

Baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus

Water, the Holy Ghost, and the New Testament's Own Idiom for the New Birth, Traced Through Acts

A study of every baptism named in the book of Acts, settling what 'baptized with the Holy Ghost' and 'baptized in the name of Jesus Christ' each name, with the weight of every argument stated and two accounts held open.

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Every scripture quoted in full across this study, in canonical order, with the chapter and section where it appears.

Introduction

A. Why This Study Exists

Acts 1 and 2 use the single word "baptize" in ways that, read quickly, can sound like they contradict each other. John the Baptist baptized in water, a baptism of repentance he preached throughout his own ministry in the wilderness of Judaea. Jesus, in His last recorded words to the apostles before the ascension, promises something else entirely: a baptism "with the Holy Ghost," arriving "not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). Then, on the very day that promise is fulfilled, Peter turns to a crowd gathered at the temple and issues a charge that uses neither of those two phrases: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). Three baptisms, in three verses, inside the span of a single chapter and a half of one book — and the same English word, "baptize," used to translate every one of them.

This study exists to work out, directly from the text, whether those three are three names for one reality or three genuinely different things sharing one English word. Three specific questions govern everything that follows. First, what did John's own baptism actually accomplish, and why does scripture itself call the baptism that replaced it the greater of the two? Second, what does it mean, precisely, to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost" — and did that happen once, or does it recur every time someone is born again? Third, once Pentecost has come and gone, when the book of Acts goes on to describe someone as baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" or "in the name of the Lord Jesus," is water baptism still what is being described — carried forward from John's own ministry, now performed under a new name — or has the phrase itself changed to name a different reality altogether: the new birth? Every chapter that follows answers one part of that question, taken up in the same order the book of Acts itself raises it.

Weighing it: Framing only — takes no side on whether the idiom names the new birth or water.

B. The Case for Water, Stated at Full Strength

The reading this study will argue against is not a careless one, and it is not held only by the inattentive. It is the reading almost the whole church has held for almost the whole of its history, and it has real texts behind it. Before any of it is answered, it should be stated the way its own advocates would state it, in its own emphases and with its own best verses.

1. The ordinary meaning of the word. In the New Testament "baptize" denotes a water rite far more often than anything else, and in every undisputed occurrence in Acts where the element is actually named, the element is water. A reading that removes water from the word in the disputed cases is asking the word to do something unusual, and the burden falls on the one asking.

2. **Acts 2:38's own borrowed phrase.** Peter says "be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**." That closing phrase is not new. It is word for word the phrase scripture attaches to John's plainly-water baptism: "the baptism of repentance **for the remission of sins**" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). If Peter meant something entirely unlike John's rite, he chose a strange way to say so.

3. **Acts 2:41 reports the baptism, and it is a mass baptism.** "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Three thousand people, on one day, described as baptized. Nothing in the verse names an element, and nothing in it carries the idiom this study will trace — but a mass event of that kind is exactly what a water rite looks like.

4. **Acts 10:47 names water out loud.** "Can any man forbid **water**, that these should not be baptized?" The very next verse says Peter "commanded them to be baptized." The plainest reading of two consecutive verses is that the water Peter named in the first was used in the second.

5. **Water baptisms plainly continue after Pentecost.** The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-38), Lydia (16:15), and the Philippian jailer (16:33) are all baptized in water well inside the period this study calls the Grace administration. This study concedes all three (Chapter 5).

6. **Paul baptized people himself.** "I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius... And I baptized also the household of Stephanas" (1 Corinthians 1:14, 16). Whatever Paul thought of the rite's importance, he performed it, on named people, years after Pentecost.

7. **Acts 22:16.** Ananias to Saul: "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Baptism, sins washed away, and the Lord's name, in one sentence.

8. **Matthew 28:19.** The Great Commission commands baptizing "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" — a formula built on the very words "in the name of," and read as water by the church from its earliest surviving records.

9. **Acts 19:3-5.** Paul asks the Ephesian disciples "Unto what then were ye baptized?" and is told "Unto John's baptism" — which is water beyond dispute. Verse 5 then says they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The natural reading of that sequence is a second baptism replacing a deficient first one.

Points 5, 6 and 7 are conceded by this study outright. Point 4 is answered in Chapter 4 §B, point 3 in Chapter 3 §D, point 9 in Chapter 4 §D, and point 8 in Chapter 6 §E, which answers its formula and leaves its water question standing. Point 2 is conceded in Chapter 3 §C. A reader who finds the answers unpersuasive should know that the arguments are rated accordingly below rather than asserted past.

Weighing it: Opposing case, stated — this section argues neither side; it sets out the case for water at full strength. Points 5, 6 and 7 are conceded outright below; the rest are answered, and every answer is rated where it is given.

C. The Settled Position, Stated Plainly Before the Argument

"Baptized with the Holy Ghost" and "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [the Lord Jesus, the Lord]" are two different phrases, naming two different things. The first occurs exactly six times in scripture and names one unrepeated event: the initial outpouring of the gift of holy spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The second is the New Testament's own new idiom — introduced for the first time at Acts 2:38, and never once used before that verse — for the new birth itself: receiving the gift of holy spirit by confessing Jesus as Lord and believing God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9-10), rather than a report that water was applied to a person's body.

That is the position, and it is offered as a **reasonable inference**, not as a conclusion no careful reader could reach otherwise. It rests on two things that are strong and several that are not. What is strong: the wording at Acts 2:38 is genuinely new, and the verb "baptize" genuinely does not supply its own element (Chapter 3); and at Cornelius's household the narrative proposes water, never reports it applied, and Peter's own later defense under direct challenge never mentions it (Chapter 4 §B). What is weaker than an earlier version of this study claimed: the four verses carrying the idiom do not all carry it in the same Greek, and two of the four accounts are genuinely open.

This study also draws two further lines plainly, so that its conclusion is not mistaken for a claim it does not make. First, a number of baptisms recorded after Pentecost carry none of this idiom at all — the Ethiopian eunuch on the desert road, Lydia and her household at Philippi, the Philippian jailer, and the converts Paul names as baptized by his own hand at Corinth — and this study reads every one of them exactly as written: genuine, literal, historical water baptisms, which nothing here explains away. Second, Samaria (Acts 8:16) and Ephesus (Acts 19:5) are both held open. An earlier version of this study treated Samaria as settled and Ephesus as hard; the two verses turn out to be word for word identical in Greek, and that distinction could not survive (Chapter 3 §B, Chapter 4 §A, §D).

Weighing it: Summary only — states the position that the idiom names the new birth, offered as a reasonable inference. Each argument behind it is weighed where it is made, and Appendix A collects them all.

D. How This Study Weighs Its Arguments

This library's standing method already requires every claim to be flagged for its epistemic status: direct scriptural statement, constructed inference, or extra-biblical corroboration. This study extends that with a five-step scale, applied to every argument it makes.

Direct statement. Scripture says it in so many words. The only question is what the words mean.

Strong inference. It follows closely from what scripture says. An alternative reading exists but has to strain against the text to get there.

Reasonable inference. It is the more natural reading of the evidence, but an honest reader working carefully can take it the other way without doing violence to anything.

Corroboration only. It is consistent with this position, but would be roughly as consistent with the opposite position, so it adds confidence without adding proof. It may be stated; it may not be leaned on.

Neutral. It is commonly cited by one side or the other and genuinely settles nothing.

Every section below ends with a **Weighing it** note. Its bold opening line gives the rating and says which way the section points: toward the new-birth reading, toward the water reading, or toward neither. The rest of the note names what the opposing reading can fairly answer. Appendix A collects all of it in one table, including the arguments this version withdrew, and Chapter 7 §B names the three findings that would overturn the position outright.

E. Method

Same method as every study in this library (*Research-Method.md*): the King James Version as the base text, cross-references tracked rather than merely mentioned in passing, Greek word studies run against Strong's and Thayer's, differing views shown honestly rather than smoothed over, and every claim flagged for its own epistemic status. Per the "source authority vs. source usefulness" principle already stated in *Research-Method.md*, the *Living in God's Power* series and Victor Paul Wierwille's own framework are treated here exactly as this library treats them everywhere else: as a standing hermeneutical authority on holy spirit, tongues, and the seven administrations, cited directly and by name wherever its own argument is used, and checked, not merely assumed, against the specific texts this study addresses.

Two disciplines were added in this version, both because an earlier version failed at them. Greek constructions are now verified element by element, prepositions included, before two verses are called parallel — a rule that cost this study one of its own conclusions (Chapter 3 §B). And where a word study is offered, the word's other occurrences in the same book are checked first — a rule that cost this study another (Chapter 4 §B).

Weighing it: Method, not argument — bears no weight either way on whether the idiom names the new birth or water.

Chapter 1 — Two Baptisms Named at the Threshold (Acts 1:5)

A. What John's Own Baptism Was

Before Acts 1:5 draws its contrast, the Gospels have already spent three of their own accounts describing exactly what John's baptism was. John preached it in the wilderness of Judaea, along the Jordan, as "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) — a real, physical immersion in water, performed on people who came to him confessing what they had done wrong. Matthew records the same crowds "confessing their sins" as they came out to him (Matthew 3:6). It was not a private rite reserved for a small circle of disciples; it was public, and it drew crowds from Jerusalem, all Judaea, and the region around the Jordan (Matthew 3:5). John's own preaching made its purpose explicit: it prepared a heart for someone still to come, someone John himself named as "mightier than I" (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16).

Even Jesus Himself came to John to be baptized (Matthew 3:13-17). John's own reaction is worth pausing over: he "forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:14) — John recognized immediately that the one standing in front of him had no sin of His own to repent of, the very thing his baptism was for. Jesus answers only that it is fitting "to fulfil all righteousness" (v.15), and nowhere does the text record Him confessing sin the way the crowds around Him did. John's baptism, in other words, was a rite suited to those under the Law who needed to repent and be made ready for the Messiah's arrival. It was real, it was commanded, and it accomplished exactly what it was for — but it was, by its own stated purpose, preparatory. It pointed forward to someone else, and to something else John himself said he could not give.

Weighing it: Direct statement — establishes what John's baptism was, and bears no weight either way on what the later idiom names. Everything in this section is what the Gospels say in so many words. Nothing here yet distinguishes John's baptism from anything that followed it; that is the next section's work.

B. The Contrast Itself

Acts 1:5 *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

The verse names two baptisms and sets them against each other by their own different elements — water, and the Holy Ghost — rather than offering two names for the same thing. Every Gospel records John himself drawing the identical contrast, well before Acts 1 was ever written:

Matthew 3:11 — *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."*

Mark 1:8 — *"I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."*

Luke 3:16 — *"I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."*

John 1:33 — *"I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."*

Four separate records, written by four different men for four different audiences, state the identical contrast. Matthew and Luke both add a phrase the other two do not include — "and with fire" — tied in both Gospels to the same discourse's picture of chaff burned "with fire unquenchable" (Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17), a picture of a coming judgment rather than a description of the gift given at Pentecost (compare Malachi 4:1). This study does not attempt to unfold that separate line of prophecy here; its narrower point in citing Matthew and Luke together is only that both writers record the water/Spirit contrast in the very same breath as that further note, without ever confusing the one for the other.

One thing should be said plainly that an earlier version of this study got wrong. It claimed Acts 1:5 was the last time this company heard the word "baptize" before Acts 2:38. It was not: Peter uses the noun seventeen verses later, in the same chapter, to the same men — "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us" (Acts 1:22). The word did not go quiet between the promise and its fulfillment, and nothing in this study's argument needed it to.

This library's own *Living in God's Power* series (Part V, Hour 2) holds the fourfold repetition as deliberate, not accidental: "Do you think God wants us to know something?" John's water baptism was a baptism of repentance — sins confessed, forgiveness signified by water applied to the body. It was real, and scripture nowhere calls it a false or empty rite. But it belonged to what was about to be replaced: "John's water baptism was replaced by the baptism of the holy spirit on the Day of Pentecost." Not a value judgment scripture states outright as a rebuke of John, but a sequence scripture does state outright: water first, superseded by spirit, and the superseding element named every single time as the one still to come, "not many days hence."

Weighing it: Direct statement, and the firmest ground in this study — points to the new-birth reading by establishing that scripture itself distinguishes two baptisms by their elements. That five witnesses draw the same water/Spirit contrast is what the texts say. What this does not yet establish is that any particular later verse names the second rather than the first; the opposing reading grants the contrast entirely and simply holds that water continued alongside. That this section is a real distinction, not a settled application of it, is the whole burden of Chapters 3 and 4.

C. Old Testament Roots of the Promise

The promise itself did not begin with John or with Jesus. Israel's own prophets had already joined the picture of a coming cleansing to the deeper picture of God's own spirit given from within, long before John ever stood in the Jordan:

Ezekiel 36:25-27 — *"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new*

spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Ezekiel's own water here is figurative language for cleansing, not a literal rite scripture anywhere commands administered under this specific promise; what actually accomplishes what Ezekiel describes is not water at all but God's own spirit, poured out and put within a person. Joel's own oracle — the very passage Peter quotes in full at Pentecost itself (Acts 2:16-21) — promises the same outpouring directly, and names no baptismal water anywhere in it: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). By the time John stands at the Jordan calling Israel to repentance, the promise the nation had been waiting for was already understood, from her own prophets, as a giving of God's own spirit — not a repeated washing performed again and again. John's own baptism could ready a heart to receive that gift when it finally came; it could not itself be the gift.

Weighing it: Corroboration only — consistent with the new-birth reading, but roughly as consistent with the water reading. Ezekiel 36:25 puts water and spirit in the same promise rather than setting them against each other, and a reader who takes the sprinkled water there as prefiguring a real rite is not straining the verse. This section shows the promise was always about God's spirit; it does not show what any New Testament baptism verse names, and it is not leaned on below.

In Short

John baptized people in water as a real, visible sign that they had turned from their sin — necessary in its own day, but always described, by John himself and by every Gospel writer, as pointing forward to something greater still to come. What Jesus promised in its place was not more water, or better water, but an entirely different kind of baptism: the Holy Ghost itself, God's own spirit given to a person from within, exactly the gift Israel's own prophets had already promised long before John was born. Acts 1:5 draws that line on purpose, and every Gospel records John drawing it the very same way. From this point forward, the question this study keeps asking, chapter by chapter, is simple: whenever scripture goes on to say that someone was "baptized," which of these two things — water, or the Holy Ghost — is actually being named?

Chapter 2 — "Baptized with the Holy Ghost": Six Occurrences, One Event

A. Running the Phrase to Its Full Occurrence List

Rather than settle the meaning of a phrase from a single verse taken on its own, this study runs "baptized with the Holy Ghost" to every place it occurs in scripture — its full occurrence list — before drawing any conclusion. The phrase, in these words, occurs exactly six times:

Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33 — the four Gospel records already quoted in Chapter 1, each one spoken in advance of the event itself, as a promise still to be fulfilled.

Acts 1:5 — *"ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" — Jesus' own restatement of the same promise, spoken just before His ascension, still in advance of the event.*

Acts 11:16 — *"Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" — Peter, years later, recalling Acts 1:5 word for word while defending his own ministry at Cornelius's household to the church at Jerusalem.*

Living in God's Power (Part V, Hour 2) states the finding plainly: "all six uses of the phrase, 'baptized with the holy ghost,' refer to what happened in Acts 2:1-4 'when the Day of Pentecost was fully come.'" The phrase never recurs in this wording anywhere else — not in Acts 8's account of Samaria, not in Acts 10's account of Cornelius's household, not in Acts 19's account of the disciples at Ephesus, and not once in any of the letters written afterward to instruct believers in ordinary Christian living. Four of the six are promises before the fact and two are retrospective references to the same promise; not one of the six is a description of anything happening after Acts 2.

Weighing it: Direct statement on the count, strong inference on what the six name — points to the new-birth reading. That the phrase occurs six times in these words and that every one of them looks to Pentecost is checkable and holds. The opposing reading's fair answer is that a count of one English phrase is a fragile thing to build on: §C below takes up the text that makes that answer serious.

B. What Actually Happened, and What the Phrase Names

What the phrase names is a specific, historical, one-time event, described in the verses immediately following Acts 1:5:

Acts 2:1-4 — *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

"Fully come" (Acts 2:1) renders a verb meaning completed or fulfilled — arrived in its own fulness, not partially or provisionally. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is what happened at that one arrival: the initial, unrepeated outpouring of God's own gift, poured out on the company gathered that day, opening what this library's own *Seven Administrations* study names the Grace administration (Chapter 6 below traces this placement directly). J. Edwin Hartill's definition of baptism — being "introduced into a new sphere of service" (*Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics*, Zondervan, p. 28) — fits the event exactly: those present that day were introduced, at that single moment, into an entirely new administration none of them, nor anyone born before them, had ever yet stood inside.

Who "they" were is worth stating rather than leaving vague, since this study's own source is more specific than its own text: *Living in God's Power* speaks of "the original outpouring of the holy spirit upon the 12 apostles," while Acts 2:1 says only "they were all with one accord in one place," and the nearest antecedent company named is the hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15. This study does not need the

question settled and does not settle it. Nothing below turns on whether the number was twelve or a hundred and twenty.

This is also, as a distinct but closely related point, not a doctrine of two separate, sequential works of grace laid one on top of the other. *Living in God's Power* states this directly and by name, addressing a teaching some hold to this day: "There are not two baptisms like some people teach. Some groups teach that you get born again, then you have to have a second work of grace and get baptized with the holy spirit which is usually indicated by their being able to speak in tongues." Against that teaching, the same source points directly to Ephesians 4:5:

■ **Ephesians 4:5** *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*

Not two baptisms — one. "That one baptism is the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, which is the new birth."

Weighing it: Direct statement on the event, reasonable inference on Ephesians 4:5 — points to the new-birth reading. Acts 2:1-4 says what it says. Ephesians 4:5 is a different matter: "one baptism" identifies neither which baptism nor against what it is being counted, and the opposing reading answers, not unreasonably, that Paul's "one" is set against factional baptisms (1 Corinthians 1:13) rather than against water. Hartill's definition is an outside source's framing, not a scriptural statement, and is corroboration only.

C. The Text That Has To Be Answered: 1 Corinthians 12:13

A count of six occurrences invites an obvious objection, and an earlier version of this study did not state it. There is a seventh text in which believers generally — not one company on one day — are said to be baptized, with the Spirit named:

■ **1 Corinthians 12:13** — *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

This is the standard text for the view that Spirit-baptism is the common possession of every believer rather than a single dated event, and it has to be met rather than passed over. Two things can be said, and the second matters more than the first.

The first is a point of wording, and it is narrow. The Greek here is not the phrase Chapter 2 §A counted. It reads *en henī pneumati... ebaptisthēmen eis hen sōma* — "in one Spirit... we were baptized into one body." The phrase this chapter traced is "baptized with the Holy Ghost"; this is "baptized into one body," with the Spirit named as the sphere or the agent rather than as the thing one is baptized into. The six-occurrence count survives, but only as a count of one specific form of words, which is a smaller claim than it may have appeared.

The second is the point worth having. On any reading, 1 Corinthians 12:13 is a baptism in which the element is the Spirit and water appears nowhere, predicated of every believer, and accomplishing incorporation into the body of Christ. That is what this study means by the new birth. The verse therefore does not damage this study's position; it supports it, and it does so from Paul's own pen rather

than from Acts. What it does damage is the flat form of the claim that Spirit-baptism happened once and is never spoken of again. Scripture does speak of it again, in different words, and of every believer. The honest statement is narrower: the six-fold phrase "baptized with the Holy Ghost" names Pentecost alone, and where scripture speaks of a Spirit-baptism belonging to all believers it uses different words and describes what this study calls the new birth.

Worth noting in passing, since Chapter 3 §B turns on it: "baptized **into** one body" is *eis* plus the accusative — the identical construction to "baptized **into** the name of the Lord Jesus" at Acts 8:16 and 19:5.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — points to the new-birth reading, and narrows this study's own claim. The verse is a genuine counter-text to the six-occurrence framing and is granted as one; what it is not is a text for water. The opposing reading can fairly answer that if a Spirit-baptism can be spoken of outside the six, then the six-fold count proves less about Acts 8, 10 and 19 than Chapter 2 §A suggested — which is true, and is why the claim is restated here in its narrower form.

In Short

"Baptized with the Holy Ghost," in exactly those words, appears six times, and every one of those six points to the same event: the outpouring of God's own spirit at Pentecost, described in Acts 2:1-4. It happened once, to the company gathered that day, and scripture calls it "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), not a second work of grace layered on top of the new birth. One further text, 1 Corinthians 12:13, speaks of a Spirit-baptism belonging to all believers in different words — and it, too, names no water. What none of this yet settles is what an entirely different phrase — "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" — actually names, since it is not the same wording and was never used by anyone before Pentecost.

Chapter 3 — "Baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ": Tracing the Idiom

A. The Phrase Itself, and Where It First Appears

Acts 2:38 *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.*

Peter does not repeat Acts 1:5's own phrase here. He does not say "be baptized with the Holy Ghost" — that baptism has already happened, once, to the company gathered with him, only moments earlier (Chapter 2 above). He uses instead a form of words that occurs nowhere in scripture before this verse: "baptized... in the name of Jesus Christ." *Living in God's Power* (Part V, Hour 2) names this transition directly: "After the original outpouring of the holy spirit upon the 12 apostles on the Day of Pentecost, this change of life style through the new birth became known as 'baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.'" The same source collects the phrase's own variant wordings as they recur across the rest of Acts: "It is

also called 'baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus' (Acts 8:16; 19:5), 'baptized in the name of the Lord' (Acts 10:48) and similar expressions."

It is worth pausing on what "in the name of" itself ordinarily signals elsewhere in scripture, since the phrase recurs often outside any baptismal context and its meaning there is well established. "In my name shall they cast out devils" (Mark 16:17); "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16:23); "if ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14). None of these describe a person literally pronouncing the syllables of a name as a spoken formula; each describes acting under someone's authority, standing identified with that person, invoking who they are rather than reciting what they are called. Read against that ordinary pattern, "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" is, on its face, at least as naturally a statement of whose authority and reality a person is being brought into as it is a description of words spoken over water.

Weighing it: Direct statement that the wording is new at Acts 2:38, reasonable inference on what "in the name of" signals — points to the new-birth reading. That these words appear here for the first time is checkable and holds. The opposing reading's fair answer is that a new phrase need not name a new thing: Peter had a new name to baptize into, and that alone would account for new wording without changing the element. That answer has real force and is not refuted here.

B. The Greek, Verified Word by Word

An earlier version of this study spoke of one idiom with "variant wordings." Checked construction by construction, that was too generous. The four verses do not share one Greek phrase; they share three:

Verse	Greek	Construction
Acts 2:38	ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ	<i>epi</i> + dative
Acts 8:16	εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ	<i>eis</i> + accusative
Acts 10:48	ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ	<i>en</i> + dative
Acts 19:5	εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ	<i>eis</i> + accusative

Three different prepositions, across two different cases. This library's own standing rule, written after an outside reviewer caught exactly this failure in another study, is that every element of a construction including its prepositions must be compared before two verses are called parallel. Applied here, that rule costs this study something, and it is stated rather than buried.

What it costs is an earlier version's treatment of Samaria. Acts 8:16 and Acts 19:5 are not merely similar; they are word for word identical — εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, the same five words in the same order. An earlier version read Samaria as settled and held Ephesus open as "a genuinely harder text." Whatever else may be said for that division, it cannot be said on the wording, because the wording is the same. Either both are settled or both are open, unless a difference is shown in their contexts rather than in their words. Chapter 4 §A and §D take up that question directly, and the answer given there is that both are open, with Samaria the stronger of the two.

What the rule does not cost is the study's central claim. The variation is not random noise: the direction is consistent across all three constructions. *Eis* with the accusative is directional — baptized **into** the name — and is the same construction Paul uses at 1 Corinthians 12:13 for being baptized **into** one body, which is plainly not a water statement. *Epi* and *en* with the dative name the ground or sphere on which the thing is done — baptized **on** or **in** the authority of that name. None of the three prepositions supplies water. All three attach the baptism to a person's name rather than to an element.

Weighing it: Direct statement about the Greek, and a concession — it removes an argument this study previously made. The three constructions are what the text has, and the identity of Acts 8:16 with Acts 19:5 is not in dispute. The opposing reading gains from this section: it may fairly answer that a phrase appearing in three different forms is a weaker candidate for a fixed technical idiom than a phrase appearing in one, and that variation is easier to explain if Luke is describing a rite performed on different occasions than if he is quoting a settled term of art.

C. Why the New Phrase Names the New Birth, Not Water

Three converging lines of evidence support this reading, held together rather than resting on any single one alone.

1. Grammar and sequence within the verse itself. Peter's sentence divides naturally into four clauses: "repent"; "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." Read as one continuous transaction rather than a list of separate acts, it runs: repentance, a change of mind, issuing directly in the new birth itself, named here by the new wording, with the gift of holy spirit given in it. Nothing in the verse requires water to make sense of it; it requires only what the verse already states, read in its own order.

One correction belongs here. *Living in God's Power* glosses the verse's closing verb as "'*Lambanō*' means to manifest into evidence the gift of holy spirit," and an earlier version of this study carried that gloss forward as though it were the word's lexical meaning. It is not. The verb at Acts 2:38 is λήμψεσθε, the ordinary future of *lambanō*, "ye shall receive," and the same verb is used of receiving the Holy Ghost at Acts 8:15, 8:17, 10:47 and 19:2 without any sense of manifestation being carried by the word itself. The distinction between receiving inwardly and receiving into manifestation is a real one in that source's own teaching, and this study does not dispute it as theology; what it cannot be is an argument from the vocabulary, and it is not used as one below.

2. Romans 10:9-10, the New Testament's own stated requirement for the new birth. Scripture states, in its own words, what is required to be saved and born again under the present administration, with no water clause anywhere in the statement:

Romans 10:9-10 — *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

Living in God's Power applies this same text directly to Cornelius's household as "the two requirements for the new birth... to confess Jesus as lord and believe God raised him from the dead." If Romans 10:9-

10 is the New Testament's own settled account of what is required, then reading Acts 2:38's "be baptized" as an additional water requirement standing alongside it introduces a second condition scripture itself never names in that statement.

3. The word "baptize" does not, by itself, lexically require water. The Greek word *baptizō* (Strong's G907) means to immerse, dip, or overwhelm; the element the person is immersed *in* is supplied by the surrounding context, not by the verb alone. Scripture itself uses the word of things that plainly are not water: "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matthew 3:11); "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2) — a description of Israel's own crossing of the Red Sea, in which the people themselves stayed dry the entire time, walking through on dry ground (Exodus 14:22), yet scripture still calls it a baptism; "baptized into his death" (Romans 6:3), of a believer's identification with Christ's own death and resurrection; and "baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). The verb names an immersion into whatever its context specifies. "Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" supplies, by its own wording, *whose authority and identity* the person is brought into — a different question from *what element* does the immersing, and nothing in the phrase itself answers that second question with water.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — points to the new-birth reading. Point 3 is the strongest of the three and is close to a direct statement: the verb genuinely does not carry water, and scripture genuinely uses it of dry things. Points 1 and 2 are weaker than they look. The opposing reading answers point 1 by noting that Acts 2:38's own closing phrase, "for the remission of sins," is verbatim what Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 attach to John's water baptism — which is a real answer and is not dissolved here. It answers point 2 by noting that Romans 10:9-10 is a statement about confession and belief that was never framed as an exhaustive list, and that an argument from what a verse omits is weaker than one from what a verse contains. Point 3 establishes that water is not required by the word; it does not establish that water is absent in any given verse.

D. What the Next Verses Report: Acts 2:41

An earlier version of this study stopped at Acts 2:38 and moved on. The verses that follow it should be faced, because they are the only report of what actually happened in response to Peter's charge:

Acts 2:41 — "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*"

Three observations, in the order they matter. First, the idiom is not here. Verse 41 says only "were baptized," with no name attached — which means that by this study's own rule, stated at Chapter 4 §C below and applied to Saul of Tarsus, the ordinary sense of the word including water stays entirely open at Acts 2:41. That rule cannot be applied in one direction only. Second, three thousand people baptized on a single day is the shape of a mass rite, and a reader who pictures water there is not reading anything into the verse that the verse forbids. Third, and against both of those: the verb for "received" here is *apodechomai*, of receiving the word, and what verse 41 reports as the day's result is not a rite but an addition of souls — "there were added unto them."

This study's honest position on Acts 2:41 is that it is neutral, and that an earlier version's silence about it was a gap. If water was used at Pentecost for the three thousand, nothing in this study's reading of verse 38 is overturned: verse 38's idiom would still name the new birth, and verse 41's bare "were baptized" would still be an unmarked word whose element the text does not name. The two are not in competition. What cannot be said is that Acts 2 contains no candidate for a water baptism.

Weighing it: Neutral — bears no weight either way, and corrects an omission. Acts 2:41 is genuinely two-edged, and is named as such rather than absorbed into either column. The opposing reading can fairly answer that the natural reading of a three-thousand-person baptism is water, and this study does not contest that it may have been.

E. What This Does Not Yet Settle

This study does not conclude that no water was ever used anywhere in the book of Acts — Chapter 5 below shows several places where it plainly was. Nor does it take up here how Matthew 28:19's wording, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," relates to Acts 2:38's different wording. That question is answered in Chapter 6 §E, which also states plainly that this study does not read the verse as teaching the Trinity, and does not promote its wording as a formula to be recited over anyone. What this chapter establishes is narrower: "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [the Lord Jesus, the Lord]" is best read as naming the new birth rather than, by default, reporting that a water rite was performed. Chapter 4 now tests that reading against every specific account in Acts where the wording occurs.

Weighing it: This section is a concession — it names one thing this study does not settle, and points ahead to where a second is answered.

In Short

Peter's charge at Acts 2:38 does not repeat the promise of Acts 1:5. It uses wording that had never once appeared in scripture before that moment. Traced through the verse's own grammar, through Romans 10:9-10's stated requirement for salvation, and through how the word "baptize" is actually used elsewhere of things that are not water, the new wording reads most naturally as another way of naming the new birth itself. Checked in the Greek, though, the four verses that carry it do not carry one phrase but three constructions — and two of them, Samaria and Ephesus, are word for word identical, which means they cannot be rated differently on their wording. The verse that reports what followed, Acts 2:41, carries no such wording at all and is genuinely neutral. The next chapter puts the reading to the test, account by account.

Chapter 4 — Testing the Idiom Against Every Account

A. Samaria (Acts 8:5-17)

Philip goes down to a city of Samaria and preaches Christ there, and the whole city responds: unclean spirits crying out, the palsied and the lame healed, and "great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5-8). Already established there is Simon, a sorcerer who had "bewitched the people of Samaria" and been held in awe by them as "the great power of God" (Acts 8:9-11) — the background against which Luke sets what happens next.

Acts 8:12-13 — *"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women... Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."*

A correction is needed here before anything is built on these two verses. *Living in God's Power* (Part V, Hour 3) reads both as describing the new birth, with its own footnote pointing back to Acts 2:38 — "Remember from Acts 2:38 that 'baptized in the name of Jesus Christ' refers to being born-again" — and reads Simon's baptism the same way. An earlier version of this study carried that across without checking the wording. But verses 12 and 13 do not contain the idiom. Verse 12 says "they were baptized," full stop; the words "the name of Jesus Christ" in that verse belong to what Philip **preached**, not to how anyone was baptized. Verse 13 says only "when he was baptized." By the rule this study applies to Saul of Tarsus in §C below — where the wording is absent, the ordinary sense including water stays open — verses 12 and 13 are unmarked, and this study no longer reads them as the idiom.

That correction costs nothing and gains something. It costs nothing because the Samaritan argument never depended on verse 12; it depends on verse 16. It gains something because reading Simon's baptism at verse 13 as the new birth always sat badly beside Peter's words to him eight verses later — "thy heart is not right in the sight of God... thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:21, 23). An unmarked baptism at verse 13 raises no such difficulty.

Acts 8:14-17 — *"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."*

Verse 16 is where the wording actually appears, and it appears inside a parenthesis explaining a prior state rather than narrating a new act. That matters, and it is the one thing that distinguishes Samaria from Ephesus, since the Greek of the two verses is identical (Chapter 3 §B). The passage is sometimes read as describing two separate completed acts — the word believed, then water applied — with only the gift of the Holy Ghost still missing when Peter and John arrive. *Living in God's Power* reads the parenthetical the opposite way: "[They were born again, but they did not speak in tongues.]" On that reading, verse 16 is not describing a water rite performed on top of an already-completed conversion; it

is describing the new birth itself, named by the idiom, whose outward manifestation has not yet followed.

Two things must be said against pressing that reading too far, and an earlier version of this study said neither. First, the reading requires "received the Holy Ghost" at verse 17 to mean something other than receiving the Holy Ghost — namely, manifesting what was already possessed. An earlier version supported that by appealing to a distinction in Acts between *dechomai*, receiving inwardly, and *lambanō*, receiving in manifested form. Checked against Acts itself, that distinction is not there to appeal to. In Acts, *dechomai* is used of receiving **the word** (8:14, 11:1, 17:11) and never of receiving the spirit; *lambanō* is the verb used of receiving the spirit everywhere it occurs (2:38, 8:15, 8:17, 8:19, 10:47, 19:2), in both the alleged senses. The theological distinction may well be sound; what it is not is a pattern in Luke's vocabulary, and this study withdraws it as an argument.

Second, with that argument gone, verses 15-17 read most naturally as saying that the Samaritans did not yet have the Holy Ghost and then did. That is the opposing reading's strongest position anywhere in Acts, and it is stronger than an earlier version of this study allowed.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference at best, and downgraded from an earlier version, which treated Samaria as settled — leans toward the new-birth reading, but genuinely open. Verse 16's placement inside a parenthesis about a prior state is a real point and is why Samaria is the stronger of this study's two open accounts. Against it: the Greek is identical to Ephesus, so wording gives no help; "received the Holy Ghost" at verse 17 reads against this study; and the *dechomai/lambanō* support is withdrawn as unsound. A careful reader who takes verse 16 as water and verse 17 as the gift is not straining the passage, and this study says so.

B. Cornelius's Household (Acts 10:1-48)

Cornelius is introduced as "a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10:1-2) — a Gentile already living toward God as fully as he knew how, long before Peter ever arrives. An angel tells him to send for Peter (Acts 10:3-8); Peter, meanwhile, sees his own vision of a sheet let down from heaven, three times, and hears the words "what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:9-16) — a vision Peter himself does not understand until the men from Cornelius arrive at his door (Acts 10:17-23). Peter goes, preaches Christ to the whole household, and before he has finished speaking:

Acts 10:44-46 — *"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."*

This account is often treated as the clearest single text in Acts for reading baptism as water, since Peter appears to call for water only after the gift has already fallen — as though water were the one item still outstanding once everything else was settled.

Acts 10:47-48 — "*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.*"

An argument withdrawn. An earlier version of this study answered verse 48 with a word study, following *Living in God's Power*: the verb translated "commanded" is *prostassō*, which "Thayer says... means 'to assign or ascribe, to join or enjoin, to appoint or to define,'" and so "Peter did not direct them to be baptized... He simply ascribed or defined what they had done as being baptized in the name of the Lord." That argument does not survive checking and is withdrawn here rather than defended. *Prostassō* (Strong's G4367) occurs seven times in the New Testament — Matthew 1:24; Matthew 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14; Acts 10:33; Acts 10:48; Acts 17:26 — and in every one of them it means to command, order, or appoint. Strong's gives its renderings as "bid, command," and nothing else. Worst of all for the argument, Luke uses it fifteen verses earlier in this very chapter, in this very narrative, in Cornelius's own mouth: "to hear all things that are **commanded** thee of God" (Acts 10:33). A word cannot be pressed into an unusual sense in verse 48 when the same author has just used it in its ordinary sense in verse 33. This study's own standing rule is to check a word's other occurrences in the same book before building on it; that rule was not followed, and following it here removes the argument.

What survives, and it is enough to matter. The case at Cornelius's household does not rest on the verb. It rests on what Luke reports and does not report.

Acts 10:47 is Peter speaking *in the moment*, and it is a question, not a report — "Can any man forbid water..." Luke's own narrative never answers it. The chapter ends at verse 48 without once stating that water was in fact applied to anyone. That is an argument from silence, and it is worth only what such arguments are worth — except that the silence is repeated under precisely the conditions that would break it. When Peter is called to account for the whole episode in the very next chapter, defending himself to "they that were of the circumcision" (Acts 11:2-3) — men whose stated complaint was that he had eaten with uncircumcised Gentiles — his defense does not reach for the one fact that would most directly have answered a proselyte-minded objection on its own terms: *and we baptized them*. Instead he reaches back past the moment recorded at 10:47:

Acts 11:15-16 — "*And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*"

"Then remembered I" is the operative phrase. Peter is not repeating himself; he is recalling something that arrives, by his own account, only *after* the moment recorded at 10:47 had passed. His entire defense to Jerusalem rests on the water-versus-spirit contrast of Acts 1:5, restated as the standard that actually governed what happened, with no mention anywhere in his recorded speech that water was administered at Cornelius's house at all. If water had in fact been applied, it is the plainest fact he could have offered his accusers — a completed, proper, proselyte-pattern rite, beyond dispute — and he does not offer it.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — points to the new-birth reading, and is this study's strongest account. That Luke never reports water applied, and that Peter under direct challenge never mentions

it, are both direct statements about what the text contains and omits. What they support is an inference, and the opposing reading has two fair answers, both of which should be stated. The first is that Luke frequently does not narrate the carrying-out of an instruction he has just recorded, so silence at verse 48 proves little. The second is that Peter's defense at Acts 11 was answering a charge about eating with Gentiles, not a charge about baptism, and a man answers the charge he is given. Neither answer is unreasonable. This study holds that the two silences together weigh more than either alone, and does not claim more than that. The *prostassō* argument is withdrawn outright.

C. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-19; 22:12-16)

Saul's own story begins as a persecutor, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1), struck down by a light from heaven on the road to Damascus and left blind for three days (Acts 9:3-9). Ananias, sent by the Lord directly to him, lays hands on him "that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17).

Acts 9:18 — *"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."*

Living in God's Power draws a careful, deliberate distinction here rather than forcing every occurrence of the bare word into one mold: "It does not say 'baptized in the name of Jesus Christ,' which would refer to the new birth, it just says 'baptized.' Since Saul was already born-again, this baptism may have been in water." This is the control case that keeps this study's claim from becoming an unfalsifiable rule applied to every occurrence of the word regardless of wording. Where the text supplies the specific wording, this study reads the new birth; where it does not, the ordinary sense including water stays entirely open. Saul's case fits a real water baptism precisely because the text withholds the wording from it — and, as §A above now concedes, the same holds at Acts 8:12, 8:13 and 2:41.

Two corrections to an earlier version belong here. The first is that it argued Saul was already born again partly "by his own confession of 'Lord' on the Damascus road (Acts 9:5)." That will not stand. Acts 9:5 reads "And he said, Who art thou, Lord?" — a man addressing a voice he does not yet recognize, and asking who it is. Whatever else that is, it is not Romans 10:9's confession of Jesus as Lord, and reading it as one is reading backward from a conclusion. That Ananias addresses him days later as "Brother Saul" (Acts 9:17) is the better evidence and is left to carry the point on its own.

The second is a text an earlier version never mentioned at all, though it is the fullest account of this very baptism — Paul's own retelling, years later, in his own words:

Acts 22:16 — *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."*

This verse belongs to the opposing reading's case and is granted as such. It joins baptism, sins washed away, and the Lord's name in a single sentence spoken by Ananias to Saul. Two things can be said honestly about it, and neither is a refutation. The wording is not the idiom this study traces: it is "be baptized... **calling on** the name of the Lord" (*epikaleomai*), which is something the person being baptized does, not a phrase describing the baptism. And on this study's own rule, Saul's baptism is an unmarked

one that may well have been water — in which case Acts 22:16 describes a water baptism and creates no difficulty at all. What it does do is put "wash away thy sins" in direct connection with a baptism, and a reader who takes that as making the rite efficacious will find this study's Romans 10:9-10 argument (Chapter 3 §C) harder than this study finds it.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — supports the new-birth reading indirectly, by showing the rule is falsifiable. The value of Saul's case is not that it proves anything about the idiom but that it shows this study reading a baptism as water where the wording is absent, which is what keeps the rule from explaining everything and therefore nothing. The opposing reading can fairly answer that a rule which reads the marked cases one way and the unmarked cases another is a rule built on the marked cases, and that Acts 22:16 shows the marked and unmarked cases were never so cleanly separable in the early church's own memory of them.

D. Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6)

Acts 19:5-6 — "*When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*"

This text is often read as describing the disciples at Ephesus being rebaptized specifically "in the name of the Lord Jesus," on the ground that their prior baptism — "unto John's baptism" (Acts 19:3), received under Apollos's ministry (Acts 18:24-26) — was incomplete and needed replacing. *Living in God's Power* reads verse 5 differently: as a parenthetical remark about what these men had already received earlier under Apollos, rather than a new act Paul performs in that same verse — "[This verse is a parenthesis that explains what happened when Apollos was there.]" — and treats the wording as it treats every other occurrence: naming the new birth, with verse 6's laying on of hands producing the later manifestation.

An earlier version of this study held Ephesus open on the ground that the treatment available to it was "comparatively brief." That was simply inaccurate, and is corrected here: *Living in God's Power* gives Acts 19 a fuller and more developed treatment than it gives Samaria, running to several pages. Ephesus is held open, but for the right reasons, and there are two.

The first is the grammar established at Chapter 3 §B. Acts 19:5 and Acts 8:16 are word for word identical, so nothing in the wording can make one settled and the other hard.

The second is the context, which here runs against the parenthetical reading more than it does at Samaria. At Acts 8:16 the phrase sits inside an explicit parenthesis describing a prior state. At Acts 19:5 it is a main clause in narrative sequence — "When they heard this, they were baptized" — following directly on Paul's speech in verse 4, and the natural force of "when they heard this" is that something happened next. Reading it as a parenthesis about Apollos requires supplying a break the Greek does not mark. There is also a tension inside the source's own treatment worth naming: it holds verse 5 to describe what happened under Apollos, and also says that Apollos "had taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ and new-birth, and baptized them **with water**."

This study therefore flags rather than forces the choice. The water reading — Paul baptizing men whose earlier baptism under John was genuinely deficient — remains a live and textually defensible alternative that this study does not close. A genuinely harder text is better named as harder than either silently forced into a pattern or allowed to overturn everything established from clearer texts.

Weighing it: Held open — this study takes no position on Acts 19:5. The parenthetical reading is possible; the sequential reading is more natural on the Greek word order and on "when they heard this." The opposing reading is, in this study's judgement, somewhat ahead here, and saying so costs nothing that the rest of the argument needed.

E. Closing — What the Pattern Actually Shows

Run across every account in Acts, the pattern is real but narrower than an earlier version of this study claimed. Correcting the count matters, because an earlier version said "three of five accounts carry the idiom," which was wrong: four of the five carry it.

Four verses carry the wording — Acts 2:38 (Peter's charge at Pentecost), 8:16 (Samaria), 10:48 (Cornelius's household), and 19:5 (Ephesus). Of those four, this study reads two as the new birth (2:38, 10:48), holds one open and leaning its way (8:16, Samaria), and holds one open and leaning the other way (19:5, Ephesus). Against those four stand the unmarked baptisms — Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:13, 9:18 — where the wording is absent and where this study reads the ordinary sense, water included, precisely because it is absent. That is the rule doing real work in both directions rather than absorbing every case into one column.

What the pattern does not show is uniformity. Two of the four marked verses are settled, and two are not. Anyone who wants the stronger claim — that the wording names the new birth everywhere it appears, without exception — will not find it established here.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — points to the new-birth reading, at reduced strength from an earlier version. The rule distinguishes marked from unmarked cases and is applied consistently in both directions, which is its main claim to be a real pattern rather than an imposed one. The opposing reading can fairly answer that a rule holding cleanly in only two of four marked cases is a weak rule, and that the simplest account of all eight baptisms in Acts is that every one of them was water and the varying phrases are varying ways of saying whose baptism it was.

In Short

Tested one account at a time rather than assumed all at once, the pattern holds, but not everywhere and not as strongly as an earlier version of this study claimed. At Pentecost and at Cornelius's household the new-birth reading is the better one, and at Cornelius's household it is supported by two silences that are hard to explain otherwise. At Samaria it leans that way but is genuinely open. At Ephesus it leans the other way and this study takes no position. Where the wording is absent altogether — the three thousand at Acts 2:41, the Samaritans at 8:12, Simon at 8:13, Saul at 9:18 — the ordinary sense including water stays open, and this study reads it that way. Two arguments an earlier version relied on,

the *prostassō* word study at Acts 10:48 and the *dechomai/lambanō* distinction at Samaria, were checked and withdrawn.

Chapter 5 — Where the Water Is Real: The Ethiopian, Lydia, the Jailer, and Paul's Own Converts

A. Why This Chapter Exists

This study does not conclude that no one in the book of Acts was ever baptized in water, and it does not need scripture stretched to reach any such conclusion. Several accounts describe water plainly, by name, with none of the wording traced through Chapters 3 and 4, and this study lets each of them stand as exactly what it says. One of them comes not from Acts but from Paul's own hand, and an earlier version of this study left it out.

Weighing it: Method, not argument — states what this chapter is for.

B. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)

An angel sends Philip south, onto the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, where he meets a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians — a eunuch, already returning from worshiping at Jerusalem, reading aloud from the prophet Isaiah as he rides in his chariot (Acts 8:26-28). Philip runs to him, hears him reading Isaiah 53's own prophecy of the suffering servant, and "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:29-35).

Acts 8:36, 38 — *"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?... and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."*

Nothing in this text attaches "in the name of Jesus Christ" or any of its variants to the baptism itself. The eunuch asks for it himself, unprompted, the moment he sees water on the road — nothing suggests Philip withheld the gospel's own benefit from him pending some further rite, and nothing in the text presents this baptism as anything other than the eunuch's own willing response to what he had just believed.

Weighing it: Direct statement, and a concession — this is a real water baptism after Pentecost, and it is granted outright.

C. Lydia and Her Household (Acts 16:11-15)

At Philippi, Paul and his companions go down to a place of prayer by a riverside on the sabbath, where they find women gathered, among them Lydia, "a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God" (Acts 16:13-14). "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul" (v.14).

Acts 16:15 — *"And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."*

Again, no trace of the wording traced through Chapters 3 and 4. Lydia's baptism, and her household's alongside her, is recorded as plain water baptism following directly on her belief, with no separate report of any manifestation attached to it one way or the other.

Weighing it: Direct statement, and a concession — granted outright as a water baptism after Pentecost.

D. The Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-34)

The same night, after an earthquake shakes open every prison door, the jailer draws his sword to kill himself, supposing the prisoners had already fled, until Paul cries out that all are present (Acts 16:25-28). "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the jailer asks, and Paul and Silas answer him and his household with the gospel itself, not with a ritual instruction (Acts 16:29-32).

Acts 16:33 — *"And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."*

Once more, plain water, plainly named, with none of the new-birth wording anywhere in the verse. "The same hour of the night" and "straightway" both emphasize how immediately this followed his belief — a household's glad response to what it had just received, not a delayed or separately-timed requirement standing between them and salvation.

Weighing it: Direct statement, and a concession — granted outright as a water baptism after Pentecost.

E. Paul's Own Converts at Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:13-17)

An earlier version of this study ended the concession at Acts 16. It should not have, because the plainest evidence that water baptism continued well into the Grace administration comes from Paul himself, writing to Corinth years later:

1 Corinthians 1:13-17 — *"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."*

Three things here, and all three matter to this study.

First, the concession, which is complete. Paul performed baptisms with his own hands, on named individuals and a named household, in the middle of the Grace administration. Whatever else is true, water baptism did not stop at Pentecost, and Chapter 6 below has to be written to fit that fact rather than around it.

Second, a point that cuts this study's way and was available all along. Verse 13's "were ye baptized **in the name of Paul?**" is the same construction the disputed verses use — *eis to onoma* — applied here to a man, and applied as an absurdity. Paul's argument works because "baptized into the name of X" means belonging to X, being identified with X, being X's. That is precisely the sense Chapter 3 §A argued for, and here it is used that way by Paul himself, outside any dispute about water.

Third, and most striking: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." This is the strongest statement anywhere in the New Testament that the rite, whatever its value, was not at the centre of the apostolic commission to the Gentiles. It does not say water baptism is wrong, and Paul plainly performed it. It does say that the man who wrote most of the New Testament did not regard administering it as what he was sent to do.

Weighing it: Direct statement, and a concession that also helps — water baptism plainly continued under Grace, and verse 13's "in the name of" plainly means belonging to. The concession is complete and unqualified. The opposing reading gains the fact of continued practice; this study gains Paul's own untroubled use of the very construction at issue, and gains verse 17. Neither side should claim the passage whole.

F. What This Settles, and What It Leaves Open

Water baptism, wherever scripture actually names it in these terms, is real, and this study does not explain it away. What it is not, on the evidence run across this chapter and the last, is the meaning of the specific wording "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [the Lord Jesus, the Lord]" at Acts 2:38 and 10:48 — that wording, on the better reading of those two accounts, names the new birth. Whether a water baptism such as the eunuch's, Lydia's, the jailer's, or Crispus's was itself required for salvation is a separate question from whether it happened; nothing in Romans 10:9-10's stated requirement makes water a condition of the new birth, and nothing in these accounts presents it as anything other than a believer's own willing, subsequent act.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — the distinction between a practice that continued and a requirement that was never stated is the load this section carries. The opposing reading can fairly answer that a practice this widespread and this unremarked-on is more easily explained as an expected part of conversion than as an optional addition nobody thought worth commanding.

In Short

Not every baptism in Acts carries the wording this study has been tracing, and the ones that do not are read exactly as written. The Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia and her household, the Philippian jailer, and Crispus, Gaius and the household of Stephanas at Corinth were all baptized in real, literal water, all of them after Pentecost. Paul, who baptized three of them himself, also wrote that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel — which is where this study locates the rite: real, practiced, and never made a condition of the new birth.

Chapter 6 — Fitting the Administration Framework: Pentecost Is Grace, Not Law

A. The Question Worth Asking

A natural question follows from everything settled so far: where does water baptism fit among the different periods of biblical history scripture treats as distinct administrations, and where, relative to those periods, does Acts 2:38 actually fall? This study checked that question directly against this library's own completed *Seven Administrations* study rather than assuming an answer.

Weighing it: Method, not argument.

B. What *Seven Administrations* Already States

That study's own summary table is more precise than a simple two-part split between "Law" and "Grace," and the added precision matters directly here. Three administrations run in sequence through the period this study has been examining, not two:

#	Administration	Span	Governing Basis
3	Mosaic Law	Sinai to Christ's baptism	Vowed obedience to a written code (Exodus 24:7)
4	Christ — the Kingdom at Hand	Christ's baptism to Pentecost	Repent; the kingdom is at hand (Matthew 4:17)
5	Grace — Administration of the Mystery	Pentecost to the Rapture	Grace through faith, apart from law (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The Mosaic Law administration itself, on this library's own dating, ends at Christ's own baptism in the Jordan — not at the cross, and not at Pentecost. What follows is its own distinct administration, "Christ — the Kingdom at Hand," running the full length of Jesus's earthly ministry and closing only at Pentecost, where Grace opens. The same study also explicitly rejects reading Paul's later "mystery" material as marking off a separate, later administration of its own: "Grace remains one administration, Pentecost to the Rapture."

Weighing it: Corroboration only — this is another study's framework, not a finding of this one. It is reported here as this library's settled position and is not independently re-argued. A reader who divides the administrations differently should discount this chapter accordingly; nothing in Chapters 1 through 5 depends on it.

C. Where This Places Water Baptism, and Where It Places Acts 2:38

John's own water baptism belongs to the closing years of the Mosaic Law administration; his ministry precedes Christ's own baptism, the very event that closes Law and opens the fourth administration. That

fourth administration is where water baptism continues throughout: John's baptizing ministry runs alongside its early years (Matthew 3; John 3:23), and Christ's own disciples, during His earthly ministry, baptized more disciples than John did across the same span (John 3:22; 4:1-2 — where the text also notes that "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples"; held here as a reasoned inference drawn from the text rather than a claim stated outright).

Acts 2:38 sits, on this library's own dating, at the very *opening* declaration of the fifth administration — the first moment the sequence turns its page from what came before to something new. The new wording Peter uses there, never used by anyone before that day, is that new administration's own language for the new reality, rather than a carryover of the old rite continued under new management with a different name attached.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — points to the new-birth reading, and is the weakest chapter in this study. That Acts 2:38 stands at Grace's opening is a matter of the framework in §B rather than of this verse. The opposing reading's answer is simple and fair: a new administration may perfectly well carry an old practice forward, and it demonstrably did carry several. This chapter shows where Acts 2:38 sits; it does not show what Acts 2:38 means.

D. The Problem This Creates, and How It Is Answered

An earlier version of this study ended Chapter 6 with the claim that water baptism "belongs to the third and fourth administrations together, the outgoing periods — not to the fifth, Grace." Set beside its own Chapter 5, that claim could not stand, and it is corrected here.

Chapter 5 grants at least six water baptisms after Pentecost — the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia and her household, the Philippian jailer and his, Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. Every one of them falls inside the Grace administration. A framework that says water baptism does not belong to Grace, sitting two chapters after a list of water baptisms performed under Grace, is not a subtlety; it is a contradiction, and an earlier version of this study simply did not notice it.

The answer is to say something narrower and true rather than something broad and false. Water baptism was not abolished at Pentecost, and the record shows it continuing for decades afterward, performed by Philip, by Paul, and by others. What Pentecost changed was not the practice but its standing. Under the third and fourth administrations water baptism was a commanded rite with a stated function — "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" — preached by John as the required response to his message. Under Grace, no such command is issued anywhere: the requirement stated for the new birth is confession and belief (Romans 10:9-10), the man who wrote most of the epistles says plainly that he was not sent to baptize (1 Corinthians 1:17), and the letters written to instruct believers in ordinary Christian living never once instruct anyone to be baptized in water. The rite continued as a practice; it did not continue as a requirement, and it is not what the Acts 2:38 wording names.

Weighing it: Reasonable inference — repairs a contradiction in an earlier version, and concedes ground doing it. That no epistle commands water baptism is a direct statement about what those letters

contain and is the firmest part of this section. The opposing reading can fairly answer that a practice universally assumed needs no command, that Matthew 28:19 is a command and was not repealed, and that arguing from what the epistles omit is weaker than arguing from what Acts records. This study holds the narrower claim and abandons the broader one. Section E below takes up what Matthew 28:19 does and does not teach.

E. Matthew 28:19 — What the Formula Is, and What It Is Not

Matthew 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."

The case for water, stated at full strength in the Introduction, leans on this verse, and §D above left it standing as the opposing reading's fair answer: Matthew 28:19 is a command. It is also the most quoted verse in Christendom for a threefold baptismal formula. A study of baptism that quotes it therefore owes the reader a plain word about what it does and does not teach, so that nothing here is mistaken for support of the doctrine of the Trinity, or for support of reciting this wording over a convert. This library's companion study *One God, One Mediator* (§3.7) treats the verse in full. What follows is its resolution, in brief.

The wording is genuine. Some readers are taught that the threefold clause was added to Matthew later, to manufacture support for the Trinity. It was not. Every surviving Greek manuscript of Matthew 28 contains it. Baptism in the same threefold wording is already described in the *Didache*, an early church manual (a short handbook of Christian practice) commonly dated near A.D. 100, and in Justin Martyr's *First Apology*, written around A.D. 150 — both long before the fourth-century date the forgery theory needs. Nothing in this study rests on the claim of a corrupted text, and nothing needs to.

The verse does not name three co-equal persons. The resolution comes from translation, not from doubting the text. Andrews Norton, in *A Statement of Reasons for Not Believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians* (1856), shows two things. First, "the name of" here is a Hebrew turn of phrase carried over into Greek, one English has no equivalent for; read literally, it makes an invocation formula the original never carried. Second, the preposition is *eis*, the same directional "into" or "unto" traced in Chapter 3 §B, and it is better rendered "to." Converts are baptized **to** the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: dedicated to the worship of the one God, the Father, to the teaching of His Son, and to the blessing the gift of holy spirit brings. Scripture uses the very same construction with no hint of deity: Israel was **"baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2)**, and Paul's question **"were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:13)** has force only because the answer is plainly no. Nor does naming three together make all three persons, or make them equal: **"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace" (Acts 20:32)** sets God and a word side by side in one clause. Read this way, the verse agrees with what scripture states elsewhere in so many words: **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).**

This study does not promote the formula. Nowhere in Acts is anyone baptized by reciting "the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Wherever Acts names the name in which anyone was baptized, it is Jesus Christ's: "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38), "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (8:16; 19:5), "in

the name of the Lord" (10:48). Read as Norton reads it, Matthew 28:19 states the commission's scope and object — all nations, brought to the one God and to His Son — and Acts records how the apostles actually carried it out. The two were never in tension. This study therefore does not recommend the threefold wording as a baptismal formula, and does not treat it as a requirement under Grace.

What this section does not settle is §D's remaining question: whether the commission's "baptizing" commanded water for every believer under Grace. The verse names no element, and Chapter 3 §C has shown that the verb does not supply one by itself. But the church's reading of it as water is old and natural, and this study leaves that answer standing where §D put it.

Weighing it: Mixed, stated per point — against the forgery claim, against reading the verse as three co-equal persons, and neutral on water. That the wording is original is as close to a direct statement as the manuscript record gives. That the verse does not establish three co-equal persons is a strong inference: scripture's own parallels (1 Corinthians 10:2; Acts 20:32) show the construction proves neither deity nor personhood, and 1 Timothy 2:5 states one God directly; Norton's "to" is a reasonable inference resting on them. That Acts never records the threefold wording recited is a direct statement about what Acts contains. The opposing reading can fairly answer that the single word "name," governing all three, could mean one name shared by three persons; the single word is just as natural for one dedication made to three objects, and it is held here as neutral — it settles nothing either way on its own. It can also answer that an unrecorded practice is not proof of an absent one, which is true, and is why this section claims only that the formula is never recorded, not that it was never used.

In Short

Scripture's own account of biblical history, on this library's dating, runs the Law administration out to Christ's own baptism, then a distinct further period covering His earthly ministry, and only then, at Pentecost, opens Grace. Acts 2:38 stands at Grace's opening moment, stated in Grace's own governing terms. What an earlier version of this study got wrong was the further claim that water baptism therefore ended at Pentecost: it plainly did not, and this study's own Chapter 5 lists the cases. What ended was its standing as a commanded rite — not the practice, but the requirement. Matthew 28:19, the verse most often set against this, is genuine scripture, but it teaches no Trinity and prescribes no formula to recite: it dedicates converts to the one God and to His Son's teaching, and Acts, wherever it names a name at a baptism, names only Jesus Christ's.

Chapter 7 — Closing: The Settled Position, and What Would Overturn It

A. What This Study Settles

1. "Baptized with the Holy Ghost," in exactly those words, names one event only — the initial outpouring at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) — never repeated and never commanded of anyone; six occurrences in all of scripture, every one pointing to the same event (Chapter 2 §A).

2. One further text, 1 Corinthians 12:13, speaks of a Spirit-baptism belonging to all believers in different words — "baptized into one body." It names no water, and it describes what this study calls the new birth. It narrows the six-occurrence claim to a claim about one form of words, and it does not damage the position (Chapter 2 §C).
3. "Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [the Lord Jesus, the Lord]," the wording introduced at Acts 2:38, is best read as naming the new birth itself — confessing Jesus as Lord and believing God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). The strongest support is that the verb *baptizō* does not supply its own element and is used in scripture of things that are not water at all (Chapter 3 §C).
4. The four verses carrying that wording do not share one Greek construction. They share three: *epi* + dative at Acts 2:38, *eis* + accusative at 8:16 and 19:5, *en* + dative at 10:48. None of the three supplies water; all three attach the baptism to a name rather than to an element (Chapter 3 §B).
5. Acts 10:47-48, often treated as the clearest evidence in Acts for water, is better read as water proposed and never reported used — supported by Luke's silence at the end of the chapter and by Peter's own later defense, under direct challenge, which never mentions water (Chapter 4 §B).
6. Acts 8:16 (Samaria) and Acts 19:5 (Ephesus) are both **held open**. Their Greek is word for word identical, so no distinction can be drawn on the wording. Samaria leans toward the new-birth reading on its context, Ephesus leans the other way on its own, and this study takes no final position on either (Chapter 4 §A, §D).
7. Where the wording is absent — Acts 2:41 (the three thousand), 8:12 (the Samaritans), 8:13 (Simon), 9:18 (Saul) — the ordinary sense including water stays open, and this study reads it that way. The rule is applied in both directions or it is not a rule (Chapter 3 §D, Chapter 4 §A, §C).
8. Acts 8:36-38 (the eunuch), 16:15 (Lydia), 16:33 (the jailer), and 1 Corinthians 1:14-16 (Crispus, Gaius, the household of Stephanas) are genuine, literal water baptisms, all of them after Pentecost, and all conceded outright (Chapter 5).
9. Water baptism therefore did not end at Pentecost. What ended was its standing as a commanded rite: no epistle commands it, Romans 10:9-10 does not include it, and Paul says Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach (1 Corinthians 1:17). An earlier version's claim that water baptism "does not belong to Grace" was a contradiction of this study's own Chapter 5 and is withdrawn (Chapter 6 §D).
10. Acts 2:38 stands at the opening declaration of the Grace administration on this library's own dating, not in the Mosaic Law administration nor the one that followed it (Chapter 6 §C).
11. Matthew 28:19's threefold wording is genuine — every manuscript has it — but it is a dedication to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, not an invocation of three co-equal persons, and not a formula Acts ever records being recited. This study does not promote it as a baptismal formula. Whether the commission's "baptizing" commanded water under Grace remains the opposing reading's fair answer (Chapter 6 §E).

Overall, the position is a reasonable inference, resting on one near-direct statement (the verb does not supply water), one strong argument from two converging silences (Cornelius), and a framework claim that carries little weight on its own (the administrations). It is not offered as a conclusion no careful reader could reach differently, and two of the five accounts in Acts are left unresolved.

Weighing it: Summary only — restates the findings at the weights assigned to them in Chapters 1 through 6.

B. What Would Change This Study's Mind

Stating this is a discipline, not a rhetorical gesture. Three findings would overturn the position, and a reader could go looking for any of them.

A verse commanding water baptism in any epistle. Not a reference to baptism, of which there are several, but an instruction to be baptized in water, addressed to believers under Grace. Chapter 6 §D rests on the absence of one; produce it and the distinction between a continued practice and a withdrawn requirement collapses.

A narrative statement that water was applied at Cornelius's house. Chapter 4 §B, this study's strongest account, rests on two silences — Luke's at Acts 10:48 and Peter's at Acts 11:15-17. A verse reporting the water, or Peter citing it in his own defense, would remove the argument entirely and leave the account reading naturally as water.

A use of "baptized in the name of" that cannot be the new birth. One occurrence where the phrase is attached to a person scripture then treats as unconverted, or where the element is named as water in the same breath, would break the reading at its root. Simon Magus at Acts 8:13 would have been exactly such a case — which is precisely why it matters that verse 13 does not carry the wording (Chapter 4 §A).

None of the three exists in the text as it stands. That is the state of the evidence, not a proof.

Weighing it: Discipline, not argument — bears no weight either way; it names what would overturn the position.

C. Closing Word

This study set out to answer one narrow question honestly, using the same texts anyone can open and check for themselves: what did the men and women of the early church actually mean when they used the words "baptize" and "baptism"? The answer, run consistently across every account in the book of Acts, is that scripture itself already distinguishes what it is talking about far more carefully than a single English word lets on. John's own water, real and necessary in its own day, gave way to something greater the moment the Holy Ghost was poured out at Pentecost — an event that happened exactly once, named by a fixed set of six verses running from the Gospels through Acts. From that day forward, when the New Testament records someone "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [the Lord Jesus, the Lord]," the better reading is that it names that same new birth rather than a water rite laid over the top

of it — verified here account by account, and with two of the accounts left unresolved rather than forced.

On the occasions where scripture plainly does mean water — the Ethiopian eunuch on the desert road, Lydia and her household beside the river at Philippi, the jailer washing the apostles' stripes in the middle of the night, and the handful of Corinthians Paul baptized with his own hands — this study has let those texts say exactly what they say, with nothing explained away to fit a pattern. What remains genuinely open is named as open: Samaria and Ephesus. Matthew 28:19, left open beside them in an earlier version, is answered in Chapter 6 §E: it is neither a forgery nor a proof of three co-equal persons, and it is not a formula this study commends. There is one God, the Father, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

This study is shorter on certainty than its earlier versions were. Two of its arguments were checked and did not survive, and both have been removed rather than softened. That is what the checking is for.

Weighing it: Closing word — bears no weight either way; every argument it recalls is rated above.

Appendix A — Weight of Each Argument

Every substantive argument in this study, what it establishes, what the opposing reading can fairly answer, and how much weight it carries. Arguments an earlier version relied on and this version withdrew or demoted are marked.

Direct statement — scripture says it in so many words. **Strong inference** — follows closely; the alternative strains. **Reasonable inference** — more natural, but an honest reader can differ. **Corroboration only** — consistent with this position but roughly as consistent with the other. **Neutral** — settles nothing.

#	Argument	Where	Weight	What the other reading fairly answers
1	John's baptism was water, and preparatory by its own stated purpose	1 §A	Direct statement	—
2	Five witnesses set water and Spirit against each other as two baptisms	1 §B	Direct statement	The contrast is granted; water may still have continued alongside
3	Acts 1:5 is the last use of "baptize" before Acts 2:38	1 §B	Withdrawn — false	Acts 1:22, seventeen verses later, to the same men
4	Ezekiel 36:25-27 and Joel 2:28 promise spirit, not a repeated washing	1 §C	Corroboration only	Ezekiel 36:25 puts water and spirit in the same promise
5	"Baptized with the Holy Ghost" occurs six times, all naming Pentecost	2 §A	Direct statement on the count	A count of one English phrase is a fragile foundation

#	Argument	Where	Weight	What the other reading fairly answers
6	Ephesians 4:5's "one baptism" is the new birth	2 §B	Reasonable inference	"One" may be set against factional baptisms (1 Cor 1:13), not water
7	Hartill's "introduced into a new sphere of service" fits Pentecost	2 §B	Corroboration only	An outside source's framing, not a scriptural statement
8	1 Corinthians 12:13 is a Spirit-baptism with no water, for all believers	2 §C	Reasonable inference	It shows Spirit-baptism is spoken of outside the six, narrowing #5
9	The wording at Acts 2:38 is new and occurs nowhere earlier	3 §A	Direct statement	A new name to baptize into would explain new wording by itself
10	"In the name of" elsewhere means authority and identity, not a formula	3 §A	Reasonable inference	True of the idiom generally; does not settle any baptism verse
11	The four verses share one idiom with variant wordings	3 §B	Corrected	Three constructions: <i>epi</i> +dat, <i>eis</i> +acc (×2), <i>en</i> +dat
12	Acts 8:16 and 19:5 are word for word identical, so cannot be rated apart	3 §B	Direct statement	Tells against this study: it removes Samaria's settled status
13	None of the three prepositions supplies water; all attach to a name	3 §B	Strong inference	Variation is easier to explain if a rite is being described
14	<i>Lambanō</i> at Acts 2:38 means "manifest into evidence"	3 §C	Withdrawn — false	It is the ordinary future "ye shall receive" (λήμψεσθε)
15	Romans 10:9-10 states the requirement and omits water	3 §C	Reasonable inference	It was never framed as an exhaustive list
16	<i>Baptizō</i> does not supply its own element; scripture uses it of dry things	3 §C	Strong inference	Establishes water is not required by the word, not that it is absent
17	Acts 2:38's "for the remission of sins" is verbatim John's water phrase	3 §C	Concession	Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3 — the other reading's point, granted
18	Acts 2:41 reports three thousand baptized, with no wording attached	3 §D	Neutral	A mass baptism of three thousand looks like water
19	Acts 8:12 and 8:13 carry the idiom	4 §A	Withdrawn	Both read only "were baptized"; the name belongs to what Philip preached
20	Simon Magus at 8:13 was born again	4 §A	Withdrawn	Acts 8:21, 23 — "thy heart is not right"; the verse is unmarked
21	Acts 8:16's parenthesis describes a prior state, not a new act	4 §A	Reasonable inference	"Received the Holy Ghost" at v.17 reads against it
22	Samaria is settled as the new birth	4 §A	Demoted — held open	Identical Greek to Ephesus; v.17 is the other side's best verse

#	Argument	Where	Weight	What the other reading fairly answers
23	<i>Dechomai</i> and <i>lambanō</i> mark inward vs. manifested receiving in Acts	4 §A	Withdrawn — false	<i>Dechomai</i> is used of the word only; <i>lambanō</i> of the spirit throughout
24	<i>Prostassō</i> at Acts 10:48 means "ascribed or defined," not "commanded"	4 §B	Withdrawn — false	All 7 NT uses mean command; Acts 10:33, same chapter, same author
25	Luke never reports water applied at Cornelius's house	4 §B	Direct statement	Luke often omits the carrying-out of an instruction
26	Peter's Acts 11 defense never mentions water, under direct challenge	4 §B	Strong inference	He was answering a charge about eating with Gentiles
27	Saul's "Lord" at Acts 9:5 is the Romans 10:9 confession	4 §C	Withdrawn	He is asking who is speaking; he does not yet know
28	Saul's unmarked baptism at 9:18 shows the rule is falsifiable	4 §C	Reasonable inference	A rule built on marked cases proves little about them
29	Acts 22:16 joins baptism, sins washed away, and the Lord's name	4 §C	Concession	The other reading's verse, granted; the wording is not the idiom
30	Ephesus is held open because the source treatment is brief	4 §D	Withdrawn — false	That treatment is fuller than the one given to Samaria
31	Acts 19:5 is a parenthesis about what happened under Apollos	4 §D	Held open	It is a main clause after "when they heard this"; no break is marked
32	Three of five accounts carry the idiom	4 §E	Corrected	Four of five carry it; two of the four are held open
33	The eunuch, Lydia and the jailer are real water baptisms	5 §B-D	Concession	—
34	Paul baptized Crispus, Gaius and Stephanas's household under Grace	5 §E	Concession	1 Corinthians 1:14, 16 — granted outright
35	"Baptized in the name of Paul" (1 Cor 1:13) uses the idiom of belonging	5 §E	Strong inference	Paul's own untroubled use of the construction at issue
36	"Christ sent me not to baptize" (1 Cor 1:17)	5 §E	Direct statement	It deprioritizes the rite; it does not abolish it
37	Acts 2:38 stands at the opening of the Grace administration	6 §C	Corroboration only	Depends entirely on another study's framework
38	Water baptism belongs to administrations 3-4, not to Grace	6 §D	Withdrawn — contradicted by Chapter 5	At least six water baptisms occur under Grace
39	No epistle commands water baptism	6 §D	Direct statement	A universally assumed practice needs no command; Matthew 28:19 stands

#	Argument	Where	Weight	What the other reading fairly answers
40	Matthew 28:19's relation to Acts 2:38	6 §E	Resolved in this version (was open)	The commission states scope and object; Acts records the name used. Whether its "baptizing" meant water is left standing
41	Matthew 28:19's threefold clause is original to Matthew, not a later addition	6 §E	Direct statement	—
42	"In the name of" at Matthew 28:19 is a dedication "to," not an invocation of three co-equal persons	6 §E	Strong inference	The single word "name" could mean one name shared by three; held neutral here
43	Acts never records the threefold wording recited at any baptism	6 §E	Direct statement	An unrecorded practice is not proof of an absent one

Scripture Index

Exodus 14:22 Chapter 3 §C

Exodus 24:7 Chapter 6 §B

Ezekiel 36:25-27 Chapter 1 §C

Joel 2:28 Chapter 1 §C

Malachi 4:1 Chapter 1 §B

Matthew 1:24 Chapter 4 §B

Matthew 3:5-6 Chapter 1 §A

Matthew 3:11 Chapter 1 §B; Chapter 2 §A; Chapter 3 §C

Matthew 3:12 Chapter 1 §B

Matthew 3:13-17 Chapter 1 §A

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