



THROUGH WATER INTO CHRIST

Washing, Cleansing, and Baptism in the Argument of Scripture

The Whole Counsel of Salvation · Glass-Box Exegesis · the Argument and the Audit

A Study Prepared for
TRUTHSCAPE.ORG

by

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Abstract

This study asks not *what is the doctrine of baptism?* but a prior and more disciplined question: *how does each biblical passage contribute to Scripture's own developing argument concerning washing, cleansing, baptism, covenant transition, union with Christ, forgiveness, reception of the Spirit, access to God, and new life?* Most treatments of baptism begin from a confessional conclusion and gather proof-texts to defend it. This study reverses that procedure. It traces the argument of the text — within each clause, paragraph, book, and covenantal setting, and then across the canon — before any doctrinal verdict is reached, allowing the doctrine to emerge from the cumulative exegetical evidence rather than being imposed upon it in advance.

The method is grammatical-historical, literary, discourse-analytical, redemptive-historical, canonical, and biblical-theological. Fifty-eight passage-units, organized in nine canonical phases and sorted into four corpora (explicit baptism texts; washing and cleansing texts; inferred baptismal texts; and canonical water-patterns), are each analyzed for literary unit, translation, clause structure, discourse relations, grammar, lexis, argumentative role, covenantal location, canonical horizon, textual variants, and interpretive options, and each is assigned a calibrated confidence level.

The thesis the evidence yields is that Scripture does contain a real canonical trajectory — from the God-mastered waters of creation, through flood-judgment survived, sea and Jordan crossed, priest washed for access, the prophetic promise of clean water and a new Spirit, John's Jordan repentance, Jesus' own consecration, the new birth of water and Spirit, and apostolic baptism into Christ, to the washed priestly people and the river of life — with baptism standing at its new-covenant center as an *efficacious-but-not-mechanical, faith-received* sign and instrument: really joined to the salvation it signifies, divinely commanded, yet never operating apart from faith, God its agent and his mercy its ground. Two questions are deliberately left disputed because the texts underdetermine them: the precise *mechanism* of baptism's efficacy (a means-of-grace instrument received by faith, or a sign-and-seal that testifies to a grace otherwise received), and the proper *subjects* of baptism (believers only, or believers together with their households and children).

Keywords: baptism, washing, cleansing, biblical theology, union with Christ, Holy Spirit, typology, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 2:38, Ezekiel 36.

About This Method — Glass-Box Exegesis

Every conclusion, traceable to the text.

Readers of theology are too often handed a conclusion and asked to trust that it came from the text; the exegetical work happens off-stage, in a black box. This study is built the other way around, in two layers. **The Argument** is the readable case, traced from Scripture to conclusion. **The Audit** is the exposed work beneath it — for each passage, the translation and parsing, the clause diagram, the full lexical range with the senses ruled out and why, the strongest form of each rival reading with the assumptions it imports, and the verdict with its confidence level and what the text does *not* establish.

Nothing here is asked to be taken on trust. Where the evidence is decisive the study says so; where it is genuinely disputed it says that too, and leaves the question open. I call this **Glass-Box Exegesis**: not a black box that issues verdicts, but a glass box you can see straight into and check. In the interactive edition, every scripture reference in the Argument opens its full exegetical dossier; in print, the same evidence is gathered in the appendices. Either way the invitation is the same — do not take my word for it; check the work.

Part I — Introduction and Method

Chapter 1. The Question, the Problem, and the Thesis

1.1 The problem: doctrine-first versus argument-first

Few Christian practices have generated as much doctrinal division as baptism, and few debates have been conducted with as little agreement about method. The characteristic procedure, across the traditions, is doctrine-first: one begins from a confessional definition — baptism is a sacrament that regenerates; baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace; baptism is an ordinance by which the already-saved believer testifies publicly to a finished work — and then one assembles the biblical texts that appear to support the definition, explaining the remainder as figurative, exceptional, or elliptical. The texts are marshalled as proof; the conclusion is secured in advance. Because each tradition can furnish a plausible chain of proof-texts, the debate tends to stall at the level of competing catenae, and the disputants talk past one another because the real disagreement lies upstream, in the method by which a text is allowed to mean.

This study adopts the opposite procedure, which may be called argument-first. Its premise is that Scripture does not present baptism as a doctrine to be defined but as a reality embedded in arguments — Paul's argument about why the justified cannot go on sinning, Peter's argument about why the suffering righteous may hope, Luke's narrative argument about how the gospel crossed from Jerusalem to the nations. The interpreter's first task is therefore not to define baptism but to trace those arguments: to establish what each author is actually claiming, on what grounds, toward what end, and to let the significance of baptism emerge from its function within the argument rather than from a definition brought to it. Only when the several arguments have been traced, correlated, and weighed may a doctrinal synthesis be attempted — and even then, the synthesis must remain accountable to every text, including the difficult and the apparently contrary.

The distinction is not merely procedural. A doctrine-first method structurally cannot be surprised by the text; it has already decided what the text must mean. An argument-first method can be, and repeatedly is, surprised — as when the passive verbs of Romans 6 refuse to settle the very question a sacramental or a memorial reading most wants them to settle, or when the flood is disclosed, only in 1 Peter, to be the true type that Genesis alone would not license us to assert. The aim of this study is to be governed by such surprises rather than to insulate a system against them.

1.2 The governing research question

The governing research question, stated in full, is this: *How does each passage contribute to Scripture's developing argument concerning washing, cleansing, baptism, covenant transition, union with Christ, forgiveness, reception of the Spirit, access to God, and new life?*

Several features of this formulation are deliberate. It speaks of a *developing* argument, presupposing that the canon has a redemptive-historical shape in which later texts advance, specify, and sometimes transform what earlier texts introduced, so that meaning accrues across the covenants rather than lying inert and uniform. It refuses to isolate baptism from the wider semantic field — washing, cleansing, sprinkling, water-crossing, covenant entry, priestly consecration, forgiveness, the gift of the Spirit, union with Christ, new creation — because the New Testament itself refuses that isolation, describing baptism in the vocabulary of washing (Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5), of burial and resurrection (Romans 6; Colossians 2), of clothing (Galatians 3), and of the flood (1 Peter 3). And it asks after *contribution* rather than after a fixed definition, because the same rite functions differently in different arguments, and a method that flattens those functions into a single definition will distort the evidence it claims to summarize.

1.3 Thesis: a tested hypothesis, not an imposed grid

The thesis of this study can be stated in a single trajectory: Scripture traces a coherent argument from the God-mastered waters of creation, through the judgment-waters of the flood survived by God's appointed means, the sea and the Jordan through which a people is constituted, the priestly washing that grants access while blood makes atonement, the prophetic promise of clean water and a new heart and God's own Spirit, John's Jordan baptism of repentance, Jesus' own baptismal consecration as the Servant-Son, the new birth of water and Spirit, and the apostolic baptism that unites the repentant believer to the crucified and risen Christ — culminating in a washed, royal-priestly people and the river of the water of life flowing from the throne. At the new-covenant center of this trajectory stands baptism, understood as an efficacious-but-not-mechanical, faith-received sign and instrument of the salvation God works.

It is essential to the integrity of this study that this trajectory be understood as a *tested hypothesis and not an imposed grid*. It is stated here at the outset only so that the reader may hold the exegesis accountable to it — testing at each passage whether the proposed connection is warranted by historical correspondence, theological correspondence, escalation, and, where possible, explicit canonical warrant, or whether two events have merely been associated because both involve water. The trajectory earns its place only to the degree that the individual exegeses, conducted on their own terms, sustain it; and where they do not — where a proposed typological link rests on nothing more than the presence of water, or where the canon declines to authorize a connection that later theology found attractive — the study says so.

1.4 Scope and delimitation: the four corpora

The relevant biblical material is assigned to four corpora. **Corpus A**, explicit baptism texts, comprises every occurrence of the βαπτ- word group (βαπτίζω, βάπτισμα, βαπτισμός, βαπτιστής, and contextually relevant uses of βάπτω), spanning Jewish ceremonial washings, John's baptism, Jesus'

baptism, Christian water baptism, baptism with the Holy Spirit, baptism with fire, metaphorical baptism into suffering or death, and baptism "into Moses" — with the governing caution that these baptisms are not to be assumed identical. **Corpus B**, washing and cleansing texts, comprises the language of washing, bathing, cleansing, purifying, sprinkling, and laundering (Hebrew *rāḥaṣ*, *kābas*, *ṭāhēr*, *nāzā*, and the theologically weighted uses of *mayim*; Greek λούω, ἀπολούω, νίπτω, πλύνω, καθαρίζω, ῥαντίζω, λουτρόν, and weighted uses of ὕδωρ), including texts that may interpret baptism conceptually without using baptism vocabulary. **Corpus C**, inferred baptismal texts, comprises passages that may describe baptismal realities without naming the rite — birth from water and Spirit, circumcision of the heart, burial and resurrection with Christ, putting on Christ, sealing with the Spirit, cleansing of the conscience — each classified by the strength of the proposed allusion, from certain to excluded. **Corpus D**, canonical water-patterns, comprises the great events and institutions that establish the theological grammar later applied to baptism: creation and the deep, Eden's river, the flood, the sea, the Jordan, the laver, Levitical purification, the Day of Atonement, prophetic cleansing, living water, and the river of life.

The corpora are analytic, not watertight; a single passage may belong to more than one. Their purpose is to discipline the study against two opposite errors — treating every mention of water as though it bore baptismal weight, and refusing baptismal significance to texts that plainly carry it — by requiring that each passage's classification be argued rather than assumed.

1.5 Standpoint and the control against bias

Every interpreter occupies a standpoint, and honesty requires naming it rather than pretending to a view from nowhere. The standpoint of this study is that no systematic-theological system — whether sacramental, Reformed covenantal, Lutheran, Baptist, restorationist, or the patristic consensus — may serve as the controlling lens through which the texts are read. Systems are admitted as conversation partners and as candidate syntheses to be tested against the evidence; they are not admitted as premises. This is a methodological commitment, not a theological one, and it cuts in every direction: it forbids reading Reformed sign-and-seal categories into a text as readily as it forbids reading sacramental efficacy or bare memorialism into it.

One consequence must be stated plainly, because it governs the later chapters. When the cumulative exegesis is weighed, the synthesis it yields is a **realist** one: baptism as a genuine means through which God acts, received by faith — really joined to the salvation it signifies rather than a bare token of a transaction completed elsewhere. Such realism is not the property of any one system. It is held, in differing idioms, by the Lutheran tradition (baptism as a means of grace), by much patristic and older catholic usage, and — in its own sign-and-seal form — by the Reformed, while it is denied chiefly by bare-memorial and pure-ordinance views. What this study affirms is that shared realism, not any single tradition's account of *how* baptism is efficacious: whether baptism is best construed as a means-of-grace instrument received by faith, or as a sign-and-seal that testifies to a grace otherwise conveyed, is

precisely one of the two questions it leaves open (Chapter 17). And it does not reach even this shared conclusion *because* those traditions hold it; it reaches it, so far as it can tell, from the grammar and argument of the texts, and it records the resemblance as a matter of transparency rather than derivation. Wherever the mediating verdict is stated, that transparency note is retained, so that the reader may judge whether the resemblance reflects the evidence or a smuggled premise. The same discipline requires that opposing views be stated in their strongest form before they are answered, that proposed allusions be labeled no higher than the evidence warrants, and that the two genuinely disputed questions be left open rather than resolved by preference.

Chapter 2. Method and Controls

2.1 The four levels and their irreversible order

The analysis of every passage moves through four levels in a fixed order: observation, interpretation, correlation, and adjudication. *Observation* asks what the text actually says — its words, forms, and syntactic relations — before it asks what they mean. *Interpretation* asks what the text means within its own literary and historical context, governed by the paragraph and the book. *Correlation* asks how the passage relates to other texts, tracing the canonical connections that its own language and argument open. *Adjudication* asks, finally, which theological construal best accounts for the evidence assembled at the first three levels.

The order may never be reversed. To adjudicate before observing is precisely the doctrine-first error the study exists to avoid; to correlate before interpreting is to let a canonical association override the local meaning that alone gives the association its content. The rule that the paragraph governs the verse, and the book the paragraph, is the practical form of this discipline: a clause is not permitted to mean, in isolation, what its paragraph will not sustain, and a paragraph is not permitted to mean what the argument of its book contradicts. Correlation genuinely clarifies — the canon is one book, and later texts illumine earlier ones — but it clarifies a local meaning; it does not erase it.

2.2 Argument-tracing and the three horizons

For the epistolary material the study follows the argument-tracing procedure associated with the grammatical-historical exegesis of the Pauline letters: establish the literary unit; identify the main proposition; trace the flow of the argument clause by clause; diagram the logical relations; and locate the passage within the argument of the whole letter, so that a baptismal statement is read as a move within a live argument rather than as a detached doctrinal deposit.¹ For the Old Testament material an equivalent grammatical, literary, covenantal, typological, and canonical analysis is applied.

Over both testaments the study employs a redemptive-historical frame of three horizons — the textual (what the passage means in its immediate context), the epochal (what it means within its covenantal moment in the unfolding plan), and the canonical (what it means in relation to the whole).² This scaffolding prevents two errors at once: the flattening of the covenants, which reads new-covenant baptism directly off an Old Testament washing as though nothing had developed; and the severing of them, which denies that the earlier water-events have any determinate relation to the later rite. The horizons keep local meaning and canonical meaning in their proper order — the textual first, the canonical last — and make the development itself an object of analysis rather than an assumption.

2.3 The controlling hermeneutical rules

A set of controlling rules operates throughout, of which the load-bearing ones may be named. The paragraph governs the verse, and grammar and syntax govern theological claims: no doctrine may neutralize a stated command, purpose, result, means, or causal relation without grammatical and contextual warrant, and none may be built on a preposition in isolation. Explicit texts control possible allusions, and possible allusions may not be promoted to explicit references (Rule 7). Silence does not prove absence: an element established earlier in a narrative is not shown to be absent merely because a later, abbreviated account omits it (Rule 9). Metaphorical language does not imply theological unreality, and symbolism and divine efficacy are not mutually exclusive (Rule 11); conversely, divine action and obedient human response are not theological competitors, and baptism is not to be labeled a meritorious work merely because its recipient submits to it. The several baptisms — John's, Jesus' own, Christian water baptism, Spirit-baptism, ritual washing, and metaphorical baptism — must be kept distinct and not flattened into one (Rule 2.1). And no essential doctrine may be founded on a textually disputed reading when undisputed texts are available (Rule 20). Finally, every conclusion must account for all the major relevant texts, including the difficult and the apparently contrary, and must distinguish clearly what is explicit, what is strongly inferred, what is merely possible, what is disputed, and what is excluded.

2.4 Certainty calibration

Because the study's usefulness depends on not overclaiming, every classification and every verdict is assigned a calibrated confidence level. Referential and allusive judgments use the tiered vocabulary *explicit / certain / probable / possible / excluded*; interpretive verdicts use *very high / high / moderate / low / highly disputed*. A "probable" allusion is not permitted to function in the argument as though it were "explicit," and a verdict of "moderate" confidence is not permitted to harden, three chapters later, into a settled premise. This calibration is what allows the study to affirm a strong central thesis while holding named sub-questions genuinely open: the confidence attaches to particular claims, not to the system as a whole, and the reader can see at every point how much weight a given conclusion is asked to bear.

2.5 Sources and verification

The evidentiary base is layered and its layers are marked. The original-language analysis rests on the tagged critical texts, with morphology and lemma confirmed passage by passage. Lexical and grammatical claims are anchored, where possible, to specific verified pages of the standard reference works. The reception-history material rests on primary sources verified verbatim against the public-domain critical editions, cited by their classical divisions. The controlling discipline is that a reference appears only when its wording and location have been checked; unverifiable page numbers are omitted rather than estimated. This is a deliberately conservative policy, and it means the study occasionally

declines to cite a source it believes exists but cannot confirm — a cost accepted in exchange for the assurance that what is cited is real.

2.6 Lexical-fallacy guards

Word-study is indispensable and dangerous, and the study observes the standard guards against its characteristic fallacies. It refuses the root fallacy, which reads a supposed etymological "basic meaning" into every occurrence; the illegitimate totality transfer, which imports the whole semantic range of a word into a single context; and the derivation of theology from concordance glosses or lexicon entries abstracted from syntax and discourse. A word's meaning in a given place is set by its context and construction, not by its history or its range; and the parsing of a form is kept distinct from its translation, so that a grammatical observation is not quietly converted into a theological conclusion. Applied to baptism, this discipline is especially necessary at the prepositional cruxes — the εἰς of Acts 2:38, the διὰ of Romans 6:4 and Titus 3:5, the genitive of 1 Peter 3:21 — where whole doctrines have been rested on a single particle read in isolation from its clause.

Chapter 3. The History of Interpretation: The Models to Be Tested

3.1 The positions defined neutrally

Before the exegesis begins, the interpretive options must be set out in their own strongest terms, so that the later adjudication tests real positions rather than caricatures. Eight may be distinguished. The *bare-symbol* or memorial view holds that baptism pictures a salvation accomplished entirely by faith apart from the rite, adding nothing to what faith has already received. The *public-testimony* or ordinance view holds that baptism is the divinely commanded first act of obedience by which the already-regenerate believer confesses Christ before the church. The *sign-and-seal* view holds that baptism is a covenant sign that both signifies and confirms the grace of the covenant to faith, really exhibiting what it represents. The *sacramental means-of-grace* view holds that baptism is an instrument through which God actually conveys the grace it signifies, received by faith. The *strong baptismal-regeneration* view holds that God, in the word-bearing rite, effects regeneration and remission, so that baptism is the appointed moment at which salvation is applied. The *covenantal-incorporation* view holds that baptism, as the new-covenant counterpart of circumcision, marks entry into the covenant community and is therefore properly administered to believers and their children. The *Spirit-baptism* view holds that the decisive baptism is the Spirit's, of which water baptism is at most an outward accompaniment. And a *composite* candidate holds that several of these capture genuine facets of a rite that is at once sign and instrument, commanded and non-mechanical, faith-received and God-wrought.

3.2 The reception-history caveat

These models have been held, in various combinations, across the history of the church, and that history is a genuine source of evidence — but of a particular and limited kind. Reception illuminates the text: it shows how competent readers in different ages construed it, surfaces exegetical possibilities a modern reader might miss, and, where it converges, provides a check against idiosyncrasy. But reception cannot overrule the text. A long consensus is weighed, not obeyed; a later creed or confession cannot redefine an apostolic term by authority; and the antiquity of a reading is evidence of its plausibility, not proof of its correctness. This caveat governs Part IV, where the historical survey is developed at length from verified primary sources; the present chapter only frames the models so that the exegesis of Part II may test them.

3.3 The two long-standing cruxes

Two grammatical cruxes have carried a disproportionate share of the doctrinal weight, and the study must adjudicate both. The first is the force of εἰς in Peter's command at Acts 2:38, "be baptized ... εἰς ἄφεσιν [for/unto the forgiveness] of your sins": whether εἰς is here purposive or causal, and whether the forgiveness is the aim of the baptism or its ground — a question on which a mid-twentieth-century grammatical dispute turned, and on which a whole construal of the rite has been made to rest. The

second is the meaning of ἐπερώτημα in 1 Peter 3:21, where baptism is said to save "not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an ἐπερώτημα of a good conscience toward God": whether the word denotes an *appeal* or *request* made to God (leaning toward a construal of baptism as the occasion of God's saving action) or a *pledge* or *answer* given to God (leaning toward a construal of baptism as the believer's responsive commitment). Neither crux can be settled by the particle or the noun alone; each requires the whole construction, its paragraph, and its canonical setting, and the study takes them up at the passages themselves.

3.4 The study in relation to prior scholarship

This study situates itself among, and is indebted to, several bodies of prior work, which it engages rather than merely echoes. The standard modern monograph on the New Testament material argues, at the decisive passage, that baptism's saving significance lies not in the water applied to the body but in the faith-and-obedience pledged to God, upon which the resurrection of Christ becomes a saving power — "it is not said that the giving to God of an answer saves; the Risen Lord does that."³ The "baptism for remission" defense presses the instrumental language of Acts and the epistles to its strongest form, concluding that the New Testament texts present baptism as the time God has appointed for initially bestowing salvation on the believing, repentant sinner.⁴ The Reformed sign-and-seal tradition, in its confessional form, holds that baptism signifies and seals the covenant of grace while denying that grace and salvation are so inseparably annexed to it that none can be saved without it or all who are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.⁵ The Lutheran means-of-grace tradition holds that baptism, as water comprehended in God's command and connected with his word, works forgiveness, delivers from death, and gives eternal salvation to those who believe.⁶ And the memorial tradition, deriving from the Reformation's radical wing, holds that the sacraments are signs and seals of a grace already received rather than means of a grace to be received. The modern credobaptist ordinance case is stated most fully in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, which reserves the rite for believers "because it preserves the testimony of the gospel by showing that only those who have repented and believed belong to the church."⁷ The study's own verdict, reached only after the exegesis, stands in a definite relation to each of these, and that relation is spelled out in Part III.

Part II — The Exegetical Corpus: The Developing Argument, Phase by Phase

Each chapter traces the argument of its passages — literary unit, translation, clause structure, discourse relations, grammar, lexis, argumentative role, covenantal setting, and canonical horizon — and closes with a running check of how the passage advances or qualifies the trajectory named in §1.3. The chapters correspond to the nine research phases.

Chapter 4. Creation and Flood: Water Mastered, Judgment Survived

4.1 Genesis 1–2: the God-mastered deep and Eden's river

The canon opens with water already present and already subordinate. "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). The waters are not a rival power to be defeated, as in the surrounding creation myths, but a medium over which God moves and which his word orders — gathered, bounded, and named on the second and third days. This is the first and most basic grammatical fact of the biblical water-theme: water is never autonomous. It is the sphere of God's ordering work, and whatever it later comes to signify, it signifies as something God masters.

Two exegetical restraints must be observed here. First, the identity of the *rûaḥ ʾēlōhîm* "moving" over the waters is genuinely open: the phrase may denote the Spirit of God or a God-sent creative wind (or breath) of God (*rûaḥ* bearing both "spirit" and "wind"), and the syntax alone does not decide it. The study therefore declines to build a pneumatological doctrine of baptism on Genesis 1:2, though it notes the suggestive later pattern by which Spirit and water are conjoined. Second, Eden's river (Genesis 2:10), which flows out to water the garden and divides into four, plants the seed of a distinct strand — life-giving water proceeding from the place of God's presence — that will run through Ezekiel's temple-river and surface again, transformed, at the end of the canon (Revelation 22:1–2). It is a seed, not yet a doctrine; the study marks the connection as a hypothesis to be tested downstream, not a typology to be asserted here.

4.2 Genesis 6–9: deliverance through judgment-water

In the flood, water becomes for the first time the instrument of both judgment and deliverance — and the two are inseparable. The same waters that destroy the world of the ungodly bear up the ark and carry the eight through to a cleansed earth. The decisive theological point is agency: it is God who brings the flood, God who remembers Noah, God who shuts the door and makes the wind pass over the earth so that the waters subside. The ark, God's appointed means, is what carries the family *through* the judgment; the water does not save by washing but by being the judgment through which, by God's provision, the righteous pass to a new world.

On the evidence of Genesis alone, the flood's relation to baptism can be rated no higher than *probable*. The narrative supplies every structural element that the later typology will exploit — judgment-water, an appointed means of passage, a remnant delivered through it into a new creation — but Genesis itself does not name baptism, and the interpreter who asserted the type on Genesis alone would be violating the rule that explicit texts control allusions. What raises the connection from probable to certain is not Genesis but 1 Peter, which the study reserves for Chapter 14 and notes here only as a forward link.

4.3 2 Peter 3:5–7: the word as agent

Peter's later reflection on the flood confirms the reading of agency reached from Genesis. "By the word of God ... the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water" (2 Peter 3:5–6); and by the same word the present heavens and earth are stored up for judgment by fire. The controlling agent is the divine word, not the water; water is the medium through which the word executes both the past judgment and, by analogy, warrants the certainty of the future one. This is a small but load-bearing datum for the whole study: where Scripture reflects on its own water-events, it consistently locates the power in God and his word and treats the water as the ordered medium — a pattern that will discipline every later temptation to attribute autonomous efficacy to the element in baptism.

4.4 Running thesis-check

The opening phase establishes the grammar the trajectory will use: water is God-mastered, not autonomous; judgment and deliverance run together in the same waters; the appointed means, not the element, carries the delivered through; and the true type-status of the flood awaits canonical warrant it does not yet possess. Nothing here is baptism, and nothing is asserted to be; but the categories that baptism will later inhabit — passage through judgment by God's provision into new creation — are laid down, and laid down as God's work.

Chapter 5. Exodus and Jordan: A People Constituted Through the Water

5.1 Exodus 14–15: the sea-crossing

At the sea the water-theme becomes national and covenantal. Israel is brought *through* the divided sea — "the LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind [*rûah*]" (Exodus 14:21) — while the same waters that are a wall of deliverance to Israel become the grave of Egypt. The redemptive-historical shape of the flood recurs on a larger canvas: deliverance through judgment-water by God's own act, issuing in a constituted people. The narrative names the result precisely: "Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses" (14:31). Deliverance produces faith; the crossing is the birth of a believing people. The dividing *rûah* echoes the *rûah* over the primeval waters, and the study notes the echo without over-reading it.

5.2 Joshua 3–5: the Jordan echo

The crossing of the Jordan on dry ground deliberately echoes the sea-crossing — the waters "stood and rose up in one heap" as the priests bearing the ark stepped in — and completes the exodus by bringing the new generation into the land, sealed at Gilgal by circumcision and Passover. The study rates the Jordan's baptismal significance *probable* rather than certain, precisely because no New Testament text takes up the Jordan-crossing as a baptismal type in the way 1 Peter takes up the flood and 1 Corinthians the sea. The echo is real and canonically resonant, but it lacks the explicit warrant that would raise it to certainty, and the discipline of Rule 7 forbids supplying that warrant by inference.

5.3 Psalm 77 and Isaiah 43:1–3: pattern-feeders, excluded

Psalm 77 ("Your way was in the sea ... Your footprints may not be known") and Isaiah 43:1–3 ("When you pass through the waters, I will be with you") re-deploy the sea-crossing as a paradigm of God's saving presence in later distress. They are essential to the *pattern* — they show Israel itself reading the crossing as a repeatable grammar of deliverance — but they are not baptism texts and are excluded from Corpus A. Their function in the study is to demonstrate that the canonical water-pattern is not an interpreter's imposition but Israel's own theological reflex.

5.4 1 Corinthians 10:1–12: "baptized into Moses"

Paul supplies the one explicitly-named water-type outside the flood. "Our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1–2). Here the sea-crossing is called a baptism — *ἐβαπτίσθησαν* — and correlated with the Christian sacraments (the following verses speak of spiritual food and drink). But Paul's argument runs in exactly the opposite direction from sacramental automatism: he adduces the type

precisely to warn the Corinthians that participation in the sign does not guarantee the reality. "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased, for they were laid low in the wilderness" (10:5). *All* were baptized into Moses; *most* fell. The passage thus does double duty in the trajectory: it authorizes the sea as a baptismal type by explicit apostolic warrant, and in the same breath it forbids the inference that the sign, received, secures the recipient apart from persevering faith. This is the first New-Testament brake on any mechanical construal, and it is applied by Paul himself.

5.5 Running thesis-check

The second phase adds covenant and community to the trajectory: through the water God constitutes a people, and the crossing produces faith. It also yields the first two disciplining qualifications from within the canon — the Jordan's type-status is left *probable* for want of explicit warrant, and the sea-type, once granted by Paul, is immediately hedged against presumption. The water-theme is advancing toward baptism, but every step is being fitted with a brake.

Chapter 6. Priestly Washing: Cleansed for Access, Atoned by Blood

6.1 Exodus 29–30 and 40: ordination washing and the laver

With the priesthood a new function of water appears: washing for access. At their ordination Aaron and his sons are washed with water (Exodus 29:4); the bronze laver is set between the tent and the altar, and the priests must wash their hands and feet from it "when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister ... *so that they will not die*" (Exodus 30:20–21). The purpose clause is decisive. The washing does not atone; it qualifies for approach. To draw near the holy God unwashed is to die; the water removes the disqualifying uncleanness so that access is possible. This is a distinct category from both judgment-deliverance and atonement — cleansing-for-access — and the study fixes it here as a controlling distinction to be carried to the adjudication.

6.2 Leviticus 8 and Numbers 8: wash-then-anoint

The ordination sequence in Leviticus 8 sets a pattern that will prove christologically suggestive: the priest is first washed, then anointed with oil. Washing precedes anointing; cleansing precedes the endowment for office. Numbers 8 applies a purification to the Levites that includes sprinkling "purifying water" on them. The study notes the wash-then-anoint pattern as a forward pointer to the Servant-Son who, at his own baptism, is washed and immediately anointed with the Spirit (Chapter 9) — while cautioning that the Levitical purification is not a proof of baptismal *mode*, since the rite here is sprinkling and the point is consecration, not immersion.

6.3 Leviticus 16: the Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement makes the controlling distinction unmistakable. Israel is cleansed "from all your sins" (Leviticus 16:30) — but the agent of that cleansing is the blood of the sin offering and the sending-away of the scapegoat, not the high priest's bathing. Aaron does bathe his body in water (16:4, 24), but the bathing qualifies him for the service; it is the *blood* that purges and the *scapegoat* that bears the iniquity away. Where the deepest cleansing "from all sins" is in view, the text assigns it to blood, and reserves water for access. This is the single most important Old-Testament datum for disciplining the later doctrine: it forbids collapsing forgiveness into washing.

6.4 Hebrews 9–10: the christological reading

Hebrews confirms and canonizes the distinction. Under the old covenant "one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22); the "various washings" (βαπτισμοί, 9:10) belonged to the external, fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. Christ's own blood, not water, cleanses the conscience (9:14). Yet Hebrews also gathers up the access-function of washing and applies it to the new-covenant worshipper: "let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil

conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (10:22). The "bodies washed with pure water" is rated a *probable* baptismal allusion — the language is the priestly access-washing, now transferred to the whole believing people who have become priests with access to the holy place. Blood atones and cleanses the conscience; the washing grants the priestly access it always signified. The two functions are held together and kept distinct, exactly as Leviticus held them.

6.5 Running thesis-check

The priestly phase contributes the access-function and, with it, the canon's sharpest internal control: water cleanses for approach, but blood atones and forgives. Any doctrine of baptism that makes the water the agent of forgiveness must reckon with the fact that the whole sacrificial system, and Hebrews' reading of it, assign forgiveness to blood and reserve water for access. The wash-then-anoint pattern, meanwhile, quietly prepares the christological center of the trajectory.

Chapter 7. Interiorized and Prophetic Cleansing: The Promise Only God Can Keep

7.1 Leviticus 11–15 and Numbers 19: the purity machinery

The purity laws elaborate a whole machinery of cleansing — washings, launderings, sprinklings, the "living water" of running streams, the hyssop and the ashes of the red heifer mixed into "the water for impurity" (Numbers 19). The system's cumulative effect is pedagogical: it trains Israel to experience defilement and cleansing as the fundamental rhythm of life before a holy God, and it multiplies water-rites without ever claiming that the water reaches the heart. The machinery cleanses the flesh for participation in the community's life and worship; its very external and repetitive character, as Hebrews will observe, testifies that a deeper cleansing is still awaited.

7.2 Psalms 26 and 51: the interiorizing of cleansing

The Psalms take the decisive step of interiorizing the cleansing-language. David's "I shall wash my hands in innocence" (Psalm 26:6) turns the ritual gesture into a figure of integrity. And Psalm 51 — the canon's deepest penitential text — prays the priestly vocabulary inward: "Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (51:7), and then, beyond anything the purity machinery could offer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me ... do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (51:10–11). Here washing, a created clean heart, and the Holy Spirit are joined in a single plea. Psalm 51 is the Old-Testament seedbed of regeneration: it recognizes that the cleansing a sinner truly needs is one that only God can create, and it associates that inward re-creation with God's own Spirit. The study marks this as the point at which the cleansing-strand turns decisively from the external to the God-wrought inward — a turn the prophets will make into a promise.

7.3 Ezekiel 36:25–27: the hinge

Ezekiel 36 is the hinge of the entire Old-Testament development. "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you ... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (36:25–27). Every verb is God's: *I will sprinkle, I will cleanse, I will give, I will put*. The promise binds together in one divine act the three strands the study has been tracing — cleansing (clean water), inward re-creation (a new heart), and the gift of God's own Spirit — and locates the whole in the sovereign initiative of God under the new covenant. It is a *principal* source, on verbal and conceptual grounds, behind the New Testament's network of cleansing-and-Spirit language, and most probably behind the "born of water and the Spirit" of John 3:5 (an allusion this study rates *probable*, not certain; see Chapter 10). The clean water here is not a rite Israel performs but a cleansing God performs; and this is the reality that Christian baptism will come to signify — never to mechanize.

7.4 Isaiah, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel: the promise multiplied

The prophetic promise is multiplied across the corpus. Isaiah sees the filth of the daughter of Zion washed away "by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning" (Isaiah 4:4), the LORD pouring water on the thirsty land and his Spirit on the offspring (44:3). Ezekiel 16 depicts God bathing and adorning his foundling bride; Ezekiel 47 sees the temple-river deepening as it flows, healing wherever it goes — Eden's river reappearing. Zechariah promises "a fountain will be opened ... for sin and for impurity" (13:1). Malachi's refiner sits over the sons of Levi "like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap" (3:2) — a purging, be it noted, not by a water-rite but by fire and lye. Joel promises the Spirit poured out "on all mankind" and salvation to "whoever calls on the name of the LORD" (2:28–32). Two things must be said of this dossier. It is overwhelmingly a promise of *God's* cleansing and *God's* Spirit, not of a rite the people perform; and its imagery is plural and not uniformly baptismal — the refiner's fire and fullers' soap are not water at all. The study takes the cleansing-and-Spirit promises (Ezekiel 36; Isaiah 44; Joel 2) as principal feeders of the New-Testament regeneration language, while declining to read every prophetic cleansing-image as a baptismal anticipation.

7.5 Running thesis-check

The prophetic phase supplies the *reality* that the entire trajectory has been approaching: a God-wrought inward washing-and-Spirit renewal, promised under the new covenant as something only God can accomplish. This is the hinge on which the study's central verdict will turn. Because the reality is God's act of cleansing-and-Spirit, the sign that will come to represent it (baptism) can be genuinely efficacious as God's appointed instrument without being mechanical, and can never be the autonomous cause of a cleansing that Ezekiel already assigned wholly to God. The Old Testament thus hands the New a promise, not a mechanism.

Chapter 8. John's Jordan Baptism: The Transitional Rite

8.1 2 Kings 5: Naaman in the Jordan

The Elisha narrative supplies the Old Testament's one narrative of cleansing by washing in the Jordan, and it supplies the very verb. Naaman is told to "wash [*rāḥaṣ*] ... in the Jordan seven times," and when he dips (*tābal*; LXX *ἐβαπτίσατο*) his flesh is restored and he is clean (2 Kings 5:10, 14). The Greek Old Testament here renders the Hebrew "dip" with the verb that will name the Christian rite, establishing the base sense "immerse." And the theology of the episode is instructive: the cleansing comes not by the water's virtue — Naaman rightly protests that Damascus has better rivers — but by obedient faith in the prophetic word; the water is the appointed occasion of a healing God gives to humbled obedience. The pattern of "cleansing through obedient faith at an appointed washing" is precisely the pattern the later rite will inhabit.

8.2 Isaiah 40: the wilderness voice

All four Gospels locate John's ministry under Isaiah 40:3, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness.'" The citation fixes John's role redemptive-historically: he is the herald of the coming of God himself, the boundary-figure between the age of promise and its fulfillment. His baptism must be read within that transitional location, not assimilated to what follows it.

8.3 Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3: the preparatory baptism of repentance

John's baptism is defined by the Gospels with precision: it is "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (*βάπτισμα μετάνοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*, Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3), administered in the Jordan to those confessing their sins, and pointedly contrasted by John himself with the greater baptism to come: "I baptize you with water ... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11). Three observations govern the reading. First, John's is a *preparatory* baptism, oriented toward the Coming One and the Spirit-and-fire baptism he will bring; it is not yet Christian baptism, a distinction that becomes explicit at Acts 19. Second, the phrase *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν* here sets the exact grammatical construction that will reappear at Acts 2:38, so that John's baptism becomes the antecedent against which Peter's command must be read. Third, John's baptism presupposes the repentance it expresses; the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, describing John independently, states that the washing was acceptable to God "not in order to the putting away of some sins, but for the purification of the body, supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness" — a formulation that, read as reception and background rather than as exegesis of the Gospels, coheres with the reading that John's water sealed a repentance already underway rather than mechanically effecting forgiveness.⁸

8.4 John 1: the Baptist's testimony

The Fourth Gospel gives John's own theological testimony, and it carefully distributes the functions. Sin-removal is fixed to the Lamb — "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) — while the Spirit-gift is fixed to Jesus, on whom John sees the Spirit descend and remain and who "baptizes in the Holy Spirit" (1:33). John's water baptism, on his own account, exists to *reveal* this One to Israel (1:31); its function is testimonial and preparatory, pointing away from itself to the Lamb who takes away sin and the Son who gives the Spirit.

8.5 Running thesis-check

The Jordan phase installs Rule 2.1 at the center of the trajectory: John's baptism is a distinct thing — preparatory, repentance-expressing, Spirit-anticipating — and must not be flattened into the Christian rite that supersedes it. It hands forward two items the later argument will need: the *εἰς ἄφεσιν* construction, now defined in a baptism that seals repentance rather than mechanizing pardon, and the sharp assignment of sin-removal to the Lamb and Spirit-gift to the Son. The stage is set for the One whose own baptism will constitute the christological center.

Chapter 9. Jesus' Baptism: The Servant-Son Consecrated

9.1 A third category of baptism

Jesus' own baptism cannot be assimilated either to John's baptism of repentance or to later Christian baptism; it is a third thing, and reading it as either of the others distorts it. Coming to John, Jesus meets the natural objection — "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" — with a purpose that is neither repentance nor initiation: "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:14–15). The sinless One submits to the baptism not to be cleansed but to identify with the people he came to save and to be publicly consecrated to his mission. At his emergence "the heavens were opened ... the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased'" (Matthew 3:16–17). The event is a consecration: washing followed immediately by Spirit-anointing and the Father's declaration — the wash-then-anoint pattern of priestly ordination (Chapter 6) now realized in the Servant-Son.

9.2 John 1:29–34: the Lamb and the Spirit-baptizer

The Fourth Gospel interprets the same event testimonially. The descending-and-remaining Spirit is the sign by which the Baptist knows Jesus to be "the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33), and the One so anointed is identified as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). The two offices are held together in the one figure: the Spirit-endowed Son is also the sin-bearing Lamb, so that the baptism which consecrates him to his mission is, from the first, oriented toward the cross by which he will take sin away and the Spirit he will pour out.

9.3 Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42: the royal Son and the Spirit-Servant

The heavenly voice fuses two Old-Testament identities. "You are My Son" echoes the royal enthronement of Psalm 2:7; "in whom I am well-pleased" evokes the Servant of Isaiah 42:1, "My chosen one in whom My soul delights ... I have put My Spirit upon Him." (The link to Isaiah 42 is best made through the Hebrew and its independent citation at Matthew 12:18 rather than through the Isaiah Septuagint, whose wording differs — a precision that keeps the allusion honestly grounded; the study rates the Isaiah 42 echo *probable*, not certain.) On that reading Jesus is declared, at his baptism, to be at once the royal Son of the Psalter and the Spirit-endowed Servant, commissioned by the Spirit's descent for the mission both texts describe.

9.4 The christological hinge

This chapter is the hinge on which the whole trajectory turns from anticipation to fulfillment. Every earlier water-event has been preparing categories — passage through judgment, cleansing for access, the promise of cleansing-and-Spirit — and every later baptism will be defined by its relation to this One. For Christian baptism, when it comes, will be baptism *into this Son*: into his death and

resurrection (Romans 6), into his name (Acts 2:38), into his body (1 Corinthians 12). The consecration of the Servant-Son is what gives the subsequent rite its content; apart from him, baptism would be one more washing, but as baptism into him it becomes union with the crucified and risen Lord.

Chapter 10. Water and Spirit: The New Birth Realized

10.1 John 3:1–10: born of water and the Spirit

To Nicodemus, "the teacher of Israel," Jesus makes entrance into the kingdom depend on a birth "of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5), and rebukes his failure to understand: "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?" (3:10). The rebuke presupposes that the birth of water-and-Spirit is something Nicodemus *should* already have known — which points not to Christian baptism, still future and unknowable to him, but to the Old-Testament promise a teacher of Israel was bound to know: Ezekiel 36:25–27, where clean water and God's new Spirit are joined in the one new-covenant promise of inward re-creation. The study therefore rates the Ezekiel allusion *probable* and reads "water and Spirit" as a single event of God-wrought new birth described in Ezekiel's own terms. In the flow of the chapter the emphasis falls decisively on the Spirit as agent — "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ... the wind blows where it wishes" (3:6, 8) — so that the new birth is disclosed as the sovereign, mysterious work of the Spirit, received and not achieved. Water here is not the agent; the Spirit is. Whether the phrase also glances forward to the rite that will signify this birth is a question the study leaves open, declining to press a *probable* allusion into a baptismal proof-text.

10.2 Titus 3:3–7: the washing of regeneration

Titus gives the fullest single formula. God "saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ" (Titus 3:5–6). The noun *λουτρόν* denotes a "bath" or "washing," and in this soteriological setting it most probably denotes the baptismal bath.⁹ On the reading this study adopts, the sentence distributes its terms as the trajectory has taught us to expect: the washing is the *instrument* ("by," *διὰ*), the Spirit is the *agent* of the regeneration and renewal, and God's *mercy* ("not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness ... but according to His mercy," 3:5) is the *ground*. It must be stated, however, that this distribution is an interpretive judgment and not the surface grammar: the two objects governed by *διὰ* — the washing and the renewal of the Spirit — are grammatically parallel, so that "washing = instrument, Spirit = agent" is a construal that touches the disputed mechanism-question (Chapter 17), not a datum the syntax hands over unambiguously. So read, Titus 3:5 states in miniature the pattern the study finds recurring: an efficacious-but-not-mechanical, Spirit-effected, mercy-grounded washing.

10.3 The regeneration stream complete

With Titus the regeneration-stream traced from Psalm 51 is complete: the clean heart and Holy Spirit of Psalm 51, promised as clean-water-and-new-Spirit in Ezekiel 36, multiplied in Isaiah 44 and poured out "on all flesh" in Joel 2, realized as the birth of water-and-Spirit in John 3, and named the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Spirit in Titus 3. Joel's promise — "whoever calls on the name of the

LORD will be delivered" — hands the trajectory directly to Pentecost, where the poured-out Spirit and the call upon the name become the content of the apostolic preaching.

10.4 Running thesis-check

This phase secures the reality that baptism will signify: God-wrought new birth by the Spirit, grounded in mercy, promised in the prophets and realized in Christ. It also plants, at Titus 3:5, the first explicit instrumental description of the washing — and, with characteristic honesty, flags that the instrumental reading, while natural, is the very point later disputed. The trajectory now has both its reality (regeneration by water-and-Spirit) and the beginnings of its central tension (how the sign relates to the reality), and it carries both into the apostolic material.

Chapter 11. Baptism Instituted and Enacted

11.1 Matthew 28:18–20: institution

The risen Christ institutes the rite as integral to the mission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20). The triune name is textually secure — there is no serious manuscript basis for the once-mooted shorter reading — and the grammar makes baptizing and teaching the twin participial specifications of disciple-making: to make disciples *is*, among other things, to baptize and to teach. Baptism is thus not an optional appendage to conversion but a commanded constituent of becoming a disciple, administered into the triune name that will define the convert's new allegiance and identity.

11.2 Mark 16:15–16 and Luke 24:44–49

Mark's longer ending — a secondary text on which no doctrine may be founded (Rule 20) — nonetheless states the apostolic association compactly: "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (16:16), where the condemnation clause names only unbelief, not the absence of baptism, guarding the priority of faith. Luke's programmatic commission fixes the content of the gospel to be preached to the nations: "repentance for forgiveness of sins ... in His name" (24:47), the very terms that Peter will enact at Pentecost.

11.3 Acts 2:14–41: the crux of *eis aphasis*

Pentecost enacts the commission and yields the study's sharpest grammatical crux. To the cut-to-the-heart crowd Peter answers: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ *for the forgiveness of your sins* [εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν]; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Three readings compete. A *causal* construal, once defended on the ground that εἰς can occasionally mean "because of," would make the baptism rest on a forgiveness already possessed; but the causal sense of εἰς is lexically marginal, and the standard grammatical treatment (Wallace) declines the causal proposal, leaving the ordinary directional-purposive sense (so BDAG) as the natural force.¹⁰ A *bare-symbolic* construal would empty the preposition of the forward reference it plainly carries. The natural reading is *purposive*: baptism, joined to repentance, is directed *toward* the forgiveness of sins, exactly as John's "baptism of repentance εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν" was (Chapter 8) — the same construction, now filled with the name of the risen Christ and coupled with the promised gift of the Spirit.

But the honest result must be stated with equal care in both directions. Read on its own, Acts 2:38 does associate baptism instrumentally with forgiveness; the plain sense couples repentance-and-baptism with the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit, and a reading that severs baptism entirely from

forgiveness is straining against the grammar. What Acts 2:38 does *not* do, by itself, is settle the *mechanism* — whether the forgiveness is conveyed *in* the rite as God's instrument or *sealed* by the rite to a faith that receives it — nor does it license a mechanical construal, since the same Peter will insist that baptism saves "not the removal of dirt from the flesh but an appeal to God for a good conscience" (1 Peter 3:21, Chapter 14), and the same Luke will show the Spirit given to Cornelius *before* any water (Chapter 12). The study's non-mechanical verdict is therefore a whole-canon synthesis, not a claim that Acts 2:38 taken alone teaches it; the passage supplies the instrumental association, and the wider canon supplies the controls that keep the association from becoming automatism. This is stated as a concession because the discipline of the study requires it: the strongest instrumental reading of Acts 2:38 is granted its full force before the qualifying texts are brought to bear.

11.4 Running thesis-check

With institution and enactment the trajectory reaches its new-covenant center. Baptism is commanded into the triune name as a constituent of discipleship; it is administered in the name of the risen Christ toward the forgiveness of sins and coupled with the gift of the Spirit. The instrumental thread of Titus 3:5 is confirmed at Acts 2:38 — and, in the same breath, the study registers that the mechanism remains underdetermined and that the controls lie in the wider canon. The center is fixed; its precise inner workings are held open for the adjudication.

Chapter 11A. New Testament Spirit-Terminology: A Bridge

11A.1 Five non-interchangeable categories

The Acts conversions and the epistolary sealing-and-indwelling texts cannot be read correctly without a disciplined vocabulary for the Spirit, because the New Testament uses several non-interchangeable expressions that a careless reading collapses. Five must be distinguished. To be *baptized with the Spirit* is a promise, with Christ as the agent, denoting his redemptive-historical outpouring of the Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5). To *receive the Spirit* denotes the gift of the Spirit to the individual (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:2). *Indwelling* denotes the Spirit's ongoing presence as a settled state (Romans 8:9–11). To be *sealed* with the Spirit denotes ownership and pledge (Ephesians 1:13–14). To be *filled* with the Spirit denotes empowering for service, and is repeatable (Acts 4:8, 31; Ephesians 5:18). The methodological control is strict: two of these terms may be treated as equivalent only where a text explicitly equates them; otherwise each retains its own sense, and the interpreter may not silently convert "sealed" into "Spirit-baptized" or "indwelt" into "regenerated."

11A.2 What Spirit-baptism is and is not

On this vocabulary, Spirit-baptism is Christ's act of pouring out the Spirit at the decisive covenantal moments of redemptive history — Pentecost for the Jews, Samaria and the house of Cornelius as the gospel crosses its great boundaries. It is *not* to be identified with the new-covenant point of entry as such, nor treated as a replacement for water baptism, nor made a synonym for regeneration or forgiveness, nor construed as a universal, repeatable second experience. Keeping these distinctions prevents the most common modern misreading, in which "Spirit-baptism" is made the real baptism and water baptism reduced to a dispensable symbol — a move the New Testament's own terminology will not sustain.

11A.3 Ephesians 1:13–14 and Romans 8:9

Two texts the exegetical corpus touched only lightly deserve full statement here, because they are load-bearing for the vocabulary. Ephesians 1:13–14 — believers "sealed ... with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance" — describes ownership and pledge; it is neither a description of Spirit-baptism nor a dating of the moment of water baptism, and it must not be pressed to prove that the Spirit's sealing precedes and so displaces the rite. Romans 8:9 — "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" — describes indwelling as the mark of belonging; it presupposes that the Spirit has been received but does not date that reception, and cannot be used to prove that reception occurs at a moment temporally prior to, and independent of, baptism. Both texts, rightly categorized, describe states and pledges, not the timing of entry.

11A.4 Payoff for the corpus

This vocabulary is what keeps "Spirit-baptism = regeneration replacing water baptism" from being read back into Acts and the epistles. It reinforces Rule 2.1 across the apostolic chapters: the several works of the Spirit are distinguished, the several baptisms are kept distinct, and the free timing of the Spirit's gift in Acts (Chapter 12) can be read as what it is — a redemptive-historical variability in the *Spirit's* bestowal — without dissolving the constancy of the *command* to be baptized in water.

Chapter 12. The Apostolic Conversions: The Pattern in Practice

12.1 The protocol and the grid

Luke narrates roughly a dozen conversion-accounts, and reading them as a doctrine requires a protocol rather than a proof-text. Each account is analyzed for the same variables — gospel preached, hearing, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, forgiveness, the gift of the Spirit, accompanying signs, entry into the community, and immediate response — with a strict distinction between what is *narrated* and what is *chronological*, between what is *stated* and what is *implied*, and between what a given abbreviated account omits and what an earlier full account has already established. The governing caution is Rule 9: an element is not shown absent because Luke, having narrated it fully once, does not repeat it in every subsequent compressed account.

12.2 The order-variation result

Across the accounts one response-pattern is constant — the gospel is preached, heard, believed; repentance and baptism follow; forgiveness and the Spirit are given; the convert enters the community — but the *timing of the Spirit's gift* varies conspicuously. At Pentecost the Spirit is promised *with* baptism (Acts 2:38). In Samaria the Spirit is *delayed* until the apostles come and lay on hands (Acts 8:14–17). In Saul's case the Spirit is *purposed before* and its reception left unnarrated in sequence (Acts 9:17; 22:16). In the house of Cornelius the Spirit falls *explicitly before* any water (Acts 10:44–48). At Ephesus the Spirit is given *after* baptism, through the laying on of hands (Acts 19:5–6). The constant is the response bound to baptism; the variable is the Spirit's timing.

12.3 The out-of-order cases as redemptive-historical validations

The two most striking departures from the Pentecost order — Samaria and Cornelius — are best read not as norms but as redemptive-historical validations (Rule 10). The delay in Samaria attaches the new Samaritan believers visibly to the apostolic church, preventing a schismatic parallel movement; the outpouring on Cornelius *before* baptism is God's own public authorization of Gentile inclusion apart from circumcision, so decisive that Peter can only ask, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" (10:47). These are hinge-moments in the extension of the gospel across its great boundaries, and their exceptional Spirit-timing serves that boundary-crossing function; to universalize them into the norm is to miss what Luke is doing with them.

12.4 Two confirmations

Two further data confirm earlier findings. The one clear re-baptism in Acts — the Ephesian disciples who had received only "John's baptism" and are now baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (19:3–5) — confirms that John's baptism was not Christian baptism (Rule 2.1); it is not a valid Christian baptism

repeated, but a preparatory baptism completed. And Ananias's word to Saul — "Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (22:16) — binds baptism's cleansing to faith's invocation, so that the washing and the calling-on-the-name are one act of believing appropriation, not a mechanical rite performed upon a passive recipient.

12.5 The household baptisms and the subjects question

Luke also reports several household baptisms — Lydia's household, the Philippian jailer's, the household of Stephanas (Acts 16:15, 33; 1 Corinthians 1:16) — without specifying the ages or, in every case, the individual faith of every member. These accounts introduce, without resolving, the question of the proper subjects of baptism. They neither state that infants were present and baptized nor exclude it; read with the jailer, who "rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household" (16:34), they underdetermine the question they raise: the credobaptist reads them as *believing* households, the paedobaptist as covenant households that include children too young to profess. The study registers the subjects-question here and reserves its adjudication for Chapter 17, where both cases — the paedobaptist covenant-continuity argument and the credobaptist case of *Believer's Baptism* — are stated in their strongest form.

12.6 The apostolic rule stated

The result may be stated as a rule that inverts a common modern assumption. In the apostolic practice, *the constant is the command to be baptized in water; the variable is the timing of the Spirit's gift*. The modern tendency — to treat Spirit-baptism as the constant essential and water baptism as the optional accompaniment — reverses what Acts actually displays. Luke shows a church for whom baptism in water is the invariable, commanded response to the gospel, while the Spirit sovereignly distributes his gift on his own redemptive-historical schedule. This is the practice that the epistolary interpretation (Chapter 13) will theologize.

Chapter 13. The Apostolic Interpretation: Union, Washing, Salvation

The narrative books show baptism instituted and enacted and map its practice across the conversions of Acts, but they do not, for the most part, *theologize* it. That work falls to the apostolic letters, and above all to Paul, who tells us what baptism *means* — what it does, what it signifies, and how it stands related to faith, to the Spirit, and to the death and resurrection of Christ. The letters do not speak with one narrow voice: they set baptism now within an argument about sanctification (Romans 6), now about sonship and inheritance (Galatians 3), now about the sufficiency of Christ against a rival "philosophy" (Colossians 2), now about the church's unity (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4), and finally about hope under persecution (1 Peter 3). This chapter traces how each argument deploys baptism and lets a coherent apostolic interpretation emerge without flattening the several uses. The thesis the evidence yields, stated so the reader may test rather than receive it: in the apostolic writings baptism is the God-appointed sign and instrument by which the believing, repentant person is united to the crucified and risen Christ — really joined to that salvation, not merely picturing it, yet not effecting it mechanically or apart from faith, because the agent throughout is God and the benefit is received through faith.

13.1 Union with Christ: Romans 6:1–14

Paul introduces baptism in Romans not to teach a doctrine of the rite but to answer an objection. If "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (5:20), why not "continue in sin so that grace may increase?" (6:1). His answer appeals to something his readers already know: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" (6:3). Baptism functions as an *agreed premise* from which Paul reasons to an ethical conclusion: whatever baptism is, it has so joined the believer to Christ's death that continuing in sin contradicts one's own existence.

The grammar carries the argument. The two occurrences of ἐβαπτίσθημεν in 6:3 are aorist passive, and the verb of 6:4, συνετάφημεν ("we have been buried with Him"), is aorist passive indicative; the correlate "Christ was raised" (ἡγέρθη) is passive, its agent specified — "through the glory of the Father." The believer is throughout the *recipient* of an action whose agent is God. This is the first control on any interpretation, and it must be stated carefully. The passive voice establishes that baptism-union is not a human achievement — not a work by which one earns incorporation into Christ. But the passive voice does *not*, by itself, decide whether the efficacy resides in the rite (God acting through the water) or in the faith-union the rite signifies; a sacramental theologian happily affirms the passives and adds that God acts *through* the water. The datum that bears on that further question is not the voice but the explicit "through faith" of the parallel in Colossians 2:12.

The prepositions specify the union. To be baptized "into Christ Jesus" and "into his death" is, on the natural construal of βαπτίζω εἰς with a personal object, to be incorporated into the person — the idiom Paul uses of being "baptized into Moses" (1 Corinthians 10:2) and of the many "baptized into one

body" (12:13).¹¹ Baptism is the means (διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος, 6:4) through which burial-with-Christ is enacted, and the purpose is stated in the ἵνα clause: "so that ... we too might walk in newness of life." The dense cluster of σύν-compounds that follows — buried with, grown together with, crucified with, and the promise that we shall live with him (6:4–8) — makes Romans 6 the classic locus of the Pauline theology of participation, issuing in the imperative not to let sin reign (6:12–14).

Three interpretive options present themselves, each deserving its strongest statement. The *memorial* reading takes baptism as the dramatization of a death-and-resurrection accomplished entirely by faith apart from the rite; its strongest supports are the priority-of-faith texts (Abraham justified while uncircumcised, Romans 4:9–11; the penitent thief, Luke 23:43) and the fact that Paul's imperative rests on what the readers are to *reckon* true.¹² The *baptismal regeneration* reading, in its strong sacramental form, takes the burial-through-baptism realistically: God genuinely effects the union in the word-bearing rite, received by faith.¹³ The reading this study judges best takes baptism as the God-appointed *means and sign* of a real, faith-received union — honoring both the realism of Paul's language ("we have been buried with Him through baptism") and the fact that the agent is God and the appropriation is faith. Against the memorial reading, Paul argues *from* baptism as the very locus of incorporation; against a mechanical construal, the passives locate agency in God, the parallel makes the raising "through faith," and the whole paragraph issues in a commanded walk a merely automatic rite could not ground. Paul's interest, it bears emphasis, is not sacramental theology in the abstract but *sanctification*: the point of adducing baptism is that those united to the dying-and-rising Christ cannot live as though sin still reigned.

13.2 Sonship and inheritance: Galatians 3:23–29

Galatians deploys baptism to a different end. The argument since 3:1 has been that righteousness and the Spirit come by faith, not works of law; the law was a temporary "guardian" until Christ. The climax is 3:26–29, and its logic is easily misread if the connective is missed. Verse 26 states the thesis — "for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" — and verse 27 grounds it with an explanatory γάρ: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Paul moves in a single breath from "sons of God *through faith*" to "*baptized* into Christ ... *put on* Christ," describing the same people in the same incorporation from two angles. Faith and baptism are not rivals, nor is baptism a second condition added to faith; baptism is the enacted form in which the faith-union was entered.

The two verbs of 3:27 repay attention. "You were baptized" (ἐβαπτίσθητε) is again aorist passive — God's incorporating act. "You have put on Christ" (Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε) is aorist middle, the investiture image. A caution lest the middle be pressed: ἐνδύομαι in the middle is simply the ordinary voice for donning clothing, so the note of personal appropriation is a contextual inference, not something the voice demonstrates. What the passage establishes is that the one baptized into Christ is

invested with Christ, so that the old status-divisions lose their force — "neither Jew nor Greek ... neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:28) — and, belonging to Christ the single "seed," the baptized are "Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (3:29). A reading that made baptism a work by which sonship is achieved would contradict Galatians' governing thesis; a reading that emptied baptism of all role would under-read Paul's own γάρ. The text holds the two together: faith and baptism are coordinated aspects of one entry into Christ.

13.3 Buried, raised, and made alive: Colossians 2:9–15

Colossians supplies what Romans 6 left implicit and furnishes the decisive control on the mechanism question. Against a syncretistic "philosophy" (2:8, 16–23), Paul argues that believers have everything in Christ. In him they "were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands ... by the circumcision of Christ" (2:11) — the inward, new-covenant heart-circumcision — "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him *through faith in the working of God*, who raised Him from the dead" (2:12).

Two features are decisive. First, as in Romans 6, the salvific verbs are passive with God as agent, and the single active verb in context has God as its explicit subject: "[God] made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (2:13). Second, and unlike Romans 6, Paul here *names* the means by which the resurrection-with-Christ is received: "through faith" (διὰ τῆς πίστεως). This is the datum the passive voice alone could not supply. It shows that the union associated with baptism is not conferred by the water automatically but appropriated by faith in the God who raised Christ — which tells decisively against an *ex opere operato* construal even as the realism of "buried with him *in baptism*, in which you were also raised" tells against a bare symbol.¹⁴ Colossians 2:12 is thus the single most important verse for locating the study's verdict: baptism is the sphere of a union that is God's act and faith's reception.

A lexical note confirms a point of method. The noun here is βαπτισμός, not βάπτισμα, yet it plainly denotes Christian baptism; the morphological form does not fix the referent, and the older attempt to distinguish the two by form alone is an illegitimate inference. Nothing in the argument depends on the disputed reading, since the point holds either way. One disputed matter must be reported, not resolved: Paul juxtaposes "the circumcision of Christ" and "buried with him in baptism," and the paedobaptist tradition reads the juxtaposition as making baptism the new-covenant counterpart of circumcision, therefore applicable to believers' children on the analogy of Genesis 17;¹⁵ the credobaptist answers that Paul pairs the two only as images of the one faith-union, and that "through faith" implies conscious faith. The exegetical verdict is that the text *associates* circumcision and baptism as figures of union but draws no infant-application inference of its own; it neither establishes nor excludes the practice. The question is genuinely open on this text and is treated in the adjudication.

13.4 The one body and the washed people: the Corinthian corpus

First Corinthians adds four data of uneven weight. First, in the rebuke of factionalism Paul asks, "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1:13). Baptism *into a name* denotes belonging — assignment to the ownership and allegiance of the one named — which is why baptism into *Paul's* name would be absurd and why the party-slogans betray the meaning of the Corinthians' own baptism. Paul's remark that Christ sent him "not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1:17) is not a depreciation of baptism — he has just named those he baptized — but a statement of relative priority in the Hebraic "not X but Y" idiom. Second, "you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (6:11): the verb "you were washed" (ἀπελούσασθε, the same verb as Acts 22:16) most naturally recalls baptism, but the three verbs together describe the whole conversion rather than a technical liturgical statement — a *probable* baptismal allusion deployed to ground holiness. Third, and most weighty, 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." The verse has been made to prove a "Spirit baptism" distinct from and superior to water baptism, but Paul's point is *unity*: the one Spirit has incorporated the many across every division into the one body. Whether ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι is taken instrumentally or locally, the text describes *one* incorporation shared by *all* believers, not a second baptism possessed by some; it is a difficult text for any position, but it does not establish a Spirit-baptism that supplants water baptism.¹⁶ Fourth, the obscure 1 Corinthians 15:29 — "those who are baptized for the dead" — is cited *ad hominem* to argue that the practice, whatever it was, presupposes the resurrection; Paul neither explains nor endorses it, its referent is irrecoverably uncertain, and no doctrine may be built upon it.

13.5 The one baptism and the bride's washing: Ephesians and Hebrews

Ephesians sets baptism among the constitutive unities of the church: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (4:5). "One baptism" states the church's single, shared initiation — over against the party-baptisms implied at Corinth — and again coordinates faith and baptism; it is not a pronouncement on mode, nor does it erase the redemptive-historical distinctions among John's, Christian, and Spirit-baptism. Ephesians 5:25–27 adds the nuptial dimension: Christ "loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word." The noun λουτρόν most probably denotes the baptismal bath, as in Titus 3:5¹⁷ (a *probable*, not certain, allusion — some read "the washing of water" as a cleansing metaphor); but two features guard against a mechanical reading. The agent is *Christ* — "He ... having cleansed her" — not the water; and the washing is qualified "with the word" (ἐν ῥήματι), locating efficacy in the word-bearing rite, not the element alone. The imagery reaches back to Ezekiel 16, where God bathes his bride. Hebrews 6:1–2, finally, lists "instruction about washings" (βαπτισμῶν, plural) among the elementary things of catechesis; the plural and the elementary setting suggest foundational instruction included

distinguishing the several washings — Jewish rites, John's baptism, and Christian baptism — precisely this study's discipline. Baptism-teaching is foundational not because trivial but because basic.

13.6 The canon's own qualification: 1 Peter 3:18–22

If Romans and Colossians give the union and Ephesians the sanctifying washing, 1 Peter states most explicitly that baptism *saves* — and, uniquely, defines how. Recalling that in Noah's day eight persons "were brought safely through the water" (3:20), Peter continues: "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh but an appeal [or pledge] to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (3:21). The verb is unambiguous — baptism "now saves you," present tense, with baptism as subject — the strongest single statement of baptismal efficacy in the New Testament; any reading that empties it fails the sentence.

But Peter immediately qualifies the *manner* with a οὐ ... ἀλλά antithesis. Baptism saves *not* "the removal of dirt from the flesh" — not as a physical washing operating on the flesh — *but* as "an ἐπερώτημα of a good conscience toward God." The hinge word is genuinely ambiguous, and the whole weight of the interpretive question rests on it. ἐπερώτημα may denote an *appeal* or *request to* God *for* a good conscience (the objective genitive, more congenial to a sacramental reading in which baptism is where one asks and receives a cleansed conscience), or a *pledge* or *answer given to* God *from* a good conscience (the subjective genitive, more congenial to a response reading); the standard lexicon lists both, and both are defended by serious scholars.¹⁸ What both share, and what Peter excludes, is any notion that baptism saves by a physical operation on the body: the saving is a Godward transaction of the conscience, and its ground is named — "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" — so the power lies in the risen Christ, not the water. The verse crystallizes the study's verdict: baptismal salvation is *real* (it saves), yet *not* mechanical (not the removal of dirt; a matter of the conscience; through the resurrection), and *faith-shaped* (an appeal or pledge toward God). The residual mechanism question turns very largely on the ἐπερώτημα genitive, and 1 Peter 3:21 leaves it genuinely open — the point at which the strongest sacramental and the strongest sign-and-seal readings most directly meet.¹⁹

13.7 Synthesis: what the apostolic interpretation establishes

Read together, the apostolic letters yield a coherent interpretation without collapsing their arguments. Baptism is *union with the crucified and risen Christ* (Romans 6; Galatians 3; Colossians 2): the baptized are buried and raised with him, clothed with him, made alive and forgiven. It is the church's *one unifying initiation* into the one body by the one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5). It is the *sanctifying washing* by which Christ cleanses his bride through the word (Ephesians 5:26; cf. 1 Corinthians 6:11). And it is, in Peter's summary, the antitype of the flood that "now saves you" — yet saves not as a physical washing but as the resurrection-grounded appeal of a good conscience.

Across all these uses two controls hold without exception, setting the boundaries of the doctrine. First, the agent is God: the salvific verbs are passive, and where active, God is their subject; baptism is not a work by which the recipient earns union. Second, the benefit is received through faith: Colossians 2:12 says so explicitly, Galatians 3:26–27 coordinates faith and baptism as one entry, and 1 Peter 3:21 locates the saving in the conscience's God-ward appeal. Between these controls, baptism stands as the God-appointed sign and instrument of a real, faith-received union — neither the bare symbol that empties Paul's realism nor the automatic mechanism that the passives, the "through faith," and Peter's "not the removal of dirt" together exclude. Two matters the apostolic evidence leaves unresolved, named here rather than dissolved: the precise *mechanism* of efficacy (means-of-grace instrument or sign-and-seal), hanging on the ἐπερώτημα of 1 Peter 3:21; and the proper *subjects* of baptism, on which the circumcision-baptism association of Colossians 2 and the household baptisms of Acts underdetermine the verdict. On both, the study presents the strongest case for each side and declines to compel a conclusion the texts do not.

Chapter 14. Consummation: The Washed Priestly People and the River of Life

14.1 Revelation 1:5–6 and 7:14: cleansed by the Lamb's blood

Revelation gathers the water-and-cleansing themes into their final form, and it does so with a striking precision about agency. The doxology of 1:5–6 blesses "Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father." The verb is best read, on the stronger textual evidence, as λύσαντι, "freed" (or "released"), rather than the similar-sounding λούσαντι, "washed" — a text-critical point that matters, because it means the foundational cleansing-from-sin at the book's outset is assigned unambiguously to the *blood* of the Lamb, not to a washing. The redeemed are, by that blood, made a royal priesthood — the fulfillment of the priestly access-washing traced in Chapter 6, now realized for the whole people. In 7:14 the great multitude "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb": the paradox is deliberate — robes are made white by being washed in blood — and it fixes the same assignment, cleansing by the Lamb's blood, in the vivid imagery of laundered garments. Where Revelation speaks of the deepest cleansing, it speaks of blood, exactly as Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 9:22 did; the canon's end confirms its controlling distinction.

14.2 Revelation 22:1–2, 14: the river of the water of life

The final water-image is not a cleansing rite at all but the life-water strand reaching its consummation. "Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street" (22:1–2), with the tree of life on either side, its leaves "for the healing of the nations." This is Eden's river (Genesis 2:10) and Ezekiel's temple-river (Ezekiel 47) brought to their end: living water proceeding from the presence of God, now from the throne of God and of the Lamb, giving life to a healed creation. The invitation that follows — "let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (22:17) — makes the water a figure of the freely given life of God, not of a washing to be performed. And the blessing on "those who wash their robes" (22:14) returns once more to the blood-washed priestly people who have the right to the tree of life and entry to the city. The trajectory that began with the Spirit hovering over the primeval waters ends with the river of life flowing from the throne: water God-mastered at the first has become, at the last, the water of life freely given, and the people cleansed by the Lamb's blood are the priests who dwell in the presence from which it flows.

14.3 Running thesis-check

The consummation confirms both halves of the study's central distinction. Cleansing from sin is assigned, at the canon's end as throughout, to the Lamb's blood, not to a water-rite — a final guard against collapsing forgiveness into washing. And the life-water strand, seeded in Eden's river and

promised in Ezekiel's temple-stream, arrives as the river of life from the throne — a strand distinct from the cleansing-rites and never itself a baptism. The four canonical water-functions the study has distinguished — judgment-deliverance, washing-for-access, cleansing-and-Spirit regeneration, and life-water — are all present at the end, gathered but not confused, in the washed priestly people and the river that gives them life.

Part III — Synthesis and Adjudication

Chapter 15. The Canonical Biblical Theology

15.1 The whole arc restated

Traced as a single argument, Scripture's water-theme runs from the God-mastered deep over which the Spirit hovers, through the flood in which the righteous are borne through judgment by God's appointed means, the sea and Jordan through which a believing people is constituted, the priestly washing that grants access while blood makes atonement, the interiorizing of cleansing in the Psalms and its transformation into the prophetic promise of clean water and a new heart and God's own Spirit, John's Jordan baptism of repentance, Jesus' own baptismal consecration as Servant-Son, the new birth of water and Spirit, the apostolic baptism that unites the believer to the crucified and risen Christ and incorporates him into the one body, and finally the washed royal-priestly people and the river of the water of life flowing from the throne. It is a real trajectory, not an imposed grid: each node was established on its own exegetical terms, and the connections were admitted only where historical and theological correspondence, escalation, and — wherever possible — explicit canonical warrant sustained them.

What makes the arc a genuine biblical theology rather than a devotional montage is the set of *disciplining qualifications* the exegesis itself generated at each stage, every one of which constrains the doctrine that emerges at the center. Water is God-mastered, never autonomous. Blood, not water, atones and forgives; water cleanses for access. Sacramental privilege, once granted, does not guarantee the recipient apart from persevering faith (1 Corinthians 10). The Spirit's timing relative to the water is free. John's baptism is not Christian baptism. And the reality baptism signifies — the inward cleansing-and-Spirit renewal of Ezekiel 36 — is God's own act, so that the sign can be efficacious as God's instrument without ever becoming the autonomous cause of what only God does. These are not qualifications imposed from outside to soften a doctrine; they are the findings of the exegesis, and the doctrine is built to fit them.

15.2 The four canonical water-strands distinguished

The single "water-theme" is in fact four distinguishable strands, and much confusion in the history of the doctrine comes from conflating them. The first is *judgment and deliverance*: the flood and the sea, in which God brings the righteous through destroying waters into a new condition — the strand 1 Peter names the antitype of baptism. The second is *washing for access*: the laver and the priestly bathings, in which water removes disqualifying uncleanness so that one may approach the holy God — the strand Hebrews 10:22 transfers to the believing priesthood. The third is *cleansing-and-Spirit regeneration*: the interiorized cleansing of Psalm 51 promised as clean-water-and-new-Spirit in Ezekiel 36 and realized as

the new birth of John 3 and the washing of regeneration of Titus 3 — the strand that supplies baptism's deepest content. The fourth is *life-water*: Eden's river, Ezekiel's temple-stream, and the river of life from the throne — living water proceeding from God's presence, which is not a cleansing-rite at all and never a baptism. Baptism draws on the first three and must be kept clear of the fourth; and even within the first three, the distinction between the access-washing (water) and the atoning cleansing (blood) must be preserved. The biblical theology of baptism is thus an exercise in distinguishing as much as in connecting.

15.3 The typological method audited

Because typology is the method most liable to abuse, the study submits each proposed type to five tests: historical correspondence (a real correspondence between the earlier event and the later), theological correspondence (a genuine correspondence of divine meaning, not merely of surface feature), escalation (the antitype exceeds the type), covenantal development (the connection tracks the unfolding covenants), and, where available, explicit canonical warrant (a later text that names the connection). By these tests the flood (1 Peter 3:21) and the sea (1 Corinthians 10:2) earn *certain* type-status, because the New Testament itself names them; the Jordan-crossing and Naaman's washing remain *probable*, resonant but unwarranted by any explicit New-Testament appropriation; and mere water-events with no correspondence beyond the presence of water — a great many of which the devotional tradition has pressed into baptismal service — are declined. The audit is what keeps the trajectory honest: it is populated only by connections that pass the tests, and its confidence at each node is calibrated to the warrant available.

Chapter 16. Doctrinal Adjudication

16.1 The nine load-bearing data

The exegesis produced nine findings that any adequate model of baptism must satisfy, and a model's adequacy is measured by how many it explains without special pleading. (One caveat governs the scorecard: the framing of the nine is itself part of the synthesis, not a neutral referee. The first datum in particular states an instrumental reading a consistent memorialist would reword; the reader should weigh the data, not treat the list as a tribunal whose verdict is settled by its wording.) They are these. *First*, baptism is really joined to salvation, not detached from it: the verbs are instrumental — "into Christ" and "into His death" (Romans 6:3), "now saves you" (1 Peter 3:21), "for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38), "washed" (1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 22:16), "saved us ... by the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). *Second*, yet the water never cleanses mechanically: the atoning cleansing is by blood (Leviticus 16:30; Hebrews 9:22; Revelation 7:14; 1:5), and the saving is expressly non-physical ("not the removal of dirt ... but an appeal to God for a good conscience," 1 Peter 3:21). *Third*, the efficacy is received through faith, which is decisive: "through faith in the working of God" (Colossians 2:12), sonship "through faith" with baptism its coordinate (Galatians 3:26–27), God "cleansing their hearts by faith" before baptism in the Gentile case (Acts 15:9), and only unbelief condemning (Mark 16:16). *Fourth*, God is the agent throughout: the saving verbs are passive with God as subject. *Fifth*, baptism is nonetheless commanded and non-optional: Peter commands it even after the Spirit has fallen (Acts 10:48), and the Commission makes it integral to disciple-making. *Sixth*, sacramental privilege does not guarantee final salvation apart from persevering faith (1 Corinthians 10:2, 5, 12). *Seventh*, the Spirit's timing relative to the water is free, not fixed. *Eighth*, "baptism" is not univocal — John's, Jewish, Jesus', Spirit-, and Christian baptism are distinct, and texts about one may not be transferred wholesale to another. *Ninth*, baptism incorporates into Christ and his one body (Romans 6; Galatians 3; Colossians 2; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; Revelation 1:6).

16.2 The models scored

Measured against the nine, the *bare-symbol/memorial* view satisfies the God-agency and faith-priority data and rightly resists mechanism, but fails the reality-language of the first datum — it must read "baptism now saves you" and "buried with him through baptism" as bare pictures — and tends to make baptism dispensable against its commanded status. The *public-testimony/ordinance* view is stronger: it honors faith-priority, God-agency, non-mechanism, and perseverance, and takes the command seriously; its price is that the instrumental language, and Acts 2:38's directing of baptism *toward* forgiveness, sit awkwardly with a purely retrospective role. The *sign-and-seal* and *means-of-grace* views, which differ mainly in how realist they are about the water, together satisfy the most data — the reality-language, non-mechanism, faith-reception, God-agency, command, non-guarantee, incorporation, and (because efficacy is tied to God's free working rather than the moment of water) the

free Spirit-timing; their vulnerability is that "seal" is never used *of baptism* in the New Testament (the Spirit is what seals, Ephesians 1:13), so the term is an inference, and the realism must still bow to Peter's "not the removal of dirt." The *strong baptismal-regeneration* view states the reality-language and command most straightforwardly, and in its realist Lutheran voice is weighty — Titus 3:5 says God saved us *by the washing*; but its automatic constructions, which detach efficacy from faith and fix regeneration at the rite, fail the express exclusion of the physical washing, the cleansing-by-faith before baptism at Cornelius, the baptized who fall, and the free Spirit-timing; in its faith-qualified form it converges toward the means-of-grace view. The *covenantal-incorporation* view is sound on incorporation and community-entry; its infant extension is neither established nor excluded by the data. The *Spirit-baptism* view rightly foregrounds that the decisive reality is the Spirit's work and its timing free, but fails if it detaches or duplicates water baptism, since 1 Corinthians 12:13 says *all* were so baptized.

16.3 The verdict

The reading that explains all nine data with the fewest exceptions is a sign-and-instrument view within a faith-and-grace frame, overlapping the sign-and-seal and means-of-grace models where those are careful and incorporating the true insights of the testimony, incorporation, and Spirit views:

Christian baptism is the God-appointed sign and instrument by which the repentant believer, calling on the Lord, is united to the crucified and risen Christ — receiving the forgiveness and the Spirit that God's mercy grants and faith embraces — and is incorporated into the one body, the washed royal-priestly people. It is really joined to this salvation, not a bare symbol, and is commanded and non-optional; yet it does not operate mechanically or by the water's own power, for the atoning cleansing is Christ's blood and the saving is "not the removal of dirt" but the appeal of a good conscience through the resurrection; its benefit is received through faith and is not guaranteed apart from persevering faith; and the Spirit who effects the reality gives himself in his own freedom, with, before, or after the water.

Stated as a formula: baptism is the instrument, God's mercy the ground, the Spirit the agent, and faith the receiving hand — *efficacious but not mechanical*. This is the same triad the exegesis reached independently at Titus 3:5, Acts 2:38, Romans 6, Colossians 2, and 1 Peter 3:21, which is why it is offered as a whole-canon synthesis rather than a reading of any single verse. The verdict *excludes* a bare symbol that empties the instrumental language; a strong *ex opere operato* mechanism that makes the rite the automatic point of regeneration apart from faith; and any construal that makes the water itself the cleansing agent. Confidence is **high** — not "very high," because the verdict is a synthesis across texts rather than the plain sense of any one, and because two real uncertainties remain (Chapter 17). Readers who weight 1 Peter 3:21's "not the removal of dirt" and the faith-priority texts most heavily will lean toward the sign-and-seal end; those who weight the instrumental verbs most heavily will lean

toward the means-of-grace end; that range is where the evidence sits, and the extremes are what the corpus rules out.

16.4 The transparency statement

Honesty requires a final word about the verdict's location. The reading judged best here sits close to the classical Reformed and, in part, the Lutheran doctrines of the sacraments — an efficacious sign and instrument, really joined to what it signifies, received through faith, not operating mechanically. It is offered *not* because any tradition holds it but because it is where the grammar of the whole corpus lands, and it is offered as the best available synthesis, not as a neutral default. A Lutheran, more realist about the water, and a Baptist, reading baptism as the sign and pledge of a salvation already received by faith, would divide the same data differently, and both have been represented in their strongest form. Where the texts genuinely underdetermine the question — as, on two matters, they do — the study says so rather than letting the resemblance to a tradition supply an answer the texts withhold.

Chapter 17. Two Questions Left Genuinely Disputed

17.1 The mechanism of efficacy

The corpus establishes *that* baptism is efficacious-but-not-mechanical and faith-received; it does not decisively settle *whether* the efficacy is located in the God-given rite (received by faith) or in the faith-union that the rite signs and seals. The hinge is a single ambiguous word — the ἐπερώτημα of 1 Peter 3:21, an *appeal to* God (leaning sacramental) or a *pledge given to* God (leaning response) — and the standard lexicon lists both readings, while the genitive construction underdetermines the choice.²⁰ Both poles, held carefully, sit inside the shared frame: neither is *ex opere operato*, and both affirm that the water has no power in itself. They differ only on *where* the efficacy is located — in the God-given rite as the appointed means, or in the covenant promise the rite signs and seals to faith. The strongest published voices on each side confirm that the difference is real and the frame shared: the means-of-grace end is pressed by those who read baptism as the appointed time God bestows salvation on the believing, repentant sinner, yet who still require faith and repentance and so sit inside the faith-bound frame;²¹ the sign-and-seal end is stated classically by those who hold the sacraments to be "real means of grace ... signs and seals" while insisting that "the virtue is not in them ... the efficiency does not reside in the water."²² The study declines to resolve the question because the decisive text leaves it open; it is the joint at which the strongest sacramental and the strongest sign-and-seal readings meet, and the evidence genuinely underdetermines it.

17.2 The subjects of baptism

The explicit conversions are all of believers who heard and responded, which is why believers' baptism is the clearly-attested pattern. But the paedobaptist case, in its strongest form, marshals real data: the household baptisms (Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16) do not specify the members' ages or, in every case, their individual faith; Peter's Pentecost promise is "for you and your children and for all who are far off" (Acts 2:39); and the circumcision-baptism association (Colossians 2:11–12), read against the covenant-sign pattern of Genesis 17, is taken to extend the sign to covenant children. The strongest modern credobaptist reply, set out in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, holds that baptism is "reserved for believers because it preserves the testimony of the gospel by showing that only those who have repented and believed belong to the church."²⁴ It presses two lines against the covenantal case. On the covenants, the volume holds that paedobaptists "rightly see continuity between the old covenant and the new, but ... fail to note the significant elements of discontinuity" that require believers' baptism — the case Wellum's chapter develops. On the Commission, Köstenberger argues that Jesus' command to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them, "clearly presupposes that the recipients ... can consciously choose to be baptized," so that the paedobaptist appeal to "the faith of parents in the case of an infant" is "without basis in the text." It answers, further, that every narrated baptism follows profession, that "your children" in Acts 2:39 is

qualified by "as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself," and that Colossians 2:12's "through faith" implies conscious faith. The strongest paedobaptist case rests the practice on covenant continuity — that the Abrahamic covenant remains in force as the covenant of grace under which the church now lives, so that the covenant sign belongs to believers' children as circumcision did.²³ The texts *underdetermine* the question: they neither establish infant baptism nor exclude it. The study reports it as genuinely disputed, and notes only what is settled — that where the New Testament shows us baptism, it shows repentant, believing response, so that any practice must keep baptism bound to the faith and repentance the texts everywhere attach to it.

17.3 A methodological reflection

To hold a doctrine with confidence while leaving its contested joints open is not indecision but discipline. The central verdict — baptism as the God-appointed, faith-received sign and instrument of union with Christ — is held with high confidence because the whole corpus converges on it. The two open questions are open not because the evidence is thin everywhere but because, at these two precise points, the decisive texts are genuinely ambiguous (the ἐπερώτημα genitive) or genuinely silent (the ages and faith of household members). A method that resolved them anyway, by preference or by tradition, would purchase a false completeness at the cost of the very discipline that gives the central verdict its credibility. The integrity of the confident conclusion depends on the honesty of the open ones.

Chapter 17A. Refutation and Engagement with Counterarguments

17A.1 The controls against "Spirit-baptism replaces water baptism"

A widespread modern claim holds that the only baptism that now matters is Spirit-baptism — identified with regeneration — so that water baptism is at most an optional symbol. The Spirit-terminology of Chapter 11A already disarms the claim, and eight controls make the refutation explicit. The *definitional* control: "Spirit-baptism" in the New Testament is Christ's redemptive-historical outpouring of the Spirit, not a synonym for regeneration. The *command* control: water baptism is commanded as integral to disciple-making (Matthew 28:19) and commanded even after the Spirit has fallen (Acts 10:48). The *salvific-language* control: the instrumental verbs ("saves," "for the forgiveness of sins," "washed," "the washing of regeneration") attach to *water* baptism in its contexts, not to a separate Spirit-baptism. The *Acts 10* control: at Cornelius the Spirit falls first, yet Peter still commands the water — proving the two are distinct and the water not dispensable. The *timing-variability* control: the Spirit comes with, before, and after the water across Acts, which is unintelligible if Spirit-baptism simply *is* water baptism or simply replaces it. The *"one baptism"* control: Ephesians 4:5 confesses one baptism, not a superior Spirit-baptism over against an inferior water one. The *category-conflation* control: "sealed," "indwelt," "filled," "received," and "baptized" are distinct and may not be silently merged. And the *apostolic-practice* control: the church of Acts baptizes every convert in water as the invariable response to the gospel.

17A.2 Eight counterarguments engaged

Eight specific objections deserve direct answer, each stated fairly before it is met. *"Spirit baptism is the real baptism; water is only a symbol"* — answered by the command and salvific-language controls: the New Testament attaches its saving language to water baptism and commands it. *"The Spirit regenerates; water cannot save"* — granted that the Spirit is the agent and the water has no power in itself (1 Peter 3:21), but this refutes only the mechanical caricature, not baptism as the God-appointed instrument received by faith. *"1 Corinthians 12:13 proves a universal Spirit-baptism"* — the verse says *all* were baptized into one body, describing one incorporation shared by all believers, not a second baptism possessed by some. *"Acts 10 proves baptism unnecessary"* — on the contrary, Peter *commands* the water precisely there, so the episode proves the opposite. *"Ephesians 1:13 shows the Spirit given before baptism, so baptism is secondary"* — the sealing describes ownership and pledge, not the timing of the rite, and cannot bear the inference. *"The thief on the cross was saved without baptism"* — a pre-Pentecost case under a different covenantal moment, which establishes that faith is decisive and that God is not bound by his own ordinance, not that the ordinance is void for those who can receive it. *"Baptism is a work, and we are saved by grace"* — baptism is a receiving, not a meriting; its verbs are passive with God as agent, and submitting to it no more earns grace than opening the hand earns a gift (Rule: baptism is not a meritorious work merely because its recipient submits to it). *"The order in Acts*

varies, so there is no pattern" — the *variable* is the Spirit's timing; the *constant* is the command to be baptized in water, so the variation establishes a pattern rather than dissolving one.

17A.3 Coherence with the study's verdict

These answers cohere with the study's verdict and observe its discipline. They defend baptism's genuine, commanded, instrumental role without overclaiming on the two open questions: none of them requires resolving the mechanism-question toward the means-of-grace pole, and none requires deciding the subjects-question. They refute the *detachment* of water baptism from the reality it signifies — the error the corpus most clearly excludes — while leaving genuinely disputed what the corpus genuinely leaves disputed. The refutation, in other words, is calibrated to the same confidence levels as the constructive argument: firm where the evidence is firm, and silent where it is not.

Part IV — History of Doctrine and Reception

The reception the exegesis deferred (Rules 12/19: history illuminates but does not overrule). The survey is built on primary sources verified verbatim against the public-domain critical editions and cited by their classical divisions. Its function is evidential in a limited sense: it shows how the church read these texts, and it discloses that the church divided over precisely the questions the study leaves disputed — which is itself evidence that those disputes are real and not artefacts of method.

Chapter 18. The Patristic and Medieval Reception

18.1 The earliest rite and its regeneration-language

From the earliest post-apostolic witnesses, baptism is described in the language of regeneration and administered in the triune name. Justin Martyr, writing about 150, describes converts brought "where there is water" and "regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated," in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, calling the rite "the washing that is for the remission of sins and unto regeneration" (*1 Apology* 61, 66). The *Didache* directs baptism "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water," permitting affusion — "pour out water thrice upon the head" — where immersion is impossible, and prescribing pre-baptismal fasting (*Didache* 7). Irenaeus calls baptism "the baptism of our regeneration" through Father, Son, and Spirit, and "the seal of eternal life" (*Demonstration* 3, 7); Clement of Alexandria gathers the early vocabulary — "being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons ... variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing" (*Paedagogus* 1.6). Two things are notable for the study. The regeneration-language is early, widespread, and tied to the triune name — the reception strongly favors reading baptism as really joined to what it signifies. And, as Chapter 20 will note from the historian's own caution, patristic "regeneration" does not yet carry the precise sense of the later Protestant order of salvation, so the vocabulary must be weighed on its own terms, not read anachronistically.

18.2 Tertullian: the Spirit-over-the-waters typology, and the first protest against infant baptism

Tertullian's *On Baptism* (c. 198) is the first treatise devoted to the rite. He grounds baptism's power in the creation-typology this study noted at Genesis 1:2: "the Spirit of the Lord was hovering over the waters ... Water was the first to produce that which had life, that it might be no wonder in baptism if waters know how to give life," and, after the invocation of God, the waters "attain the sacramental power of sanctification" as the Spirit "rests over the waters, sanctifying them" (chs. 3–4). This is reception evidence that the creation-water/Spirit connection was read baptismally very early — though, consistent with the study's own restraint at Genesis 1:2, it is the Father's later reading, not the plain sense of the Genesis text, that is being recorded. Tertullian is also the first explicitly to discuss infant baptism — and to oppose it: "the delay of baptism is preferable ... in the case of little children ... let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ" (ch. 18). His protest is doubly significant: it attests that infant baptism was already practiced (one does not argue against a novelty), and it shows the subjects-question already contested in the late second century — again, the church divides where the study finds the texts underdetermined.

18.3 The Romans 6 and John 3:5 mainstream

The fourth-century catechists read baptism through Romans 6 and John 3:5 as the study does. Cyril of Jerusalem teaches the newly baptized that they "descended three times into the water, and ascended again," figuring "the three days' burial of Christ," so that the water was "at once your grave and your mother," and insists that baptism is "the counterpart of the sufferings of Christ" in which "we ... were baptized into His death" (*Mystagogical Catecheses* II). Basil joins water and Spirit exactly as the study reads John 3:5 through Ezekiel 36: "the water fulfils the image of death, and the Spirit gives us the earnest of life ... this is what it is to be born again of water and of the Spirit," and — anticipating the study's "faith and baptism coordinated, not rivals" — "faith and baptism are two kindred and inseparable ways of salvation" (*On the Holy Spirit* XV.35, XII.28). Cyril also supplies the reception form of the study's sign/reality distinction, observing of Simon Magus that "his body went down and came up, but his soul was not buried with Christ" — the outward washing without the inward reality (*Procatechesis*). Chrysostom compresses the Romans-6 reading into an epigram — "Baptism is the Cross."

18.4 Augustine: the *sacramentum/res* distinction

The single most important patristic datum for this study is Augustine's explicit distinction between the sacrament and the reality it signifies: "the sacrament of baptism is one thing, the conversion of the heart another; but man's salvation is made complete through the two together ... the sacrament may exist in the infant without the conversion of the heart" (*On Baptism, Against the Donatists* IV.25.33). This *sacramentum/res* distinction is the historical root of the very frame the study reached exegetically — the sign genuinely conveys, yet is distinguishable from, the inward reality it seals; efficacious, yet not mechanical, because the sacrament may be present without the heart's conversion. Augustine also supplies the classic infant-baptism/original-sin argument (*On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins* I.34) and grounds the validity of baptism in God rather than in the minister — the point that would settle the Donatist controversy. The study takes Augustine's distinction as a striking convergence, not as authority: it is evidence that the sign/reality frame is ancient and native to the tradition's best reading of the texts, not a modern imposition.

18.5 The fourth-century orations and the several baptisms

The great baptismal orations deepen the reception at two points the study has emphasized. Gregory of Nazianzus independently makes the study's Rule 2.1 distinction, enumerating the several baptisms: "Moses baptized ... in the cloud and in the sea ... typical; John ... unto repentance; Jesus ... in the Spirit — the perfect Baptism; and a Fourth ... by Martyrdom" (*Oration* 39.17), the patristic form of the very insistence that "baptism" is not univocal. Ambrose assembles the Old-Testament baptism-typology dossier the study traced in Parts II — the flood, the Red Sea, the bitter water of Marah, and Naaman in the Jordan — and draws from it precisely the study's controlling point about agency: "it is not of the

waters but of grace that a man is cleansed," and the water "does not cleanse without the Spirit" (*On the Mysteries*). Gregory of Nyssa states the sign/reality frame almost verbatim: "it is not the water that bestows ... but the command of God and the visitation of the Spirit; water serves to express the cleansing" (*On the Baptism of Christ*). These are reception convergences of a high order — the Fathers, reading the same texts, reach the same distinction between the God-given efficacy and the water's own powerlessness — but they remain evidence of how the texts were read, weighed and not obeyed.

18.6 The developed rite and mode

The early church orders show the rite the epistles theologized taking liturgical shape. The *Apostolic Constitutions* prescribe a sequence — renunciation, a triune interrogation, immersion figuring the descent-and-ascent of Romans 6, and anointing — and the *Didache* already permits affusion by necessity while assuming immersion in living water as the norm. The developed practice thus enacts the Romans-6 theology (burial and rising) and preserves the triune name of Matthew 28:19, while showing the flexibility about mode that the New Testament's own silence on prescribed mode leaves open.

18.7 The one-baptism controversy on Rule 2.1 and Acts 19

The third-century dispute over baptism administered by heretics is the reception-history of the one text in Acts where a baptism is clearly repeated (Acts 19). Cyprian and the Seventh Council of Carthage held that heretical "baptism" is no baptism, so that converts from heresy are "not re-baptized ... but baptized ... there is one baptism appointed in the Church"; Firmilian agreed. The opposing Roman position, represented by the anonymous *Treatise on Re-Baptism*, held that baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ," even among heretics, must not be repeated — the view that eventually prevailed. Both sides appealed to the texts this study weighs, and the controversy is instructive precisely as reception: the church's dispute over *when* a baptism may be repeated is not an exegesis of Acts 19, whose own point is narrower — the completion of John's preparatory baptism, which was never Christian baptism (Rule 2.1).

18.8 The medieval codification

By the high Middle Ages the doctrine was codified in the direction of realism. The historian records the consolidation: the enumeration of seven sacraments; the formula *ex opere operato* (which, the historian is careful to note, was not understood as magical or as operating irrespective of the recipient's disposition); the identification of baptism with regeneration itself; the doctrine of a *limbus infantum* for the unbaptized; and the fixing of affusion as the Western norm, with confirmation split off from baptism as a separate rite. This trajectory carries the early regeneration-language toward the strong sacramental pole the study's adjudication finds must be qualified by faith and by 1 Peter 3:21 — and it is the development against which the Reformation will react.

18.9 Methodological control

A long and broad consensus is significant reception evidence, and the patristic-medieval convergence on baptism as regeneration, read through Romans 6 and John 3:5, genuinely favors the study's rejection of a bare-symbol reading. But consensus is weighed, not obeyed (Rule 19). Two cautions apply. The antiquity of a reading establishes its plausibility, not its correctness; and, as the historian himself warns, the Fathers' "regeneration" language "signifies not so much a subjective change of heart ... as a change in the objective condition and relation of the sinner," so it must not be read anachronistically through the later Protestant order of salvation. The reception is powerful and it is consulted; it does not overrule the grammar of the texts.

Chapter 19. The Reformation Relocation

19.1 Zwingli's innovation

The decisive modern turn is registered, from the neutral historian, in Zwingli. Zwingli "regarded the sacraments as signs and seals of a grace already received rather than as means of a grace to be received ... He rejected ... baptismal regeneration." This is, on the historian's own account, a departure from the prior consensus: for the first time the sacrament is construed as commemorating and attesting a grace complete before and apart from it, rather than as an instrument through which grace is conveyed. The radical wing pressed the logic to its conclusion, rejecting infant baptism in favor of a pure church of professed believers, performing the first rebaptism in 1525 and suffering persecution — including, with grim irony, execution by drowning. Whatever one's verdict on the exegetical merits, the historical fact is that the memorial construal and the severance of baptism from regeneration enter the tradition here, in the sixteenth century.

19.2 Calvin's sign-and-seal recovery

Calvin recovered a middle position that the study's verdict most resembles. Baptism is "a kind of sealed instrument by which he assures us that all our sins are ... effaced" (*Institutes* 4.15.1) — a sign that genuinely seals and conveys assurance of the grace it represents, neither the bare token of Zwingli nor the *ex opere operato* mechanism of the medieval codification. Calvin also grounds infant baptism on the covenant, arguing that baptism is "substituted for circumcision" and that the covenant sign therefore belongs to believers' children (*Institutes* 4.16). Calvin's sign-and-seal construal is the confessional position closest to the study's mediating verdict — which is exactly why the transparency note of Chapter 16 is necessary.

19.3 The Lutheran counter-position

The Lutheran tradition held the means-of-grace pole against both the medieval mechanism and the Zwinglian memorial. Luther's *Large Catechism* teaches that baptism, as water comprehended in God's command and connected with his word, "works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe" — the water availing nothing without the word, but the word-bearing water genuinely conveying what it promises (*Large Catechism* IV.41–42). The Augsburg Confession states that baptism "is necessary to salvation" and that "by baptism the grace of God is offered" (Article IX). This is the realist voice the adjudication represents in its strongest form and finds must be held within Peter's "not the removal of dirt."

19.4 The confessional cross-section

The Reformation confessions divide, along the two poles, exactly where the study leaves the mechanism-question disputed. On the sign-and-seal side, the Westminster Confession states the study's

mediating verdict almost confessionally: grace and salvation are "not so inseparably annexed" to baptism that none can be saved without it or all who are baptized are regenerated, yet "the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost ... in his appointed time" (28.5–6). The Heidelberg Catechism asks whether "the outward washing of water itself the washing away of sins" and answers "No" (72–73); the Belgic Confession locates the cleansing "not ... by the external water, but by ... the precious blood" (34). On the means-of-grace and regenerative side stand the Lutheran confessions and, at the strong end, the Council of Trent, which pronounces its anathema on any who say that baptism is "not necessary unto salvation" (Session VII). The confessional map is thus a map of the very range the study identifies — from a high sign-and-seal to a realist means-of-grace — with the memorial view on one flank and the strong regenerative view on the other.

19.5 The historical irony

There is a genuine historical irony worth naming, and it belongs to reception rather than to exegesis. The tradition that most emphasizes salvation by grace alone is also the tradition, in its radical wing, that most decisively relocated salvation *away from* the commanded sign, construing baptism as the believer's testimony to a grace already complete. Whether that relocation was an exegetical gain or loss is the substance of the mechanism-question the study leaves disputed; but that it was a sixteenth-century development, and not the reading of the prior fifteen centuries, is a matter of historical record on which the neutral historian and the study's own sources agree.

Chapter 20. Modern Developments and the Evangelical Synthesis

20.1 The relocation into the *ordo salutis*

In the developed Protestant order of salvation, the tendency traced from Zwingli hardened into a settled architecture in which regeneration, justification, and the sealing of the Spirit are located at the moment of faith, and baptism follows as sign, seal, or testimony. The lexicon of Reformed dogmatics places baptism within this order as a means of grace subordinate to the Word; the terminology itself — the technical *ordo salutis* — is a post-Reformation development, and reading it back into the apostolic or patristic vocabulary is the anachronism the historian warned against. The study's verdict neither adopts this architecture as a premise nor rejects its substance; it observes that the New Testament binds baptism to conversion more tightly than a purely retrospective placement suggests, while agreeing that faith is decisive and God the agent.

20.2 The evangelical synthesis and its exegetical burden

The modern Reformed-Baptist and broader evangelical synthesis typically holds baptism to be an ordinance that follows and testifies to a completed salvation. Its strength is its firm grasp of faith-priority and grace; its exegetical burden, as Chapter 16 noted, is the instrumental language of Acts 2:38, Titus 3:5, and 1 Peter 3:21, which it must construe as retrospective or figurative. The study does not adjudicate against this synthesis so much as locate it: it is a defensible reading of the faith-priority end of the evidence, which pays its price at the instrumental texts, just as the means-of-grace reading is a defensible reading of the instrumental end, which pays its price at the faith-priority texts.

20.3 The study's verdict in relation to this history

The study's whole-canon verdict returns neither to *ex opere operato* nor to the memorial relocation. It recovers baptism as the faith-received, commanded sign and instrument that the apostolic and patristic material describes — really joined to salvation, yet not mechanical; commanded, yet not meritorious; efficacious, yet by God's Spirit received through faith. Its closest confessional analogues are the Calvinian sign-and-seal and the faith-qualified Lutheran means-of-grace, which is why the resemblance is disclosed rather than concealed; but it reaches the position from the grammar of the corpus, and it holds the mechanism-question open where those traditions close it.

20.4 The standard modern literature

Two modern works anchor the contemporary debate at the two ends the study identifies. The standard monograph on the New Testament material presses the union-and-efficacy language while grounding the saving power in the risen Christ rather than in the water — "it is not said that the giving to God of an answer saves; the Risen Lord does that."²⁵ The strongest recent statement of the "baptism for remission" reading presses the instrumental texts to their firmest form, making baptism the appointed

time God bestows initial salvation on the believing, repentant sinner, while still requiring faith and repentance.²⁶ The study stands between them, closer to the former in its refusal to fix regeneration mechanically at the rite, respectful of the latter's insistence that the instrumental language be taken seriously.

20.5 The Reformed sign-and-seal in its own voice

The Reformed sign-and-seal pole, verified from its own classic statements, is not the bare memorial with which it is sometimes confused. Hodge holds the sacraments to be "real means of grace ... signs and seals," yet insists that "the virtue is not in them ... the efficiency does not reside in the water"; Charnock, representative of the Puritan emphasis, subordinates the sacrament to the Word — "the gospel is the instrument whereby God brings the soul to this new birth ... sacraments are not efficacious but by virtue of the word ... God alone is the prime efficient cause of regeneration"; and the covenant-children datum is stated confessionally in the Canons of Dort, which call the children of believers "holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace" (I.17). This pole affirms, with the study, that baptism truly conveys grace and that the water has no power in itself; it differs from the means-of-grace pole only on *where* the efficacy is located, and that difference is the disputed mechanism-question of Chapter 17.

20.6 An excursus on the creed

A final historical observation confirms how deeply baptism shaped Christian doctrine. The historian of the Apostles' Creed judges that the old Roman symbol "is based on the baptismal formula": the creed grew from the triune interrogation put to candidates at the font, and the third article's confession of "the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting" names the blessings received at baptism. If so, the church's foundational confession of faith is itself a deposit of its baptismal practice — a reception fact that underscores how central, and how far from optional, baptism was in the life of the early church, whatever one concludes about its precise efficacy.

Part V — Conclusion

Chapter 21. Conclusion

21.1 What the study establishes and what it leaves disputed

The study establishes, with high to very high confidence, a real canonical trajectory and a central doctrine. The trajectory is not a montage of water-images but a disciplined development, each node verified on its own terms and connected only where the tests of typology are met: the God-mastered deep, the flood survived, the sea and Jordan crossed, the priest washed for access while blood atones, the prophetic promise of clean water and a new Spirit, John's preparatory baptism, Jesus' consecration, the new birth of water and Spirit, apostolic baptism into Christ, and the river of life. The central doctrine is that Christian baptism is the God-appointed sign and instrument by which the repentant believer is united to the crucified and risen Christ — really joined to salvation, commanded, yet not mechanical, its benefit received through faith, its agent the Spirit, its ground God's mercy. What the study deliberately leaves disputed is likewise clear: the precise mechanism of baptism's efficacy, which hinges on the ambiguous ἐπερώτημα of 1 Peter 3:21, and the proper subjects of baptism, which the household and circumcision texts underdetermine. The confidence attaches to the trajectory and the central doctrine; the two disputed joints are held open because the decisive texts are genuinely ambiguous or silent.

21.2 The governing conclusion

The governing conclusion is methodological as much as doctrinal. What the study offers is not an accumulation of proof-texts marshalled to defend a prior definition, but the reconstruction of Scripture's own argument concerning water, washing, cleansing, covenant transition, participation in Christ, forgiveness, the Spirit, priesthood, and new creation. Read as an argument rather than a catalogue, the material yields a coherent and disciplined doctrine — baptism at the new-covenant center of a long trajectory, as the God-given, faith-filled washing that joins the repentant believer to the crucified and risen Christ and incorporates him into the washed priestly people. The doctrine emerged from the exegesis; it was not imposed upon it. That is the study's principal claim.

21.3 Two studies converging

This exegetical corpus stands in a relation of mutual corroboration with a second, independent study — an analysis of New Testament Spirit-terminology and the patristic and historical reception — which reaches the same central thesis by a different route. The one works forward through the canon passage by passage; the other works through the vocabulary of the Spirit and the history of the doctrine. That two studies, proceeding by different methods, converge on the same verdict — baptism as the

commanded, faith-received sign and instrument of union with Christ, with Spirit-baptism distinguished from and not replacing it — is itself a kind of evidence: the conclusion is not an artefact of a single method but a result to which the material drives from more than one direction.

21.4 Contributions and limitations

The study's contributions are its original-language and text-critical rigor, its refusal to build doctrine on disputed readings (Rule 20), its calibrated confidence levels, and above all its discipline of leaving genuinely disputed questions open rather than forcing them. Its limitations are equally to be named. The engagement with the printed commentary and grammatical literature at the cruxes remains thinner than a final publication would require, since the study restricted its citations to references it could verify. The strongest memorial and the strongest paedobaptist voices are represented from the classic sources but would repay fuller engagement with the current monographic literature. And a full history-of-effects, and the comparative Second-Temple washing evidence, are sketched rather than exhausted. These are the honest edges of a study that chose verified depth over unverified breadth.

21.5 Avenues for further research

Five avenues invite further work: a full history of the doctrine's effects, from the patristic rites through the medieval and Reformation controversies to the modern debates; the relation of baptism to the Lord's Supper as the two dominical signs; the comparative study of Second-Temple washing practice against which John's and Christian baptism stand out; a focused monograph on the ἐπερώτημα of 1 Peter 3:21, the single word on which the mechanism-question most turns; and a fresh treatment of the subjects-of-baptism question that takes seriously how thoroughly the household and covenant texts underdetermine it. Each of these is a place where the present study has marked a boundary it did not cross.

Appendices

The appendices present the study's structured evidence base.

Appendix A — Master Passage Inventory (condensed)

The fifty-eight passage-units against seven key fields. The complete inventory carries twenty-five fields per unit (agent, recipient, human response, divine action, stated result, temporal relation, covenantal setting, argumentative role, canonical background and development, interpretive disputes, and research status).

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
Genesis 1:2	D	Creational/cosmic water	Yes (literal)	Excluded (foundational pattern)	Very high (exegesis)	Water = created, non-divine medium; Spirit poised over it to give order/life
Genesis 1:6-10	D	Creational water, ordered	Yes (literal)	Excluded (foundational pattern)	Very high	Separation of waters and emergence of dry land = shape of order-from-chaos
Genesis 2:10-14	D	Life-giving river (sanctuary)	Yes (literal)	Excluded (foundational pattern)	High	Eden river begins the sanctuary-river thread to Ezek 47/Rev 22
Genesis 6:5-13	D	Judgment setting	No (context)	Excluded (pattern)	Very high	Moral ground of the flood; Noah set apart as righteous remnant
Genesis 7:11-24	D	Judgment/deliverance water	Yes (cataclysmic)	Probable → Certain type-source (via 1 Pet 3:21)	Very high (exeg); High (type)	One water-event = judgment AND salvation; deliverance THROUGH by appointed means
Genesis 8:1-22	D	Re-creation water	Yes	Possible (Spirit); Certain (pattern)	High; Moderate (Spirit)	Flood reversal framed as re-creation; 'God remembered' is the narrative hinge
Genesis 9:8-17	D	Covenant after deliverance	Yes (referenced)	Excluded (pattern)	Very high	Deliverance-through-water joined to covenant + cosmic sign
2 Peter 3:5-7	D	Cosmic water: creation+flood → fire	Yes (literal, cosmic)	Excluded (NT canonical horizon)	High	Creation & flood = one word-governed water-history; warrant for canonical method
Exodus 14:15-31	D	Typological water deliverance	Yes (literal Sea)	Certain type-source (via 1 Cor 10:2)	Very high (exeg); High (type)	Yahweh saves Israel through the sea, judges Egypt in it; the paradigm salvation, named a baptism by Paul
Exodus 15:1-18	D	Poetic celebration of Sea deliverance	Yes	Excluded (pattern; celebrates the type)	Very high	The Sea deliverance sung as Yahweh's cosmic kingship; escalates yam to tēhōmōt
Joshua 3:14-17; 4:19-24	D	Typological water deliverance (entry)	Yes (flood-stage Jordan)	Probable typological correspondence (no NT warrant)	Very high (exeg); Moderate (type)	Jordan crossing re-enacts the Sea as covenant-entry; probable baptism type, held below the Sea
Joshua 5:2-12	D/C	Covenant-marker renewal at threshold	No (water crossing just prior)	Possible (circumcision-baptism analogy; Phase 9)	High	At the threshold the covenant markers are renewed; 'reproach rolled away' = shame-removal, not sin-washing

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
Psalms 77:16-20	D	Poetic recollection of Sea (theophany)	Yes (poetic)	Non-baptismal (pattern-developing)	Very high	Yahweh's way through the sea recalled as theophany to steady faith; develops through-water/leading motif
Isaiah 43:1-3	D	Metaphorical peril (new-exodus)	Metaphorical (danger)	Non-baptismal (metaphor; pattern-feeder)	Very high	'Waters' = danger God preserves THROUGH; a preservation promise, not a rite
1 Corinthians 10:1-12	A (used typologically)	Metaphorical/typological baptism	Yes (sea) + cloud	Explicit (typological baptism); ties Sea to Christian baptism	Very high	Baptism = real incorporation into a mediator, yet guarantees nothing without persevering faith (all baptized, most fell)
Exodus 29:4; 30:17-21	B	Priestly consecration / purification for access	Yes (literal, washing)	Not a baptism text (Corpus B; conceptual pattern-feeder)	Very high (exeg); Moderate (pattern)	Washing consecrates priests & qualifies for access; water=purity, blood=atonement (distinct)
Exodus 40:12-15,30-32	B	Priestly consecration/access (fulfillment)	Yes (literal)	Not a baptism text (pattern-feeder)	Very high; Moderate (pattern)	Prescribed washing performed; washing (purity) distinct from anointing (Spirit-symbol)
Leviticus 8:6-12	B	Priestly consecration (ordination)	Yes (literal)	Not a baptism text (conceptual pattern-feeder)	Very high; Moderate (pattern)	Consecration begins with washing; water/oil/ blood distinct; washing → anointing echoed at Jesus' baptism
Numbers 8:5-13	B	Purification from uncleanness (Levite dedication)	Yes (literal, sprinkled)	Not a baptism text; sprinkling pattern-feeder (NOT a proof of baptismal mode)	Very high; High (lexical link)	Introduces nāzâ (sprinkle) motif feeding Ezek 36:25 & Heb 10:22; a purification, not baptism; mode not derivable here
Leviticus 16 (esp. 4,24,26,28,30)	B (in atonement context)	Priestly purification-for-access within atonement	Yes (bathings) + blood	Not a baptism text; primarily ATONEMENT; bathing = secondary pattern-feeder	Very high (water/blood distinction); High (typology via Heb)	Decisive cleansing is by BLOOD, not bathing-water; water bathes for access, blood removes sin
Hebrews 9-10 (9:9-14; 9:18-22; 10:19-22)	B/C	NT interpretation of priestly washings; baptismal allusion (10:22)	Yes (ceremonial; 'pure water')	10:22 = probable baptismal allusion; 9:10 baptismoi = OLD washings	Very high (argument); High/probable (10:22 baptism)	Old washings purified flesh; Christ's blood cleanses conscience; believer inwardly sprinkled (blood) + outwardly washed (water/ baptism); forgiveness by blood not water
Leviticus 11-15 (14:1-9; 15:1-15)	B	Purification from uncleanness (everyday)	Yes (literal; incl. living water)	Not a baptism text; pattern-feeder (living water, hyssop)	Very high; High (lexical seeds)	Ceremonial cleansing removes uncleanness for access; seeds 'living water' (→ Spirit) & hyssop-sprinkling
Numbers 19	B	Purification from corpse-defilement (gravest common)	Yes (ashes + living water, sprinkled)	Not a baptism text; Heb-warranted foil; not a mode-proof	Very high; High (Heb 9:13 link)	OT's premier cleansing-water (ash+living water, hyssop); gave 'purity of flesh' (Heb 9:13), not conscience
Psalms 26 (26:6)	B (symbolic)	Symbolic/ethical washing (innocence)	Symbolic (gesture)	Non-baptismal (symbolic)	Very high	Priestly hand-washing moralized into a symbol of integrity; a bridge to Ps 51's interiorizing

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
Psalms 51 (51:1-12)	B (moral/ inward) → toward C	Prophetic/moral cleansing of the guilty self	Metaphorical (washing/hyssop as figures)	Not a baptism text; PRIMARY pattern-source for washing-regeneration-Spirit	Very high (exeg); High (pattern-source)	Takes priestly washing kit, applies to moral guilt; escalates to created clean heart + Holy Spirit — the OT seedbed of water-and-Spirit renewal
Ezekiel 36:25-27	C	New-covenant cleansing + Spirit (THE HINGE)	Metaphorical-promissory (God sprinkles)	NOT a rite; CERTAIN baptism/new-birth background; probable allusion behind John 3:5	Very high (exeg); Very high (hub)	Fountainhead promise: God sovereignly cleanses (clean water) + gives new heart + his Spirit; the reality baptism signifies
Isaiah 1:16-18	B/C	Moral cleansing (human 'wash' + divine pardon)	Metaphorical (moral)	Non-baptismal (moral); pattern-feeder (repentance+wash+pardon)	Very high	'Wash yourselves' = repent/do justice; 'white as snow' = God's pardon; human turn + divine cleansing held together
Isaiah 4:2-6 (4:4)	B/C	Cleansing by purging judgment/Spirit-fire	Metaphorical (cleansing by judgment/fire)	Non-baptismal; Spirit-and-fire pattern-feeder	Very high (exeg); Moderate (rûah= Spirit?)	The Lord cleanses Zion by a purging spirit of judgment+burning; joins washing to Spirit/fire (→ Matt 3:11)
Isaiah 44:1-5 (44:3)	C	Water-and-Spirit outpouring promise	Metaphorical (water = poured Spirit)	Non-baptismal; PRIMARY water-and-Spirit promise (also Phase 7)	Very high; High (John 7 link)	Poured water figures poured Spirit (parallelism); primary OT Spirit-outpouring promise behind John 7 / Acts 2
Ezekiel 16:1-14 (16:9)	B/C	Covenant-founding washing (allegory)	Metaphorical/allegorical (God bathes bride)	Not a baptism text; conceptual pattern-feeder (washing at covenant-entry)	Very high (exeg); Moderate (Eph5 link)	God's gracious covenant-bath+anointing of Jerusalem; conceptual pattern for Christ cleansing his bride (Eph 5:26)
Ezekiel 47:1-12	D	Life-giving sanctuary-river (eschatological)	Yes (visionary, life-giving)	Non-baptismal (life-water); completes river-of-life arc	Very high; High (Rev 22 arc)	Sanctuary-river of life/healing (NOT cleansing/rite); Eden → temple-river → living water= Spirit → Rev 22
Zechariah 13:1	C	New-covenant cleansing-fountain	Metaphorical-promissory (God opens fountain)	Non-baptismal; cleansing-fountain pattern-feeder (→ pierced Christ)	Very high; High (John 19 link)	Permanent God-opened fountain 'for sin and impurity'; tied to spirit of grace + pierced one (→ John 19:34)
Malachi 3:1-4	B/C	Cleansing by refining fire + fullers' soap	Metaphorical (fire+soap, not water)	Non-baptismal; Spirit-and-fire pattern-feeder; messenger → John (opens Phase 5)	Very high; High (John/ Matt 3 links)	Cleansing imaged as refining fire + fullers' soap (kābas); messenger=John; closes OT, opens onto John's Jordan ministry
2 Kings 5:9-14	B/D	OT baptism-prototype (Jordan cleansing dipping)	Yes (literal, Jordan, immersion)	Not the rite; OT βαπτίζω-prototype; cleansing by obedient faith	Very high; High (prototype)	Gentile dips 7x in Jordan (tābal → LXX baptizō), cleansed by obedient faith not ritual grandeur; base sense of baptizō=immerse
Isaiah 40:3-5	D-adjacent	New-exodus advent-frame (the John prophecy)	No (no washing)	Non-baptismal; the FRAME for John's baptism	Very high	Wilderness voice = John; coming LORD = Jesus (implicit high Christology); frames John's Jordan baptism as new-exodus preparation

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
Matthew 3:1-12	A	John's baptism (repentance) vs. Spirit-and-fire baptism	Yes (Jordan) + Spirit/fire (Messiah's)	Explicit; John's baptism DISTINCT from Christian baptism (Acts 19)	Very high; High (distinct)	John's water-baptism of repentance/confession (eis metanoian), subordinated to Messiah's Spirit-and-fire; rite without fruit doesn't exempt from judgment
Mark 1:1-8	A	John's baptism (repentance → forgiveness) vs. Spirit-baptism	Yes (Jordan)	Explicit; distinct from Christian baptism; direct antecedent of Acts 2:38	Very high	Crisp formula baptisma metanoias eis apheresin hamartiōn = direct lexical antecedent of Acts 2:38; water/Spirit contrast (no 'fire' in Mark)
Luke 3:1-18	A	John's baptism (repentance → fruit) vs. Spirit-and-fire	Yes (Jordan region)	Explicit; distinct; ethical-fruit emphasis refutes bare ritualism	Very high	Repentance-baptism must bear concrete ethical fruit (justice/honesty/contentment); universal-salvation frame; Luke-Acts arc to Pentecost
John 1:19-34	A	John's baptism as christological witness vs. Spirit-baptism	Yes (Bethany-beyond-Jordan)	Explicit; John's baptism PURPOSED to reveal Christ; sin-removal=the Lamb; Spirit=Jesus' gift	Very high; High	John's water-baptism exists 'that he might be revealed to Israel' (1:31); sin-removal=Lamb (1:29); Spirit-baptism=Jesus (Spirit remains); water only reveals/prepares
Matthew 3:13-17	A	Jesus' baptism (unique: consecration/anointing)	Yes (Jordan) + Spirit	Explicit; UNIQUE category (not John's repentance-baptism, not Christian baptism)	Very high; High (consecration)	Jesus' baptism = sinless identification + messianic Spirit-anointing (Lev 8 wash → anoint fulfilled); Ps2+Isa42 declaration
Mark 1:9-11	A	Jesus' baptism (Spirit-anointing; Son of God)	Yes (Jordan) + Spirit	Explicit; unique consecration	Very high	Vivid: heavens TORN (schizō, inclusio w/ 15:38 veil torn = access opened); Spirit onto him; Son of God (1:1)
Luke 3:21-22	A	Jesus' baptism (anointing; prayer-context)	Yes + Spirit (bodily form)	Explicit; unique consecration; Western 3:22b variant (Ps 2:7b) secondary	Very high	Prayer-context + bodily-form Spirit; launches Spirit-led ministry (Luke 4); Luke-Acts arc to Pentecost
John 1:29-34	A	Jesus' anointing (Johannine: Spirit abides)	Yes (setting) + Spirit (abiding)	Explicit; sin-removal=Lamb, Spirit=Jesus' gift; water only reveals	Very high	Spirit REMAINS (menō) = permanent anointing (Isa 11:2); atonement=Lamb, Spirit-baptism=Jesus; John 1:34 Son/Chosen variant noted
Psalms 2:7 / Isaiah 42:1	D-adjacent	Background to the baptismal declaration (non-water)	No	Non-baptismal background (excluded as water texts)	Very high (fusion); Certain (non-baptismal)	Baptismal voice fuses royal Son (Ps2:7) + Spirit-anointed chosen Servant (Isa42:1); King+Servant christology; Servant → cross (Isa53)
John 3:1-10 (3:5)	C	New birth / regeneration (water+Spirit)	Yes (water = new-covenant cleansing, figured)	Primary = Ezek 36 new-covenant cleansing-renewal; baptism = PROBABLE secondary sign; NOT baptismal-regeneration (Spirit is agent)	Very high (Spirit-birth); High (Ezek 36); Probable (baptism)	'Water and Spirit'=one new-covenant cleansing-and-renewal (Ezek 36), Spirit the agent; baptism signifies it; single ἕξ binds water+Spirit

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
Joel 2:28-32	C-adjacent	Spirit-outpouring + call-on-the-name (non-water)	No (Spirit poured, not water)	Non-baptismal; NT weaves it into Pentecost baptism+Spirit (Acts 2:38)	Very high	Universal Spirit-outpouring + call-on-name → saved; Acts 2 fulfills → repent+baptized+receive Spirit (2:38); Acts 22:16 baptism+call
Titus 3:3-7 (3:5-6)	B/C	Christian baptism (washing) + regeneration + Spirit	Yes (λουτρὸν = baptismal washing, BDAG)	λουτρὸν = baptismal washing (BDAG); INSTRUMENT of Spirit-regeneration, grounded in mercy (not bare symbol, not mechanical)	Very high; High (λουτρὸν=baptism per BDAG)	'Saved through the washing of regeneration' — washing=instrument, Spirit=agent, mercy=ground; fulfils Ezek36/Ps51/John3
Matthew 28:18-20	A	Christian baptism INSTITUTED (triune name)	Yes (implied rite)	Explicit INSTITUTION; triune name TEXTUALLY SECURE (NA28)	Very high	Risen Christ institutes baptism into the one triune name as essential disciple-making component; eis to onoma = dedication/ belonging (BDAG/Deissmann)
Mark 16:15-16	A (secondary text)	Christian baptism (believer's; faith's response)	Yes (implied)	Corroborative ONLY — text-critically SECONDARY (Longer Ending, Rule 20); unbelief (not un-baptism) condemns	High (TC); High (asymmetry)	Secondary text (16:9-20); faith decisive (only unbelief condemns); corroborates belief-and-baptism but cannot establish baptismal necessity
Luke 24:44-49	D-adjacent	Programmatic commission (message+Spirit; non-water)	No	Non-baptismal in itself; PROGRAMS Acts baptism (same eis aphesin / epi tō onomati)	Very high	Names the message (repentance-forgiveness-in-his-name to all nations) + power (Spirit); enacted in Acts 2:38
Acts 2:14-41 (2:38)	A	Christian baptism — PARADIGM apostolic conversion	Yes (~3000 baptized)	Explicit; eis aphesin = PURPOSIVE (BDAG, not causal)	Very high (exeg); High (eis purposive)	Repent+be baptized in Jesus' name DIRECTED TOWARD (eis, purposive) forgiveness+Spirit; instrument/mercy-ground/ Spirit-agent — not mechanical, not bare symbol
Acts 8:4-25 (Samaria)	A	Christian baptism (#11)	Yes	Explicit	High	Believers baptized in Jesus' name; Spirit uniquely delayed until apostles validate Samaritan inclusion — not a normative pattern
Acts 8:26-40 (Ethiopian eunuch)	A	Christian baptism (#11)	Yes	Explicit	Very high	Clean faith → baptism sequence; the 8:37 confession is a secondary Western addition; Spirit not narrated (silence≠absence)
Acts 9:1-19 / 22:3-16 / 26:9-20 (Saul)	A+B	Christian baptism + washing (#11)	Yes	Explicit	Very high	Baptism is the occasion at which, calling on the Lord's name in faith, Saul's sins are washed away; Spirit given before baptism

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
Acts 10:1-48 / 11:1-18 / 15:7-11 (Cornelius)	A	Christian baptism (#11), preceded by Spirit-baptism (#12)	Yes	Explicit	Very high	God gives believing Gentiles the Spirit before baptism, cleansing hearts by faith; baptism is the commanded seal of a divinely-validated inclusion — not a normative order
Acts 16:11-15 (Lydia)	A	Christian baptism (#11)	Yes	Explicit	Very high (exegesis); household scope disputed	God opens Lydia's heart; she and her household are baptized; the household's composition/faith is unspecified — settles neither infant baptism nor its denial
Acts 16:25-34 (Philippian jailer)	A	Christian baptism (#11)	Yes	Explicit	Very high (exegesis); household scope disputed	Clearest "believe → baptized at once"; word spoken to whole house, which rejoices in belief; faith and baptism held together, not opposed
Acts 18:1-11 (Corinth)	A	Christian baptism (#11)	Yes	Explicit	Very high	Belief issues in baptism (Crispus's household and many Corinthians)
Acts 18:24-28 (Apollos)	A	John's baptism (#9)	Yes	Explicit	High (silence on re-baptism)	Apollos knew only John's baptism and was more fully instructed; no re-baptism reported (silence, Rule 9)
Acts 19:1-7 (Ephesian disciples)	A	John's baptism (#9) vs. Christian baptism (#11)	Yes	Explicit	Very high	The one clear NT re-baptism: John's preparatory baptism ≠ Christian baptism; Christian baptism is "in the name of the Lord Jesus"; Spirit given after, via hands
Romans 6:1-14	A+C	Christian baptism — union w/ death & resurrection (#11)	Assumed (rite)	Explicit	Very high (union); high (adjudication)	Baptism is the God-appointed means/sign of a real, faith-received union with Christ's death & resurrection — passive verbs (God the agent), issuing in a new ethical walk; neither mechanical nor bare symbol
Galatians 3:23-29 (3:26-27)	A+C	Christian baptism — union/ investiture (#11)	Assumed (rite)	Explicit	Very high (union); high (adjudication)	Baptism into Christ is the enacted correlate of the faith by which one is a son of God — real incorporation & investiture, coordinated with faith (not rivals, not a works-condition), making all one in Christ & Abraham's heirs

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
Colossians 2:9-15 (2:11-13)	A+C	Christian baptism — union / circumcision of Christ (#11)	Assumed (rite)	Explicit	Very high (union/through-faith); circumcision link disputed	Baptism is the sphere of a God-wrought, faith-received union with the crucified-and-risen Christ — "through faith", God the agent (blocks mechanism), yet real (blocks bare symbol); βαπτισμός=Christian baptism; the circumcision link does not settle infant baptism
1 Cor 1:10-17	A	Christian baptism (#11)	Yes	Explicit	Very high	Baptism is into Christ's name (=belonging to Christ, not a leader) and is subordinate to (follows) the gospel; who administers it is irrelevant
1 Cor 6:9-11	B	Washing of conversion (probable baptismal allusion)	Assumed	Probable	High/probable	A rhetorical triplet for conversion (washed/sanctified/justified) "in the name... and by the Spirit"; "washed" (apelousasthe, mid.) alludes to baptism/conversion-cleansing, God the agent
1 Cor 12:12-13	A	Christian baptism / Spirit-baptism into the body (#11/#12)	Assumed + Spirit	Explicit	Very high	The one Spirit baptized all into the one body — baptism's ecclesial/unifying dimension; not a two-tier Spirit-baptism (all, not some)
1 Cor 15:29	A	Obscure/disputed (#19/20)	Uncertain	Excluded/obscure	Excluded from doctrinal use	Irreducibly obscure; cited ad hominem for the resurrection; NO doctrine of baptism may be built on it (Rule 20)
Ephesians 4:1-6 (4:5)	A	Christian baptism (#11)	Assumed	Explicit	Very high	The one baptism is a constitutive bond of the one church — one shared initiation confessing the one Lord by the one faith (faith & baptism coordinated)
Ephesians 5:25-27 (5:26)	A+B	Christian baptism — the sanctifying washing (#11)	Yes	High/strongly probable	High	Christ sanctifies & cleanses his bride by the baptismal washing (λουτρόν, BDAG) effective WITH THE WORD — Christ the agent, efficacy in the word-bearing washing, not bare water
Hebrews 6:1-2	A/B	Elementary teaching about baptisms (#5/#11)	—	Explicit (as teaching)	High	Teaching about baptisms (plural) was foundational Christian catechesis — entailing distinguishing Christian baptism from Jewish/John's washings (Rule 2.1); βαπτισμός plural

Reference	Corpus	Referent category	Water present	Baptismal certainty	Confidence	Provisional conclusion
1 Peter 3:18-22 (3:21)	A+C+D	Christian baptism — saving antitype of the flood (#11/#15)	Yes	Explicit	Very high	Baptism truly SAVES — but not as physical washing; as the resurrection-grounded, faith-shaped appeal/pledge of a good conscience to God. The canon's own affirm-and-qualify definition
Revelation 1:5-6; 7:14; 22:1-2,14	B+D	Priestly-people cleansing by blood; life-water consummation (#16/#15)	Blood (not water); life-water	Rev1:5 EXCLUDED as washing (λύσαντι=freed); 7:14/22:14 blood-washing	Very high	Cleansing/release from sin is by the LAMB'S BLOOD (Rev 1:5 "freed", not "washed"); the redeemed are a blood-washed royal priesthood; the water-of-life arc consummates at the throne (Eden inclusio) — Rev 22:1 non-baptismal

Appendix B — Acts Conversion-Narrative Grid

The apostolic conversion accounts against the recurring variables. Full grid (twelve variables, including narrated vs. chronological order and rhetorical emphasis).

Passage	Faith	Repent.	Baptism	Forgive.	Spirit	Comm. entry	Order (theol.)
Acts 2:14-47 (Pentecost)	Implied (received the word 2:41; the call 2:39)	Yes — explicit (2:38 metanoēsate)	Yes — explicit (2:38,41; ~3000)	Yes — explicit goal (2:38 eis aphesin)	Yes — explicit gift (2:38-39)	Yes (added to church 2:41,47)	God's call/promise (2:39) grounds the response; repentant faith receives forgiveness+Spirit; baptism the enacted occasion
Acts 8:4-25 (Samaria)	Yes (8:12, believed Philip)	Implied	Yes — in the name of the Lord Jesus (8:12,16)	Implied	Yes — but DELAYED: not until apostles come and lay hands (8:15-17); explicitly "had not yet fallen" (8:16)	Yes (joined to apostolic church)	Spirit withheld to validate Samaritan inclusion via Jerusalem apostles
Acts 8:26-40 (Ethiopian eunuch)	Yes (implied; 8:37 secondary text)	Implied	Yes — prompt (8:38, "what prevents me?")	Implied	Not narrated (8:39 "went rejoicing"; Western add. supplies Spirit)	(returns to Ethiopia)	Clean faith → baptism sequence
Acts 9:1-19 / 22:3-16 / 26:9-20 (Saul)	Yes (calls on the name, 22:16)	Yes (persecutor turns; preaches repentance 26:20)	Yes — "be baptized and wash away your sins" (22:16; 9:18)	Yes — explicit: "wash away your sins" (22:16)	Yes — but PURPOSED before baptism: Ananias came "that you may... be filled with the Spirit" (9:17), then baptized (9:18); completed reception not separately narrated (weaker than Cornelius)	Yes (joined disciples, 9:19)	Spirit given before baptism; cleansing bound to invocation
Acts 10:1-48 / 11:1-18 / 15:7-11 (Cornelius)	Yes (believed, 11:17; 15:9 "cleansed hearts by faith")	Yes (11:18 "repentance unto life")	Yes — commanded, AFTER the Spirit (10:47-48, in name of Jesus Christ)	Yes (10:43 "everyone who believes receives forgiveness")	Yes — BEFORE baptism: Spirit "fell on all who heard" (10:44-47); prevenient	Yes (Gentiles received into church, 11:18)	Spirit prevenient to validate GENTILE inclusion; God shows no partiality
Acts 16:11-15 (Lydia)	Yes (a "believer", 16:15)	Implied	Yes — she AND her household (16:15)	Implied	Not narrated	Yes (hosts the church, 16:15,40)	Divine initiative + responsive faith
Acts 16:25-34 (Philippian jailer)	Yes ("believe... he had believed in God", 16:31,34)	Implied (changed conduct: washes wounds, hospitality)	Yes — "at once, he and all his family" (16:33)	Implied	Not narrated	Yes	Faith → immediate baptism, household included

Passage	Faith	Repent.	Baptism	Forgive.	Spirit	Comm. entry	Order (theol.)
Acts 18:1-11 (Corinth)	Yes (Crispus + household; many believed, 18:8)	Implied	Yes — "believed and were baptized" (18:8)	Implied	Not narrated here	Yes (Corinthian church founded)	Belief issuing in baptism
Acts 18:24-28 (Apollos)	Yes (fervent; already believed re: Jesus)	(John's baptism = of repentance)	Knew ONLY John's baptism (18:25); no re-baptism reported (silence)	Implied	"Fervent in spirit/Spirit" (18:25; debated)	Yes (ministers at Corinth, 18:27-28)	Incomplete knowledge corrected without reported re-baptism
Acts 19:1-7 (Ephesian "disciples")	Yes (had believed as John's disciples; now in Jesus)	Yes (John's = baptism of repentance)	Yes — RE-BAPTIZED "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (19:5); had only "John's baptism" (19:3)	Implied	Yes — AFTER baptism, via Paul's hands (19:6, tongues/prophecy)	Yes (Ephesian church)	John's baptism ≠ Christian baptism; the one clear re-baptism

Appendix C — Priority Textual-Variant Adjudications

Every priority variant that could materially affect interpretation, adjudicated against the standard critical apparatus (NA28, ECM, Metzger, Houghton/UBS6). Rule 20: no essential doctrine rests on a disputed reading.

#	Passage	Variant	Adjudicated reading (NA28/ECM/Metzger)	Phase	Doctrinal effect
1	Matt 28:19	Triadic name; alleged Eusebian "in my name"	Triune formula textually SECURE — no Greek MS omits/replaces it; the only variants are <i>νῦν</i> and <i>βαπτίζοντες/βαπτίσαντες</i> . Eusebius's "in my name" is a citation phenomenon, not an apparatus variant .	6/8	Formula secure; the "short-form" claim is mis-categorized.
2	Mark 1:1–8	1:1 "υἱοῦ θεοῦ"; 1:2 "in Isaiah" vs "in the prophets"	1:2 "in Isaiah" (κ B) preferred; composite = Exod 23:20 + Mal 3:1 + Isa 40:3 .	5	Minor; corrected in the corresponding passage study.
3	Mark 16:9–20 (16:16)	Longer Ending	Secondary (Metzger: earliest text ends at 16:8); double-bracketed for antiquity, not originality. No argument may depend on 16:16 .	8	Excluded as primary evidence (Rule 20).
4	John 3:5	ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος	Stable ; dispute is exegetical (what "water" means), not text-critical. (Also: <i>John 5:3b–4</i> is a secondary gloss — exclude from the water corpus.)	7	Text secure.
5	Acts 2:38	ἐπὶ/ἐν/εἰς τῷ ὀνόματι; εἰς ἄφεσιν	NA28 ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι (℣74vid κ A C); <i>ἐν</i> secondary (B D). The εἰς belongs to εἰς ἄφεσιν (distinct phrase). BDAG classifies εἰς ἄφεσιν as PURPOSE ("for forgiveness"), NOT causal (Mantey's causal εἰς rejected).	8	Text secure; the <i>eis</i> -crux now has BDAG's answer (purposive) — full adjudication Phase 8.
6	Acts 8:37	Eunuch's confession	Secondary (Metzger {A} omission; absent ℣74 κ A B C). Not a valid prooftext for pre-baptismal confession.	8	Excluded (Rule 20).
7	Acts 19:5	εἰς τὸ ὄνομα	Stable (only a Western <i>Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν</i> addition). Evidence for baptism into identification/allegiance with the Lord Jesus.	8	Secure.
8	Acts 22:16	ἀπόλουσai... ἐπικαλεσάμενος	Stable; middle ἀπόλουσai + invocation participle. BDAG: personal invocation ("calling on the name," cf. Joel 2:32 / Rom 10:13).	8	Secure; exegetical keys confirmed.
9	1 Cor 10:2	ἐβαπτίσαντο / ἐβαπτίσθησαν	NA28 middle ἐβαπτίσαντο (harder reading; Jewish self-baptism); passive strongly attested; Metzger {D} .	2	Immaterial to the argument.
10	1 Cor 12:13	ἐν πνεῦμα / εἰς ἐν πνεῦμα	NA28 ἐν πνεῦμα ("given the one Spirit to drink"); <i>εἰς</i> secondary.	9	Secure.
11	Eph 5:26	τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι	Stable . BDAG: λουτρόν = "the washing/bath of baptism."	9	Secure; baptismal referent (BDAG).

#	Passage	Variant	Undisputed reading (NA28/UBS6/ECM/NA28a)	Phase	Doctrinal effect
12	Col 2:12	βαπτισμῶ / βαπτίσματι	NA28 βαπτισμῶ (G909) — proof that βαπτισμός can denote Christian baptism ; βαπτίσματι secondary.	9	Confirms -μα/-μος not referentially operative.
13	Titus 3:5–6	around λουτροῦ	Secure (only a Western repeated διά). λουτρὸν = the baptismal bath (BDAG).	7/9	Secure.
14	Heb 10:22	λελουσμένοι... ὕδατι καθαρῶ	Stable.	3/9	Secure.
15	1 Pet 3:20–21	ὁ/ῶ before καὶ ὑμᾶς	NA28 ὁ... ἀντίτυπον νῦν σῶζει βάπτισμα — central wording textually STABLE ; only a minor relative-pronoun variant.	9	The οὐ...ἀλλά + "baptism now saves you" is secure text.
16	Rev 1:5	λύσαντι / λούσαντι	NA28 λύσαντι ("FREED us") (℣18 & A C; Andreas tradition), not λούσαντι ("washed"); ECM undecided, UBS6 retains λύσαντι. Rev 1:5 must NOT be used as an unqualified washing text.	9	"washed" is a substantial but secondary Koine variant.
17	Rev 22:14	πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς / ποιοῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς	NA28 πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς ("wash their robes") (& A) preferred; "do his commandments" secondary.	9	The washing-access statement is present.

Rule 20 upheld: no essential doctrine rests on a disputed reading — Mark 16:16 (#3) and Acts 8:37 (#6) are secondary and excluded from primary use; Rev 1:5 (#16) is "freed," not "washed." Conversely, the load-bearing baptism texts are **textually secure**: Matt 28:19 (triune formula), Acts 2:38 (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι... εἰς ἄφεσιν), 1 Pet 3:21 (βάπτισμα νῦν σῶζει), Col 2:12, Eph 5:26, Titus 3:5, Heb 10:22.

LXX layer (Rahlfs/Göttingen/Muraoka): 2 Kgs 5:14 *tābal* → **ἐβαπτίσατο** (aorist middle) confirmed; Ezek 36:25 *zāraq* → **ῥανῶ... ὕδωρ καθαρὸν** (use **Göttingen Ezekiel** — 36:23c–38 is text-critically contested, absent from ℣967); Num 19 LXX distinguishes **βάπτω** (dip hyssop) / **περιρραίνω** (sprinkle) / **πλύνω–λούω** (launder/bathe) — three distinct actions, confirming the mode is not collapsed.

Appendix D — Lexical Studies (load-bearing lemmas)

Consolidated semantic-range and contextual findings for the key Hebrew and Greek lemmas, with the rite/mode/agency guardrails.

Hebrew (HALOT · TDOT):

- **טָבַל** *tābal* (H2881): "dip/plunge/dive." 2 Kgs 5:14 = Naaman immersed himself; HALOT ties it to the *rāḥaṣ* command and confirms LXX **ἐβαπτίσατο** as "a direct OT lexical anchor for βαπτίζω as immersion." (*Phase 5 confirmed.*)
- **רָחַץ** *rāḥaṣ* (H7364): general wash/bathe verb; scope set by object/syntax. Exod 29:4 / Lev 8:6 = comprehensive consecratory washing of the *persons*; Lev 16:4,24 = explicit whole-body; Exod 30:19–21 = hands/feet only. **TDOT calls the consecration washing "obviously a plunge bath"** (interpretive, not lexically forced).
- **טָהַר** *tāhēr* (H2891): the central purity root — the *result/state/declaration* of cleanness, NOT a washing-mode. In 2 Kgs 5, *rāḥaṣ/tābal* = the acts, *tāhēr* = the result; Ezek 36:25 = God effects it.
- **נָזַף** *nāzā* (H5137) vs. **זָרַק** *zāraq* (H2236): overlapping but distinct profiles — *nāzā* (Hiphil) = controlled sprinkling by finger/hyssop (Num 19:18); *zāraq* = throwing/dashing a larger volume (Exod 24:6 covenant blood; **Ezek 36:25** God's cleansing application). LXX renders both in the ῥαίνω/ῥαντίζω family.
- **כָּבַס** *kābas* (H3526): launder *garments* (vs. *rāḥaṣ* = body); LXX πλύω → Rev 7:14 "washed robes."
- **חֹטֵאת** / **נִדְחָה** (Num 19:9): purification-offering/rite domain (TDOT prefers "purification offering" over "sin offering"); *mê niddā* = "water for/of purification" (the impurity *expelled*), not "sin-water."
- **כָּפַר** *kāpar* (H3722): NOT merely "cover" — expiate / purge / avert / remove guilt-and-defilement; priestly formula "the priest atones, God forgives/cleanses."
- **מָשַׁח** *māśaḥ* (H4886): technical consecratory anointing → change of status (Exod 29:7; Lev 8:12), distinct from the washing.
- **רוּחַ** *rûaḥ* (H7307): context-dependent (wind/breath/Spirit). Gen 8:1 = God-sent wind; **Gen 1:2 ambiguous — TDOT rejects "a mighty wind," favors "God's wind/breath, his invisible creative energy"**; Ezek 36:27 / Isa 44:3 / Joel 2:28 (*rûḥî*) = God's own Spirit. (*Refines Genesis 1–2.*)
- **לֵב** *lēb* (H3820, Ezek 36:26): the whole inner person; stone → flesh = a divine **new creation** of the moral center.
- **טִמְאָה** *ṭmāʾa*: objective state of uncleanness (not mere dirt); Ezek 36:25 extends to idolatry/moral defilement. **מַיִם** *mayim* (TDOT): a theologically multivalent *created medium* (life/chaos/judgment/cleansing) — **not autonomous sacred power**; efficacy from God's action.

Greek (BDAG · TDNT · Louw-Nida · MM · Spicq):

- **βαπτίζω / βάπτισμα (G907/G908) / βαπτισμός (G909):** base sense "dip/immerse." The **-μα/-μος** distinction is morphologically suggestive but NOT referentially operative (BDAG + Oepke/TDNT); Col 2:12 NA28 = βαπτισμῶ denotes Christian baptism. Oepke (TDNT): baptism is "a real action of the holy God," excluding *both* magical and merely symbolic views.
- **εἰς + ἄφεσις (Acts 2:38; Mark 1:4):** BDAG classifies εἰς ἄφεσις under PURPOSE ("for forgiveness, so that sins might be forgiven"), not causal; Mantey's causal-εἰς proposal (Matt 12:41) cannot transfer here. ἄφεσις = the *act of release/remission* (not a prior state), so "because already forgiven" is unnatural.
- **βαπτίζω εἰς + person/ὄνομα:** directed entry into relation/allegiance/participation (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27; 1 Cor 10:2); εἰς τὸ ὄνομα carries a dedicatory/possessive force ("to the account/name of," MM, Deissmann) — belonging/allegiance, with Hartman's "with reference to" as the ritual-defining framework. (*For Phase 8/9.*)
- **λουτρόν (G3067; Eph 5:26; Titus 3:5):** BDAG = "the washing/bath of baptism," not a bare metaphor; baptismal referent "strongly probable, approaching certain." **σώζω (1 Pet 3:21; Titus 3:5):** full soteriological sense; baptism is an **instrumental means within God's saving action**, not a bare sign. **ὁμοίωμα (Rom 6:5):** real corresponding participation, not mere image. **ἐπερώτημα (1 Pet 3:21):** pledge/undertaking/appeal (juridical). **ῥύπος (1 Pet 3:21):** literal dirt — the οὐ...ἀλλά denies "*merely* external washing," not the water. (*For Phases 7/9.*)
- **ῥαντίζω/ῥαντισμός (Heb 9–10):** rooted in the Num 19 red-heifer ὕδωρ ῥαντισμοῦ; Num 19 → Heb 9:13 → Heb 10:22 sprinkling thread established; heart-sprinkling (blood) and body-washing (λούω, baptismal) kept **distinct**.

Guardrails: avoid root fallacy, etymological fallacy, illegitimate totality transfer, one-gloss-everywhere, and theology-from-Strong's-numbers.

Appendix E — Interpretive-Claims Matrix

For each passage and competing view: the assumptions the view must import, its weaknesses, and the provisional verdict. This is the audit of the adjudication — where each reading follows the text and where it depends on a prior commitment.

Passage	View	Assumptions imported	Weaknesses	Provisional verdict
Genesis 1:2	View 1: Foundational / non-baptismal (Spirit over waters as life-orderer)	Minimal — declines to read a rite into the text	Must resist over-reading the water+Spirit pairing	ADOPTED. Foundational pattern, not a baptism text (Very high)
Genesis 1:2	View 2: Typological-baptismal (Spirit over waters prefigures water+Spirit new birth)	Requires later baptismal doctrine as controlling lens (violates Rule 18)	No rite/subject/cleansing/ covenant present; fails typology test (no stated correspondence)	Rejected as reading; link retained as PROBABLE allusion for Phase 7
Genesis 1:2	View 3: Meteorological ('a mighty wind'), no forward trajectory	Assumes no theological Spirit	merachefet (Deut 32:11 eagle) resists 'mere wind'; LXX = pneuma theou	Rejected (Low)
Genesis 6-9	View 1: Typological deliverance-through-judgment (adopted)	Accepts 1 Pet 3:21's stated type-antitype	Must not retroject baptism/ resurrection/conscience into Genesis itself	ADOPTED (Very high exeg; High typology)
Genesis 6-9	View 2: Baptismal-regeneration proof (flood proves baptism saves through water)	Reads mechanical efficacy into water	Peter's own οὐ...ἀλλὰ + 'through the resurrection' guards against it; Genesis says nothing of a rite	Deferred to 1 Pet 3 study; not supported by Genesis (Low here)
Genesis 6-9	View 3: Bare symbol / moral example	Assumes baptismal typology is homiletical overlay	Cannot account for explicit NT typology (1 Pet 3:21; 2 Pet 3) or de-/re-creation vocabulary	Rejected (Low)
2 Peter 3:5-7	View 1: Cosmic-eschatological (adopted)	None significant	Leaves δι' ὧν antecedent and δι' ὕδατος sense open (honestly)	ADOPTED (High)
2 Peter 3:5-7	View 2: Baptismal/sacramental over-reading	Imports a rite the text never raises (Rule 7)	No rite, cleansing, or persons washed in 3:5-7	Rejected (Low)
1 Cor 10:1-12	View 1: Typological-warning (adopted) — baptism real but non-guaranteeing	Only that persevering obedient faith is required (stated in context)	Must distinguish exodus 'baptism into Moses' from the Christian rite	ADOPTED (Very high)
1 Cor 10:1-12	View 2: Sacramental/efficacious — baptism conveys secured grace	Imports ex opere operato efficacy	REVERSES Paul's point: all were baptized, yet most fell (10:5)	Rejected as the passage's teaching (privilege did not secure)

Passage	View	Assumptions imported	Weaknesses	Provisional verdict
1 Cor 10:1-12	View 3: Bare symbol — 'baptized' merely outward marker	Post-Enlightenment memorialism	Empties 'baptized'/'spiritual' of the reality Paul asserts	Rejected (under-reads the text)
Exodus 14-15	View 1: Typological salvation-through-water (adopted)	Accepts Paul's stated typology	Must separate national deliverance (Exodus) from Paul's added baptism/warning	ADOPTED (Very high exeg; High type)
Exodus 14-15	View 2: Sacramental over-reading (Sea-baptism = efficacious baptism)	Reads mechanical efficacy into the crossing	1 Cor 10:5 warns the opposite; Exodus itself has no rite	Rejected (Low)
Joshua 3-5	View 1: Covenant-entry-through-water, probable type (adopted)	Holds typology at 'probable' (no NT warrant)	Must not inflate correspondence into explicit warrant	ADOPTED (Moderate type)
Joshua 3-5	View 2: Full baptismal type equal to the Sea	Assumes equal status to the Sea	Paul chose the Sea, not the Jordan, for βαπτίζω (1 Cor 10:2)	Rejected as overreach
Heb 10:22	View 1: Baptismal allusion paired w/ inner blood-cleansing (adopted)	Reads 'body washed with pure water' as baptism (sign) — inferred, not lexical	Word is louō not baptizō; reference is probable, not certain	ADOPTED (High/probable)
Heb 10:22	View 2: Purely metaphorical inner cleansing	Both participles = same inner reality	Flattens the deliberate hearts// body parallelism and concrete 'water'	Less likely than View 1
Heb 10:22	View 3: Baptismal-regeneration (water effects cleansing)	Water itself efficacious for access	Inverts the chapter: forgiveness by BLOOD (9:22), conscience cleansed by Christ's blood (9:14); water is outer counterpart	Rejected (Low)
Leviticus 16	View 1: Atonement text with framing access-bathings (adopted)	Accepts Hebrews' typology	Care needed not to let bathings eclipse blood-center	ADOPTED (Very high)
Leviticus 16	View 2: Bathing-as-baptism-type	Transfers atonement weight to washing-water	Cleansing 'from all sins' is by blood, not bathing; no text calls it baptism	Rejected as overreach
Ezek 36:25-27	View 1: Monergistic new-covenant cleansing+Spirit; the reality baptism signifies (adopted)	Keeps promise/sign distinction (Ezekiel = promise, baptism = sign)	Must not collapse promise into rite	ADOPTED (Very high)
Ezek 36:25-27	View 2: Baptismal-regeneration (clean water = baptism conveying Spirit)	Assumes the water is a human-administered rite	In Ezekiel GOD is the sprinkler; 'water' is the figure of HIS cleansing; it is a promise, not a liturgy	Rejected as the text's teaching (Rule 7)

Passage	View	Assumptions imported	Weaknesses	Provisional verdict
Ezek 36:25-27	View 3: Purely metaphorical/national restoration (no real Spirit)	Reduces 'my Spirit within' to national renewal	Underreads explicit 'my Spirit... within you' + moral cleansing 'from all idols'	Rejected (Low)
Isa 44:3	View 1: Water-and-Spirit outpouring promise (adopted)	Water = figure of the poured Spirit	Must resist reading a rite into a Spirit-outpouring metaphor	ADOPTED (High)
Isa 44:3	View 2: Baptismal reading (poured water = baptismal water)	Imports a rite	Parallelism identifies water WITH the Spirit; God is the pourer; no rite	Rejected (Low)
John's baptism (Matt 3 / Mark 1 / Luke 3 / John 1)	View 1: Distinct, preparatory repentance-baptism subordinated to Spirit-baptism (adopted)	Reads John's baptism as transitional (pre-Christian), not the church's rite	Must not sever continuity (shared baptism-repentance-forgiveness nexus with Acts 2:38)	ADOPTED (Very high)
John's baptism	View 2: John's baptism = Christian baptism (no real distinction)	Assumes John's baptism conveys the Spirit / is the sacrament	John denies it is Spirit-baptism (Matt 3:11); Acts 19 re-baptizes John's-baptism recipients	Rejected (over-identifies)
John's baptism	View 3: Bare-symbol / merely ritual washing	Empties baptism of repentance-substance	Baptism is defined by repentance + confession + fruit (Luke 3:8-14); emptying contradicts the text	Rejected (under-reads)
2 Kings 5	View 1: OT baptism-prototype; cleansing by obedient faith (adopted)	Holds it as prototype, not the Christian rite	Must not over-read as sacrament	ADOPTED (High)
2 Kings 5	View 2: Sacramental/regeneration proof (the dipping effects cleansing)	Reads mechanical efficacy into the water	Cleansing is by obedient faith in the word, not self-chosen water (5:11-12)	Rejected
Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:13-17 / Mark 1 / Luke 3 / John 1:29-34)	View 1: Messianic consecration/identification; a UNIQUE baptism (adopted)	Holds water(John's rite) and Spirit-anointing as one inaugural event	Must keep it distinct from both John's-baptism-for-himself and Christian baptism	ADOPTED (Very high)
Jesus' baptism	View 2: Jesus repents/ receives John's baptism like all	Assumes Jesus needs repentance/cleansing	Jesus confesses no sin (3:13-15 vs 3:6); 'fulfill all righteousness' = identification, not repentance	Rejected
Jesus' baptism	View 3: = institution/model of Christian baptism	Reads Christian baptism (into Christ's death, forgiveness, Spirit) back here	Christian baptism is post-resurrection (Matt 28:19; Rom 6); this is Jesus' OWN consecration	Rejected as over-identification
John 3:5	View 1: 'Water and Spirit' = Ezek 36 new-covenant cleansing-and-renewal; Spirit the agent (adopted)	Reads baptismal link as secondary (real, canonical, but not primary)	Some traditions resist the 'secondary' baptism link	ADOPTED (High)

Passage	View	Assumptions imported	Weaknesses	Provisional verdict
John 3:5	View 2: 'Water' = Christian baptism (baptismal regeneration)	Anachronistic for Nicodemus; the SPIRIT is the agent (3:6,8), not the water	3:10 expects OT knowledge; John subordinates water-baptism to Spirit (1:33; 4:2)	Moderated form compatible w/ View 1; efficacious form rejected
John 3:5	View 3: 'Water' = physical/natural birth (amniotic)	single ἐξ binds water+Spirit as ONE source; 'water'=amniotic is not a natural idiom	3:10 points to OT prophecy not biology; 3:6 makes the point without it	Rejected
Titus 3:5-6	View 1: Instrument of Spirit-regeneration, grounded in mercy (adopted)	washing=instrument, Spirit=agent, mercy=ground	Must hold all three (instrument/agent/ground) together	ADOPTED (High)
Titus 3:5-6	View 2: Baptismal regeneration (the water regenerates)	Blurs the rite toward the ground of salvation	Salvation is by MERCY not works (3:5); the SPIRIT is the agent (poured out, 3:6)	Rejected (mechanical form)
Titus 3:5-6	View 3: Bare symbol (washing only testifies to prior regeneration)	empties 'saved us THROUGH the washing'	God really 'saved us through the washing'; not a bare token	Rejected (under-reads)
Acts 2:38	View 1: Repentant faith enacted in baptism → appointed occasion of forgiveness+Spirit (adopted)	Ground = God's mercy/call; agent = Spirit; baptism = sign/instrument bound to repentant faith	Must hold all three (not mechanical, not bare symbol)	ADOPTED (High)
Acts 2:38	View 2: Baptismal regeneration (the water causes forgiveness)	assumes the rite mechanically forgives	ignores grace/faith/Spirit-agency; strained vs. Titus 3:5 'not by works', 1 Cor 10, Mark 16:16	Rejected (mechanical form)
Acts 2:38	View 3: Causal εἰς — 'baptized BECAUSE already forgiven' (Mantey)	reads a prior forgiveness the rite only marks	BDAG classes εἰς ἄφεσιν as PURPOSE not causal; Marcus rebuts Mantey; ἄφεσις=the act of remission (not a prior state)	Rejected
Acts 8 (Samaria Spirit-delay)	View 1: Redemptive-historical validation, not norm	God validates new people-groups via apostles	Must argue exceptional status from narrative logic	ADOPTED (High)
Acts 8 (Samaria Spirit-delay)	View 2: Two-stage norm (baptism then later Spirit / confirmation)	assumes one anomaly = the rule	contradicted by Acts 2:38 & 10 (Spirit with/before); Rule 10	Rejected
Acts 22:16 (wash away sins)	View 1: Baptism the occasion of sins washed away, bound to faith-invocation	cleansing faith/invocation-bound, not water alone	must hold washing as invocation-bound	ADOPTED (High)

Passage	View	Assumptions imported	Weaknesses	Provisional verdict
Acts 22:16 (wash away sins)	View 2: Baptismal regeneration (water washes away sins)	assumes the water itself removes sin	sins washed away "calling on his name"; middle voice; canon grounds cleansing in blood/mercy	Rejected (mechanical)
Acts 22:16 (wash away sins)	View 3: Purely symbolic (cleansing already received on the road)	reads baptism as bare picture	"why do you wait? ...wash away your sins" presents it as to-be-enacted	Rejected
Acts 10 (Cornelius Spirit-before)	View 1: Spirit prevenient = validation of Gentile inclusion; baptism the commanded seal	God validates Gentile inclusion by faith apart from law	must argue exceptional from narrative logic	ADOPTED (High)
Acts 10 (Cornelius Spirit-before)	View 2: Spirit-before-baptism is the norm; baptism only ratifies completed salvation	assumes one exception = rule	contradicts 2:38 & 19:6; baptism still commanded (10:48); Rule 10	Rejected
Acts 10 (Cornelius Spirit-before)	View 3: Baptismal regeneration; Cornelius a unique sign not touching the water-first norm	assumes water normally confers Spirit/cleansing	"cleansed hearts BY FAITH" + Spirit before water tell against mechanical construal	Rejected (mechanical)
Acts 19:1-7 (re-baptism)	View 1: Re-baptized because John's baptism ≠ Christian baptism	John's baptism preparatory, insufficient	must explain Apollos's (unreported) non-re-baptism	ADOPTED (Very high)
Acts 19:1-7 (re-baptism)	View 2: 19:5 continues Paul's words (John's hearers baptized into Jesus) — no re-baptism	assumes 19:5 is quoted speech	grammatically strained (de + subject); near-universally rejected	Rejected
Acts 16 (household baptism)	View 1: Believers' baptism; household = those who heard & believed	members believed (Rule 9 silence)	Lydia's household faith unstated	Favored for jailer; indeterminate overall
Acts 16 (household baptism)	View 2: Household incl. non-professing/infants (paedobaptist)	members baptized on head's faith (Rule 9 silence)	no infant mentioned; house hears & rejoices in belief	Not established by text
Acts 16 (household baptism)	View 3: Texts silent; cannot settle the question (exegetical verdict)	—	yields no decisive answer	ADOPTED as verdict (disputed)
Romans 6:3-4	View 1: Means/sign of real faith-received union	God the agent; faith-received (Col 2:12; reckon 6:11)	must specify water/union relation	ADOPTED (Very high/High)
Romans 6:3-4	View 2: Baptismal regeneration (water effects union)	assumes the rite operates automatically	passives w/ God as agent; Col 2:12 "through faith"; 6:11-14 faith+command	Rejected (mechanical)
Romans 6:3-4	View 3: Bare symbol (only pictures union)	reads baptism as detached illustration	under-reads "buried WITH him THROUGH the baptism"	Rejected

Passage	View	Assumptions imported	Weaknesses	Provisional verdict
Galatians 3:27	View 1: Baptism = enacted correlate of faith-union (real incorporation/ investiture)	faith & baptism coordinated, one entry	must hold both w/o collapsing	ADOPTED (Very high/High)
Galatians 3:27	View 2: Baptismal regeneration (rite confers sonship)	rite as cause apart from faith	3:26 grounds sonship in FAITH; letter excludes works	Rejected
Galatians 3:27	View 3: Bare symbol (only illustrates faith-alone union)	empties the rite	under-reads "baptized INTO Christ... put on Christ"	Rejected
Colossians 2:12	View 1: Sphere of God-wrought, faith-received union	God agent; faith the means; water the sphere/sign	integrate "in baptism" w/ "through faith"	ADOPTED (Very high/High)
Colossians 2:12	View 2: Baptismal regeneration (baptism effects life)	rite operates automatically	same clause: "THROUGH FAITH"; 2:13 GOD made alive	Rejected (mechanical)
Colossians 2:12	View 3: Bare symbol	detached emblem	under-reads "buried IN baptism, IN WHICH raised"	Rejected
Colossians 2:11-12	Sub-dispute: baptism replaces circumcision → infant baptism (paedobaptist)	baptism = new-covenant circumcision incl. children	text ASSOCIATES but draws no infant inference; 2:12 "through faith"	Not settled by text (disputed)

Appendix F — Clause and Argument Diagrams

Argument diagrams for the priority passages, showing how each conclusion sits within the flow of its passage — the main assertion with its grounds, means, purpose, and result.

Genesis 1:1–10 (creation water)

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[MAIN] God created the heavens and the earth (1:1)
├ circumstance: the earth was formless-and-empty (tōhû wā-bōhû) (1:2a)
├ circumstance: darkness over the face of the deep (tēhôm) (1:2b)
├ circumstance (durative): the Spirit of God hovering over the waters (1:2c)
├
├ ORDERING ACT A – fiat + execution (1:6–7)
├   fiat: "Let there be an expanse dividing waters from waters"
├   execution: God separated (bādal) the waters above / below
├     └ RESULT: sky established
├
├ ORDERING ACT B – fiat + execution (1:9–10)
├   fiat: "Let the waters be gathered... let dry land appear"
├     └ RESULT: dry land (yabbāšâ) appears; waters named "Seas"; "good"
```

Relations: 1:2 = circumstantial background (disjunctive waw, not sequence). Movement = unordered water → separation → gathering → habitable land. No command to a creature; volitional jussives express fiat.

Genesis 2:10–14 (river of Eden)

```
[MAIN] A river was going out from Eden (2:10a)
├ PURPOSE (infinitive lēhašqôt): to water the garden (2:10b)
├ DEVELOPMENT: it divided into four heads (2:10c)
├ ELABORATION: Pishon / Gihon / Tigris / Euphrates (2:11–14)
```

Relations: Purpose-infinitive is the key logical link (river exists *to give life*). Sanctuary-river motif → Ezek 47; Rev 22.

Genesis 7:11–8:1; 9:11 (flood: judgment / deliverance / covenant)

[MAIN – JUDGMENT] The flood-waters blotted out all flesh (7:11–24)
├ GROUND: human wickedness/violence filled the earth (6:5,11–13)
├ MEANS/AGENCY (divine passives): fountains of the great deep split open
├ + floodgates of heaven opened (7:11) [= DE-CREATION, reversing 1:6–10]
├ ───
├ CONTRAST (deliverance): BUT the waters bore up the ark;
├ Noah's eight carried safely THROUGH the water (7:17–18,23b)
├ ─ HINGE: "And God remembered Noah" (8:1a)
├ ─ MEANS OF REVERSAL: God sent a *rûaḥ* over the earth → waters subsided (8:1b)
├ [= RE-CREATION, echoing 1:2]
├ ─ RESULT: dry land reappears (8:13–14) [echoing 1:9]
├ ───
├ CONSEQUENCE (covenant): God establishes the Noahic covenant –
├ never again to cut off all flesh by flood-waters (9:11)
├ ─ SIGN: the bow in the cloud (9:12–17)

Relations: Ground (moral) → Means (de-creation) → Contrast (through-water deliverance) → Hinge (remembrance) → Means (re-creation) → Result (dry land) → Consequence (covenant + sign). One water-event = judgment *and* salvation.

2 Peter 3:5–7 (creation/flood/fire, by the word)

[MAIN] This escapes them – willfully (θέλοντας) (3:5a)
├ (γάρ: grounds the rebuttal of the scoffers' "nothing changes," 3:4)
├ ─ CONTENT A (ὅτι): heavens existed long ago,
├ and earth formed OUT OF water and THROUGH water – BY THE WORD OF GOD (3:5b)
├ ─ CONTENT B (δι' ὧν): through which [waters] the then-world,
├ flooded with water (κατακλυσθεῖς), perished (3:6)
├ ─ shared GROUND/AGENCY: "the word of God" (water = medium, word = agent)
├ ─ CONTRAST/CONSEQUENCE (δέ): the now-heavens-and-earth, BY THE SAME WORD,
├ are stored up for FIRE, kept unto the day of judgment (3:7)

Relations: γάρ (evidence) → two ὅτι/relative content clauses (creation, flood) → δέ contrast (present world → fire). Timeline ἔκπαλαι → τότε → νῦν → ἡμέρα κρίσεως. Agent throughout = *logos*; element = *hudōr* then *pyr*. Contrast pair: ὁ τότε κόσμος / οἱ νῦν οὐρανοί.

Exodus 14:15–31 (Red Sea crossing)

[MAIN] command→execution: "stretch out your hand... divide the sea" → the waters were split (14:16,21)
├ MEANS: Yahweh drove the sea back by a strong east wind (rûah), all night
| (agent = Yahweh; instrument = wind; token = Moses' hand)
├ PURPOSE: "that Israel may go through on dry ground" (14:16)
├ RESULT A (deliverance): Israel went into the midst of the sea on DRY GROUND,
| waters a wall right and left (14:22,29)
├ RESULT B / CONTRAST (judgment): waters returned, covered the Egyptians;
| "not one of them remained" (14:26-28)
├ └ PURPOSE: "that I may get glory... the Egyptians shall know I am the
LORD" (14:17-18)
├ └ RESULT C (response): the LORD SAVED Israel → the people FEARED and BELIEVED
in the LORD and in Moses (14:30-31)

Relations: same-water / opposite-outcome (save vs. judge) — the flood pattern recurs. Faith is the narrated *result* of deliverance-through-water (14:31).

Joshua 3:14–17; 4:22–24 (Jordan crossing)

[MAIN] Israel crossed the Jordan on DRY GROUND (3:16-17; 4:22)
├ MEANS: Yahweh cut off / dried up the waters (stood in a heap, nēd);
| ark-bearing priests stood firm in the midst (3:16-17)
├ EXPLICIT ANALOGY: "AS the LORD did to the Red Sea" (4:23)
├ └ PURPOSE: that all peoples know Yahweh's mighty hand; that Israel fear him
forever (4:24)

[MAIN-2 / Gilgal] new generation circumcised + Passover kept (5:2-10)
├ GROUND: the men of war who left Egypt died in the wilderness (5:4-7)
├ DIVINE DECLARATION: "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt" → Gilgal
(5:9)
├ └ CONSEQUENCE: Passover; land's produce eaten; manna ceased (5:10-12)

Relations: entry-through-water (re-enacting the Sea) → covenant-marker renewal. "Rolled away reproach" = shame-removal, not sin-washing.

Psalms 77:16–20 (Sea recalled as theophany)

[THEOPHANY] the waters saw you and trembled; the deeps shook (v.16)
├ cosmic accompaniment: clouds, thunder, lightning, whirlwind (vv.17-18)
├ CORE: your WAY was through the sea, your paths through the great waters,
| yet your footprints unseen (v.19)
├ └ RESULT/CLIMAX: you LED your people like a flock by Moses and Aaron (v.20)

Relations: remembered deliverance = ground answering present doubt (the lament of vv.1-9). Non-baptismal; develops through-water/leading motif.

Isaiah 43:1–3 (preservation through peril)

[IMPERATIVE] "Fear not" (43:1)
├ GROUND 1 (creation/redemption): he created, formed, redeemed, named you; "you are mine" (43:1)
├ GROUND 2 (protective promise): pass through waters → I am with you;
│ rivers shall not OVERWHELM; fire shall not SCORCH (43:2)
│ [contrast pairs, both negated]
└ GROUND 3 (guarantor): "for I am the LORD your God... your Savior" (43:3)

Relations: waters/rivers/fire = metaphors for peril; the through-water figure denotes preservation, not a rite. Temporal: redemption accomplished (perfects) grounds preservation promised (imperfects).

1 Corinthians 10:1–12 (baptism into Moses; the warning)

[PREMISE – fivefold "ALL"] our fathers ALL: under the cloud / through the sea / baptized into Moses / ate spiritual food / drank spiritual drink (from Christ the Rock) (10:1-4)
|
[HINGE – adversative] BUT with MOST of them God was not pleased – they were overthrown in the wilderness (10:5)
├ INTERPRETATION: these became TYPŌI for us (10:6)
├ ILLUSTRATIONS: not idolaters / immoral / testers / grumblers – as some were, and fell (10:7-10)
└ RESTATEMENT: these happened ΤΥΠΙΚŌΣ, written for our admonition, "on whom the ends of the ages have come" (10:11)
|
[CONCLUSION – imperative] "let the one who thinks he stands watch lest he fall" (10:12)
└ ASSURANCE (balance): no temptation unbearable; God provides the way of escape (10:13)

Relations: the fivefold πάντες ("all") is overturned by "**but** with MOST... not" (10:5) — the all/most antithesis is the argument's engine. Baptism = real incorporation into a mediator (εἶς + person, cf. Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27), functioning as **polemical evidence** that privilege ≠ security; the imperative (10:12) rests on this typological indicative.

Exodus 29:4; 30:17–21 (priestly washing / laver)

ACCESS TO THE HOLY GOD requires mediation (priesthood) + purity (washing)
└ ORDINATION (initiator, 29:4): bring Aaron & sons to tent entrance → WASH with water → vest/anoint/sacrifice
└ LAVER (ongoing, 30:17-21): basin of water between tent and altar
└ priests WASH hands & feet (30:19)
└ TEMPORAL: whenever entering the tent / approaching the altar (30:20)
└ PURPOSE (negative): "SO THAT THEY MAY NOT DIE" (30:20,21) [washing = condition of safe access]

Relations: washing = means/qualification of access; absence = death. Water(purity) ≠ blood(atonement).

Leviticus 8 (ordination) — ordered consecration

CONSECRATION SEQUENCE (8:6-30):
1. WASH Aaron & sons with water (8:6) [initiator purification – FIRST]
2. VEST in holy garments (8:7-9)
3. ANOINT tabernacle/altar/Aaron's head w/ oil (8:10-12) [Spirit-symbol]
4. SACRIFICE: sin/burnt/ordination; blood to ear-thumb-toe (8:14-30) [atonement]
refrain: "as the LORD commanded Moses"

Relations: three distinct media — water (purity) / oil (Spirit-symbol) / blood (atonement). Washing → anointing order echoed at Jesus' baptism (Matt 3).

Numbers 8:5–13 (Levite cleansing)

PURPOSE: "to cleanse them" (lěṭahārām, 8:7)
└ MEANS (composite): sprinkle water of purification (nāzâ) + shave body + launder clothes (kābas) + purify selves (ṭāhēr)
└ PRESENTATION: before the tent → hands laid → wave offering → sin/burnt offering "to make atonement"
└ RESULT: "that they may do the service of the LORD" (8:11,15)

Relations: sprinkling (nāzâ) introduced → feeds Ezek 36:25; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 1:2. Purification, not baptism; mode not derivable.

Leviticus 16 (Day of Atonement) — bathings frame the blood

APPROACH (16:1-4): warning (Nadab/Abihu) → high priest BATHES body (16:4) + linen garments [access-purity]

|
ATONEMENT (16:5-22): bull sin-offering → incense → SPRINKLE BLOOD on mercy seat (nāzâ, 16:14-15)

→ cleanse sanctuary → SCAPEGOAT bears sins away (16:20-22)

|
CONCLUSION (16:23-28): high priest BATHES again (16:24); handlers wash clothes + bathe (16:26,28)

|
STATUTE (16:30): "atonement made... TO CLEANSE you; from all your sins you shall be CLEAN before the LORD"

Relations: bathings (water, access) BRACKET the central blood-atonement + scapegoat-removal. Cleansing "from all sins" = by BLOOD, not bathing-water.

Hebrews 9:9–14; 10:19–22 (fulfillment; draw near)

9:9-10 old sacrifices/washings (baptismoi) = REGULATIONS FOR THE FLESH → cannot perfect the CONSCIENCE

9:13-14 A FORTIORI (ei... posō mallon): if animal blood + heifer-ashes SPRINKLING → fleshly purity,

HOW MUCH MORE Christ's blood → CLEANSE THE CONSCIENCE

10:19-21 GROUND: confidence to enter by the BLOOD of Jesus; new living way (his flesh); a great priest

10:22 EXHORTATION: "let us DRAW NEAR" (proserchōmetha)

└ inner: hearts SPRINKLED clean from an evil conscience (rherantismenoi – blood)

└ outer: body WASHED with pure water (lelousmenoi – water/baptism?)

Relations: flesh → conscience, repeated → once-for-all, water(outer) ↔ blood(inner). 10:22 pairs inner blood-sprinkling with outer water-washing (probable baptismal allusion); forgiveness grounded in blood (9:22), not water.

Leviticus 11–15 (purity system)

SYSTEM PURPOSE: "be holy, for I am holy" → distinguish unclean/clean (11:44-47)
contact/condition → UNCLEAR (carcass 11; childbirth 12; skin disease 13-14; discharge 15)
|
REMEDY: launder clothes (kābas) + bathe body (rāḥaṣ) → "unclean until evening" → CLEAN
└ GRAVE cases (healed šāra'at 14; chronic discharge 15):
+ LIVING WATER (mayim ḥayyim) + HYSSOP-blood SPRINKLING (14:5-7)
+ multi-day process + ATONING SACRIFICE (14:19-20; 15:14-15) → CLEAN

Relations: ceremonial washing removes uncleanness (access); sacrifice atones (forgiveness). Seeds: living water → Spirit (John 7:39); hyssop → Heb 9.

Numbers 19 (red heifer / water of impurity)

PREPARATION: red heifer burned (cedar/hyssop/scarlet) → ashes stored → "for the water of impurity; IT IS A PURIFICATION FOR SIN" (19:9)
| (handlers become unclean – cleanses-the-unclean / defiles-the-clean paradox)
PROBLEM: corpse-contact → UNCLEAR 7 days; neglect → defiles sanctuary → CUT OFF (19:13)
|
REMEDY: ashes + LIVING WATER → clean person dips HYSSOP, SPRINKLES unclean on day 3 & 7
→ then launder + bathe → CLEAN at evening (19:17-19)

Relations: death = supreme defilement → most elaborate cleansing. Heb 9:13: this gave "purity of the flesh," foil to Christ's conscience-cleansing.

Psalms 26:6 (symbolic washing)

APPEAL: vindicate me – I walk in integrity (26:1-3)
└ negative ground: I do not sit with the wicked (26:4-5)
└ positive ground: "I WASH MY HANDS IN INNOCENCE and go around your altar" (26:6-8)

Relations: washing = symbol of moral innocence for worship-access (cf. Ps 24:4). Non-baptismal; bridge to Ps 51's interiorizing.

Psalm 51:1–12 (interiorized cleansing + new heart + Spirit)

PLEA (51:1-2): have mercy; blot out; WASH/LAUNDER me (kābas) from iniquity; CLEANSE me (ṭāhēr)
└ GROUND (51:3-6): radical confession ("against you only"; "brought forth in iniquity")
PLEA (51:7-12):
└ purge me with HYSSOP → clean; wash me → WHITER THAN SNOW (7)
└ CREATE (bārā') in me a CLEAN HEART; renew a right spirit (10) [new-creation act]
└ take not your HOLY SPIRIT from me (11) [cleansing + Spirit]
TRUE SACRIFICE (51:16-17): not ritual sacrifice, but "a broken and contrite heart"

Relations: ceremonial vocabulary → moral guilt; escalates washing → **created clean heart** → **Holy Spirit**; ritual deprioritized. The OT seedbed of Ezek 36:25-27 / John 3:5 / Titus 3:5.

Ezekiel 36:25–27 (the hinge — clean water + new heart + Spirit)

GROUND (36:22): "NOT for your sake... but for the sake of MY HOLY NAME" [monergism]
└ CLEANSING (25): I will SPRINKLE (zāraq) CLEAN WATER → "you shall be CLEAN"
└ from all uncleannesses + all IDOLS I will cleanse you [moral, not just ceremonial]
└ NEW HEART (26): I will give a NEW HEART + new spirit; remove heart of STONE → heart of FLESH
└ GIFT OF SPIRIT (27a): I will put MY SPIRIT (rûḥî) within you (bēqirbēkem – INTERIOR)
└ └ RESULT (27b): → I will CAUSE you to walk in my statutes (obedience)
└ COVENANT (28): you shall be my people, and I will be your God
└ THEN (31): you shall loathe yourselves [repentance FOLLOWS the cleansing]

Relations: every saving verb has GOD as subject (monergistic). Order: cleanse(water) → new heart → my Spirit → obedience. Water(cleansing) + Spirit(renewal) fused. The reality baptism signifies; NOT the rite (God is the sprinkler).

Isaiah 44:3 (water // Spirit parallelism)

"Fear not, Jacob... chosen" (44:1-2)
POUR water on the thirsty || POUR MY SPIRIT on your offspring
streams on the dry ground || my blessing on your descendants
└ RESULT: flourish like willows by streams (44:4)
└ RESPONSE: "I am the LORD's"; write "The LORD's" on the hand (44:5) [belonging]

Relations: synonymous parallelism → water = the poured Spirit. Primary OT Spirit-outpouring promise (→ John 7:37-39; Acts 2). God is the pourer; no rite.

Isaiah 1:16–18 (moral wash + divine pardon)

REJECT RITUAL amid injustice (1:11-15, "hands full of blood")
SUMMONS (1:16-17): WASH yourselves / make clean = cease evil / DO JUSTICE
PARDON (1:18): scarlet sins → WHITE AS SNOW [God's act/offer]
ALT (1:19-20): willing→eat the good / refuse→devoured

Relations: human "wash yourselves"(=repent/justice) + divine "white as snow"(=pardon) held together. Non-baptismal.

Zechariah 13:1 · Malachi 3:1–4 · Ezekiel 47 (compact)

Zech 12:10 → 13:1: spirit of grace + mourn the PIERCED ONE → FOUNTAIN opened "to cleanse from sin+uncleanness"
(→ John 19:34, pierced side: blood + water)
Mal 3:1-3: messenger(=John) → the Lord comes as REFINER'S FIRE + FULLERS' SOAP → purify sons of Levi → righteous worship
(→ Matt 3:11 "Spirit and fire"; Mark 1:2)
Ezek 47:1-12: water from the SANCTUARY → deepens (ankle→swim) → HEALS the Dead Sea → life + healing-leaves
(Eden Gen 2:10 → temple-river → living water=Spirit John 7:38-39 → Rev 22:1-2)

2 Kings 5:9–14 (Naaman — the OT baptism-prototype)

PROBLEM: Naaman, great commander, is a LEPER
PRESCRIPTION (Elisha): "wash in the Jordan 7× → clean"
OFFENSE (5:11-12): expected a grand cure; Damascus's rivers are "better" → rage
PERSUASION (servants): "if he'd said a great thing... how much more 'Wash, and be clean'?"
OBEDIENCE (5:14): he DIPPED (ṭābal→LXX baptizō) 7× "ACCORDING TO THE WORD" → flesh like a child's, CLEAN
CONFESSION (5:15): "no God in all the earth but in Israel"

Relations: cleansing by OBEDIENT FAITH in the word (not ritual grandeur / self-chosen water). Base sense of baptizō = immerse. Gentile-inclusion (Luke 4:27).

John's baptism — the water / Spirit-and-fire contrast (Matt 3; Mark 1; Luke 3; John 1)

FRAME: Isa 40:3 (voice) [+ Mal 3:1 messenger, Mark 1:2] → JOHN in the wilderness
JOHN'S BAPTISM: baptisma metanoias EIS APHESIN hamartiōn (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3)
└ crowds baptized in the Jordan, CONFESSING sins (Matt 3:6; Mark 1:5)
└ demands FRUIT worthy of repentance (Luke 3:8-14: share / honest / content)
└ purpose (John 1:31): "THAT HE MIGHT BE REVEALED TO ISRAEL"
THE CONTRAST (John himself):
ἐγὼ μὲν ... ἐν ὕδατι | ὁ δὲ ... ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (καὶ πυρί)
(I: WATER, preparatory) | (He: HOLY SPIRIT + fire, consummating)
WINNOWING (Matt 3:12; Luke 3:17): wheat gathered / chaff burned (Spirit+fire = salvation+judgment)

Sin-removal = the LAMB OF GOD (John 1:29); Spirit-baptism = JESUS (Spirit REMAINS, John 1:33)
John's baptism ≠ Christian baptism (Acts 19:1-6 re-baptizes its recipients into Jesus' name)

Relations: John's water-baptism is preparatory/subordinate; it joins baptism-repentance-confession-forgiveness (→ Acts 2:38) but cannot give the Spirit. The rite without repentance-fruit does not exempt from judgment (Matt 3:8-10).

Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:29–34)

APPROACH (Matt 3:13-15): Jesus comes to be baptized → John objects (roles reversed)
→ Jesus: "fitting to FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS" (identification, NOT repentance) → John consents
THE EVENT (baptized → up from the water):
└ heavens OPENED (Mark: TORN, σχίζω – cf. 15:38 veil torn = access)
└ SPIRIT descends (dove) and RESTS/REMAINS on him (John: μένω) [= anointing; enacts Isa 42:1]
└ FATHER'S VOICE: "my beloved SON [Ps 2:7], with whom I am well pleased [Isa 42:1]"

TRINITY present: Son baptized · Spirit descends · Father speaks (→ anticipates Matt 28:19)
Lev 8 pattern fulfilled: WASH (baptism) → ANOINT (Spirit) [Christos = anointed]
Sin-removal = the LAMB (John 1:29); Spirit-baptism = JESUS (Spirit remains, 1:33)

Gospel accents: Matt = public "This is..." (attestation) + "fulfill all righteousness"; Mark = heavens TORN (inclusio 1:10/15:38); Luke = PRAYING + bodily-form Spirit (→ Luke 4:18 mission → Acts 2); John = Spirit REMAINS (permanent anointing) + Lamb.

Ps 2:7 + Isa 42:1 fused (the baptismal declaration)

Ps 2:7 "You are my SON" → royal/Davidic sonship (enthronement)
Isa 42:1 "my chosen SERVANT... my Spirit UPON him" → Servant election + Spirit + mission to nations
↓ fused by the Father's voice ↓
"my beloved SON, with whom I am WELL PLEASED" + Spirit descends
→ Jesus = royal Son AND Spirit-anointed Servant (Servant → Isa 53 → cross)

John 3:1–10 (born of water and the Spirit)

Nicodemus: "we know you are a teacher from God" (3:2)
DECLARATION 1 (3:3): unless born ANŌTHEN (again/from above) → cannot SEE the kingdom
└ misunderstanding (3:4): "enter the womb a second time?"
DECLARATION 2 (3:5): unless born OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT (single εἰς) → cannot ENTER the kingdom
└ 3:6 flesh births flesh / SPIRIT births spirit
└ 3:8 the wind/Spirit (pneuma) blows where it wishes – SOVEREIGN, mysterious
REBUKE (3:9-10): "the teacher of ISRAEL – and you don't understand?" → points to OT (Ezek 36)

"water and Spirit" = Ezek 36:25-27 new-covenant CLEANSING (water) + RENEWAL (Spirit)
[cross-ref: Ezek 36:25-27 = 113 votes – dominant]
Spirit = the AGENT (passive gennēthē = received); baptism = SECONDARY sign (not the agent)

Titus 3:3–7 (washing of regeneration)

ONCE (3:3): foolish, enslaved to passions, hating/hated
BUT (3:4): the goodness of God our Savior APPEARED
HE SAVED US (3:5):
└ NOT by works we did in righteousness
└ BUT according to his MERCY [= the GROUND]
└ through the WASHING of regeneration + renewal of the Holy Spirit [= the INSTRUMENT]
the Spirit whom he POURED OUT (execheen) on us richly through Christ (3:6) [= the AGENT]
RESULT (3:7): justified by grace → HEIRS of eternal life

washing (λουτρόν=baptism, BDAG) = INSTRUMENT · Spirit = AGENT · mercy = GROUND
→ efficacious-but-not-mechanical; not bare symbol, not works-based

Joel 2:28–32 (Spirit poured out; call on the name)

"afterward: I will POUR OUT my Spirit on ALL FLESH" → sons/daughters prophesy; all, incl. servants
→ cosmic signs before the Day of the LORD (2:30-31)
→ "everyone who CALLS ON THE NAME of the LORD shall be SAVED" (2:32)
== fulfilled at Pentecost: Acts 2:16-21 (Joel quoted) → 2:38 "repent + be baptized... receive the Spirit"
also Acts 22:16 (baptism + calling on his name); Rom 10:13

Matthew 28:18–20 (Great Commission)

AUTHORITY (28:18): "All authority... has been given to me" [ground]
→ COMMISSION (one imperative): MAKE DISCIPLES of all nations (28:19)
└ going (participle)
└ BAPTIZING them INTO THE NAME of the Father + Son + Holy Spirit (participle = how)
└ teaching them to obey all I commanded (participle = how)
ASSURANCE (28:20): "I am with you always, to the end of the age"

Christian baptism INSTITUTED; triune name (one ὄνομα, three persons) – textually SECURE
eis to onoma = dedication/belonging to the triune God

Acts 2:38 (the crux — number-shift + eis aphesin)

Pentecost: Spirit poured (Joel fulfilled) → Jesus = Lord & Christ → "WHAT SHALL WE DO?" (2:37)

2:38: REPENT [metanoēsate, 2 PLURAL]
+ LET EACH BE BAPTIZED [baptisthētō, 3 SINGULAR] ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν [= FOR forgiveness – PURPOSIVE, not causal (BDAG)]
+ you WILL RECEIVE [lēmpesthe, 2 PLURAL] the gift of the Holy Spirit
2:39 GROUND (γάρ): "the promise is for you... everyone whom the Lord CALLS"
2:41 RESULT: those who received the word were baptized (~3000)

repentance + baptism = one response (corporate call individualized in baptism)
→ directed toward forgiveness + Spirit
baptism = INSTRUMENT/sign · God's mercy/call = GROUND · Spirit = AGENT
(not mechanical baptismal regeneration; not "because already forgiven"; not bare symbol)

Mark 16:16 (asymmetry) • Luke 24:47 (program)

Mark 16:16 [SECONDARY text]: believe + baptized → SAVED || disbelieve → CONDEMNED
(baptism ABSENT from the condemnation clause → only UNBELIEF condemns; faith decisive)
Luke 24:47 [program]: "repentance FOR forgiveness IN HIS NAME to all nations" + wait for the Spirit
→ enacted in Acts 2:38 (same eis aphesin / epi tō onomati)

Phase 8B — the Acts conversions (order-variation)

ONE RESPONSE, VARYING SPIRIT-ORDER:
gospel → hearing → FAITH → BAPTISM (+ repentance, forgiveness, Spirit)
Spirit timing relative to water baptism:
Acts 2:38 WITH the response the norm/charter
Acts 8 DELAYED → apostolic hands .. Samaritan validation (redemptive-historical)
Acts 9:17 PURPOSED-before (unnarrated) Saul
Acts 10:44 BEFORE (explicit, prevenient) Cornelius/Gentile validation
Acts 19:6 AFTER → apostolic hands John's-disciples completion
⇒ no fixed water-then-Spirit mechanism; out-of-order cases = validations, not norms (Rule 10)

Acts 22:16 (Saul): "Rise, be baptized ∟
AND wash away sins ∟ (two coordinate middle imperatives)
CALLING on his name ∟ ← faith-invocation = the anti-mechanism control
⇒ sins washed away IN the baptism, AS one calls on the Lord (not the water alone)

Acts 19:5 (Ephesus): "into John's baptism" (preparatory) ≠ baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus"
⇒ RE-BAPTISM (the one clear NT case) → John's baptism ≠ Christian baptism (Rule 2.1)

Phase 9 — apostolic interpretation (union / washing / saving)

Rom 6:3-4: baptized INTO Christ = INTO his death

└ buried WITH him THROUGH the baptism (passive → God the agent)

└ (purpose ἵνα) walk in NEWNESS OF LIFE

control: raised "through faith" (Col 2:12 parallel); grounds sanctification

→ neither bare symbol (union is real) nor mechanism (God acts, faith receives)

Gal 3:26-27: sons of God THROUGH FAITH (v.26)

└ (γάρ) FOR as many as baptized INTO Christ = PUT ON Christ (v.27)

⇒ faith & baptism COORDINATED (one entry), not rivals → one in Christ, Abraham's heirs

Col 2:11-13: circumcision-of-Christ (not hands)

└ buried WITH him IN baptism

└ raised WITH him THROUGH FAITH in the working of God ← anti-mechanism control

└ GOD made you alive, forgave all trespasses

(circumcision→baptism link: associates, does NOT settle infant baptism – disputed)

1 Cor: 1:13 baptized into a NAME = belonging to Christ (not a party); 1:17 rite < gospel

6:11 washed / sanctified / justified – "in the name... and BY THE SPIRIT"

12:13 in ONE SPIRIT all baptized INTO ONE BODY ⇒ UNITY (not two-tier Spirit-baptism)

15:29 baptized "for the dead" – obscure, ad hominem, doctrinally inert (Rule 20)

Eph 4:5 ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism ⇒ the church's single unifying initiation

Eph 5:26 Christ cleanses his bride BY THE WASHING OF WATER *with the word*

(λουτρόν = baptismal bath; agent = CHRIST; efficacy in word+water, not bare water)

Heb 6:2 "teaching about baptisms" (pl.) = foundational catechesis (distinguishing the washings)

1 Pet 3:21 (the crux):

flood: 8 saved THROUGH water → antitype: BAPTISM "NOW SAVES you"

└ NOT: removal of dirt from the body

└ BUT: ἐπερώτημα of a good conscience toward God

(appeal-TO / pledge-GIVEN-TO – genitive disputed)

THROUGH the resurrection of Jesus Christ

⇒ real salvation, non-physical, faith-shaped, resurrection-grounded (crystallizes, not proves)

Rev 1:5 "FREED (λύσαντι) us from our sins BY HIS BLOOD" → priest-kingdom (NOT "washed")

Rev 7:14 robes "washed white IN THE BLOOD of the Lamb" ⇒ blood cleanses, not water

Rev 22:1 river of the WATER OF LIFE from the throne (Eden inclusio, Gen 2:10) – Corpus D, not baptism

(These condensed diagrams cover the later apostolic texts.)

Appendix G — Concordance of Baptism, Washing, and Water Texts

The exhaustive, canonically-ordered catalog: every explicit baptism, washing, cleansing, sprinkling, and theologically-weighted water passage, plus inferred baptismal texts and canonical water-patterns, with corpus and certainty. Corpus: A = explicit baptism; B = washing/cleansing; C = inferred baptismal; D = canonical water-pattern. Certainty: explicit / certain / probable / possible / excluded.

Phase 1 — Creation, Judgment, and Deliverance

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Gen 1:2	D	תְּהוֹם <i>tēhôm</i> (H8415); מַיִם <i>mayim</i> (H4325); רוּחַ <i>rûaḥ</i> (H7307); רָחַץ <i>rāḥaṣ</i> (ptc.)	Creational/cosmic water	Excluded (foundational pattern)	Spirit hovering over the waters; source of the later water+Spirit grammar. Not a rite.
Gen 1:6–10	D	בְּדִל; מַיִם <i>bādal</i> (separate); יַבְבָּשָׁה <i>yabbāšā</i> (dry land)	Creational water, ordered	Excluded (foundational pattern)	Separation of waters; dry land appears — reused at Sea (Exod 14) and Jordan (Josh 3–4).
Gen 2:10–14	D	נָהָר <i>nāhār</i> (river); שִׁקְהָה <i>šqḥ</i> (water/irrigate)	Life-giving river of Eden	Excluded (foundational pattern)	River from the garden-sanctuary; anticipates Ezek 47; Rev 22:1–2.
Gen 6:5–13	D	(context: corruption, judgment)	Judgment setting	Excluded (pattern)	Moral ground of the flood; Noah "righteous," set apart.
Gen 7:11–24	D	תְּהוֹם רַבָּה <i>tēhôm rabbā</i> (great deep); מַבְבּוּל <i>mabbûl</i> (flood, H3999); בָּקַע <i>bāqa</i> (split)	Judgment/deliverance water	Probable → Certain type-source (via 1 Pet 3:21)	De-creation; eight borne <i>through</i> water in the ark.
Gen 8:1–22	D	רוּחַ <i>rûaḥ</i> ; יַבְבָּשָׁה	Re-creation water	Possible (Spirit); Certain (pattern)	"God remembered Noah"; wind/Spirit over waters; dry land reappears (echo of Gen 1).
Gen 9:8–17	D	בְּרִית <i>bērît</i> (covenant); מַיִם	Covenant after deliverance	Excluded (pattern)	Deliverance-through-water joined to covenant + sign (bow).
2 Pet 3:5–7	D	ῥῆμα <i>hudōr</i> (G5204); κατακλύζω <i>kataklyzō</i> (G2626); λόγος <i>logos</i>	Cosmic water: creation + flood + coming fire	Excluded (NT canonical horizon)	Apostolic warrant for reading creation/flood as one word-governed water-history.

Cross-listed forward (studied in later phases, noted here for the flood cluster):

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Certainty	Note
1 Pet 3:20–21	A/C	βάπτισμα; ἀντίτυπον; ὕδωρ; δι' ὕδατος	Explicit (baptism) + Certain typology	Names baptism the flood's antitype; οὐ...ἀλλά qualifier..

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Certainty	Note
Matt 24:37–39; Luke 17:26–27	D	κατακλυσμός	Excluded (pattern/ warning)	Days of Noah as sudden-judgment paradigm..
2 Pet 2:5	D	—	Excluded (pattern)	Noah "herald of righteousness," eight preserved.

Phase 2 — Exodus and Covenant Transfer

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Exod 14:15– 31	D	יָם <i>yām</i> (H3220); בָּרָץ <i>bāqāʿ</i> (H1234, split); יַבְבָּשָׁה <i>yabbāšā</i> (H3004, dry ground); רוּחַ <i>rûah</i> ; אָמֵן <i>ʾāman</i> (believe); יָשָׁא <i>yāšāʿ</i> (save)	Typological water deliverance	Certain type-source (via 1 Cor 10:2)	Yahweh divides the Sea; Israel saved on dry ground; Egypt drowned. Faith-response (14:31).
Exod 15:1–18	D	תְּהוֹמוֹת <i>tēhōmōt</i> (H8415, deeps); נֵד <i>nēd</i> (H5067, heap); רוּחַ אֲפִיךָ (breath of nostrils)	Poetic celebration of Sea deliverance	Excluded (celebrates the type)	Song of the Sea; escalates <i>yam</i> to <i>tēhōmōt</i> ; Yahweh reigns forever (Rev 15:3).
Josh 3:14–17; 4:19–24	D	כָּרַת <i>kārat</i> (cut off); נֵד <i>nēd</i> ; יָבֵשׁ; יַבְבֵּשׁ <i>yābēš</i> (dry up)	Typological water deliverance (entry)	Probable typological correspondence (no NT warrant)	Jordan cut off; Israel crosses into inheritance; explicit Sea- analogy (4:23).
Josh 5:2–12	D/C	מֹול (circumcise); גִּלְגָּל <i>gālāl</i> (H1556, roll → Gilgal); Passover	Covenant-marker renewal at threshold	Possible (circumcision- baptism analogy)	Reproach of Egypt "rolled away"; circumcision + Passover renewed; manna ceases. Shame-removal, not sin- washing.
Ps 77:16– 20	D	דֶּרֶךְ; תְּהוֹמֹת; מַיִם <i>derek</i> (way); נָהָה <i>nāhā</i> (led)	Poetic recollection of Sea (theophany)	Non-baptismal (pattern-developing)	"Your way was through the sea"; the deeps tremble; Yahweh shepherds his flock.
Isa 43:1–3	D	עָבַר <i>ʿābar</i> (pass through); שָׁטַף/מַיִם; שָׁטַף <i>šāṭap</i> (overwhelm); גָּאֵל (redeem)	Metaphorical peril (new- exodus)	Non-baptismal (metaphor; pattern- feeder)	"When you pass through the waters... they shall not overwhelm you." Waters = danger God preserves through.
1 Cor 10:1–12	A (typological)	βαπτίζω <i>baptizō</i> (G907); εἰς + acc. (into Moses); τύπος <i>typos</i> (G5179); πάντες	Metaphorical/ typological baptism	Explicit (ties Sea to Christian baptism)	"All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Real incorporation, yet all baptized while most fell (10:5) → "watch lest you fall" (10:12).

Textual-variant note: 1 Cor 10:2 ἐβαπτίσθησαν (passive) vs. ἐβαπτίσαντο (middle) — see the textual-criticism appendix.

Phase 3 — Priestly Washing and Access (Corpus B — the washing/cleansing vocabulary begins)

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Exod 29:4; 30:17–21	B	רָחַץ <i>rāḥaš</i> (H7364, wash body); כִּיּוֹר <i>kiyyôr</i> (H3595, laver)	Priestly consecration / access-washing	Not a baptism text (pattern-feeder)	Ordination-washing + perpetual laver; wash "so that they may not die." Water = purity/access.
Exod 40:12–15,30–32	B	מָשַׁח ; מִיֹּץ; <i>māšah</i> (anoint)	Consecration/ access (fulfillment)	Not a baptism text	Washing enacted; glory fills the tent. Washing (purity) vs. anointing (Spirit-symbol).
Lev 8:6–12	B	מָשַׁח ; מִיֹּץ; H4886; שִׁטָּה	Priestly ordination	Not a baptism text	Ordered rite: wash → vest → anoint → sacrifice . Washing → anointing sequence (cf. Jesus' baptism).
Num 8:5–13	B	נָזַף <i>nāzâ</i> (H5137, sprinkle); מִי טָהַר (water of purification); כְּבָבָס <i>kābas</i> (H3526, launder); טָהַר <i>ṭāhēr</i> (H2891)	Purification of the Levites	Not a baptism text; sprinkling pattern-feeder	Introduces the sprinkling motif (→ Ezek 36:25; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 1:2). NOT a proof of baptismal mode.
Lev 16:4,24,26,28 (+30)	B (in atonement)	רָחַץ (bathe); כִּפֶּר <i>kipper</i> (H3722, atone); נָזַף (sprinkle blood)	High-priestly access-bathing within atonement	Not a baptism text; primarily atonement	Bathings frame the blood-atonement. Cleansing "from all sins" is by blood , not water.
Heb 9:9–14; 9:18–22; 10:19–22	B/C	βαπτισμός <i>baptismos</i> (G909, "washings"); ῥαντίζω <i>rhantizō</i> (G4472); λούω <i>louō</i> (G3068); καθαρίζω; συνείδησις (conscience)	NT interpretation; baptismal allusion (10:22)	9:10 = old washings; 10:22 = probable baptismal allusion	Old <i>baptismoi</i> purified flesh; Christ's blood cleanses conscience; believers "hearts sprinkled + body washed with pure water."

Note: Heb 9:10 uses βαπτισμοῖς of the **old-covenant** ceremonial washings — a caution that the βαπτ- group ≠ Christian baptism in every occurrence. Full TC note (10:22 text stable, interpretation disputed) in the textual-criticism appendix.

Phase 4 — Purification and Prophetic Cleansing

Part A — Levitical purity + penitential psalms

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Lev 11–15 (14:1–9; 15:1–15)	B	נָזַף ; כְּבָבָס; נָזַף; מִיֹּץ <i>mayim ḥayyim</i> (living water); אֶזְזֹב <i>'ēzōb</i> (hyssop); טָהַר	Purification from uncleanness (everyday)	Not a baptism text; pattern-feeder	Contact → unclean → wash → clean. Seeds living water (→ Spirit, John 7:39) and hyssop-sprinkling (→ Heb 9).

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Num 19	B	הַנִּדָּה <i>mê niddâ</i> (water of impurity, H5079); אֶפֶר (ashes); אֶזְזָב; מֵי־חַיִּים; גִּזְה;	Purification from corpse-defilement (gravest)	Not a baptism text; Heb-warranted foil; not a mode-proof	OT's premier cleansing-water; gave "purity of the flesh" (Heb 9:13), not conscience.
Ps 26:6	B (symbolic)	יָדַי <i>rāḥaš</i> (wash hands); נִקְיִין (innocence)	Symbolic/ethical washing	Non-baptismal (symbol)	"I wash my hands in innocence" — priestly gesture moralized; bridge to Ps 51.
Ps 51:1–12	B (moral/inward) → C	כִּבֵּס (launder me); טָהַר (cleanse); אֶזְזָב <i>ḥāṭā'</i> Piel + אֶזְזָב (purge with hyssop); בָּרַא <i>bārā'</i> (create clean heart); רוּחַ קֹדֶשׁ (Holy Spirit)	Prophetic/moral cleansing of the guilty self	Not a baptism text; primary pattern-source for washing-regeneration-Spirit	Interiorizes cleansing; wash → create clean heart → Holy Spirit . Seedbed of Ezek 36:25–27; John 3:5; Titus 3:5.

Part B — Prophetic cleansing promises

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Ezek 36:25–27	C	זָרַק <i>zāraq</i> (H2236, sprinkle/dash); מֵי טְהוֹרִים (clean water); רוּחִי טָהַרְתִּי (my Spirit)	New-covenant cleansing + Spirit — THE HINGE	Not a rite; certain new-birth background; probable allusion behind John 3:5	God sovereignly sprinkles clean water + gives new heart + his Spirit. NT cross-ref hub: Heb 10:22, John 3:5, Titus 3:5, Eph 5:26, Isa 4:4, Zech 13:1.
Isa 1:16–18	B/C	כִּתְּחִי (imperative); scarlet → snow	Moral cleansing + divine pardon	Non-baptismal (moral)	"Wash yourselves" = repent/do justice; "white as snow" = God's pardon.
Isa 4:2–6 (4:4)	B/C	רוּחַ דָּוָה; דָּוָה <i>dūah</i> ; רוּחַ בִּעֻר/מִשְׁפָּט (spirit of judgment/burning)	Cleansing by purging judgment/Spirit-fire	Non-baptismal; Spirit-and-fire feeder	The Lord washes Zion's filth/bloodguilt by a purging spirit of judgment & burning (→ Matt 3:11).
Isa 44:1–5 (44:3)	C	יָצַק <i>yāṣaq</i> (pour); מֵי־רוּחִי (my Spirit)	Water-and-Spirit outpouring promise	Non-baptismal; primary water-and-Spirit feeder	"Pour water on the thirsty // pour my Spirit on your offspring" (→ John 7:37–39; Acts 2). Also Phase 7.
Ezek 16:1–14 (16:9)	B/C	שָׁטַף <i>šāṭap</i> ; סִוָּךְ (anoint); בָּרִית	Covenant-founding washing (allegory)	Not a rite; conceptual feeder	God bathes + anoints Jerusalem at covenant-entry (→ Eph 5:25–27, Christ washes his bride).
Ezek 47:1–12	D	מִקְדָּשׁ; מֵי־חַיִּים (sanctuary); כָּפָא (heal); חַיָּה (live)	Life-giving sanctuary-river	Non-baptismal (life-water)	River of life/healing from the temple; Eden → temple-river → living water=Spirit → Rev 22.
Zech 13:1	C	מַעְיָן <i>māqōr</i> (fountain); טָהַר; נִדָּה	New-covenant cleansing-fountain	Non-baptismal; cleansing feeder	Fountain opened "to cleanse from sin and uncleanness"; tied to spirit of grace + pierced one (→ John 19:34).

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Mal 3:1–4	B/C	צָרַף (refine); בְּרִית מְכַבְּסִים (fullers' soap, <i>kābas</i>); טָהַר; מְלָאךְ הַבְּרִית	Cleansing by refining fire + soap	Non-baptismal; Spirit-and-fire feeder	Refiner's fire + fullers' soap purify the Levites; messenger = John (→ Mark 1:2; Matt 3:11). Opens Phase 5.

Phase 5 — Jordan and New Exodus (the first actual water-rite: John's baptism)

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
2 Kings 5:9–14	B/D	טָבַל <i>tābal</i> (H2881, dip → LXX βαπτίζω); יָרַךְ; טָהַר	OT baptism-prototype (Jordan cleansing)	Not the rite; OT βαπτίζω-narrative	Naaman dips 7× in the Jordan, cleansed by obedient faith. Base sense of βαπτίζω = "immerse/dip"; Gentile-inclusion (Luke 4:27).
Isa 40:3–5	D-adj	קוֹל קוֹרֵא (voice); דֶּרֶךְ הַיְהוָה (way of the LORD)	New-exodus advent-frame	Non-baptismal (the frame)	The wilderness voice = John (all 4 Gospels); frames his Jordan baptism as new-exodus preparation for the LORD (Jesus).
Matt 3:1–12	A	βαπτίζω/βάπτισμα; ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν; ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί	John's baptism vs. Spirit-and-fire	Explicit ; John's baptism distinct from Christian baptism	Water-baptism of repentance + confession; subordinated to the Messiah's Spirit-and-fire baptism. Rite without fruit ≠ exemption from judgment.
Mark 1:1–8	A	βάπτισμα μετάνοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν; ὕδατι / ἐν πνεύματι	John's baptism (repentance → forgiveness)	Explicit; direct antecedent of Acts 2:38	"Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" — the exact <i>eis aphesin</i> nexus of Acts 2:38. Water vs. Spirit.
Luke 3:1–18	A	βάπτισμα μετάνοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν; καρποὺς ἀξίους (fruits); πνεῦμα + πῶρ	John's baptism (repentance → ethical fruit)	Explicit; refutes bare ritualism	Repentance must bear concrete ethical fruit ; "all flesh shall see the salvation of God"; Luke–Acts arc to Pentecost.
John 1:19–34	A	βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι / ἐν πνεύματι; ἵνα φανερωθῇ (that he be revealed); ἀμνὸς (Lamb); μένω (Spirit remains)	John's baptism as christological witness	Explicit; sin-removal = the Lamb; Spirit-baptism = Jesus	John's water-baptism exists "that Christ might be revealed to Israel" (1:31). The Lamb takes away sin; Jesus (Spirit <i>remains</i> on him) baptizes with the Spirit.

Key distinction (project Rule 2.1): John's baptism is a **distinct baptism** — the NT itself distinguishes it from Christian baptism (Acts 19:1–5, where John's-baptism recipients are re-baptized into Jesus' name and receive the Spirit).

Phase 6 — Jesus' Baptism and Consecration (a unique baptism: consecration/anointing)

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Matt 3:13–17	A	βαπτίζω; πληρῶσαι δικαιοσύνην; πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον; υἱός ἀγαπητός	Jesus' baptism (consecration/anointing)	Explicit; UNIQUE category	"To fulfill all righteousness" (identification, no repentance); Spirit descends/rests; Father declares Son (Ps 2:7 + Isa 42:1). Fulfills Lev 8 wash → anoint.
Mark 1:9–11	A	βαπτίζω; σχίζω (heavens torn); εἰς αὐτόν; υἱός	Jesus' baptism (Spirit-anointing)	Explicit; unique	Heavens torn (σχίζω, inclusio w/ 15:38 veil torn = access opened); Spirit onto him; "You are my Son."
Luke 3:21–22	A	βαπτίζω; προσεύχομαι ; σωματικῶ εἶδει; υἱός	Jesus' baptism (anointing; prayer)	Explicit; unique	Jesus praying ; Spirit in bodily form ; launches Spirit-led ministry (Luke 4:18) → Pentecost (Acts 2).
John 1:29–34	A	μένω (Spirit remains); ἄμνος (Lamb); βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι; υἱός/ἐκλεκτός	Jesus' anointing (Spirit abides)	Explicit; unique	Spirit descends and remains (permanence, Isa 11:2); Jesus = Spirit-baptizer; sin-removal = the Lamb .
Ps 2:7 / Isa 42:1	D-adj	יְהוָה/υἱός; ἡ/πνεῦμα; ἡ/ἐκλεκτός; ἡ/πνεῦμα	Background to the baptismal voice	Non-baptismal (background)	Royal Son (Ps 2:7) + Spirit-anointed chosen Servant (Isa 42:1) fused in the Father's declaration.

Key distinction: Jesus' baptism is a **third category** — not John's baptism-of-repentance received for himself (he confesses no sin) and not Christian baptism (post-resurrection, into Christ). It is his **messianic consecration** (wash → Spirit-anointing, Lev 8 fulfilled), grounding the later baptism of believers *into* him.

Phase 7 — Water, Spirit, and New Birth

(Ezekiel 36:25–27 and Isaiah 44:3–5 studied in Phase 4B — see there. New in Phase 7:)

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
John 3:1–10 (3:5)	C	γεννάω <i>gennaō</i> (born); ἄνωθεν (again/from above); ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος; πνεῦμα (wind/Spirit)	New birth / regeneration	Primary = Ezek 36 new-covenant birth; baptism = probable secondary sign	"Born of water and the Spirit" = the Ezek 36:25–27 cleansing-and-renewal (verbal parallel + 3:10 rebuke; corroborated by the cross-ref tally, whose next entries are baptismal); Spirit is the agent (3:6,8). Not baptismal-regeneration.
Joel 2:28–32	C-adj	שָׁפַק <i>šāpāk</i> (→ ἐκχέω, pour out); שָׂרָא (all flesh); קָרָא (call on the name)	Spirit-outpouring + call-on-the-name	Non-baptismal (Spirit-outpouring promise)	"Pour out my Spirit on all flesh... everyone who calls on the name shall be saved" → Acts 2:16–21,33,38; Rom 10:13; Acts 22:16.

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Titus 3:3–7 (3:5–6)	B/C	λουτρόν <i>loutron</i> (washing = baptism, BDAG); παλιγγενεσία (regeneration); ἀνακαίνωσις (renewal); σώζω; ἐκχέω	Christian baptism + regeneration + Spirit	λουτρόν = baptismal washing (BDAG); instrument of Spirit-regeneration	"He saved us — not by works but by mercy — through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit , whom he poured out ." Washing = instrument, Spirit = agent, mercy = ground.

Key result: John 3:5 and Titus 3:5–6 realize the OT clean-water-and-Spirit / created-clean-heart promise (**Ezek 36:25–27; Ps 51:10**). Baptism is the **sign/instrument** of the Spirit's regenerating-renewing work — neither a bare symbol nor a mechanical, works-based efficacy (the Spirit is the agent; God's mercy the ground).

Phase 8 — Commission and Apostolic Practice (complete — Parts A + B)

Part A — commission + Pentecost

Ref	Corpus	Key term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Relevance note
Matt 28:18–20	A	βαπτίζω; εἰς τὸ ὄνομα (into the triune name); μαθητεύω	Christian baptism INSTITUTED	Explicit; triune name textually secure	Risen Christ commands baptism into the one name of Father, Son, Spirit — essential to disciple-making; <i>eis to onoma</i> = dedication/belonging.
Mark 16:15–16	A (secondary text)	πιστεύω+βαπτίζω; ἀπιστέω	Believer's baptism (faith's response)	Corroborative only (Longer Ending secondary, Rule 20)	"Believe + baptized → saved; unbelief → condemned." Baptism absent from the condemnation clause — only unbelief condemns.
Luke 24:44–49	D-adj	μετάνοια εἰς ἄφεσιν; ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι; ἐπαγγελία (Spirit)	Programmatic commission (message + Spirit)	Non-baptismal (programs Acts)	"Repentance for forgiveness in his name to all nations"; wait for the Spirit → enacted in Acts 2:38.
Acts 2:14–41 (2:38)	A	βαπτίζω; ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι; εἰς ἄφεσιν (purposive); δωρεὰ τοῦ πνεύματος	Christian baptism — paradigm conversion	Explicit; <i>eis ἄφεσιν</i> = purposive (BDAG), not causal	"Repent and be baptized in Jesus' name for the forgiveness of sins, and receive the Spirit." Baptism bound to repentant faith as sign/instrument — not mechanical, not bare symbol.

Part B — the Acts conversions

Passage	Corpus	Term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Note
Acts 8:4–25 (Samaria)	A	βαπτίζω (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ)	Christian baptism	Explicit	Believe → baptized; Spirit DELAYED until apostolic hands (8:16) — redemptive-historical validation, not norm. Simon: baptism + wrong heart profits nothing.
Acts 8:26–40 (eunuch)	A	βαπτίζω	Christian baptism	Explicit	Clean faith → baptism ("what prevents me?"). 8:37 confession SECONDARY (excluded). Spirit unnarrated.
Acts 9 / 22 / 26 (Saul)	A + B	βαπτίζω; ἀπολούω (wash away sins); ἐπικαλέω (call on name)	Christian baptism + washing	Explicit	"Be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name " (22:16). Cleansing bound to faith-invocation, not water alone. Spirit BEFORE baptism (9:17).
Acts 10–11 / 15 (Cornelius)	A	βαπτίζω (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)	Christian baptism (+ Spirit-baptism)	Explicit	Spirit BEFORE baptism (10:44–48, prevenient); "cleansed hearts by faith " (15:9). Baptism the commanded seal of a God-validated Gentile inclusion — not a norm, not a mechanism.
Acts 16:11–15 (Lydia)	A	βαπτίζω	Christian baptism	Explicit	"The Lord opened her heart"; she + household baptized (members unspecified).
Acts 16:25–34 (jailer)	A	βαπτίζω	Christian baptism	Explicit	Clearest " believe → baptized at once "; word to whole house, household rejoices in belief. Household scope undefined.
Acts 18:1–11 (Corinth)	A	βαπτίζω	Christian baptism	Explicit	Crispus's household + many Corinthians "believed and were baptized."
Acts 18:24–28 (Apollus)	A	βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου	John's baptism	Explicit	Knew "only John's baptism"; instructed more fully; no re-baptism reported (silence).
Acts 19:1–7 (Ephesus)	A	βαπτίζω / βάπτισμα (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ)	John's baptism → Christian baptism	Explicit	The one clear RE-BAPTISM : John's baptism ≠ Christian baptism (Rule 2.1). Spirit AFTER baptism via Paul's hands.

Result: one response (gospel → hearing → faith → baptism, with repentance/forgiveness/Spirit); **Spirit/baptism order not fixed** (with 2:38 / delayed 8 / before 9,10 / after 19); the out-of-order cases are redemptive-historical validations, not norms; John's baptism ≠ Christian baptism; baptism's cleansing bound to faith-invocation (22:16); household baptism reported but undefined (disputed).

Phase 9 — Apostolic Interpretation

Part A — Union with Christ

Passage	Corpus	Term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Note
Romans 6:1–14	A + C	βαπτίζω (εἰς Χριστόν / εἰς τὸν θάνατον); βάπτισμα	Christian baptism = union w/ death & resurrection	Explicit	"Baptized into Christ = into his death; buried with him through the baptism ... walk in newness of life." Passive verbs (God the agent) ; grounds sanctification.
Galatians 3:23–29 (3:26–27)	A + C	βαπτίζω (εἰς Χριστόν); ἐνδύω ("put on")	Christian baptism = incorporation/ investiture	Explicit	"Baptized into Christ have put on Christ "; sons of God through faith (3:26) — faith & baptism coordinated . One in Christ; Abraham's heirs.
Colossians 2:9–15 (2:11–13)	A + C	βαπτισμός (G909); συνθάπτω / συνεγείρω; περιτομή ἀχειροποίητος	Christian baptism = union / circumcision of Christ	Explicit	"Buried with him in baptism , in which raised with him through faith in the working of God"; God made you alive , forgave. βαπτισμός = Christian baptism. Circumcision ↔ baptism link disputed (infant baptism).

Result: the three great Pauline texts = **baptism as union with the crucified-and-risen Christ** (into his death; buried & raised; clothed with him; circumcised in him). Unanimous controls: **passive verbs** → **God the agent**; the raising is "**through faith**" (Col 2:12). ⇒ baptism = God-appointed **means/sphere/sign of a real, faith-received union** — neither bare symbol nor automatic mechanism; deployed to ground sanctification (Rom 6), sonship/unity/inheritance (Gal 3), completeness in Christ (Col 2). **βαπτισμός**=Christian baptism. Circumcision ↔ baptism associates but does not settle infant baptism.

Part B — the Corinthian corpus

Passage	Corpus	Term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Note
1 Cor 1:10–17	A	βαπτίζω εἰς τὸ ὄνομα	Christian baptism	Explicit	Baptism into a name = belonging to Christ , not a party (1:13). "Not to baptize but to preach" = relative priority (gospel first), not disparagement.
1 Cor 6:9–11	B	ἀπολούω (aor. mid.); ἀγιάζω, δικαίω	Washing of conversion	Probable	"You were washed , sanctified, justified in the name... and by the Spirit" — conversion-triplet; "washed" alludes to baptism.
1 Cor 12:12–13	A	βαπτίζω εἰς ἓν σῶμα (ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι)	Christian/Spirit baptism into the body	Explicit	"In one Spirit all baptized into one body" — the ecclesial/unifying dimension; not a two-tier Spirit-baptism.
1 Cor 15:29	A	βαπτίζω ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν	Obscure	Excluded	"Baptized for the dead" — irreducibly obscure; <i>ad hominem</i> ; no doctrine may rest on it (Rule 20).

Part C — Ephesians / Hebrews 6

Passage	Corpus	Term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Note
Eph 4:1–6 (4:5)	A	βάπτισμα	Christian baptism	Explicit	" One Lord, one faith, one baptism " — baptism a bond of the one church's unity (with 1 Cor 12:13).
Eph 5:25–27 (5:26)	A+B	λουτρόν (G3067) τοῦ ὕδατος; ἐν ῥήματι	The sanctifying washing	High/strongly probable	Christ "cleansed her by the washing of water with the word " — λουτρόν = baptismal bath (BDAG); Christ the agent, efficacy with the word , not bare water.
Heb 6:1–2	A/B	βαπτισμῶν (G909, plural) διδαχῆς	Elementary teaching about baptisms	Explicit (as teaching)	"Instruction about washings/baptisms " = foundational catechesis, entailing distinguishing the baptisms (Rule 2.1).
(Heb 9:10; 10:19–22)	B	βαπτισμοί; λούω	ceremonial washings; bodies washed	probable (10:22)	Cross-ref: bodies washed (baptism, probable) as outer counterpart to the blood-sprinkled heart.

Part D — 1 Peter / Revelation — *the climax and consummation*

Passage	Corpus	Term(s)	Referent	Certainty	Note
1 Pet 3:18–22 (3:21)	A	βάπτισμα; ἀντίτυπον; σώζει; ἐπερώτημα	Christian baptism — saving antitype of the flood	Explicit	"Baptism now saves you — not removal of dirt but the appeal/pledge of a good conscience to God — through the resurrection ." The canon's own affirm-and-qualify definition: real, non-mechanical, faith-shaped.
Rev 1:5–6	B (excluded as washing)	λύω (λύσαντι, "freed")	freed from sins by his blood; made priests	Excluded (as washing)	NA28 " freed " (λύσαντι), NOT "washed" — cleansing by the blood ; the redeemed = royal priesthood.
Rev 7:14	B	πλύνω (robes washed)	washed white in the Lamb's blood	Metaphor (blood, not water)	Robes "washed... in the blood of the Lamb " — cleansing agent = the blood , not water; the white-robed priestly multitude.
Rev 22:1–2,14	D + B	ῥόδω ζωῆς; πλύνω (22:14)	river of the water of life; washed robes	Consummation (non-baptismal life-water)	The river of the water of life from the throne (Eden inclusio, Gen 2:10); the blood-washed "wash their robes" → enter the city, tree of life.

Result: The apostolic interpretation = **baptism as union with the crucified-and-risen Christ** (Rom 6; Gal 3; Col 2), the **one unifying initiation into the one body** (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:5), the **Christ-effected sanctifying washing** of the bride (Eph 5:26), and the **saving antitype of the flood** (1 Pet 3:21) — with the canon's own definition: baptism **saves**, yet **not** as physical washing **but** as the **resurrection-grounded, faith-shaped appeal of a good conscience** (1 Pet 3:21). Cleansing from sin itself is by the

Lamb's blood (Rev 1:5 "freed"; 7:14), never the water; and the water motif **consummates** as the river of life at the throne (Rev 22:1, inclusio with Eden). Obscure/excluded: 1 Cor 15:29 (baptism for the dead); Rev 1:5 as a "washing" text. Disputed: the circumcision ↔ baptism / household infant-baptism inference.

Terms: βαπτίζω/βάπτισμα, ἀπελούσασθε/ἀπολούω, καθάρισας τῷ λουτρῷ, ῥαντισμός, ἀντίτυπον, ἐνεδύσασθε (put on Christs). Refs: Rom 6; 1 Cor 1,6,10,12,15; Gal 3; Eph 4–5; Col 2; Titus 3; Heb 6,9–10; 1 Pet 1–3; Rev 1,7,22.

Appendix H — Spirit-Terminology Grid

The New Testament uses several non-interchangeable expressions for the Spirit's work. Conflating them produces the "Spirit-baptism replaces water baptism" error; distinguishing them keeps the apostolic evidence legible. Two terms may be treated as equivalent only where a text explicitly equates them.

Expression	What it denotes	Agent	Nature / timing	Representative texts
Baptized with/in the Spirit	Christ's redemptive-historical outpouring of the Spirit	Christ	Promise; given at decisive covenantal moments, not a repeatable individual experience	Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:1–4; 10:44–47; 11:16
Receive the Spirit	The gift of the Spirit to the individual	God	Given in conversion	Acts 2:38; 8:15–17; Gal 3:2
Indwelling of the Spirit	The Spirit's settled, ongoing presence	God / the Spirit	A continuing state; presupposes reception, does not date it	Rom 8:9–11; 1 Cor 6:19
Sealed with the Spirit	Ownership and pledge (guarantee of the inheritance)	God	A mark of belonging; not a dating of the rite	Eph 1:13–14; 4:30; 2 Cor 1:22
Filled with the Spirit	Empowering for service and witness	The Spirit	Repeatable	Acts 4:8, 31; 13:9; Eph 5:18

What Spirit-baptism is: Christ's act of pouring out the Spirit at the hinge-moments of redemptive history (Pentecost; the Samaritan and Gentile inclusions). **What it is not:** the new-covenant point of entry as such; a replacement for water baptism; a synonym for regeneration or forgiveness; or a universal, repeatable "second experience." Two texts often pressed the other way: **Ephesians 1:13–14** (sealing = ownership/pledge, not a dating of the rite) and **Romans 8:9** (indwelling = the mark of belonging, presupposing but not dating reception).

Appendix I — Counterargument Control-Texts

Part 1 — Eight controls against "Spirit-baptism replaces water baptism."

#	Control	Force
1	Definitional	"Spirit-baptism" is Christ's redemptive-historical outpouring, not a synonym for regeneration.
2	Command	Water baptism is commanded as integral to disciple-making (Matt 28:19) and commanded even after the Spirit has fallen (Acts 10:48).
3	Salvific-language	The instrumental verbs ("saves," "for the forgiveness of sins," "washed," "washing of regeneration") attach to <i>water</i> baptism in their contexts.
4	Acts 10	At Cornelius the Spirit falls first, yet Peter still commands the water — the two are distinct and the water is not dispensable.
5	Timing-variability	The Spirit comes with, before, and after the water across Acts — unintelligible if Spirit-baptism simply is or <i>replaces</i> water baptism.
6	"One baptism"	Ephesians 4:5 confesses one baptism, not a superior Spirit-baptism over an inferior water one.
7	Category-conflation	"Sealed," "indwelt," "filled," "received," and "baptized" are distinct and may not be silently merged (Appendix H).
8	Apostolic-practice	The church of Acts baptizes every convert in water as the invariable response to the gospel.

Part 2 — Eight counterarguments engaged and answered.

#	Counterargument (stated fairly)	Answer
1	"Spirit baptism is the real baptism; water is only a symbol."	The NT attaches its saving language to water baptism and commands it (controls 2–3).
2	"The Spirit regenerates; water cannot save."	Granted the Spirit is agent and the water has no power in itself (1 Pet 3:21) — this refutes only the mechanical caricature, not baptism as the God-appointed, faith-received instrument.
3	"1 Corinthians 12:13 proves a universal Spirit-baptism."	The verse says <i>all</i> were baptized into one body — one incorporation shared by all believers, not a second baptism possessed by some.
4	"Acts 10 proves baptism unnecessary."	Peter <i>commands</i> the water there — the episode proves the opposite.
5	"Ephesians 1:13 shows the Spirit given before baptism, so baptism is secondary."	The sealing describes ownership and pledge, not the timing of the rite.
6	"The thief on the cross was saved without baptism."	A pre-Pentecost case under a different covenantal moment: it shows faith is decisive and God is not bound by his own ordinance, not that the ordinance is void for those who can receive it.
7	"Baptism is a work, and we are saved by grace."	Baptism is a receiving, not a meriting; its verbs are passive with God as agent — submitting to it no more earns grace than opening the hand earns a gift.
8	"The order in Acts varies, so there is no pattern."	The <i>variable</i> is the Spirit's timing; the <i>constant</i> is the command to be baptized in water — the variation establishes a pattern rather than dissolving one.

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1. The argument-tracing procedure followed here is that set out for the Pauline letters in Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, and applied throughout the underlying passage worksheets. [return](#)
2. On the textual, epochal, and canonical horizons as the frame of redemptive-historical interpretation, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*. [return](#)
3. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 258–275 (on 1 Peter 3:21). [return](#)
4. Jack Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study*, 28–32. [return](#)
5. Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), 28.1 (baptism "a sign and seal of the covenant of grace") and 28.5 ("grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it"). [return](#)
6. Martin Luther, *Large Catechism* IV.41–42. [return](#)
7. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, eds., *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 2; engaged more fully in Chapter 17. [return](#)
8. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.5.2 (§§116–118). Adduced as first-century background and reception, not as exegesis of the Gospel texts; Josephus's negative formulation ("not in order to the putting away of sins") stands in verbal tension with the Gospels' εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν and is to be reconciled with, not substituted for, that phrase. [return](#)
9. BDAG 603 (λουτρόν), "bath, washing," used of the baptismal washing (so at Titus 3:5 and Ephesians 5:26). Whether the washing is construed as the *instrument of* or the *sign of* the regeneration is the disputed mechanism-question (Chapter 17), not something the lexical gloss settles. [return](#)
10. On εἰς at Acts 2:38, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 369–371, discussing and declining the causal construal. [return](#)
11. BDAG 164–165 (βαπτίζω), sense ② "to use water in a rite ... plunge, dip, wash, baptize," noting that the term "was not nearly so technical as the transliteration suggests"; the incorporative force comes from the construction (βαπτίζω εἰς + personal object), not from the bare preposition. Cf. *TDNT* (Oepke) 1:529–546. [return](#)
12. For the memorial/ordinance position in its strongest form, see the Zwinglian appeal to justification prior to and apart from the rite and to baptism as pledge: Huldrych Zwingli, "On Baptism," in *Zwingli and Bullinger*, Library of Christian Classics 24 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 130. [return](#)
13. For the strong sacramental (Lutheran) means-of-grace reading, Luther, *Large Catechism* IV.41–42; for the Reformed sign-and-seal alternative, John Calvin, *Institutes* 4.15.1–4, and Westminster Confession of Faith 28.1 ("a sign and seal of the covenant of grace"), with the qualification at 28.5. [return](#)
14. On διὰ τῆς πίστεως as the appropriating means in Colossians 2:12, and the dative of means more generally, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 162–163. [return](#)
15. For the covenant-sign argument reading baptism as the counterpart of circumcision and thus applicable to believers' children, cf. Westminster Confession of Faith 28.4 ("the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized"); the credobaptist reply stresses the "through faith" of Colossians 2:12. The study reports the question as genuinely disputed (Chapter 17). [return](#)

16. For the reading of 1 Corinthians 12:13 as one incorporation shared by all believers rather than a distinct second baptism, the point stands whether ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι is construed instrumentally or locally; the emphasis of Paul's argument is the unity of the one body. [return](#)
17. BDAG 603 (λουτρών), "bath, washing," used of the baptismal washing at Ephesians 5:26 and Titus 3:5. [return](#)
18. BDAG 362 (ἐπερώτημα) lists both the "appeal" and the "pledge/answer" construals for 1 Peter 3:21; on the genitive types that leave the choice open, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 73–75, 109–119. [return](#)
19. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 258–275, reaches the same frame: baptism's saving significance lies "not through the application of water to the flesh but through the pledge of faith and obedience therein given to God, upon which the resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes a saving power," adding that "it is not said that the giving to God of an answer saves; the Risen Lord does that." [return](#)
20. BDAG 362 (ἐπερώτημα) lists both the "appeal to God" and the "pledge/answer to God" construals for 1 Peter 3:21; on the genitive underdetermining the choice, Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 73–75, 109–119. [return](#)
21. Jack Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study*, 28–32, presses the instrument-of reading to its strongest form while still requiring "believing, repentant sinners" — so the view sits inside the faith-bound frame, not the mechanical one. [return](#)
22. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (the sacraments as "real means of grace ... signs and seals," yet "the virtue is not in them ... the efficiency does not reside in the water"); Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, concurs that baptism is "not merely a sign and seal, but also a means of grace." Cited as reception evidence (Rules 12/19). [return](#)
23. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, states the covenant-continuity argument (the Abrahamic covenant "still in force ... the covenant of grace under which we now live"), cited as the representative paedobaptist voice. [return](#)
24. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, eds., *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006): the thesis ("reserved for believers...") and the covenant-continuity statement are from the editors' introduction, 2 and 7; the Great Commission argument is from Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Baptism in the Gospels," in the same volume, 24. [return](#)
25. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 258–275. [return](#)
26. Jack Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study*, 28–32. [return](#)