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that he never wanted anyone to claim allegiance to him over the Lord. To perceive that Paul was dismissing the efficacy of baptism is to overlook his intended message.

Truly, an unbiased view of this verse in the context of its chapter requires the reader to infer that baptism is essential. *“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”* (13) presents three rhetorical questions, the answers to which are plainly implied. No, Christ is not divided. No, Paul was not crucified for anyone – that was Jesus Christ. No, they were not baptized in Paul’s name – again, that was Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38)! Paul placed the crucifixion of the Lord in direct connection with baptism in the name of the Lord. It is precisely because Jesus died, was buried, and arose that a sinner must imitate His death, burial, and resurrection in baptism. There is no other way to be *“united together in the likeness of His death”* (Romans 6:3-6).

In the general context of the book, its writer Paul treated baptism as necessary. Five chapters later, he enumerated many *“unrighteous”* behaviors which keep souls from God’s kingdom (1st Corinthians 6:9-10) and then said, *“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God”* (11). Baptism is here referred to as washing. It is washing to remove sin (Acts 22:16) and it is done in the Lord’s name (Matthew 28:19), so it must be baptism. In this indirect mention of baptism, Paul credits baptism with the removal of unrighteousness so as to be ready to enter the kingdom of God. Such information as this was not conveyed by someone who, in the same book, regarding baptism as unimportant.

Another six chapters later, he wrote, *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit”* (1st Corinthians 12:13). Still emphasizing unity, the apostle taught that baptism is the means of entry into the body. Elsewhere, he explained that Christ is the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23) and the body is the church (Colossians 1:18), so entrance into it is hardly a trivial issue. Even if Paul’s thankfulness for not baptizing is initially confusing to the reader, such an expression must be reconciled with his clear statement, later, that baptism is how one gains access to the body, which is where salvation is.

He returned to the subject of baptism three chapters after that. In a

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lengthy discourse on the reality of resurrection, the apostle rhetorically asked, *“Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?”* (1st Corinthians 15:29). In view of being alive after death, the correct preparation for death is to be baptized! No one would get baptized at all if not for the future resurrection. Therefore, remaining unbaptized is to remain unprepared for the resurrection. That is a very strong argument in favor of a practice he could not have been dismissing fourteen chapters earlier.

In the broader context of the writings of this apostle, it is readily evident that baptism is tremendously important. Paul taught that baptism is how a soul is united in death with Christ (Romans 6:3-6). Echoing his remarks to the Romans, Paul told the Colossians baptism is burial and resurrection with Jesus (Colossians 2:12). He also explained that baptism is how one puts Christ on (Galatians 3:27), implying spiritual nakedness otherwise. The apostle said there is *“one baptism”* just as there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one God (Ephesians 4:4-6). If baptism is immaterial to salvation, then hope, faith, God, Lord, Spirit, and body are equally irrelevant, but that is impossible. Paul said that God saves man *“through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”* (Titus 3:4-5). Although the word baptism is not present, the concept is visible inasmuch as sins are only washed away at baptism (Acts 22:16); thus, the washing of regeneration is a clear reference to baptism. Whatever Paul meant about his thankfulness for not baptizing many Corinthians, it must not be interpreted in opposition to what he wrote the Romans, Colossians, Galatians, Ephesians, and Titus.

In the greater context of Paul’s personal experience, any diligent student of Scripture can see that baptism mattered to him. He was directly commanded by Ananias, *“Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins”* (Acts 22:16). Paul was taught that baptism is how a sinner is cleansed and he received that instruction readily as seen by the fact that *“He arose and was baptized”* (Acts 9:18).

Lydia and her household were baptized because of Paul’s preaching (Acts 16:14-15). The jailor of Philippi and his household were likewise baptized because of Paul’s and Silas’s preaching (Acts 16:32-33). Twelve men in Ephesus were baptized when they heard Paul preach (Acts 19:4-7). And the primary text under review herein shows he personally administered baptism to Crispus, Gaius, and the house of Stephanas in Corinth (1st Corinthians 1:14, 16). If Paul was

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"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER"

HEBREWS 10:24-25

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Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

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disregarding the importance of baptism, it is strange so many people scattered across the world were baptized when they heard him preach.

In the final context of the New Testament, it becomes clear Paul was far from alone in regarding baptism as essential to eternal salvation. Jesus requires baptism of disciples (Matthew 28:19), saying it is needed for salvation (Mark 16:16) and to enter God's kingdom (John 3:3-5). Peter commanded it of Jews (Acts 2:38) and Gentiles (Acts 10:47-48), teaching, explicitly, that salvation depends on it (1st Peter 3:21). Philip baptized the Samaritans (Acts 8:12-13) and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:35-38). The writer to the Hebrews said, "*the doctrine of baptisms*" is "*elementary*" (Hebrews 6:1-2).

In summary, the apostle Paul did not contradict himself three times in one epistle. He did not contradict what he wrote in five other epistles. He did not contradict what he practiced in converting others. He did not contradict what he submitted to in order to be saved. He did not contradict what Jesus and Peter commanded, what Philip practiced, or what the Hebrews writer said was basic information.

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"I THANK GOD THAT I BAPTIZED NONE OF YOU"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

If salvation depends on baptism, some wonder why Paul would, apparently, undermine its validity when he wrote, "*I thank God that I baptized none of you*" (1st Corinthians 1:14). To clarify, examine the apostle's remark at every level of context.

In the immediate context of the chapter, notice Paul pleaded with the brethren for unity of speech, mind, and judgment (1st Corinthians 1:10) because he was aware of contentions within the congregation at Corinth (11). Such partisanship was dividing the church that some claimed to be adherents of Paul or Apollos or Cephas instead of just being Christians (12-13). Having rebuked division, Paul offered the remark in question, "*I thank God that I baptized none of you*" (14) with this reason given: "*Lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name*" (15). After this statement, he promptly acknowledged that he had baptized some Corinthians, but not many (16). Finally, he concluded by telling his readers that his primary work was to preach the gospel, not necessarily to personally baptize those whom he preached to (17).

It is imperative to see that Paul never thanked God that people were not baptized, nor did he thank God that he did not teach baptism; rather, he was thankful not to have been the one who put disciples under the water. He explicitly stated his reason for this gratitude being

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