



KINGDOM PROPHETIC VISIONARY MINISTRY, LLC · A KINGDOM ETHOS TEACHING

Baptism in Jesus' Name vs. Father, Son, Holy Spirit: The Whole Truth

The Whole Christ — Water, Spirit, Blood, and Fire. A teaching on the apostolic divide, the three camps on baptism, the tithe debate, and the four-fold witness of salvation.

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Three churches will baptize you three different ways this Sunday. Two of them will tell you the third one isn't valid. All three are missing what the Spirit is saying.

By the end of this teaching you will know why the baptism wars are unnecessary, why the apostle Paul never taught the tithe, why the thief on the cross entered Paradise without water, and what the Spirit means by buried under the titles, raised in the Name — the reconciliation that refuses to let the Body of Christ fracture over the physical act of the water.

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"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

JOHN 14:6

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

1 JOHN 5:8

SECTION I

Prologue: All Truth Must Be His Truth

Before a single doctrine is examined, a single ordinance is weighed, or a single tradition is named, the Kingdom believer must settle one question: **who is the standard?**

The Lord Jesus Christ does not say He is *a* way, *a* truth, or *a* life. He declares Himself to be **the** way, **the** truth, and **the** life. The definite article in John 14:6 is not decorative grammar; it is the foundation of all sound theology. Every truth that does not terminate in the resurrected Christ Himself is, by definition, partial truth — and partial truth, when held with legalistic certainty, becomes a spirit of error.

This teaching proceeds from that conviction. It is written under the burden of the Holy Spirit to address a fracture in the Body of Christ that has persisted for centuries — a fracture over the ordinances of **baptism, tithe, and circumcision**, and over the broader question of how Gentile believers are incorporated into the covenant life that originated, by divine design, in Israel.

The fracture is not new. It was present in the Jerusalem of Acts 15. It surfaced again in the Galatian churches Paul reprovved. It returned in every generation that mistook the form of an ordinance for its substance. And it persists today in three competing camps over baptism, in pulpit fights over tithe, and in a Gentile church that has too often Judaized what was never meant to be transferred.

The aim of this work is not to abolish ordinance. It is to **unbind ordinance from the spirit of error** by re-seating it under the all-sufficient Lordship of Jesus Christ, where Jew and Gentile share one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Father (Ephesians 4:4–6). The aim is not to choose between water, Spirit, blood, or fire as the saving element. It is to behold them as the four-fold witness of one salvation accomplished

by one Christ. The aim is not to silence Matthew 28:19 with Acts 2:38, nor Acts 2:38 with Matthew 28:19. It is to receive both under the executive authority of the Name above every name.

Let one thing be clear from the start. What follows is **not compromise**. It is not splitting the difference between traditions to keep the peace. It is not a soft middle ground for the sake of unity. This teaching stands on the apostolic charge to **rightly divide the word of truth** (2 Timothy 2:15) — to separate what God has separated and to join what God has joined. Compromise dulls the edge of Scripture; right division sharpens it. The reconciliation set forth here cuts cleaner than the camps it heals, because it cuts where the Word actually cuts and leaves uncut what the Word leaves uncut. The believer who reads on should expect not a softer gospel but a sharper one — sharper because it is more whole.



The reconciliation the Lord has placed on this work can be stated in one line: the believer is buried under the covenant titles — Father, Son, Holy Ghost — and raised in the executive Name of the resurrected One in whom all power dwells, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the word being delivered. The remainder of this teaching is its unfolding and its defense.

What follows is offered in the prophet-apostle-scribe voice the Lord has placed upon this ministry. It is exhaustive by intention and homiletical by grace. It is anchored in the original languages where they clarify, and in the King James and English Standard texts where the English will preach. It will name what must be named, surrender what must be surrendered, and refuse to leave any believer in a partial gospel when the whole Christ is available.

SECTION II

Buried in the Titles, Raised in the Name: The Whole Truth

The reconciliation the Spirit has placed on this ministry honors both the words of the resurrected Christ in Matthew 28:19 and the apostolic practice recorded throughout the book of Acts. It refuses to let the Body of Christ fracture over the physical act of the water.

Before the camps are named, before the test cases are weighed, before the apostolic streams are traced and the four-fold witness unfolded — the reconciliation itself can be stated plainly, and then defended in everything that follows.

The Singular Name

What does Matthew 28:19 actually say in Greek?

Matthew 28:19 reads, in the Greek, *eis to onoma tou Patros kai tou Huiou kai tou Hagiou Pneumatos* — "into the **name** (singular, *onoma*) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The grammar matters.

The Lord Jesus did not say "into the names" plural. He said "into the Name" singular, and then named three relational disclosures of that one Name. There is one God, one Name, three persons in eternal communion within that Name.

Philippians 2:9 then specifies the content of that Name: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Whose name? The name of the resurrected Christ, in whom "all power" in heaven and on earth dwells (Matthew 28:18).

When Acts records the apostles baptizing "in the name of Jesus," they are not contradicting Matthew 28:19; they are **filling the title of Matthew 28:19 with the personal Name disclosed in the resurrection.**

The Reconciliation

Here is the framing the Spirit has given. When the believer is immersed under the waters, they are buried under the covenant titles — Father, Son, Holy Ghost — the relational frame in which God has revealed Himself across the whole of Scripture. When the believer rises from the waters, they rise into the executive Name of the resurrected One in whom all power dwells, the Name above every name, the Lord Jesus Christ.



Buried under the titles. Raised in the Name. Both
Matthew and Acts honored. No camp dispossessed.
The whole Christ over the whole act.

Hear this clearly. The reconciliation set forth here is **not a peace treaty between rival camps**. It is not Camp Two and Camp Three meeting in the middle and shaking hands. It is the restoration of what the apostles always taught and what the Spirit has always carried, before centuries of partisan hardening obscured it. Where the camps fight over which formula is exclusively valid, the apostolic witness — Matthew and Acts together, Father-Son-Holy Ghost and the name of Jesus together — was always one. To recover the original unity is not compromise; it is **right division**. It separates the apostolic substance from the partisan accretion. It joins what the Spirit always joined and lets fall what the Spirit never bound.

This is not a third formula to add to the existing two. It is a **hermeneutical posture** that allows the believer to receive baptism without participating in the partisan war that has fractured the Body. The water is not the war. The water bears witness to Christ. Let the witness do its work, and let Christ have the glory.

Practically, this means the believer walking in a Kingdom Ethos can be baptized in any congregation that lifts up the risen Christ as Lord. And by Kingdom Ethos, here's what is meant — not a new movement, not a denomination, not a teaching you sign up for, but a way of living that belongs to every

believer: putting the King and His Kingdom first, ahead of church tradition, ahead of any one camp, ahead of any one form. It's a way of carrying yourself before the Lord that any believer can step into the moment they confess Jesus as Lord, no matter what tradition raised them or what fellowship they sit in on Sunday morning. So when you go down into the water, the words "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" honor the way God has shown Himself to be — three Persons, one God. The words "in the name of Jesus" honor the risen Christ in whom all power has been given. Both sets of words point to the same Lord. The absence of either one doesn't make your baptism invalid, as long as your heart is set on Christ Himself, the One who is the substance behind both. And the presence of either one doesn't save you apart from that same Christ. The water is not what saves. Christ is what saves. The water is simply showing the world what Christ has already done in you.



SECTION III

The Three Camps on Baptism: Where the Spirit of Error Hides

The reconciliation just stated did not arise in a theological vacuum. It arose in direct answer to a fracture — a centuries-long division within the Body of Christ over the very practice of baptism, a division that has hardened into three principal camps.

Each camp carries a piece of truth. Each camp, when its piece is **absolutized** into the whole, sustains a spirit of error. The discernment required of the Kingdom believer is not to pick a side but to **name the truth in each and the error of absolutizing any**.

Camp One: Baptism Is Not Necessary

This camp, often associated with strands of evangelical and dispensational thought, points to passages such as Ephesians 2:8–9 ("by grace are ye saved through faith... not of works") and Romans 10:9 ("if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart... thou shalt be

saved"). It points, above all, to the thief on the cross, who entered Paradise without water, without circumcision, without tithe, on nothing but the word of Christ.

The truth this camp holds: Salvation is not effected by the act of immersion. The water does not save. Christ saves, and Him alone.

The error when this camp absolutizes: It risks dismissing the sustained apostolic practice of baptism in Acts as if it were optional ornamentation. The same Paul who said "Christ sent me not to baptize" (1 Corinthians 1:17) was himself baptized (Acts 9:18; 22:16). Baptism is not the cause of salvation, but the apostles never treated it as a take-it-or-leave-it appendage either. To minimize what the Spirit honored is to drift into a different error than the legalists — but it is still error.

Camp Two: Baptism in the Trinitarian Formula

This camp, the dominant Western liturgical tradition, baptizes with the formula drawn directly from Matthew 28:19 — "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It anchors itself in the express words of the resurrected Christ to the Eleven and in nearly two millennia of catholic and reformed practice.

The truth this camp holds: The Lord Jesus Himself spoke these words. They are not human invention. The triune disclosure of God — Father, Son, Holy Ghost — is the covenant frame in which the believer is buried with Christ in the likeness of His death (Romans 6:4).

The error when this camp absolutizes: It can degenerate into mere formula recitation, treating the words as a sacramental incantation that operates *ex opere operato* — by the work performed — apart from the living relationship with the resurrected Christ. It can also miss the striking grammatical fact that Matthew 28:19 says "in the *name*" — singular (*eis to onoma*) — not "in the names" plural. There is **one Name** disclosed in three relational unveilings, and that Name is given a content the Trinitarian formula alone does not specify.

Camp Three: Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ

This camp — historically including Oneness Pentecostal traditions and many apostolic-restorationist movements — baptizes "in the name of Jesus Christ" following the Acts pattern: Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48;

19:5; 22:16. It points out that **every recorded baptism in the book of Acts** is performed in the name of Jesus, never with the Matthew 28:19 formula spoken aloud.

The truth this camp holds: All authority in heaven and on earth has been vested in the resurrected Christ (Matthew 28:18). "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). The apostolic practice of invoking that Name over the immersed believer is not arbitrary. It places the convert under the executive authority of the Lordship of Jesus.

The error when this camp absolutizes: It can collapse the relational disclosure of Father and Spirit into a unitarian flatness, denying the very triune fullness Matthew 28:19 declares. It can also become as legalistic about its formula as Camp Two is about its own — making the precise verbal pronouncement the focus of validity, which simply trades one sacramentalism for another.

The Discernment

The Spirit of error in each camp is not in the truth it holds; it is in the truth it **excludes**. The believer who insists "only Father-Son-Holy Ghost" excludes the Acts witness. The believer who insists "only in Jesus' name" excludes the Matthean commission. The believer who insists "none of it matters" excludes the apostolic practice altogether.

None of these stances honors the whole Christ. The reconciliation already stated above heals this fracture by refusing to participate in it.



SECTION IV

The Test Cases: When the Letter Fails and Christ Stands

Scripture itself supplies the cases that disprove every form of legalism around the ordinances. These are not embarrassments to be explained away. They are evidence the Spirit placed in the whole of Scripture to keep the church from making the form into the substance.

The Thief on the Cross

Was the thief on the cross saved without baptism?

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

LUKE 23:43

The thief crucified beside Christ entered Paradise that very day. He was not baptized. He was not circumcised in adulthood as a proselyte. He paid no tithe. He took no communion. He was catechized by no apostle. He performed no work of repentance beyond the cry of a dying man: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

This single case is sufficient to dismantle every soteriology that locates salvation in an ordinance. The thief was saved by direct encounter with the crucified Christ. If salvation can occur without water, then water is not the cause of salvation. The same logic applies, by extension, to every ordinance: if any can be omitted in the saving moment, none of them is the saving cause.



Christ saves. The ordinance witnesses.

Paul: Baptized but Not Sent to Baptize

Did Paul baptize anyone?

"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."

1 CORINTHIANS 1:17

The man who carried the gospel further than any other apostle is the same man who confessed that his commission was not to administer water. "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" (1 Corinthians 1:14–15).

Paul was himself immersed at Damascus by Ananias (Acts 22:16) — so he is not anti-baptism. He simply does not center his apostolic ministry on the rite. He centers it on the preaching of the cross and the impartation of the Spirit.

This is decisive for Gentile-stream ecclesiology. If the apostle to the Gentiles refused to make the act central, then no Gentile pulpit has authority to make it central. To do so is to be more apostolic than the apostle, which is to be inadvertently un-apostolic.

Paul's Silence on Tithe

Is tithing required for Christians today?

Why the tithe belongs in a teaching about baptism. A reader may wonder why a teaching on baptism turns to address tithe. The answer is direct: the tithe is here because the same spirit that ties baptism to

salvation also ties tithing to salvation and to oneness with God. In the modern Gentile church, tithe has been preached as if it validates the believer's standing before the Lord — as if the act of tithing confirms the believer's salvation, opens the door of right relationship, and proves the legitimacy of one's covenant walk. The same legalism that says "your baptism is not valid without this exact formula" turns and says "your standing with God is not valid without this exact percentage." It is one error wearing two costumes. To address baptism without addressing tithe would leave half the disease in the room.

Few ordinances are more aggressively tied to salvation, covenant standing, and divine blessing in modern Gentile churches than the tithe. The teaching often runs as follows: those who do not tithe are "robbing God" (Malachi 3:8), are "under a curse" (Malachi 3:9), do not have the "windows of heaven" opened to them (Malachi 3:10), and stand outside the place of full covenant blessing.

In some pulpits the implication runs harder still — that genuine right standing with God, full inheritance, or even the assurance of salvation cannot be claimed by those who refuse the practice. The believer is told, in effect, that their relationship with the Father is contingent upon a financial percentage drawn from a Mosaic ordinance. Tithing becomes the financial counterpart to the baptismal-formula argument: an outward act made the gate through which the believer must pass to be considered fully in Christ. Both moves elevate ordinance over Christ. Both must be answered with the same word.

This is the very architecture the apostle Paul fought to dismantle. **It is the spirit of the Galatian heresy in financial form.**



The Judaizers said: "Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved." The modern tithe-teacher says, in effect: "Except ye tithe, ye cannot be in right covenant standing." The ordinance has changed; the spirit of error is identical.

Both take a Mosaic practice given to Israel and impose it on Gentile believers as a precondition of relationship with God. Both elevate an ordinance over Christ. Both are answered by the same Pauline thunder: "Christ shall profit you nothing" (Galatians 5:2) when ordinance is made the gate of salvation or standing.

In thirteen letters covering virtually every dimension of Christian life — doctrine, ethics, household order, leadership, suffering, eschatology, and worship — the apostle Paul **never once teaches the tithe** as binding upon the Gentile believer. The Hebrew *ma'ăšēr* — the tenth — was a Mosaic ordinance with specific Levitical and agrarian architecture. It was given to a covenant people in a covenant land with a covenant priesthood. Paul does not import it.

His silence is not oversight; it is **apostolic restraint**. He refuses to tie the believer's standing to a percentage when their standing has been purchased entirely by Christ.

What he teaches instead is the **grace of giving** — *charis* and *koinōnia* — generosity that flows from a heart awakened to the Lord's own self-giving. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The shift is not from generosity to stinginess. It is from **legal percentage to liberated proportion** — from ten as a ceiling to grace as the floor and the stratosphere both.

The Pauline believer may give one percent or fifty; the question is no longer the percentage but the heart. And the heart is set free precisely because nothing is being earned and nothing is being purchased — Christ has already accomplished what the ordinance could never accomplish.

What about Abraham, Melchizedek, and the Pharisees?

Many will protest: did not Abraham tithe to Melchizedek before the law (Genesis 14:20)? Yes. And his tithe was a one-time freewill offering of war spoils, not an ongoing institutional levy upon his descendants. Did not Jesus rebuke the Pharisees for neglecting tithe (Matthew 23:23)? Yes — and He spoke that word to law-keeping Jews under the Mosaic economy, before the cross had inaugurated the new covenant. Does not Hebrews 7 honor Melchizedek's priesthood? Yes — to demonstrate that Christ Himself is the greater Melchizedek, the priest after whose order all tithing typology is fulfilled.

The transferal of the Mosaic tithe into the Gentile church as a condition of standing requires a hermeneutical leap that Paul himself never makes — and that the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 explicitly forbade.

This is why the tithing test case matters. **It is not merely a question of money. It is a question of whether any ordinance — water, blood, oil, bread, percentage, calendar, day, or food — can be tied to the believer's salvation or standing without invoking the spirit of error this entire teaching has named.**

The answer is consistent across every test case in this section. The thief was saved without water. Paul was sent without baptizing. The Gentiles were grafted in without circumcising. And the Gentile believer stands in full covenant relationship with the Father without tithing by Mosaic formula.



Christ saves. The ordinance witnesses. Whoever reverses that order — whether at the baptismal font, the circumcision altar, or the offering plate — has stepped back into the Galatian battle.

The Non-Circumcision of the Gentiles

Circumcision — *bērît mîlāh* — was the very sign of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 17). And yet Paul fights the entire Galatian battle to keep this sign off the bodies of Gentile believers: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Galatians 5:2). He goes further: "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature" (Galatians 6:15).

If the founding sign of the Abrahamic covenant is not transferable as a binding ordinance to Gentile believers, no lesser ordinance is. This sets the principle for everything that follows: **Israel's ordinances were given to Israel; their fulfillment in Christ is what is given to all.**



SECTION V

The Two Commissions: One Christ, Two Apostolic Streams

Why didn't Paul impose Jewish law on Gentile believers?

Paul's behavior in the test cases — baptized but not sent to baptize, silent on tithes, militant against forced circumcision — is not a personality quirk. It is the visible signature of an **apostolic divide** that runs through the entire New Testament.

The Lord Jesus did not give one undifferentiated commission to one undifferentiated apostolate. He gave a commission in Galilee to the Twelve who had walked with Him through His earthly ministry — Jews speaking to Jews, raised on the Torah, schooled in the synagogue, formed in the soil of the covenants of promise. And He gave a separate, sovereign, and distinct commission on the road to Damascus to a man who had not walked with Him in the flesh — Saul of Tarsus, set apart from his mother's womb (Galatians 1:15) and revealed to be "a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15).

The Galilean Commission to the Twelve

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

MATTHEW 28:18-20

This Great Commission is given to **the Eleven** (Matthew 28:16) — the surviving members of the original Twelve, men whose covenantal frame of reference was Israel. The ordinance of water baptism

named here did not arrive in a vacuum. It was given to men whose ancestors had practiced *mikveh* — the Jewish ritual immersion bath — for centuries.

The Hebrew verb *ṭābal* meaning "to dip" appears throughout the Levitical purity codes. When John the Baptizer immersed Israelites in the Jordan, he was not inventing an unfamiliar rite; he was renewing a familiar one under a prophetic call to repentance. The Greek *baptizō* simply translated this Hebraic practice into the Hellenistic tongue.

So when the resurrected Christ commissions the Twelve to baptize the nations, He is sending Jewish apostles, formed in a mikveh culture, into a Jewish-then-Gentile world with an ordinance that already had four hundred years of covenantal architecture behind it. The Twelve were equipped to carry this. They were **apostles to the circumcision** (Galatians 2:7–9) — to Israel first, and to the God-fearing Gentiles attached to the synagogue.

The Damascus Commission to Paul

Paul's commission did not come through the Twelve. He is emphatic on this point: "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). His apostolate was direct, and its scope was distinct. "When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter" (Galatians 2:7) — here, in one verse, the Spirit codifies what too many readers gloss over: there are **two cultural streams of one gospel**, flowing from one Christ, into two distinct soils, through two distinct apostolic mandates.

This is not contradiction. It is the wisdom of the Head of the Church. The same Lord who gave Israel the Torah did not require Gentile believers to take it on as a yoke. The same Lord who instituted circumcision through Abraham did not impose it on the uncircumcised who came to faith. The same Christ who walked in the temple did not transfer the temple system across the Gentile threshold. He kept what He had given to Israel *for* Israel, and He fulfilled it in Himself for everyone else.

The Jerusalem Council: The Divide Ratified

"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well."

ACTS 15:28-29

Acts 15 is the ecclesial moment when the apostles, elders, and the Holy Ghost together formally declined to impose the Mosaic yoke upon Gentile converts. The men from Judea had taught, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Paul and Barnabas "had no small dissension" with them (Acts 15:2). The matter was carried to Jerusalem. James presided. Peter testified. The decision was rendered: Gentiles are not bound by Mosaic ordinance. They are saved "through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as they" (Acts 15:11).

This is the textual hinge. From this point forward, anyone who imposes Jewish ordinances on Gentile believers as a condition of salvation, sanctification, or standing is contradicting the explicit Spirit-led ruling of the Jerusalem council. The ordinances of Israel were not eradicated. They were **not transferred as binding law** upon the Gentile church. What the Father did not require, no apostle, bishop, pastor, or denomination has authority to require.



SECTION VI

The Four-Fold Witness: Water, Spirit, Blood, and Fire

What is the four-fold witness of salvation?

Beneath the camps and beneath the apostolic streams lies an even deeper architecture of regeneration itself. The Spirit has shown that the holistic truth of salvation is not held in any single element but in the convergent witness of four. The apostle John names three explicitly:

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

1 JOHN 5:7-8

And John the Baptizer adds the fourth: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). Together — water, Spirit, blood, fire — these constitute the apostolic anatomy of salvation. Each bears its own testimony. None is sufficient alone. All converge upon the one Christ.

The Water (hudōr)

Water in Scripture carries a triple weight: it cleanses, it buries, and it births. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:26). The Greek *loutron* — bath — appears again in Titus 3:5: "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." To Nicodemus the Lord said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Water testifies to the cleansing that the Word performs on the soul. It testifies to burial: "we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Romans 6:4). And it testifies to new birth, the believer rising from the

immersion as a new creation in the likeness of resurrection life. The error of the church has been to treat water as the cause of these realities rather than the witness to them. The water does not regenerate; the Word and the Spirit regenerate, and the water bears witness in the earth that the regeneration has occurred.

Water also remembers the older waters: the chaos over which the Spirit hovered (Genesis 1:2), the flood that judged and saved (1 Peter 3:20–21), the Red Sea through which Israel passed (1 Corinthians 10:1–2), the Jordan that opened for the priests bearing the ark. Water is the element of transition — from death to life, from bondage to freedom, from old creation to new. The believer's baptism participates in that long memory.

The Spirit (pneuma)

The Spirit is the executive agent of regeneration. He is the breath (*rûah*) that hovered over the deep before the world had form. He is the wind that fell at Pentecost and the dove that descended at the Jordan. He is the seal of inheritance: "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

Paul gives the apostolic definition of Spirit-baptism in 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." Note carefully: Spirit-baptism is the act by which the believer is incorporated into the Body of Christ. It is not a second-blessing optional. It is not a denominational distinctive. It is the very mechanism by which a person becomes part of the *ekklesia*.

Where water testifies in the visible, Spirit testifies in the invisible. Where water bears the public witness of burial and resurrection, Spirit bears the private witness of adoption and indwelling: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). One cannot see Spirit-baptism with the natural eye. One can only see its fruit — changed lives, restored loves, sanctified appetites, supernatural gifts, and the abiding presence of Christ in the believer.

The Blood (haima)

The blood is the ground of all the rest. Without the blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22), no covenant (Hebrews 9:18), no access (Hebrews 10:19), no purchase (Acts 20:28), no propitiation

(Romans 3:25), no peace (Colossians 1:20). Water cannot save without blood beneath it. Spirit cannot indwell without blood having atoned. Fire cannot purify without blood having ransomed.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

HEBREWS 9:14

The blood is the only element among the four that the believer never administers and never reproduces. Water can be poured. Spirit can be invoked. Fire can fall. But the blood was shed once, by one Lamb, on one cross, in one finished work, and it cannot be added to or repeated. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19).

The blood is also the believer's weapon: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11). It is the speech of a better covenant: "The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24). The blood is not silent; it pleads. And it pleads not for vengeance but for mercy upon those who have hidden in it.

The Fire (pyr)

Fire is the fourth witness, and it is the one most often neglected by ordinance-bound theology. John the Baptizer joined it directly to Spirit-baptism: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11). At Pentecost, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:3). Fire is the element of consecration, of refining, of judgment, and of presence.

Malachi prophesied of the Messiah, "He is like a refiner's fire... he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:2–3). Paul applied the same principle to the believer's works: "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Corinthians 3:13). The author of Hebrews reminds us, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

Fire purifies what blood has redeemed and what Spirit indwells. Fire burns away the wood, hay, and stubble that water cannot wash, that the believer's self-effort cannot reform, and that mere doctrinal correctness cannot expose. Fire is the witness that God is not finished with the believer at the moment of conversion; He is making sons and daughters who can stand in His presence as gold tried seven times.

The Convergent Witness



Water buries the old self. Spirit raises the new self.
Blood ratifies the entire transaction. Fire consecrates
the redeemed life. Four witnesses. One Christ.

The four agree in one. To preach any one of these four as the whole salvation is to preach a Christ smaller than the Christ of Scripture. The whole Christ administers the whole witness, and the whole witness terminates in the whole Christ.



SECTION VII

The Ekklesial Implication: One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

EPHESIANS 4:4-6

Paul does not write "one formula" or "one administration." He writes "one baptism." The unity of baptism is not procedural; it is **Christological**. The one baptism is incorporation into the one Christ — accomplished by the one Spirit, ratified by the one blood, witnessed in the one water, refined by the one fire — under the one Father.

This dismantles the entire tribal architecture by which the church has divided itself over baptism. The believer in the Trinitarian camp and the believer in the Jesus-name camp share one Lord. They share one faith. They share one baptism — because the baptism is into Christ, not into the formula. To break fellowship over the formula is to elevate the form above Christ, which is the very definition of legalistic error.

Grafted In, Not Grafted Over

Paul's olive tree image in Romans 11 settles the Jew-Gentile question with horticultural precision. The Gentile believer is *grafted in* — *enkentrizō* — to the cultivated olive tree whose root is the covenant promise to Abraham. "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee" (Romans 11:18).

To be grafted in is to share the sap of the root — the promise, the Messiah, the Spirit. It is **not** to become a Jewish branch growing on a Jewish tree. The Gentile branch retains its distinct character; it does not need to be circumcised, nor to keep the feasts as legal obligations, nor to tithe by Levitical formula, nor

to baptize by mikveh-derived requirement. What it needs is the sap. What it needs is the root. What it needs, finally, is the One who fulfilled all the law and gave the Spirit without measure.

The End of the Civil War

If this teaching is received, a long civil war within the Body can begin to end — not someday, but in the next conversation, the next pulpit, the next baptismal service, the next offering plate. The end does not come by abolishing ordinance, because the apostles did not abolish ordinance. It does not come by mandating one formula across all traditions, because the Spirit did not mandate one formula. It comes by **placing every ordinance back under Christ Himself**, where the apostles always kept it. Here is what that looks like in practice. The believer baptized in Jesus' name and the believer baptized in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are no longer enemies; they receive each other as one in the same Lord. The pulpit lays down the Mosaic percentage as the test of right standing and takes up the teaching of grace-led generosity from a freed heart. The Gentile believer steps out from under yokes Paul fought to remove and walks in the full inheritance Christ purchased. And the leader who has used ordinances to validate or invalidate other believers repents of it, and begins instead to honor every brother and sister who confesses Jesus as Lord and bears the witness of the Spirit. This is the end of the civil war. **Not a future hope, but a present obedience.** Embrace it where you stand. Carry it into your fellowship. Speak it where the fight still rages. The whole Christ is enough — and any believer who has Him has the whole.



The Kingdom is not built by ordinance. The Kingdom is built by the King.

The ordinances are servants of the Kingdom, not its gates. Where they have been made gates, they must be returned to the place of servants. Where they have been despised entirely, they must be restored to the place of honored servants. The whole Christ has room for both correction and restoration; the partial Christs of our camps have room only for war.



SECTION VIII

Closing Doxology: Surrendering the Partial to the Whole

Every position laid down in this teaching must end where it began: at the feet of the resurrected Christ. The thesis was, and remains, that He is the way, the truth, and the life — not *a* partial truth among many, but *the* whole truth into which every partial truth must be surrendered.

The Kingdom Ethos posture is not theological neutrality. It is theological surrender. Every camp lays its piece at His feet. Every formula is offered up to His Lordship. Every ordinance is resealed under His authority. And out of that surrender comes a Body that can finally be one.

To the believer who has been told baptism does not matter: it matters, because the apostles practiced it, the Lord commanded it, and the witness it bears is the witness of burial and resurrection in the very pattern of Christ.

To the believer who has been told only one formula is valid: the formula serves the Name; the Name does not serve the formula.

To the believer who has been told they must tithe by Mosaic percentage to be in good standing: Paul did not teach you that, and no one has authority to bind on your conscience what the apostle to the Gentiles loosed.

To the believer who has been told they are second-class because they are not circumcised: Paul fought a continent-spanning war to keep that yoke off your body and off your soul.



The spirit of error is not always loud. Sometimes it whispers in the certainty with which we hold a true thing in a way that excludes the rest of the truth.

And let no reader confuse this surrender with compromise. To surrender every partial truth to the whole Christ is the **most uncompromising act a believer can make**, because it refuses to settle for any version of Christ smaller than the One who actually is. Compromise lowers the standard to keep the peace; surrender raises the standard to the Person of Christ Himself and lets every partial position fall where it will. This teaching has not softened the gospel. It has sharpened it on the only edge that ultimately matters — the edge of the resurrected Christ in whom all power dwells.

And to the Body of Christ as a whole: the four-fold witness — water, Spirit, blood, fire — is given by God so that no one element becomes the whole. The two apostolic streams — to the circumcision and to the Gentiles — are given so that no one cultural form becomes the whole. The reconciliation of buried-in-the-titles, raised-in-the-Name is given so that no one formula becomes the whole. The whole is reserved for the One who is the whole, and to Him alone be glory in the ekklesia, throughout all ages, world without end.

Amen.

The Full Dissertation Is Coming

What you have read here is the teaching in its blog form. The complete work — with the full original-language word studies, the expanded scripture index, the historical-theological apparatus, and the discussion guide for fellowships and study groups — is being prepared as a Kingdom Ethos eBook (Kingdom Ethos here meaning a posture available to every believer — ordering life under the King and His Kingdom rather than under religious institution, ordinance, or camp — not a movement, denomination, or new teaching).

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Sit with what the Spirit is showing you in this blog teaching. Test it against the Scriptures. Bring it before the Lord. The fuller release is coming — but the word being delivered here is sufficient to begin walking in.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Curtis C. Bryant III

Before any other title, Curtis C. Bryant III is a surrendered brother and fellow believer in the finished work of Christ. He stands with you under the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, and the same Father (Ephesians 4:4–6). The teaching above was not written from above but from beside — from one believer who has wrestled with the same fractures, sat under the same divided pulpits, and been pressed by the same Spirit to lay every partial truth at the feet of the whole Christ.

He serves the Body in the function of an apostolic-prophetic scribe and teacher within the fivefold framework, and is the founder of Kingdom Prophetic Visionary Ministry LLC and the voice behind the One Kingdom Ethos teaching catalog at onekingdomethos.com. One Kingdom Ethos is not a movement, denomination, or new teaching to join, but a posture available to every believer: ordering one's life under the King and His Kingdom rather than under religious institution, ordinance, or camp. The work exists to recover the original ekklesial pattern — Kingdom over religion, Person over ordinance, Christ over camp — and to release teaching, eBooks, and assessment resources that equip believers to discern the spirit of error wherever it has crept into otherwise good things. The S.A.F.E.G.U.A.R.D. Biblical Assessment Protocol anchors that work as a proprietary nine-criterion framework for testing biblical teaching across the Body.

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