection for mankind was totally impossible under the Law due to humanity's inherent mutability called sin. The law provided a means of covering mankind's sin through various sacrificial rites. This would lead mankind to desire a better relationship with God that would remove their sin. Through the Prophets God revealed a promised Heavenly Covenant that would replace the temporal earthly covenant of the Law that He himself would confirm with mankind through the agency of the Messiah.

Galatians 3:15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith

The earthly Covenant of the Law, was of a natural country, a natural priesthood, a natural tabernacle (temple), followed by a natural procession of earthly kings ruling in a worldly kingdom. This Kingdom was abolished and its banished subjects returned to form a secular state called Israel in 1948.

Whereas the Heavenly Covenant of Grace and Truth, has an eternal Priesthood, an Eternal Kingdom, an Eternal City with an Eternal tabernacle and Eternal Redemption from sin. The Kingdom of God will never end and cannot be placed within the timeframes of the various seasons of the current solar system we have our earthly sojourn in. It is highly recommended that one makes a serious study of the Letter to the Hebrews bearing this Covenant relationship in mind which God has entered into with mankind.

The Baptist's Mission

Mathew 3:13 ¶ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John's very mission and purpose was to prepare the way of the Lord. Christ's claim to be the way the truth and the life is established by his baptism. Thus he sets the pattern for the Church (Christ's predestined elect) to follow. Men are called to forsake all and follow Christ. Thus entry to the imminent Kingdom was by repentance from the way of the transgressor, demonstrated by willingness to be baptized and follow Christ. Baptism is the preparatory rite for the remission of sin under the new covenant. God requires all that would enter his Kingdom to submit to Christ's authority and be baptized.

Malachi 3:1; Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Christ's preeminence is demonstrated in his willingness to be baptized by recognizing John as the one who was to prepare him for the promised Kingdom.

Mathew 3:1 ¶ In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 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.

The focal point of John's ministry was the coming of the new covenant Kingdom that would replace the old apostate kingdom and bring about its demise. His call to repentance and the setting up of the New Covenant way of the Lord by baptism for those who confessed their sins, marked the major turning point in history of the sons of Jacob.

Mathew 3: 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? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

His warning of destruction by fire upon the self righteous religious status quo, who thought they had no need of repentance, and of the demise of the old Kingdom by God's wrath upon the vipers who would soon be trodden underfoot. Trees in the prophets are the metaphors of earthly kingdoms. When an axe is laid to the root of a tree, a kingdom falls even though it imagines it has reached heaven.

Christ sets the example to those who bore witness to the event, by being baptized by John thus confirming the veracity of Johns words. Should Jesus have turned away from Johns baptism he would have aligned himself with those who doubted John's mission and purpose.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.

In the Messiah's response to John's reluctance to baptize He who was greater than himself, and his verbal expression of needing to be baptized by Christ, we discover that between them they were fulfilling God's

righteousness. The righteousness of Law, given to Israel through Moses, required the vengeance upon those who broke the old covenant's precepts and statutes. Repentance followed by baptism was the mark of disassociating one's self from the transgressors of the law, and heeding the voice of the prophets who heralded the coming destruction. To heed John and the prophets was to hear God and obey him.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”

John had declared that the messenger of the Covenant would soon follow him and baptize the elect remnant of Israel with the Holy Ghost, and destroy the reprobates with unquenchable fire.

“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”

Christ's means of filling his Garner with wheat was to distinguish them from the chaff by filling them with his Spirit. John has laid out God's purpose upon apostate Israel that was historically fulfilled at the feast of Pentecost when the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and the chaff died in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans some forty three years later.

Psalm 50:3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him

Isaiah 10:17 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day;

John 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

John the Baptist bore witness by preparing the way of the Messiah, foretelling the events that would follow in the messenger of the covenants wake. He called Israel to find redemption in Christ and salvation from the coming wrath upon those who rejected Him by Him.

Baptism after Pentecost

Acts 2:14 ¶ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved

The tongues of fire accompanying the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost were a symbol of a coming judgement upon the mockers. Blood, fire and vapor of smoke are the signs that accompany the destruction of a city by an invading army. The day of the Lord is a day of the destruction of his enemies.

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Those who rejected Christ for Barabbas and proclaimed Caesar their King had committed the transgression that made them the enemies of Christ. All they could now expect was a day of vengeance, for the rejection of the resurrected, ascended and enthroned Lord and King over all of creation. Yet God's longsuffering had made a way of salvation from the wrath to come.

Acts 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

This sermon by Peter on the day of Pentecost outlined God's purpose upon Apostate Israel. Christ's enemies were now to be made his footstool. Repentance is called for once again to those who were pricked in the heart by Peter's message of a Judgement on Christ's enemies.

Acts 2:37 ¶ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, 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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Once again the way of the Lord is opened to those who repent for their rejection of Christ. Through baptism they shall receive the promise of the remission of their sins. For Baptism is the door to becoming a partaker of the Messianic New Covenant. The promised remission of sins is extended beyond the present generation to the generations to come. This confirms that Christ Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom that will supercede the apostate Kingdom of Israel that was at that time in its last days. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the many that had embraced Christ's covenant on the day of Pentecost, in fulfillment of Christ's Passover promise of the coming Comforter that would follow his ascension, is proof of His eternal Kingdom. Christ having poured out his life's blood as atonement for the sins of his elect qualified them to be filled with the Comforting Spirit of Truth.

Hebrews 9:20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.¶ It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Sanctification through Baptism

Sanctification is a work of God that makes the vessels of ministry fit for his purpose. The Levitical priesthood had to be washed before they could minister, and atonement for their sin had to be made by way of animal sacrifice.

Leviticus 16:4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. ¶ And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

Entry into the presence of God requires a washing which is a type of water Baptism in preparation for the remission of Sins, through the blood of the sacrificed animal. Just as Aaron had to wash as the High Priest mediator of the old Covenant, in compliance with the righteous requirements of the Law, Christ our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek is baptized by John in order to make a once only perfect offering for our sin. This is done that we may partake of the inheritance contained in the New Covenant shedding of Christ our Mediators blood for the remission of our Sin. His death becomes our death, his resurrection becomes our resurrection, his ascension becomes our ascension into heaven.

Hebrews 6:20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Christ's Baptism being the preparation of new and living way, which is verified by his ascension to the promised throne of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 8:1 ¶ Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Christian Baptism is a sacramental act, where we die to self and are raised with Christ as a new man that will ascend to the throne (judgement seat) of Christ when we leave this mortal body and put on immortality. Following the way of Christ our forerunner, we enter the Kingdom of Heaven where there is everlasting righteousness.

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 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. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

There is well trodden narrow way to the Kingdom of Heaven which begins with the baptism of repentance which marks a major turning point in our lives. Multitudes hear the gospel and only many are moved by the Holy Ghost to walk the path he has shown them. Election begins with a call to be baptized; those that heed the call to follow Christ find the starting point of the narrow way to the Kingdom Heaven. Once washed the called are to make their election sure. We have to follow Christ to the marriage supper of the Lamb and accept his invitation to sup with him. Marriage is a Covenanted rite where two become one, and the Bridegroom pledges allegiance to care and look after his Bride. The Bridegroom offers the Bride joint possession of his wealth and co-regency with him. The Bride prepares herself through cleansing to accept his hand and to cleave unto him, so that the two become one flesh. Love for one another is the bond that unites them. The Bridegroom offers the Bride his flesh, and consummates the marriage with his life force.

This is re-enacted every time we partake of the tokens of the New Covenant in celebration of our communion, the common union of Christ and his elect. The elect having all things in common with Christ becomes a joint heir with him receiving all the promises of Christ's inheritance from God his Father.

The narrow way is to follow baptism up by embracing the New Covenant, offered to you by the New Melchisedec Priesthood of those who now mediate Christ's covenant to you. They offer you the opportunity to become one with Christ by partaking of his flesh in the token of the bread broken for you, and to embrace his life giving Spirit in the token of the Cup of wine that symbolizes his blood. Through his blood you receive everlasting remission of your Sins and every time you drink of it you remember the once only sacrifice the lamb of God made for you. For the blood of Christ ratified the everlasting covenant of your unity with him.

Hebrews 10:10 **By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.**

Hebrews 13:20 **Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.**

Catechism is the means the traditional churches use to prepare young converts for Communion. Unfortunately religious rite has replaced reality, and they are losing ground to Pentecostal sectarianism through Dispensational teaching that denies Christ's covenant and the Kingdom of Heaven. The promised covenant has been overshadowed by a fictional Antichrist Covenant and an earthly kingdom. Theirs is another Gospel that denies the everlasting covenant ratified by Christ in the Last week of Gabriel's time frame of seventy weeks, that includes the advent of the Messiah and the covenant he would confirm in the midst of the last week, commonly known as the last supper. Thus they have dispensed with Christ and have led a generation or more astray.

The spirit behind this movement, twists scripture out of context and although it preaches a Jesus, yet it fails to preach Christ and thus is antichrist in practice and doctrine. True Christianity is founded upon a covenant relationship with God. Without embracing the promised covenant one can have no true relationship with God and his Christ. It is time to re-embrace Christ's covenant and abandon those like Clarence Larkin, one of leading authors of Dispensational teaching, who deny that it was ever made with the elect of Israel in the seventieth week of Gabriel's time frame. This time frame of seventy seven's (weeks) of years was given to Daniel who had seen the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah's writings, which he understood as following the end of the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity. Because the covenant contained the Messianic Promise of an eternal Kingdom, Daniel had set himself to fast and pray for God's mercy upon the apostate nation.

Daniel 9:27 And He (The Messiah) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

Mt 26:28 For this is my blood of the new Covenant (testament), which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Daniel 9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

The true Baptism of the Holy Spirit by Christ followed the ratification of the new Covenant by his blood. Without the New Covenant only apostasy can follow. Those who now claim to be the modern evangelists etc, are building towers of Babel by fleecing others to finance their ambitions of world wide dominance.

Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Truth can only be established by the scripture, and our Gospel must be based upon the old testament Promises and not modern fiction. If one cannot support his Gospel from the scripture he is in gross delusion. Placing gaps in the permanently fixed timeframes of the scripture by mutable men declaring that God stopped his clock for some or other totally unsupported conjecture to make it fit erroneous secular history, is laughable.

1John 5:8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Only the Glorious Holy Spirit can guide you into the truth of preparing the way of the Lord. This he does by calling you to repentance and Baptism in water, and to embrace the blood of the New Covenant. Without one of these three witnesses you are on a broad road that leads to destruction, for all agree that the Lord Jesus Christ is the way the truth and the Life. John the Baptist came in the power of the Spirit to bear witness of Baptismal preparation and of Christ the messenger of the New blood Covenant. The Spirit bore witness to the Law and the Prophets.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Forgiveness following Baptism

The way of Jesus of Nazareth was the predestined way to bear witness of the veracity of the Law and the prophets . He fulfilled the way of the New Covenant, through the Baptism of John to the introduction of the New Covenant at the last supper , followed by his ratification of the covenant by laying down his life as a sacrificial Lamb and sanctifying it as Holy Covenant with his blood. All this culminated in his cry for New Covenant forgiveness for all those who follow in the way of the Lord.

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Christ having made intercession on our behalf , obtains the promise of the New Covenant forgiveness to redeem us from the Curse of the Law which includes wrath upon those who break its precepts and statutes. It was for our sin's and our ignorance of God's way, that Christ laid down his life and took the full brunt of the wages of our sin, which is death. Yet in bearing God's punishment on our behalf, he petitions our forgiveness, in an act of the greatest love mankind has ever witnessed.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

God is a Covenant Keeping God, those outside of the New covenant are beyond any true relationship with God and are destined to suffer his wrath. Their lack of understanding blinds them to the Messenger and the Mediator of the New Covenant. Thinking they are safe in doing things their own way, they forget that we are to do things in God's way. God's unconditional Love of us is bound up within that which he has covenanted to do for us. The New Covenant framework sets the terms and conditions by which God promises to become your God. To embrace God , we need to embrace his glorious everlasting Covenant through the way of Jesus . Our intentions to serve God and mankind can only be deemed true within the New Covenant of God's glorious Grace. Many make a confession of Jesus but fail to embrace Christ's covenant, therefore they fall away in due course and embrace strange gods. Judas walked with Jesus, then sold Jesus for thirty pieces of Silver , he left after the New covenant supper without becoming a partaker of the Covenant. Beyond God's grace this son of Perdition hung himself, when he realized the cost of his betrayal. Today you can make merchandise of a flock , by fleecing them for every cent , build huge Churches and still be out of the way, by not having embraced the New Covenant that was ratified in Christ's blood.

Hebrews 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us

There is a religious view that partaking of communion, is a the modern day way of partaking of a daily sacrifice for the remission of sins. Also that failure to continuously take communion leaves you in a state of sin. This confusion of the tenets of the Law being the only means of forgiveness holds many in bondage to idolatrous worship of the tokens of the Covenant. Therefore some go so far as to advocate multiple rebirths , which requires another regeneration each time. Our redemption is an eternal redemption from the wages of sin, it does not last only until some or other transgression of the law is made. Christ's once only perfect offering has redeemed and sanctified us for eternity.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Our redemption under the New Covenant redeems our spirit for eternity, but our flesh is still in state of Corruption. Many try by religious works to redeem the flesh, performing pilgrimages, fasts, feasts and other such religiosity to cure the discovery of their true nature of being totally depraved. The flesh is in an incurable state which continues until it is dead and buried. The great maxim of the Reformation was Justification by Faith. Many are still blind to this maxim and are trying to work out their own salvation by religious rites. They are continually in a state of uncertainty of their spiritual state, because their faith is in their own efforts to provide a cure for what is incurable. Read Hebrews 10:14 again and see the two little insignificant words “*for ever*” then work out how long your sanctification under the New Covenant lasts. From the first time you partake of the New Covenant in faith and in remembrance of what Christ has done, your sanctification and continuous state of forgiveness last’s for all eternity. Communion then becomes a celebration of the grace of God, and of your eternal unity with Christ, every time you do it in remembrance of what the glorious Messiah of the new covenant has done on your behalf.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing can separate those who have embraced the way of the New Covenant from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. When you stray God still loves you unconditionally, even though you hate yourself for falling short of the mark. You may not meet every religious bigot or zealot’s standard, but you have been made acceptable in Christ.

Ephesians 2:11 ¶ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¶ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

There is an Eternal destiny for those who follow the way of the Lord. Christ’s covenant founded upon the promises to the father’s which contains the promise of a city built without hands. Historically the house of God was the temple in Jerusalem. When the Judgement began at the house of God and was consummated in Ad70 by its total destruction by fire and the uprooting of the stones in fulfillment of Christ’s declaration of the coming apocalypse to the apostates, the children of Israel were left without a city and without a King.

Baptism prepares an Eternal Destiny

Hebrews 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Mathew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. ¶ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

The old city, that once rang with the cries of the prophets proclaiming the promise of the New Kingdom, whose house of God has laid desolate for millennia since the wrath of God fell upon it in its last days under the old covenant. The writer to the Hebrews understood that Jerusalem that was once the Joy of the whole Earth would not stand the test of time. His focus was upon a coming city under the new Covenant that he expounds with his epistle.

Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Just as Moses the Prophetic mediator of the old Covenant Led the Children of Israel through the wilderness on a journey to the Promised Land, so to is Christ our guide to an Eternal City and an Eternal Country. This solar system is subject to the laws of Nature and here there is no eternal Country or an Eternal City. Plate tectonics produce earthquakes due to the movement of the Earth's crust and an earthly Jerusalem will always be subject to its forces.

Acts 16:26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

God has prepared an eternal City that abides forever, a city not made with human hands, for the followers of the way of the Lord. This city is built upon the Chief Corner stone the Lord Jesus Christ the mediator of the new covenant promises. Unwavering faith in the promised Messiah produces the living stones that are built upon the foundations of the apostles and the prophets that proclaimed the New Covenant.

1 Peter 2:4 ¶ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded..

Hebrews 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Dispensational teaching flatly contradicts the scripture, in the presumptuous promise of a Millennial Kingdom and a rebuilt millennial Temple by men in Jerusalem, with an earthly throne for Jesus. The way of Christ was to his father's house and to the throne on his right hand. They have even gone so far as to change the scripture to suit their imaginary scenarios. This is why this author has stuck with the Authorized King James even though the language is archaic in order to avoid their pitfalls.

Acts 7:47 But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? ¶ Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

The building blocks of the new covenant Kingdom are the living stones built upon Christ the stone cut without human hands.

Revelation 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The results of the Great tribulation that commenced when Titus led his forces into Judaea , and the infant church fled the promised land and were scattered into the Roman Empire , having heeded Christ's explicit instruction, ensured the growth of the church.

Mathew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be

There is something the reader must understand when reading this passage , lest he deceive others . Firstly who the audience was. Secondly the setting and the time frame. This passage was recorded for us and was not an instruction to us. The event was something those sitting around Jesus listening to him would experience , thus the time frame was within their own life spans. To think otherwise is to indirectly accuse Christ of being a false prophet.. These words “*When ye therefore shall see*” are an instruction to the infant Church in Ad30 and not the present Church in the twenty first century. Luke expounds the term “Abomination of Desolation” in his record of the same discourse.

Luke 21: 20 ¶ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

The flight from the tribulation produced a numberless multitude of living stones that had embraced the way of the Lord. Firstly they had washed their robes in the Baptism of Repentance , secondly they had embraced the New Covenant in Christ's blood for the remission of their Sins. The multitude at the time of Johns writing was an indefinite figure implying that it was in a continuous state of growth and the final tally had not yet been reached. The foundation of the New Jerusalem had been laid , using the 144000 living stones , the elect remnant of the old covenant made with the progeny of Jacob.

Revelation 21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Mathew 22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

The promise of the Resurrection following Baptism and the embracing of the New Covenant relationship with God our Father through Christ our Mediator is to become as the angels of God. This implies that at our death we shall be glorified. Many today are looking for a mystical Rapture while still alive in their human body. This has been subject to much speculation as to its timing during the past century and some were even convinced it would occur at the beginning of the seventh millennium (2000 AD). This they postulated using six days of a thousand years in length, based upon the historical time span contained in the old testament of approximately 4000 years. Their failure to understand the way of the Lord led to this misnomer. Christ's way is Baptism, the New Covenant, Sacrificial Death, His Burial followed by his Resurrection and Ascension.

John 14:1 ¶ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ¶ And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The final covenant promise of Christ at his return to his disciples after his ascension to his Father's house was a promised return to take them (his disciples) there. In order to get there they would have to follow him through death, burial, and resurrection. This Covenanted promised way which is founded upon baptism for the remission of our sins and our right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven in the Heavens after partaking of the Covenant. Just as our Journey in this life follows the way of the Lord of Glory, so even through death we follow him by faith into his Father's house.

1 Thessalonians 4: 13 ¶ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Our Ascension into heaven as being those that have remained behind, "Then we which are alive and remain", follows after our death and ends the time we remain behind. By failing to understand that the word remain denotes a period of time until the event is fulfilled many ignore it in favor of an erroneous instant ascension as though Paul said "we which are alive shall be caught up together with them". This much favored interpretation that counts the word "remain" as spurious and of no significance is the cause of much delusion. They have never asked why Paul likens our ascension to our faith that Christ died and rose again as the very foundation of the Christian Faith. The Dead in Christ are always first while the remnant mourns our passing.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Paul corroborates this by his statement that anyone alive in a flesh and blood body cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. This is in a passage dealing explicitly with our resurrection after our death. Everything in the Christian is a matter of faith in the Covenant promises of God. We Hope for a glorious resurrection, we receive an earnest (Deposit) of the spirit in order that we might be Glorified in the spirit upon our resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

We triumph over death by being Glorified and immortalized, have been delivered by Christ's defeat of death because we are part of his body.

1 Corinthians 15: 35 ¶ But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

It is absolute foolishness to believe you will not pass through death and be alive in a flesh and blood body in the resurrection (Rapture). Our Death contains the hope of our resurrection, and that we see as having started when we are baptized into Christ's death.

1Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Death is obligatory to every member of the human race, resurrection is the reward of Faith in Christ. I once believed the delusion of the dispensationalists who preached a Rapture when cars would be careening down the road because the drivers vanished into thin air. Now that all their speculation and fear they instill has come to naught, in light of a contextual study of the scripture instead of isolated snippets I have a glorious hope.

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

1Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Baptism is the first step towards this hope of entering the Glory of God our Saviour, through his everlasting Covenant of Grace and Truth and the promise of the resurrection when we die. Every Day Christ's heavenly Kingdom grows as we join the numberless multitude as a result of the great tribulation poured out upon the apostate worldly kingdom of Israel in the 1260 days that resulted in the destruction of Babylon the Mother of Harlots, by the Roman Rod of Iron in Christ's hand which desolated Herod's Temple and trod his enemies under foot in the days of the vengeance of our God and Saviour. Thank God I was left behind in my forefathers loins to one day join the Choirs of Angels in the heavenly host to sing his praise and glory.

To God be the Glory.
Amen.

Note: If anyone would desire to understand the Apocalypse and the Return of Christ at the Destruction of Jerusalem in the period AD66-AD70, I recommend they read the "The Parousia" by James Stuart Russell (1878) available on the Internet. This treatise covers in detail the fulfilled Return of Christ in the Life time of his Disciples according to his promise "Behold I Come quickly" made to the infant Church prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The scope of this treatise of my own is primarily around an understanding as to why we baptize.

Additional notes from other sources.

*Extracted From:
A Commentary on the New Testament*

from the Talmud and Hebraica

John Lightfoot

(1602-1675)

Matthew 24:27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

[For as the lightning, &c.] To discover clearly the sense of this and the following clauses, those two things must be observed which we have formerly given notice of:—

1. That the destruction of Jerusalem is very frequently expressed in Scripture as if it were the destruction of the whole world, #De 32:22; "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell" (the discourse there is about the wrath of God consuming that people; see verses 20,21), "and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." #Jer 4:23; "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light," &c. The discourse there also is concerning the destruction of that nation, #Isa 65:17; "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered," &c. And more passages of this sort among the prophets. According to this sense, Christ speaks in this place; and Peter speaks in his Second Epistle, third chapter; and John, in the sixth of the Revelation; and Paul, #2Co 5:17, &c.

2. That Christ's taking vengeance of that exceeding wicked nation is called Christ's "coming in glory," and his "coming in the clouds," #Da 7. It is also called, "the day of the Lord." See #Ps 1:4 Mal 3:1,2, &c.; #Joe 2:31 Mt 16:28 Re 1:7, &c. See what we have said on chapter 12:20; 19:28.

The meaning, therefore, of the words before us is this: "While they shall falsely say, that Christ is to be seen here or there: 'Behold, he is in the desert,' one shall say; another, 'Behold, he is in the secret chambers': he himself shall come, like lightning, with sudden and altogether unexpected vengeance: they shall meet him whom they could not find; they shall find him whom they sought, but quite another than what they looked for."

Mathew 24:28. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

[For wheresoever the carcase is, &c.] I wonder any can understand these words of pious men flying to Christ, when the discourse here is of quite a different thing: they are thus connected to the foregoing: Christ shall be revealed with a sudden vengeance; for when God shall cast off the city and people, grown ripe for destruction, like a carcase thrown out, the Roman soldiers, like eagles, shall straight fly to it with their eagles (ensigns) to tear and devour it. And to this also agrees the answer of Christ, #Lu 17:37; when, after the same words that are spoke here in this chapter, it was inquired, "Where, Lord?" he answered, "Wheresoever the body is," &c.; silently hinting thus much, that Jerusalem, and that wicked nation which he described through the whole chapter, would be the carcase, to which the greedy and devouring eagles would fly to prey upon it.

Mathew 28:19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

[Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c.] I. The enclosure is now thrown down, whereby the apostles were kept in from preaching the gospel to all the Gentiles, #Mt 10:5. For, first, the Jews had now lost their privilege, nor were they henceforward to be counted a peculiar people; nay, they were now become "Lo-ammi." They had exceeded the heathens in sinning, they had slighted, trampled upon, and crucified the Creator himself, appearing visibly before their eyes in human flesh; while the heathens had only conceived amiss of the Creator, whom they neither had seen nor could see, and thereby fallen to worship the creature. Secondly, Christ had now by his blood paid a price for the heathens also. Thirdly, he had overcome Satan, who held them captive. Fourthly, he had taken away the wall of partition: and fifthly, had exhibited an infinite righteousness.

II. Make disciples. Bring them in by baptism, that they may be taught. They are very much out, who from these words cry down infant-baptism, and assert that it is necessary for those that are to be baptized to be taught before they are baptized.

1. Observe the words here, make disciples; and then after, teaching, in the twentieth verse.
2. Among the Jews, and also with us, and in all nations, those are made disciples that they may be taught. A certain heathen came to the great Hillel, and saith, Make me a proselyte, that thou mayest teach me. He was first to be proselyted, and then to be taught. Thus first, make them disciples by baptism; and then, teach them to observe all things, &c.

III. Baptizing. There are divers ends of baptism:—

1. According to the nature of a sacrament it visibly teacheth invisible things, that is, the washing of us from all our pollutions by the blood of Christ, and by the cleansing of grace, #Eze 36:25
2. According to the nature of a sacrament, it is a seal of divine truth. So circumcision is called, #Ro 4:11; "And he received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith," &c. So the Jews, when they circumcised their children, gave this very title to circumcision. The words used when a child was circumcised you have in their Talmud. Among other things, he who is to bless the action saith thus, "Blessed be he who sanctified him that was beloved from the womb, and set a sign in his flesh, and sealed his children with the sign of the holy covenant," &c.

But in what sense are sacraments to be called seals? Not that they seal (or confirm) to the receiver his righteousness; but that they seal the divine truth of the covenant and promise. Thus the apostle calls circumcision 'the seal of the righteousness of faith': that is, it is the seal of this truth and doctrine, that 'justification is by faith,' which righteousness Abraham had when he was yet uncircumcised. And that is the way whereby sacraments confirm faith, namely, because they do doctrinally exhibit the invisible things of the covenant; and, like seals, do by divine appointment sign the doctrine and truth of the covenant.

3. According to the nature of a sacrament, it obligeth the receivers to the terms of the covenant: for as the covenant itself is of mutual obligation between God and man; so the sacraments, the seals of the covenant, are of like obligation.
4. According to its nature, it is an introductory into the visible church. And,
5. It is a distinguishing sign between a Christian and no Christian, namely, between those who acknowledge and profess Christ, and Jews, Turks, and Pagans, who do not acknowledge him. Disciple all nations, baptizing. When they are under baptism, they are no longer under heathenism; and this sacrament puts a difference between those who are under the discipleship of Christ, and those who are not.
6. Baptism also brings its privilege along with it, while it opens the way to a partaking of holy things in the church, and placeth the baptized within the church, over which God exerciseth a more singular providence than over those that are out of the church.

And now, from what hath been said, let us argue a little in behalf of infant-baptism. Omitting that argument which is commonly raised from the words before us, namely, that when Christ had commanded to baptize all nations, infants also are to be taken in as parts of the family, these few things may be observed:

I. Baptism, as a sacrament, is a seal of the covenant. And why, I pray, may not this seal be set on infants? The seal of divine truth hath sometimes been set upon inanimate things, and that by God's appointment.

The bow in the cloud is a seal of the covenant: the law engraven on the altar, #Jos 8, was a seal of the covenant. The blood sprinkled on the twelve pillars that were set up to represent the twelve tribes was a seal and bond of the covenant, #Ex 24. And now tell me, why are not infants capable, in like manner, of such a sealing? They were capable heretofore of circumcision; and our infants have an equal capacity. The sacrament doth not lose this its end, through the indisposition of the receiver. Peter and Paul, apostles, were baptized: their baptism, according to its nature, sealed to them the truth of God in his promises concerning the washing away of sins, &c. And they, from this doctrinal virtue of the sacrament, received confirmation of their faith. So also Judas and Simon Magus, hypocrites, wicked men, were baptized: did not their baptism, according to the nature of it, seal this doctrine and truth, "that there as a washing away of sins?" It did not, indeed, seal the thing itself to them; nor was it at all a sign to them of the 'washing away' of theirs: but baptism doth in itself seal this doctrine. You will grant that this axiom is most true, "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith." And is not this equally true? Esau, Ahab, Ahaz, received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith: is not circumcision the same to all? Did not circumcision, to whomsoever it was administered, sign and seal this truth, that there 'was a righteousness of faith'? The sacrament hath a sealing virtue in itself, that doth not depend on the disposition of the receiver.

II. Baptism, as a sacrament, is an obligation. But now infants are capable of being obliged. Heirs are sometimes obliged by their parents, though they are not yet born: see also #De 29:11,15. For that to which any one is obliged obtains a right to oblige from the equity of the thing, and not from the apprehension of the person obliged. The law is imposed upon all under this penalty, "Cursed be every one that doth not continue in all," &c. It is ill arguing from hence, that a man hath power to perform the law; but the equity of the thing itself is very well argued hence. Our duty obligeth us to every thing which the law commands; but we cannot perform the least tittle of it.

III. An infant is capable of privileges, as well as an old man; and baptism is privilegial. An infant hath been crowned king in his cradle: an infant may be made free who is born a slave. The Gemarists speak very well in this matter; "Rab Houna saith, They baptize an infant proselyte by the command of the bench." Upon what is this grounded? On this, that baptism becomes a privilege to him. And they may endow an absent person with a privilege: or they may bestow a privilege upon one, though he be ignorant of it. Tell me then, why an infant is not capable of being brought into the visible church, and of receiving the distinguishing sign between a Christian and a heathen, as well as a grown person.

IV. One may add, that an infant is part of his parent: upon this account, #Ge 17:14, an infant is to be cut off if he be not circumcised, when, indeed, the fault is his parents'; because thus the parents are punished in a part of themselves, by the cutting off of their child. And hence is that of #Ex 20:5, "Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children," because children are a part of their fathers, &c. From hence ariseth also a natural reason of infant-baptism: the infants of baptized parents are to be baptized, because they are part of them, and that the whole parents may be baptized. And upon this account they used of old, with good reason, to baptize the whole family, with the master of it.

[In the name of the Father, &c.] I. Christ commands them to go and baptize the nations; but how much time was past before such a journey was taken! And when the time was now come that this work should be begun, Peter doth not enter upon it without a previous admonition given him from heaven. And this was occasioned hereby, that, according to the command of Christ, the gospel was first to be preached to Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

II. He commands them to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: but among the Jews they baptized only in the name of Jesus; which we have observed before, from #Ac 2:38,8:16,19:5. For this reason, that thus the baptizers might assert, and the baptized confess, Jesus to be the true Messiah; which was chiefly controverted by the Jews.

Of the same nature is that apostolic blessing, "Grace and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Where then is the Holy Ghost? He is not excluded, however he be not named. The Jews did more easily consent to the Spirit of the Messiah, which they very much celebrate, than to the person of the Messiah. Above all others, they deny and abjure Jesus of Nazareth. It belonged to the apostles, therefore,

the more earnestly to assert Jesus (to be the Messiah), by how much the more vehemently they opposed him: which being once cleared, the acknowledging of the Spirit of Christ would be introduced without delay or scruple. Moses in #Ex 6:14 going about to reckon up all the tribes of Israel, goes no further than the tribe of Levi only; and takes up with that to which his business and story at that present related. In like manner the apostles, for the present, baptize in the name of Jesus, bless in the name of the Father and of Jesus, that thereby they might more firmly establish the doctrine of Jesus, which met with such sharp and virulent opposition; which doctrine being established among them, they would soon agree about the Holy Ghost.

III. Among the Jews, the controversy was about the true Messiah; among the Gentiles, about the true God; it was, therefore, proper among the Jews to baptize in the name of Jesus, that he might be vindicated to be the true Messiah; among the Gentiles, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that they might be hereby instructed in the doctrine of the true God. Hear this, O Arian and Socinian!

IV. The Jews baptized proselytes into the name of the Father, that is, into the profession of God, whom they called by the name of Father. The apostles baptize the Jews into the name of Jesus, the Son: and the Gentiles, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

V. The Father hath revealed himself in the old covenant, the Son in the new; in human flesh, by his miracles, doctrine, resurrection, and ascension; the Holy Ghost, in his gifts and miracles. Thus the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity grew by degrees to full maturity: for the arriving at the acknowledgment of which it was incumbent upon all who professed the true God to be three in one to be baptized into his name.

Mark 13:32. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

[But of that day and hour knoweth no man.] Of what day and hour? That the discourse is of the day of the destruction of Jerusalem is so evident, both by the disciples' question, and by the whole thread of Christ's discourse, that it is a wonder any should understand these words of the day and hour of the last judgment.

Two things are demanded of our Saviour, verse 4: the one is, "When shall these things be, that one stone shall not be left upon another?" And the second is, "What shall be the sign of this consummation?" To the latter he answereth throughout the whole chapter hitherto: to the former in the present words. He had said, indeed, in the verse before, "Heaven and earth shall pass away," &c.; not for resolution to the question propounded (for there was no inquiry at all concerning the dissolution of heaven and earth), but for confirmation of the truth of the thing which he had related. As though he had said, "Ye ask when such an overthrow of the Temple shall happen; when it shall be, and what shall be the signs of it. I answer, These and those, and the other signs shall go before it; and these my words of the thing itself to come to pass, and of the signs going before, are firmer than heaven and earth itself. But whereas ye inquire of the precise time, that is not to be inquired after; for of that day and hour knoweth no man."

We cannot but remember here, that even among the beholders of the destruction of the Temple there is a difference concerning the day of the destruction; that that day and hour was so little known before the event, that even after the event, they who saw the flames disagreed among themselves concerning the day. Josephus, an eyewitness, saw the burning of the Temple, and he ascribed it to the tenth day of the month Ab or Lous. For thus he; "The Temple perished the tenth day of the month Lous (or August), a day fatal to the Temple, as having been on that day consumed in flames by the king of Babylon." Rabban Jochanan Ben Zaccai saw the same conflagration; and he, together with the whole Jewish nation, ascribes it to the ninth day of that month, not the tenth; yet so that he saith, "If I had not lived in that age I had not judged it but to have happened on the tenth day." For as the Gloss upon Maimonides writes, "It was the evening when they set fire to it, and the Temple burnt until sunset the tenth day. In the Jerusalem Talmud, therefore, Rabbi and R. Joshua Ben Levi fasted the ninth and tenth days." See also the tract Bab. Taanith.

[Neither the angels.] "'For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come,' #Isa 63:4. What means 'the day of vengeance is in mine heart?' R. Jochanan saith, I have revealed it to my

heart, to my members I have not revealed it. R. Simeon Ben Lachish saith, I have revealed it to my heart, but to the ministering angels I have not revealed it." And Jalkut on that place thus: My heart reveals it not to my mouth; to whom should my mouth reveal it?

[Nor the Son.] Neither the angels, nor the Messiah. For in that sense the word Son, is to be taken in this place and elsewhere very often: as in that passage, #Joh 5:19, "The Son," that is, the Messiah, "can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do": verse 20, "The Father loveth the Messiah," &c: verse 26, "He hath given to the Messiah to have life in himself," &c. And that the word Son is to be rendered in this sense, appears from verse 27; "He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." Observe that, "because he is the Son of man."

I. It is one thing to understand "the Son of God" barely and abstractly for the second person in the Holy Trinity; another to understand him for the Messiah, or that second person incarnate. To say that the second person in the Trinity knows not something is blasphemous; to say so of the Messiah, is not so, who, nevertheless, was the same with the second person in the Trinity: for although the second person, abstractly considered according to his mere Deity, was co-equal with the Father, co-omnipotent, co-omniscient, co-eternal with him, &c.; yet Messiah, who was God-man, considered as Messiah, was a servant and a messenger of the Father, and received commands and authority from the Father. And those expressions, "The Son can do nothing of himself," &c. will not in the least serve the Arian's turn; if you take them in this sense, which you must necessarily do; "Messiah can do nothing of himself, because he is a servant and a deputy."

II. We must distinguish between the excellences and perfections of Christ, which flowed from the hypostatical union of the natures, and those which flowed from the donation and anointing of the Holy Spirit. From the hypostatical union of the natures flowed the infinite dignity of his person, his impeccability, his infinite self-sufficiency to perform the law, and to satisfy the divine justice. From the anointing of the Spirit flowed his power of miracles, his foreknowledge of things to come, and all kind of knowledge of evangelic mysteries. Those rendered him a fit and perfect Redeemer; these a fit and perfect Minister of the gospel.

Now, therefore, the foreknowledge of things to come, of which the discourse here is, is to be numbered among those things which flowed from the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and from immediate revelation; not from the hypostatic union of the natures. So that those things which were revealed by Christ to his church, he had them from the revelation of the Spirit, not from that union. Nor is it any derogation or detraction from the dignity of his person, that he saith, 'He knew not that day and hour of the destruction of Jerusalem'; yea, it excellently agrees with his office and deputation, who, being the Father's servant, messenger, and minister, followed the orders of the Father, and obeyed him in all things. "The Son knoweth not," that is, it is not revealed to him from the Father to reveal to the church. #Re 1:1, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him."

We omit inquiring concerning the knowledge of Christ, being now raised from death: whether, and how far, it exceeded his knowledge, while yet he conversed on earth. It is without doubt, that, being now raised from the dead, he merited all kind of revelation; see #Re 5:9, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain," &c. and that he, conversing on earth before his death, acted with the vigour of the Holy Spirit and of that unspeakable holiness which flowed from the union of the human nature with the divine, the divine nature, in the meantime, suspending its infinite activity of omnipotence. So that Christ might work miracles, and know things to come, in the same manner as the prophets also did, namely, by the Holy Ghost, but in a larger measure; and might overcome the devil not so much by the omnipotence of the divine nature, as by the infinite holiness of his person, and of his obedience. So that if you either look upon him as the minister and servant of God; or if you look upon the constitution, as I may so call it, and condition of his person, these words of his, "Of that day and hour knoweth not the Son also," carry nothing of incongruity along with them; yea, do excellently speak out his substitution as a servant, and the constitution of his person as God-man.

The reason why the divine wisdom would have the time of the destruction of Jerusalem so concealed, is well known to itself; but by men, since the time of it was unsearchable, the reason certainly is not easy to

be searched. We may conjecture that the time was hid, partly, lest the godly might be terrified with the sound of it, as #2Th 2:2; partly, that the ungodly, and those that would be secure, might be taken in the snares of their own security, as #Mt 24:38. But let secret things belong to God.