

# ***WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER***

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## **TO THOSE WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS**

### **A NON-UNIVERSAL CULTURE AWARENESS INSTRUCTIONAL PUBLICATION**

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### **A MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER**

This is my one hundred and fifteenth monthly teaching letter and continues my tenth year of publication. We are now in a series of lessons pertaining to Paul's writings. We may digress to earlier scriptures in order to show how Paul addressed them, because before Paul many things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Yahshua Christ Himself revealed many things that had been kept secret, and Paul continued the process. Sometimes these hidden secrets are revealed over a span of years. Peter, for instance, didn't fully understand his sheet-vision for fourteen years, as explained in *Watchman's Teaching Letter* #111. But it fell on Paul to reveal the Gospel (good news) and take it to the nations which the 12 tribes had formed. It is incredible, but many do not know of what the Gospel consists, and the fact that it couldn't have been offered before the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Yahshua Christ. Thus, in the shortest definition possible, the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Yahshua Christ is the good news of the Gospel. The Gospel was hidden in veiled language in the Old Testament by the prophets, of which Paul often reminds us. That the Gospel was prophesied but kept hidden is disclosed by Paul at Eph. 3:5-6: "<sup>5</sup> **Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;** <sup>6</sup> **That the [lost Israel] nations should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.**" The KJV at this passage wrongly translates the Greek *ethnê* (meaning nations) as the Latin word Gentiles, which only muddies the water. It only makes sense that Israelites alone (lost or otherwise) could become "fellow heirs". Once Israel was divorced, she lost her status of being heir to the Covenant, but with the Gospel, she was purchased back! If we don't understand this fact, we really don't know the purpose of the Gospel which the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Yahshua Christ put into effect. And before this was accomplished, the Gospel could not be proclaimed to the Israel nations. The term "Israel" here should not be confused with the Canaanite variety of bad-fig-jews, of which the pureblooded tribe of Judah was/is not a part!

The revealing of the veiled language of the prophets concerning the Gospel was not exclusively disclosed to Paul. If one will examine the book of Acts, one will find that the other apostles began to understand, but it wasn't an immediate unveiling. Actually, the book of Acts is a book of transition from the Old Testament economy to the New, which took a period of approximately forty years to come to fruition. Neither does this mean that all of the prophetic mysteries were revealed to the apostles, for we can interpret nearly 2000 years of prophecy fulfilled by historical events since; even determining some prophecy formerly hidden being fulfilled in our own day. That is why Paul's writings are all so important, for many of the mysteries were revealed to him which the other apostles didn't receive. Inasmuch as the book of Revelation was not written until after Paul's death, John's revelation is an extension of the mysteries revealed by Yahshua and his disciples, which includes Paul. Therefore, it was never revealed to Paul the mysteries which John received. It is noteworthy that Yahshua Christ never proclaimed the Gospel before His death, as it would have been premature, for the price hadn't yet been paid.

It should be made positively clear to every Israelite that before the time of Yahshua's death on the cross there was absolutely no Redemption, and that that Redemption was for Israelites only! None of Yahshua's disciples had any idea that He was going to die or that his death would bring Redemption. Luke 18:31-34 records: "<sup>31</sup> **Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.** <sup>32</sup> **For he shall be delivered unto the nations [*ethnesin*], and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:** <sup>33</sup> **And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.** <sup>34</sup> **And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.**"

With this passage, we have a problem where the translators used the Latin term "Gentiles" for the Greek word *ethnesin*, the Dative Plural of *ethnos*. But what I really wanted to show you is that Yahshua's disciples "understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." Secondly, to understand that "nations" would be a better rendering than the confusing Latin term "Gentiles" at verse 32, let's go to Acts 4:26-27 for verification, where the Greek word *ethnesin* is also used: "<sup>26</sup> **The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against Yahweh, and against his Christ.** <sup>27</sup> **For of a truth against thy holy child Yahshua, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles [sic nations, *ethnesin*], and the people of Israel, were gathered together ..."**

Here the two rulers mentioned are Herod and Pontius Pilate, so we have to assume that the two ruled nations [*ethnesin*] represented are Judaea and Galilee, though Judaea ceased to exist as a separate district and was annexed to the Roman province of Syria at the banishment of Herod Archelaus in 6 A.D. While it is not difficult to identify the "rulers" mentioned, it is not as easy to identify the "people of Israel" here. Herod Antipas began as tetrarch over Galilee and Perea and was the Herod which ordered the execution of John the Baptist and later presided at Yahshua's trial

(Luke 23:6-12), so he has to be the same Herod of Acts 4:26-27. Pontius Pilate was the fifth Roman prefect of Judaea (ruled 26 to 36 A.D.), who issued the official order sentencing Yahshua to His death by crucifixion at the insistence of the bad-fig-jews (Matt. 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 18-19).

As I said, the identity of the “people of Israel” here may be a little more difficult as it may be a misnomer. As for Herod, his genetic background was Edomite; and as for Pontius Pilate, he may have been an Israelite of the Zerah branch of Judah, as were the Caesars of Rome. But if the term “Israel” at Acts 4:27 means pure Israelites at the time of Yahshua’s ministry, though there were a few, they would have been few and far between. I will repeat here what I said in *Watchman’s Teaching Letter #111*: At this point in time, there were not even ½ of one percent of the tribe of Judah, Benjamin or Levi represented in Judaea, and nearly 0% of the other tribes. And chances are that some of whom Peter was addressing were actually of Edomite or Canaanite extraction. So when Peter is recorded as saying “Ye men of Israel”, this misconception on his part must be taken in its proper context. At Acts 3:12, Peter commits the same miscue where he says: “And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel ...” I then quoted from *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, compiled and edited by Spiros Zodhiates, on the Greek word #2453 translated “Jews”, page 779, where Zodhiates explained how many in Judaea at that time started to use “Israelite” as being synonymous with “Judahite”. Ironically, most of the citizens of Judaea at that time were of Canaanite and Edomite extraction, so the term “Judahite” is also out-of-context in the early chapters of Acts.

While Zodhiates is not an entirely perfect source, it clearly demonstrates how the application of this term came into misuse. It also shows why there was a lack of discrimination concerning the identification of the citizens of Judaea: between those of true Judah and those of Edomite/Canaanite extraction, and how the mishandling the two separate terms “Judah” and “Israel” became errantly synonymous. (Read again *WTL #111*)

As I mentioned before, the book of Acts is a book of transition, and baptism was one of those things making a shift from the Old Testament economy to the New. And like the message of the Gospel, it took a while to change. To show you this we will go to two passages at Acts 18:24-25 and Acts 19:1-4: (1) “<sup>24</sup> **And a certain [good-fig] Judahite named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.** <sup>25</sup> **This man was instructed in the way of Yahweh; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of Yahweh, knowing only the baptism of John ...**” and, (2) “<sup>1</sup> **And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,** <sup>2</sup> **He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.** <sup>3</sup> **And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.** <sup>4</sup> **Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Yahshua.**” From this it should be strikingly clear that John’s mode of baptism

from the Old Testament economy was not the same as that of the New. New Testament baptism in Christ comes not with water at the hands of man, but with the Spirit upon hearing and understanding and accepting the Word. What else can a true Israelite accept and believe other than the Gospel?; that being Redemption through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Yahshua Christ. Repeating: It is essential to notice from these two passages that John's water baptism was not sufficient after Christ's death, although it continued to be practiced for some time after that! And it took Paul to make a final judgment on the matter, but we will save that explanation for later!

To show you that baptism was a ritual from the Old Testament economy, all we need to do is go to Hebrews 9:6-12: “<sup>6</sup> **Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.** <sup>7</sup> **But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:** <sup>8</sup> **The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:** <sup>9</sup> **Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;** <sup>10</sup> **Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.** <sup>11</sup> **But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;** <sup>12</sup> **Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”** What we have here are most of the Old Testament ritual laws that ceased upon Christ's sacrificial death!

I underlined the word “washings” here as it is the Greek word *baptismois*, Dative Plural of *baptismos* which is a noun and counterpart to the verb *baptizo*. It is explained in a footnote under the subtitle “Baptism” by Philip Schaff, in his *History of the Christian Church*: “The ‘divers baptisms’ in Heb. 9:10 (in the Revision ‘washings’) probably include all the ceremonial purifications of the Jews [sic Israelites], whether by bathing (Lev. 11:25; 14:9; Num. 19:7), or washing (Num. 19:7; Mark 7: 8), or sprinkling (Lev. 14:7; Num. 19:19).” In other words, water baptism is an Old Testament ceremonial washing, and it had its place in the rituals of the Tabernacle. There are a lot of people who have no idea of the extensive use of baptism in Old Testament times. The Strong's number for *baptismos* is 909 and says:

“**909** βαπτισμός [*baptismos* /bap-tis-mos/] noun or neuter: masculine. From 907 ... Four occurrences; AV translates as ‘washing’ three times, and ‘baptism’ once. **1** a washing, purification effected by means of water. **1A** of washing prescribed by the Mosaic law (Heb 9:10) which seems to mean an exposition of the difference between the washings prescribed by the Mosaic law and Christian baptism.” It is noteworthy that #909 is from #907. In other words *baptismos* is from *baptizo*. Therefore, we should consult Strong's on #907:

“**907** βαπτίζω [*baptizo* /bap-tid-zo/] verb. From a derivative of 911 ... 80 occurrences; AV translates as ‘baptize’ 76 times, ‘wash’ twice, ‘baptist’ once, and

‘baptized + 2258’ once. **1** to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk). **2** to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one’s self, bathe. **3** to overwhelm. **Additional Information:** (Not to be confused with 911, bapto.) The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words [bapto and baptizo]. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be ‘dipped’ (bapto) into boiling water and then ‘baptised’ (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism ... Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle! *Bible Study Magazine*, James Montgomery Boice, May 1989.” I should point out that this quotation from Strong’s used Mark 16:16 as a reference, which I deleted with ellipses, as verses 9 through 20 are known to be forged, not being in the two oldest ancient manuscripts.

This pickle illustration is really a good example for understanding the meaning of baptism, by either water or fire. While water washes both our clothes and physical bodies clean, the fire baptism predicted by John the Baptist has an even greater cleansing effect. When high temperature heat is applied to metal, bringing it to a liquid state, the impurities (dross) will come to the top of the vessel holding the liquid metal where it can be skimmed off, leaving only pure metal of whatever kind it might be. Of course, we cannot have our bodies cast into a high temperature blast furnace and survive, but the fire baptism by the Holy Spirit will cleanse us from the false doctrines (dross) we have absorbed since our birth. And most of those false doctrines have come from the pulpits of nominal churchianity! Why is it that we can’t take John the Baptist at his word at Matt. 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 [Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire ...**”?

Or do we do like the Pharisees and clean the outside of the cup while leaving the inside (inner-man) contaminated? I am aware that when it is relating to the Pharisees it is referring to their corrupted genetics – while for pure Adam-man it would be his corrupted dogmas – but water baptism can only clean the outside of the body while fire can purge the inner man of his corrupted concepts. It would appear that water baptism has become the lazy man’s religion! In other words, one can be baptized in water in the corrupted name “Jesus”, which was, and still is Yahshua, and then proceed to do little-to-nothing for the building of the Kingdom! It was stated in part at verses 7 & 9 cited above, “... for the errors of the people ... that could not make him that did the service perfect”. These sundry rituals, including baptism, couldn’t make the man perfect back then, and still can’t today! How can anyone with a straight face proclaim that these Old Testament rituals will wash a man’s sins (errors) away? Of course, one can see how a few men with the inclinations of a tyrant or a dictator might wish to do so!

In stark contrast to these Old Testament rituals is the baptism spoken of at Eph. 5:26-27, 30: “<sup>26</sup> **That he [Yahshua] might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing**

of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious ekklesia, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish ... <sup>30</sup> For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” It can’t get any cleaner than this, for verse 30 speaks of a pure race of people “of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones” being washed (baptized) by “the washing of the water by the word”. Here “the washing of the water” is only symbolic of how we are washed by His spoken Word! So it’s a pure racial people cleansed by the fire of the Holy Spirit in the power of His spoken Word, a people with all of the dross (false concepts) skimmed away. In short, a pure people with pure perception! Do we really want to trade that for water baptism which can’t do the job? The Word is the cleansing vehicle, not water.

A good place to go next would be 1 Cor. 12:12-14: “<sup>12</sup> For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit are we [*the 12 tribes of Israel*] all baptized into one body, whether we be [*of the tribe of*] Judah or [*the lost Israel*] nations, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For the body is not one member, but many.” I took the prerogative of amplifying this passage so the reader might better comprehend what is being said, for the word “all” must be qualified as meaning exclusively Israelites. Therefore, as water baptism was exclusively for Old Testament Israelites, so too, is the Holy Spirit baptism by the washing of the water by Word for the New. Who else but Israel did you think it was talking about?

A couple more water baptisms are recorded at Acts. Let’s take a look at the one at 8:27, 34-36: “<sup>27</sup> And he [*Philip*] arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship ... <sup>34</sup> And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? <sup>35</sup> Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Yahshua. <sup>36</sup> 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?*” Now right away as soon as some read Ethiopian, they will erroneously assume black man. There is one thing we can be sure of, the Spirit would not have sent an angel to Philip directing him to Gaza had not this Ethiopian eunuch been a pureblooded Israelite of one of the twelve tribes! If the passage at 1 Cor. 12:12-14 was directed to Israelites, so too, with this passage concerning the Ethiopian eunuch! It is easy enough to understand that this “Ethiopian” must have been an Israelite dwelling in Ethiopia once one realizes that Philip met him as he was returning to Ethiopia from Jerusalem, where he had already been to worship. Death was the penalty for a foreigner attempting to enter the Temple, as Josephus attests in his histories, and for which see also Acts 21:28. Additionally, this “Ethiopian” was found reading Isaiah, and the quote recorded at Acts 8:32-33 is from the Greek Septuagint version of the prophet. Now there probably were a few blacks at that time in Ethiopia, but this eunuch was not one of them. The problem is, a few of the authors of various commentaries and Bible dictionaries will mislead the reader on this subject. Not

only do these authors confuse the issue of what kind of people occupied Ethiopia at the time of this eunuch, but they will mistakenly claim that Moses married an Ethiopian woman – in their minds meaning a black woman! The *Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, edited by Merrill C. Tenney says in part on page 262, under the topic “Ethiopia”, “The Ethiopians had skin of different appearance (Jer. 13:23); the Greek name *Aithíops*, burnt-face, shows the color to have been dark. Pictures on monuments show that they were a mixed race, some Negro, some Semitic, some Caucasian.” First of all, Mr. Tenney, Caucasians are Semitic, so what do you mean “some Semitic, some Caucasian”? Mr. Tenney, do you consider the racially mixed bad-fig-jews to be Semitic, or arabs as far as that goes? While some of what Mr. Tenney presents here is true, the reader can instinctively see he is attempting to make all Ethiopians black, or mixed with black! And it has been my experience, when speaking to people about the subject of Ethiopians, nearly all of them believe that when the Bible speaks of Ethiopians, that they are black, and that Moses married a black Ethiopian woman! The reason they believe this is because that is what they have heard from the pulpit of their church or in Sunday-school. I have found it is almost impossible to reason with such people!

One more topic should be addressed here, and that is the matter of Jeremiah 13:23 where he says: “**Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.**” It should be pointed out that by the time of Jeremiah, Egypt had been overrun by negroids from central Africa. Also by Jeremiah’s time the Egyptians had started to use negroids to fight in their army, and like America today, it swiftly proceeded to become a mulatto nation. That is the main reason why Jeremiah solemnly warned the Judaeans not to go there. And it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that while Egypt was being overrun, so also was Ethiopia. That’s not saying that everyone in Egypt and Ethiopia became a mulatto, but many did. So Jeremiah wasn’t saying anything out of order when he asked, “... Can the Ethiopian change his skin ...?” And undoubtedly, in this isolated case, he meant black skin.

To cite another source which might clear up at least some of the confusion on this subject, I will go to the *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* with editors Walter A. Elwell and Philip W. Comfort on page 450, under the topic “Ethiopia” and subtopic “Location”: “... At that time it [*the Egyptian loanword Cush*] was used of [Ethiopia] a small area between the second and third cataracts of the Nile. Later on, during the [Egyptian] New Kingdom period (c. 1570-1160 BC), it was applied to a larger area that extended some distance to the south. This broader designation corresponds geographically to the modern lands of Nubia and northern Sudan. It is misleading to think that the Ethiopia of Scripture is the same territory as the Ethiopia of modern times, which in an earlier period was called Abyssinia. The name Ethiopia was of Greek origin, and according to some interpreters means ‘burnt-faced’ (cf. Acts 8:27). This tradition has been perpetuated by the Arabic name Beled es Sudan, or ‘land of the blacks,’ from which the designation Sudan comes.” While this explanation about Ethiopia may not be perfect in every respect, it surely makes a little sense. But to add to the confusion, there were two different countries named Cush (the one south of Egypt as described here,

and Hindu Cush in the area today we know as Afghanistan. So from which of these two lands of Cush did Moses get his wife? The answer would be the one where the Midianites had settled, for Moses' wife was a racial Midianite, a descendant of Abraham by Keturah. Another problem concerning Moses' in-laws lies in the fact that they are also called Kenites. Actually, the Kenites were the descendants of Cain fathered by Satan, and surely Yahweh wouldn't have smiled on that! The only other answer is that the Kenites had settled parts of the same land of Cush before the Midianites had arrived there. If that is correct, it would explain why, at Exodus 2:16-17, after some shepherds gave Reuel's daughters a hard time while they were attempting to water their family's flock that Moses had to fight them off. If Reuel and his daughters were living in an area named after the Kenites, it would account for why this Midianite family is referred to as Kenites, or called after the geographic designation. Here these shepherds were interfering with this Midianite family's source of living, and isn't that exactly what the Kenite-Cain children of Satan by Eve, whom we know as bad-fig-jews, are doing today to the White people?

By this time, one might be wondering what all this has to do with baptism. What is important here, when Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, is that the baptized person was not a black or race-mixed person. It also shows that Philip hadn't yet fully comprehended the changeover from the Old Testament water baptism to the New Testament Spirit baptism. That revelation would come later, through Paul's ministry. Thus, the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized by the Old Testament criterion rather than the New. That brings us to the decision we have to make since Paul made his final pronouncement on water baptism: Would we rather have John the Baptist's Old Testament water baptism or Yahshua Christ's New Testament Spirit baptism by the washing of the water by the Word? I would assure you that the Word of Yahweh is a much better cleansing agent than H<sub>2</sub>O.

I have another baptism in Acts to mention besides that of the Ethiopian eunuch, and that would be the baptism of Saul of Tarsus, whom most know as Paul. Paul's baptism can be found at both Acts 9:18 and 22:16. Actually, the passage at Acts 9 suggests two separate baptisms for Paul, so let's read verses 17 & 18: “<sup>17</sup> **And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, Yahweh, even Yahshua, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.** <sup>18</sup> **And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.**”

Here it appears that Paul first received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then was baptized to wash away his sins. This is amazing, for in many denominations calling themselves “holiness churches”, they demand this happen in the reverse order. Also, it is worthy of note that Paul received two baptisms; (1) by the Holy Spirit, and (2) by Old Testament water baptism. To understand why these two baptisms happened we need to go to the other account of Paul's conversion at Acts 22, and key in on verse 12: “**And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the [true] Judahites which dwelt there.**” So we see here that Ananias was a devout

man according to the law, and being so he wasn't yet about to discontinue the Old Testament ritual of water baptism.

We have to remember that Paul himself was no dummy when it came to the law, for he was educated at the feet of Gamaliel, (Acts 22:3). Some might use this evidence that Paul was baptized twice to argue that every Christian should do likewise, but that brings up another problem for, John the Baptist indicated a change in the mode of baptism rather than two separate baptisms. You see, like the sacrificing of animals and birds couldn't pay Israel's sin debt, neither could water wash Israel's sins away. Water baptism, and the other sacrificial rituals, are what was nailed to the cross.

Somewhere along the line, Paul began to realize, probably through the several revelations he was given, that water baptism was no longer needed. We have to remember that Paul, a student of the law, had himself practiced baptism several times in his ministry, and therefore it would be a very difficult decision for him to reverse his stance on the matter. But change his position he did, at 1 Cor. 1:17, saying: "**For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.**" Since Paul was not sent by Christ to baptize (and surely he was referring to water baptism rather than Spirit baptism), neither is anyone else, since he made that "Holy Spirit-breathed" pronouncement. I say "Holy Spirit-breathed" because Paul's writings are no less inspired than the other scriptures in our Bible. That is made clear by Peter at 2 Pet. 3:15-16: "<sup>15</sup> **And account *that* the longsuffering of our Master *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;** <sup>16</sup> **As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.**" Notice here that Peter compares Paul's epistles, and places them in the same category with "**the other scriptures**"! Therefore, all Paul bashers take warning, for if one bashes Paul, one automatically bashes Peter. And if one condemns Peter, one automatically becomes guilty of condemning Yahshua Christ Himself, who called him to be a fisher of men. And if one indirectly condemns both Peter and Christ by bashing Paul, one also condemns the prophet Jeremiah, for Jeremiah said at 16:16: "**Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith Yahweh, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.**" Can you now see how far-reaching such a condemnation can go?

Paul's decision to no longer baptize with water is part of Holy Writ. By comparison it is equivalent to a Supreme Court decision, only Paul's decision was not made by nine fallible men, but by the Holy Spirit. In analogy, Supreme Court decisions are but tinker-toys. But to use our present way of expressing Paul's decision, today we would call it a "landmark case".

Actually, the Old Testament rituals were shadows of things to come. It's like a man who wants to buy a beautiful shade tree to place in his front yard. So he goes to a nursery to shop for a half-grown tree, since he doesn't want to wait for several years for it to mature. He then spies a tree that takes his fancy, and asks the salesman the price.

Upon being informed of the price for all the binding of the roots, transportation and excavation, he exclaims “\$1500.<sup>00</sup> seems a bit high to me”. The salesman then replies to his client, “Well, I could sell you the shadow for \$25.<sup>00</sup>”. So the moral to the story is: Would we settle for the shadow, or would we rather have the real thing?

But for what reason did Paul finally proclaim that he came not to baptize but rather preach the Gospel? If one will check verses 11 through 16 just before 1 Cor. 1:17, one will find that at Corinth there started to be division among the ekklesia regarding whom was baptized by whom. It was breaking up into splinter groups, and Paul had no choice but to take drastic action. Had he not taken the bull by the horns from the start, chances are we would not have 1st and 2nd Corinthians in our Bibles today! Water baptism still divides assemblies!

The same attitude prevails today as it did in Corinth at 1 Cor. ch. 1. Water baptism gives leverage for a preacher to become a tyrant or dictator among his members. Members will boast that they were baptized by a certain pastor, and if one was not baptized by that particular **god-man**, it wasn't done right and is null and void. Church history is replete with arguments of just who can be baptized, or how water baptism should take place. There are the forward dunk advocates and the backward dunk advocates. There must be at least a thousand ideas concerning what some consider proper. Paul, seeing the folly of it all, pronounced it nonessential, as it had become a hindrance.

Paul said at 1 Cor. 1:14-15: “<sup>14</sup> **I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;** <sup>15</sup> **Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.**” After this, it is never recorded that Paul ever baptized again with water, showing the superiority of preaching, (the washing of the water by the Word, (oral or written))!