

How one baptism proves two Gospels

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(First published: April 23, 2022 /Last revision: March 7, 2024)

Apparent contradictions in the Bible are some of the greatest evidences that there are at least two Gospels. Please note that I'm not saying these things actually are contradictions. I'm just saying that they *seem* to be contradictions — at least if one doesn't consider the proper context of each passage — and also that taking the context into consideration demonstrates how there has to be at least two separate sets of teachings for two separate groups of people in Scripture, including two separate Gospels.

For example, Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:4-6 that *“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.”* Now think carefully about what he said in that passage. He told his written audience that there's only one baptism, and yet we know from the rest of Scripture that there are *many* different baptisms, not just one (some dry and some wet; while the Greek word βάπτισμα/“baptisma” — which is transliterated as “baptism” in most English Bible translations today — *can* mean to wash something in water, the word literally just means “submersion” or “immersion,” and not all immersions in Scripture are in water). How can Paul teach that there's only one baptism without contradicting the rest of the Bible? I mean, just look at all the different types of baptism mentioned in Scripture:

- **Baptism into Moses** (1 Corinthians 10:1-2): Paul talks about Israel's baptism into Moses “in the cloud and in the sea.” Water was present, of course, but the people remained dry.
- **Israel's ceremonial cleansings** (Numbers 19:13, Leviticus 11:25, Exodus 30:17-21, Hebrews 9:10): When John the Baptist started dunking people in water, they already knew exactly what he was doing and why. Nobody asked him, “What are you doing? Why are you getting all of these people wet?” This is because water baptism was something that was required under the Mosaic

Law for the cleansing of the people, so they were already quite familiar with the concept.

- **Levitical priesthood baptisms** (Exodus 29:4, Leviticus 8:6, Numbers 8:7): These were baptisms in water which were required in order to become a priest under the Mosaic law.
- **John's baptism** (Matthew 3:5-6, Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3, John 1:31, Luke 7:29, Acts 10:37): John baptized Israelites with water for the forgiveness of sins, so they could live in the promised kingdom when it begins on earth (specifically in Israel), and could identify their Messiah.
- **The baptism of Jesus to fulfill the law** (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-10): Jesus, who didn't need to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, since He never sinned himself, was nevertheless baptized by John to "*fulfil all righteousness*" under the law.
- **Baptism with fire** (Isaiah 4:4, Malachi 3:2-3, Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16): Jesus will baptize Israel with purifying (albeit mostly figurative) "fire" when they go through the Tribulation.
- **Pentecostal water baptism** (Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, Acts 22:16, Ezekiel 36:25): Water baptism for the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. This was the same sort of baptism as John's baptism, but was now being done in the name of Jesus, and was quite necessary for salvation under the Gospel the disciples preached.
- **Baptism with (or in) the Holy Spirit** (Isaiah 44:3, Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Acts 2:17-18, Acts 8:15-17, Acts 11:16): This is the baptism with the Holy Spirit, poured out from heaven by Jesus upon the believing remnant of Israel with signs and powers following.
- **Baptism into the body of Christ** (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:5, Colossians 2:12, Galatians 3:27, Romans 6:3-4): The immersion of a believer into the body of Christ, which identifies them with what He experienced in His body, including His death, His burial, and His resurrection.

This baptism is performed *by* the Spirit at the time one believes the Gospel, and is immersion into the body of Christ, not immersion in water.

There are other types of baptism I didn't include in that list as well, but that should be enough to prove that there are many different types of baptism mentioned in the Bible. So how is it that Paul can say there's only one baptism when there are clearly so many? Well, by realizing that Paul simply meant there's only one type of baptism for those among his written audience, meaning for members of the church called the body of Christ (and please either read my Bible study titled "*What the Bible really says about heaven, hell, judgement, death, evil, sin, and salvation*" or my Bible study titled "*Things that differ*" if you aren't aware of the fact that there are two legitimate churches based on two legitimate Gospels, both created by Jesus Christ). He wasn't saying that there aren't other types of baptisms which those *outside* the body of Christ can participate in; just that the "one baptism" he was referring to was the only baptism for those of us in the body of Christ (and I trust it's clear that the "one baptism" he wrote about would have to be the final one in the list).

This tells us that baptism for those who enjoy the special type of salvation those in the body of Christ get to enjoy (which is a different type of salvation from the one Jesus taught to Israelites during His earthly ministry) isn't in water. Yes, Paul did baptize a few people in water early on,¹ but he would have eventually stopped completely as he progressed in receiving revelations of truth from the Lord,² particularly after learning the truth that there's only *one* sort of immersion, or baptism, for us, which is immersion *by* the Holy

¹ I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. — 1 Corinthians 1:14-16

² It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 12:1

Spirit, *into* the body of Christ,³ including into what He experienced in His body, such as His death⁴ (and he was careful to point out that Christ *didn't* send him to baptize at all,⁵ which would be unusual if water baptism *was* necessary for the sort of salvation he was teaching the Gentiles about, as some Christians believe, and if he actually *was* trying to get them saved). This baptism should not be confused with the various different types of baptisms for Israel that I already mentioned, some of which involved water and some of which didn't, telling us that not all baptisms end up getting someone wet. This particular baptism, or immersion, is quite dry for us, and happens to us entirely passively at the moment we believe and are saved.

In order to try to ignore this point, some Christians claim that Paul simply meant we should only be baptized in water once in our lives rather than repeatedly, but he preceded the words "*one baptism*" with the words "*one hope*" and "*one faith*," and I certainly hope nobody would think we should only have hope or faith once in our lives, as would be the case if Paul meant we should be baptized only once in our lives there, so that interpretation doesn't really fit with the rest of the passage if we're interpreting the whole thing consistently, which tells us he's really just saying that there's only one *type* of baptism for us—one which doesn't involve water at all.

And while not everyone uses that interpretation, since others will instead claim that 1 Corinthians 12:13 should actually be translated as saying "for *in* one Spirit

³ 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. — 1 Corinthians 12:13

⁴ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. — Romans 6:3-4

⁵ 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

are we all baptized into one body,” but since there is now only *one* baptism for those in that body, and this verse still tells us that baptism into the body of Christ is what this one baptism is, if “in one Spirit” *were* the best translation — and the assumption that it is a better translation is based on nothing more than their dislike of the idea that water baptism might not be meant for believers in the body of Christ today, and is not a translation that most English Bible versions I’ve read agree with, I should add — if it did refer to that baptism *with*, or *of*, or *in* the Holy Spirit, then it can’t also include getting wet, because water baptism would then be a *second* baptism *in addition* to our one baptism in or with the Holy Spirit, so this doesn’t help defend the idea of water baptism for the body of Christ at all anyway.

The fact that water baptism is said to be necessary for salvation under the Gospel of the kingdom,⁶ whereas our baptism doesn’t involve water at all, is really all the proof you need that there is more than one Gospel taught in Scripture, and understanding how to resolve apparent contradictions in the Bible like this one is not only beneficial to one’s faith, it also helps one properly interpret Scripture, because this isn’t the only apparent contradiction that is resolved by understanding the difference between the two Gospels. Scripture is full of things that differ, yet which reveal the existence of two Gospels because they do, so please read one of those Bible studies I mentioned earlier in order to learn the multitude of differences between the body of Christ and the Israel of God, as well as what our respective Gospels (not to mention salvations) consist of.

⁶ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. — Mark 16:16