

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 seventeenth monthly teaching letter and continues my tenth year of publication. We are now in a series of lessons pertaining to Paul's writings. In *WTL* #'s 112 & 115, I covered a lot of Scripture explaining what the Bible teaches concerning baptism. There are a lot of misconceptions about this subject, and it appears there is still a need to discuss the matter further. In *WTL* #112, I referred to several Scriptures where there were baptisms, but not a drop of water was involved. I cited Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 10:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Exod. 14:16; Eph. 5:25-27 & Col. 2:10-12 as examples. I challenge anyone to find water baptism in any of these passages!

The Bible does speak of water baptism, though, and in the Old Testament it is referred to as "washings", and was practiced long before the time of John the Baptist. Being the son of a Levite, John had every right and authority to do so! John the Baptist was also aware that it wouldn't be long until the mode of water baptism would be changed to Spirit baptism, and said as much at 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 ...**"

Then at Acts 1:4-5 Yahshua Himself commanded his disciples of this very same thing, saying: "⁴ **And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.** ⁵ **For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**" We might brush John the Baptist's announcement aside as non-inspired, but what are we going to do with Christ's Words? How much more evidence do we need to show clearly that water baptism does not wash away sins?

Christ wasn't the last to give this admonition concerning the Holy Spirit. Later, Peter was given the same inspiration at Acts 11:15-16, where it states: "¹⁵ **And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.** ¹⁶ **Then remembered I the word of Yahshua, how that he said, John indeed baptized with**

water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” Notice here the word “but” which can mean “rather”, “however” or “instead”. This was one of Peter’s traits – to remember something after-the-fact. Remember, it took Peter fourteen years to fully comprehend his four-cornered sheet-vision! The fact that Peter remembered Christ’s words concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a great admission on his part as it exposes Peter’s over-emphasis of water baptism, especially at Acts 2:38, (and he had to be told many things 3 times):

“ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yahshua Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” With this statement, Peter established a flawed criteria, a position for which he would later have to admit was wrong. To see that, it will be necessary to go to Acts 10:43-45: “⁴³ **To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.** ⁴⁴ **While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.** ⁴⁵ **And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the ethnê also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.**” Yes, Peter then went on to offer baptism by water, but this passage proves beyond all doubt that water baptism was not necessary for the remission of sins, nor was it essential for the receiving of the Holy Spirit! In other words, this passage nullified what Peter said at Acts 2:38! Yet, many today still hold to a powerless water baptism for the removing of sins! So not only were those of the circumcision “astonished”, but so was Peter.

It is no wonder that the Holy Spirit fell on these ethnê, [plural of ethnos, 1484, *Nation*] as Peter was preaching from the prophets concerning the attributes and sufferings predicted for Christ from Isaiah chapter 53. And this demonstrates the power of Yahweh’s Word with which we are to be washed and how water baptism is a poor substitute. Just read Isaiah 53 if you don’t think so. Peter didn’t realize it, but he was baptizing these ethnê with the washing of the water by the Word, and Yahweh honored it with His Spirit! I’m not trying to ridicule anyone who may have received water baptism in the past – I’m just trying to put it in its proper place – and that would be in the Old Testament with the other Temple rituals which were only shadows of things to come. Sure, John the Baptist baptized Yahshua Christ, and it was the proper thing to do for that era of time.

I would suggest that the reader once again compare Acts 2:38 with Acts 10:43-45, as the criteria of the two are entirely different. In the first, Peter recommends water as a cleansing agent, and in the latter the cleansing agent is Christ’s suffering and bleeding, as portrayed by Isaiah chapter 53. The reason Peter and his entourage of the circumcision were so “astonished” is because they had formed a faulty premise based upon man’s reasoning of how they thought this matter should be. We should be just as astonished today if we follow the criteria laid down by Peter at Acts 2:38. There is nothing more confusing today than to review the creeds of the various Baptist denominations! Not that there aren’t many good, well-meaning folk among them. If one will make a comparative study of their belief system(s), one will discover they can hardly agree on anything. They even go to the extreme of using circumcision, as found in the

Old Testament, to support their theories on the subject. For instance, one can ask a thousand Baptists what age one should reach to be baptized and one will get a thousand answers. If they would just study Acts 10:43-45 in its proper context and ascertain how Peter and those of the circumcision were “astonished”, they might become “astonished” also. “Astonished” because at Acts 10:43-45, water baptism was not essential on Yahweh’s part to impart His Holy Spirit. Otherwise, Yahweh would have waited until after water baptism to impart His Holy spirit. It all boils down to which was more important, Peter’s words at Acts 2:38 or Yahweh’s action at Acts 10:43-45? What it amounts to is: Yahweh didn’t follow Peter’s criteria! Nor should we! This shows the danger of not studying the entire context of the Bible, and instead simply majoring in one passage.

After the Holy Spirit had fallen on these ethnê to whom Peter was preaching, he, as an afterthought, said at Acts 10:47-48: “⁴⁷ **Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?** ⁴⁸ **And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Yahshua. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.**” From Peter’s words here it should be clearly evident that it was not essential to be baptized with water to receive the Holy Spirit! Yet, that is the view of the Baptist churches. In the following chapter at Acts 11:17, Peter explained what had happened with the ethnê receiving the Holy Spirit: “¹⁷ **Forasmuch then as Yahweh gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Sovereign Yahshua Christ; what was I, that I could withstand Yahweh?**” If Peter understood that he couldn’t “withstand Yahweh”, who are we to insist that they should first have received water baptism, and after that the Holy Spirit? But that is what we are doing when we adhere only to Acts 2:38! And to cling only to Acts 2:38 while neglecting Acts 10:43-45 is to “withstand Yahweh”! Peter couldn’t have stated it better, and by making such a statement, he was admitting he had been wrong!

Those who hold that there are two baptisms should consider Eph. 4:4-6 which states: “⁴ **There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;** ⁵ **One Master, one faith, one baptism,** ⁶ **One *singular*-Elohim and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.**” There is more to this passage than I wish to go into at this time, but you will notice there is only “one baptism”. Which is it: water baptism or Spirit baptism?

As there is but one baptism, so too, there is but one gospel which Gal. 1:8-9 makes quite clear: “⁸ **But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** ⁹ **As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.**” Any gospel that proclaims two separate baptisms would fall into the category of “any other gospel”, bringing the curse of this passage down upon the head of anyone, once receiving light concerning this matter.

PROBLEMATIC ORIGINS OF BAPTISM

The origins of baptism present some problems. From the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. A-C, page 464 under the heading “Baptism

[Sacramental View]” and subtitle “Biblical basis” ¶4, we read in part: “Baptism as a rite of immersion was not begun by Christians but was taken by them from Jewish and pagan forms and given the new meaning attached to the promise of Christ. Daily ablutions were common in pagan circles and even the Jews practiced a regular baptism for proselytes ...” To demonstrate that the bad-fig-jews were also practicing water baptism, I will reproduce an edited excerpt from my essay *Special Notice To All Who Deny Two Seedline*, #8:

“JEWISH” PROSELYTIZING

This is another aspect which should be delved into concerning the cursed bad-fig-Judaeen *nation* at the time of the Messiah. Without this understanding, it is difficult to comprehend the conditions surrounding the bad-fig-Judaeen *nation* at that period. Once that view is understood and grasped, a very different view will be perceived. This is a topic which has **NOT** been addressed, at any length, by the clergy of nominal churchianity or, for that matter, among those who understand the Israel Identity message. It is paramount that we understand the complexities of that period, **for if we don't**, we simply cannot fathom the elements which were coming into play during that time. Once we comprehend this, we will not be prone to make ludicrous statements such as those which Ted R. Weiland has spewed (vomited) out.

I will first introduce the general story and then present the documentation. First, let's consider the Scripture where Messiah condemned the bad-fig-jews for their proselytizing, Matthew 23:15:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

In Matthew chapter 3, we are told of John the Baptist and his endeavor to prepare the way for the Messiah by baptizing and conversion. It seems here, according to the story, the Pharisees and Sadducees came and inquired of John what he was doing. Forthrightly, John informed the bad-fig-jews, he didn't baptize “vipers”. Why were the Pharisees and Sadducees so interested in what John the Baptist was doing? Many may be unaware of the fact that the Pharisees and Sadducees were also baptizing their converts. The requirement to become a bad-fig-jewish proselyte was firstly, to be circumcised, and when the wound was healed, then, secondly, the candidate was baptized. The bad-fig-jews considered that when their candidate went down into the water he was a heathen, and when he came back up, he was an Israelite. This is fantastic, for a non-Israelite could be baptized thousands of times and it would not make him an Israelite! And just whom were these bad-fig-jews baptizing and making proselytes? Many were of the seven Canaanite nations. Now some excerpts from pages 55 to 63 from *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* volume 2, by John Lightfoot:

“Whensoever any heathen will betake himself, and be joined to the covenant of Israel, and place himself under the wings of the divine Majesty, and take the yoke of the law upon him, voluntary circumcision, baptism, and oblation, are required ... That was a common axiom ... *No man is a proselyte until he be circumcised and baptized ...*

[because none becomes a proselyte without circumcision and baptism] according to the judgment [or right] of the Sanhedrim ... *If with a proselyte his sons and his daughters are made proselytes also, that which is done by their father redounds to their good ...* A heathen woman, if she is made a proselytess, when she is now big with child,— the child needs not baptism ... *for the baptism of his mother serves for him for baptism ... ‘If an Israelite take a Gentile child ... or find a Gentile infant, and baptizeth him in the name of a proselyte,— behold, he is a proselyte’ ...* First, you see baptism inseparably joined to the circumcision of proselytes. There was, indeed, some little distance of time; for ‘they were not baptized till the pain of circumcision was healed, because water might be injurious to the wound.’ But certainly baptism ever followed ... Secondly, Observing from these things which have been spoken, how very known and frequent the use of baptism was among the Jews, the reason appears very easy why the Sanhedrim, by their messengers, inquired not of John concerning the reason of baptism, but concerning the authority of the baptizer; not what baptism meant, but whence he had a license so to baptize, John 1:25 ... For the admission of a proselyte was reckoned no light matter ... *Proselytes are dangerous to Israel, like the itch ...* When a proselyte was to be circumcised, they first asked him concerning the sincerity of his conversion to Judaism: whether he offered not himself to proselytism for the obtaining of riches, for fear, or for love to some Israelite woman ... As soon as he grows whole of the wound of circumcision, they bring him to baptism; and being placed in the water, they again instruct him in some weightier and in some lighter commands of the law. Which being heard ... *he plunges himself, and comes up, and behold, he is as an Israelite in all things ...*

“... But a proselyte was baptized not only into the washing-off of that Gentile pollution, nor only thereby to be transplanted into the religion of the Jews; but that, by the most accurate rite of translation that could possibly be, he might so pass into an Israelite, that, being married to an Israelite woman, he might produce a free and legitimate seed, and an undefiled offspring. Hence, servants that were taken into a family were baptized,— and servants also that were to be made free: not so much because they were defiled with heathen uncleanness, as that, by that rite ... *becoming Israelites in all respects*, they might be more fit to match [*mate*] with Israelites, and their children be accounted as Israelites. And hence the sons of proselytes, in following generations, were circumcised indeed, but not baptized. They were circumcised, that they might take upon themselves the obligation of the law; but they needed not baptism, because they were already Israelites. ... The baptism of proselytes was the bringing over of Gentiles into the Jewish religion ...” [“Sanhedrim” Lightfoot’s spelling.]

You can see from this, things at that period were not at all like we are led to believe. By-and-large the people of that bad-fig-jewish nation had so corrupted themselves genetically, there were hardly any pureblooded Israelites left among them. Here you have the facts laid out before you, so that it will save you a lot of homework on your part. All you have to do is verify them. It would appear the time has come for some who follow the teachings of anti-seedliners such as the likes of Ted R. Weiland to wake up and get the wax out of their ears. Here is substantial evidence that the anti-seedliners are not as informed as they pretend to be. Not only are the clergy of today

blind to the conditions of that nation, but we have those in Israel Identity who have been trained in the Judeo-churchianity theological centers who aren't much better. It takes a lot of time and effort, sweat and blood, to put research like this together. Furthermore, if one cannot see the parallel between what is going on today, with all of the mixed-racial marriages, just as the Judeans of that day were taking strange wives and strange husbands, one has to be blind! They were taking others in marriage who were often descended from the seven Canaanite nations. There were some pureblooded Benjamites who were still in Galilee, from whom Yahshua took all of His disciples except one, as there were some Essenes in Judaea. [end of excerpt taken from *Special Notice To All Who Deny Two Seedline*, #8]

It is my hope that this is beginning to give the reader a better perspective of what kind of baptizing was going on during the time of Christ in Judaea.

While we are on the subject of baptism, we shouldn't overlook the passage at Mark 16:16: "**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**" Did Yahshua Christ really say these words? Mark 16:9-20 lacks original authority, as they are verses which were added a few centuries A.D. later to a gospel which (rightly or wrongly) was thought to be incomplete. Mark 16:16 does not indicate what it is that one "believeth not" for which he is "damned", while 2 Thess 2:7-12 is very specific. Mark 16:16 leaves the reader completely in the dark as to whom, what, when, where, why or how. 2 Thess. 2:12, is much clearer where it says "**That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**" If one will read verses 7 through 12 of 2 Thessalonians, one will not be left wanting for understanding. Also, many of the false doctrines which are floating around today usually use the last 12 verses of Mark 16 for support!

But Mark 16:16 is not the only problematic passage on baptism to consider. There is also Matthew 28:19, where it says: "**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost**". This passage has also been disputed on textual grounds, but in the opinion of many scholars some of the words may still be regarded as part of the true text of Matthew. However, doubt exists among some whether they may represent verbiage in addition to what Christ actually said. Such evidence found at Acts 2:38; 10:48 (cf. 8:16; 19:5), supported by Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3, suggesting that baptism in early Christianity was administered, not in the threefold name, but only in the name of Yahshua Christ. Thus, it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with clear, fixed intent the last two verses of Matthew. Of course, those who maintain a trinity of gods rather than a *singular*-Elohim idolize these last two verses of Matthew. Mark 1:8 should come into play here where it says: "**I [John the Baptist] indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.**" Notice it **DOESN'T** say: "I [John the Baptist] indeed have baptized you with water: but He Yahshua shall baptize you again with more water"! But that is how the majority read it! So anyone since Pentecost who is relying on water baptism in the names of a trinity of gods to be significant for salvation is deceiving himself. It is simply amazing the number of people who still rely on water baptism as a foundation for their salvation!

If all of these misunderstandings aren't bad enough, many use John 3:5 as support for water baptism where it says: "**Yahshua answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Yahweh.**" Many uninspired scholars understand these words as containing a reference to water baptism. Just how they do this is unclear, for if "water" implies water baptism and "Spirit" implies Spirit baptism, an erroneous claim for two baptisms is contrived. The "water" of this verse is simply the breaking of the water surrounding the child during the birth process; it has nothing to do with any kind of baptism! The "Spirit" in this verse is in reference to a race of people who had the Spirit of Yahweh breathed into them at Genesis 2:7. All non-Adamites have not this Spirit (and again, it shouldn't be confused with Spirit baptism)! Had they only read the next verse 6, they would have understood that the "water" is the "flesh". And while we are at it, Yahshua didn't say at verse 3, "... Except a man be born again ...", but rather "... Except a man be born from above ...", which simply means to be born of the heavenly White Adamic race. That is why Paul was able to say at Rom. 8:16: "**The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of Yahweh.**" How can water baptism "beareth witness" of anything? Again I will say, water baptism had its time and place in the Old Testament rituals, and those rituals were to continue until Yahshua finally made the ultimate sacrifice of Himself, as Daniel said at 9:26-27: "²⁶ **And after threescore and two weeks shall [Yahshua] Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince [Romans under Titus] that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.** ²⁷ **And he [Yahshua Messiah] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the [Old Testament] sacrifice and the oblation to cease [with His own sacrificial death] ...**" Now water baptism is in the same category as the sacrificial animals that were killed in the Temple. It was those ritual laws which were nailed to the cross. Therefore to continue Old Testament water baptism after Pentecost is superfluous. If we are going to continue water baptism, we need to go back and revive all of the Old Testament Temple rituals! The practice of water baptism was not immediately discontinued, but through the leading of the Holy Spirit Peter discovered and said: "**... what was I, that I could withstand Yahweh?**"

Some may conclude that I am bringing all of this forward assuming that I was never baptized with water, which is not true. I was baptized when I was about 12 to 13 years old by immersion in a river. But I look back on it now with a different perspective than the church I was going to at the time taught. There is one thing for sure, I can't undo what has already happened! You see, I'm just as hard on myself as I am with others. And I wouldn't recommend that anyone who was baptized in the past try to un-baptize themselves. Had we lived in Old Testament times, sure, it would have been the correct thing for any self-respecting Israelite to do.

I will now quote a passage from *A History Of The Christian Church*, pages 93-97, by Williston Walker on the subject of baptism. While it is not perfect in all respects, it will serve to verify some of the things which I have already addressed:

SECTION XIII. BAPTISM

“Baptism is older than Christianity. The rite gave to John, the ‘Forerunner,’ his name. He baptized Jesus. His disciples and those of Jesus baptized, though Jesus Himself did not. The origin of the rite is uncertain; but it was probably a spiritualization of the old Levitical washings. Jewish teaching, traceable probably to a period as early as the time of Christ, required proselytes to the Hebrew faith not merely to be circumcised, but to be baptized. It seems probable that John did not invent the rite, and simply used contemporary practice. It was a fitting symbol of the spiritual purification that followed the repentance that he preached. The mystery religions had equivalent rites; but so purely Jewish was that primitive Christianity to which baptism belongs, that it is inconceivable that they should have had any effect on the origin of the practice, though they were profoundly to influence its development on Gentile [sic ethnos] soil. Peter represents baptism as the rite of admission to the church, and to the reception of the Holy Spirit. As the sacrament of admission baptism always stood till the religious divisions of post-Reformation days. It so stands for the vast majority of Christians at present.

“With Paul, baptism was not merely the symbol of cleansing from sin, it involved a new relation to Christ, and a participation in His death and resurrection. Though Paul apparently did not think baptism essential to salvation his view approached that of the initiations of the mystery religions and his converts in Corinth, at least, held an almost magical conception of the rite, being baptized in behalf of their dead friends, that the departed might be benefited thereby. Baptism soon came to be regarded as indispensable. The writer of the fourth Gospel represented Christ as declaring: ‘Verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.’ ... This conviction but deepened. To Hermas (115-140), baptism was the very foundation of the church, which ‘is builded upon waters.’ Even to the philosophical Justin (153) baptism effected ‘regeneration’ and ‘illumination.’ In Tertullian’s estimate it conveyed eternal life itself.

“By the time of Hermas and of Justin the view was general that baptism washed away all previous sins. As in the mystery religions it had become the great rite of purification, initiation, and rebirth into the eternal life. Hence it could be received but once. The only substitute was martyrdom, ‘which stands in lieu of the fontal bathing, when that has not been received, and restores it when lost.’ With the early disciples generally baptism was ‘in the name of Jesus Christ.’ There is no mention of baptism in the name of the Trinity in the New Testament, except in the command attributed to Christ in Matt. 28:19. That text is early, however. It underlies the Apostles’ Creed, and the practice recorded in the *Teaching*, and by Justin. The Christian leaders of the third century retained the recognition of the earlier form, and, in Rome at least, baptism in the name of Christ was deemed valid, if irregular, certainly from the time of Bishop Stephen (254-257).

“Regarding persons baptized, the strong probability is that, till past the middle of the second century, they were those only of years of discretion. The first mention of infant baptism, and an obscure one, was about 185, by Irenaeus. Tertullian spoke distinctly of the practice, but discouraged it as so serious a step that delay of baptism

was desirable till character was formed. Hence he doubted its wisdom for the unmarried. Less earnest men than Tertullian felt that it was unwise to use so great an agency of pardon till one's record of sins was practically made up. A conspicuous instance, by no means solitary, was the Emperor Constantine, who postponed his baptism till his deathbed. To Origen infant baptism was an apostolic custom. Cyprian favored its earliest possible reception. Why infant baptism arose there is no certain evidence. Cyprian, in the letter just cited, argued in its favor from the doctrine of original sin. Yet the older general opinion seems to have held to the innocence of childhood. More probable explanations are the feeling that outside the church there is no salvation, and the words attributed to Christ in John 3:5. Christian parents would not have their children fail of entering the Kingdom of God. Infant baptism did not, however, become universal till the sixth century, largely through the feeling already noted in Tertullian, that so cleansing a sacrament should not be lightly used.

“As to the method of baptism, it is probable that the original form was by immersion, complete or partial. That is implied in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12. Pictures in the catacombs would seem to indicate that the submersion was not always complete. The fullest early evidence is that of the *Teaching*: ‘Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living [running] water. But if thou hast not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, then pour water upon the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ Affusion was, therefore, a recognized form of baptism. Cyprian cordially upheld it. Immersion continued [to be] the prevailing practice till the late Middle Ages in the West; in the East it so remains. The *Teaching* and Justin show that fasting and an expression of belief, together with an agreement to live the Christian life were necessary prerequisites. By the time of Tertullian an elaborate ritual had developed. The ceremony began with the formal renunciation by the candidate of the devil and all his works. Then followed the threefold immersion. On coming from the fount the newly baptized tasted a mixture of milk and honey, in symbolism of his condition as a new-born babe in Christ. To that succeeded anointing with oil and the laying on of the hands of the baptizer in token of the reception of the Holy Spirit. Baptism and what was later known as confirmation were thus combined. Tertullian also shows the earliest now known existence of Christian sponsors, *i.e.*, godparents. The same customs of fasting and sponsors characterized the worship of Isis.

“In the apostolic age baptism was administered doubtless not only by Apostles and other leaders, but widely by those charismatically eminent in the church. By 110-117, Ignatius, in the interest of unity, was urging, ‘it is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love-feast.’ In Tertullian's time, ‘of giving it, the chief priest, who is the bishop, has the right; in the next place the presbyters and deacons ... besides these even laymen have the right, for what is equally received can be equally given.’ In the Greek and Roman Churches baptism still continues [to be] the only sacrament which any Christian, or indeed any seriously intending person, can administer in case of necessity.

“The middle of the third century saw a heated discussion over the validity of heretical baptism. Tertullian had regarded it as worthless; and his was undoubtedly the

prevalent opinion of his time. After the Novatian schism Bishop Stephen of Rome (254-257) advanced the claim that baptism, even by heretics, was effectual if done in proper form. His motives seem to have been partly the growing feeling that sacraments are of value in themselves, irrespective of the character of the ministrant, and partly a desire to facilitate the return of the followers of Novatian. This interpretation was energetically resisted by Cyprian of Carthage, and Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and led to certain important assertions of the authority of the Roman bishop. The deaths of Stephen and Cyprian gave a pause to the dispute; but the Roman view grew into general acceptance in the West. The East reached no such unanimity of judgment.”

Williston Walker recognized that Paul didn't esteem water baptism as essential, and Paul was the recipient of the hidden mysteries!