

From the Baptism of John to the Baptism into the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 18:24–19:7): Unification of Baptism in Earliest Christianity*

Manabu TSUJI

Hiroshima University
tsujim@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

1. Earliest Christianity and the Baptism of John

1.1. Acts 18:24–28

Acts 18:24–28 presents an episode about Apollos, who is known for his missionary activity in Corinth (1Cor 1:12; 3:4–9, 22; 16:12). According to 1 Corinthians, he came to Corinth somewhat later than Paul (cf. 3:6) and, independently of the latter (cf. 16:12),¹ worked there as a missionary so successfully that some church-members said, “I belong to Apollos” (1:12).

In Acts 18:24–28, Luke provides more information about him, although in a peculiar manner: Apollos, a native of Alexandria, “had been instructed in the

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1 W. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1. Teilband: 1 Kor 1,1–6,11, EKK VII/1 (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991), 143: “Er (sc. Apollos) gehörte nicht zum engeren Kreis der Mitarbeiter des Paulus, sondern war eher ein unabhängiger Wandermissionar.”

Way of the Lord, ...though he knew only the baptism of John” (v. 25, NRSV same as below). It might appear strange that a Christian missionary knew of no other baptism than that of John the Baptist, but Luke’s description of him must reflect a historical fact that was supposedly handed down as an Ephesian church tradition. The following observations support this view:

(1) In Acts, the word “way” (ὁδός) is used for “Christianity” in the modern sense (9:2; 18:26; 19:9; 22:4, 22). The “Lord” here refers to Jesus, as the context clarifies (v. 28). This description of Apollos shows that earliest Christianity was, regardless of its contents, already known in Alexandria in the fifth decade of the first century.²

(2) Apollos’ Christian identity can also be inferred from another description of him as “ardent in spirit” (ζέων τῷ πνεύματι, v. 25). This expression refers not only to his “vibrant” attitude when speaking,³ but also, as suggested by the same phrase in Rom 12:11, to his condition of being filled with the spirit when speaking.⁴ Because Apollos was teaching “the things concerning Jesus,” which

2 R. I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MI: Fortress, 2009), 459 n. 9, argues against the existence of Christians in Alexandria at that time, “for Apollos could have learned about Jesus elsewhere.” He gives Aquila as example, who is from Pontus, but had been living in Rome before coming to Corinth (Acts 18:2), and regards the Alexandrian background of Apollos as deriving from Ephesian local tradition. But there is no need to deny the interpretation of Apollos as coming from the Alexandrian church, regardless of whether this description belongs to Ephesian local tradition.

3 So e.g., F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, ³1990), 351; Pervo, *Acts*, 459.

4 So S. Arai, *Shito-Gyōden* [Acts of the Apostles], vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shinkyō-Shuppansha, 2016), 8; M. Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer*, FR-LANT 15 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911), 95; J. Zmjewski, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, RNT (Regensburg: Pustet, 1994), 676; K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, Part I, vol. IV: English Translation and Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 233; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-*

are doubtlessly related to Christianity (cf. a similar phrase about Paul in 28:31), it is highly probable that this is God’s “Spirit,” which was given to him as a Christian.⁵ We have no reason to ascribe this phrase to the Lucan composition.⁶

The greatest issue for interpreters is the fact that Apollos, although he is evidently Christian, was said to know only the baptism of John (v. 25). Quite a number of commentators ascribe this to the redactional composition of the author Luke, who tries to “degrade” Apollos from independent missionary to a rank-and-file member of Pauline Christianity.⁷ However, it is highly questionable that Luke (or somebody preceding him in the Ephesian church) had to devise this strange fiction of an illegitimately baptized Christian missionary for that purpose. He could have been content with the description that Priscilla and Aquila

Rhetorical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1998), 565; C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 888.

- 5 G. Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum nach der Traditionen der Apostelgeschichte: Ein Kommentar* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 216, sees Apollos as “christlicher Pneumatiker.”
- 6 Pace J. Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, NTD 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ¹⁸⁼²1988), 279, who mentions that this expression “mag ursprünglich nur Umschreibung seiner glühenden Beredsamkeit und ekstatischen Art gewesen sein, die erst Lukas im Sinne einer Begabung mit dem heiligen Geist gedeutet hat.” Roloff’s interpretation is inevitable as far as he regards Apollos as Jewish missionary (“So bleibt als wahrscheinlichste Lösung die, daß Apollos ein jüdischer Missionar war, der möglicherweise in Beziehung zur Täuferbewegung stand” [ibid.]).
- 7 E. Käsemann, “Die Johannesjünger in Ephesus,” in idem, *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964, 158–168), 164; E. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ¹³⁼⁴1961), 491; H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, HNT 7 (Tübingen: Mohr, ²1972), 118; A. Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Bd. 2, ÖTBK 5/2 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1985), 507; Zmijewski, *Apostelgeschichte*, 673; J. Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ¹⁷⁼¹1998), 470 etc.

“took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately”⁸ (v. 26). This mention of Apollos evidently derives from tradition and reflects a historical fact.⁹

If Apollos was baptized only through the baptism of John and yet was not re-baptized into the name of Jesus, we cannot help but suppose that the “baptism of John” was regarded as a valid Christian baptism. In that case, this expression (Mark 11:30 par.; Luke 7:29; Acts 1:22; 10:37) denotes not a personal relationship to the Baptizer, in contrast to that to Jesus, but rather a “Johannine baptism,” namely, the understanding of baptism that derives from John the Baptist. This must have been regarded as the baptism of repentance that leads to the forgiveness of sins, which was founded by John (cf. Mark 1:4//Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4).

However, it is noteworthy that it is called the “baptism of John”: in other words, that this ritual was recognized as inheritance from John the Baptist.

The mention that Priscilla and Aquila explained the Way of God to Apollos “more accurately” (ἀκριβέστερον, v. 26) corresponds to the preceding description of Apollos “accurately” (ἀκριβῶς) teaching the things concerning Jesus (v. 25). It should therefore be regarded as a Lucan redaction meant to degrade Apollos to an immature missionary.¹⁰ As a matter of fact, Apollos could not have improved

8 The adverb “more accurately” (ἀκριβέστερον) is undoubtedly Lucan addition to the tradition in order to make an impression that Priscilla und Aquila (= Pauline Christians) know better about the “Way of God” than Apollos (= non-Pauline) does.

9 W. Thiessen, *Christen in Ephesus*, TANZ 12 (Tübingen/Basel: Francke, 1995), 47, ascribes this mention of Apollos to a Lucan note, because this paragraph must have been a tradition held by the adherents of Apollos, who cannot have suggested a theological defect of Apollos. However, it is also possible to assume that this tradition has been formed from the viewpoint of Pauline Christians, who were probably not sympathetic to Apollos and his theology.

10 The verb “explain” (ἐκτιθημι) is also a Lucan word (cf. Acts 11:4; 28:23. In 7:21 it is used in different meaning. These are the only usages in NT). Witherington, *Acts*, 567

his “insufficient” understanding of baptism with the help of Priscilla and Aquila. This is evident from the fact that he, unlike the “disciples” in Ephesus (19:5), is not re-baptized with a “correct” baptism and that he continued to be active as an independent missionary, separately from Paul, as 1 Corinthians shows (1Cor 1:12–13; 3:4–9; 16:12). Apollos must have learned something from Priscilla and Aquila, who worked together with Paul (Acts 18:2–3), but this never led him to modify his own understanding of Christianity and join the Pauline group.¹¹ They evidently did not force Apollos to change his understanding of baptism, probably because they could also accept the baptism of John, although they themselves understood the baptism in a different, more likely Jesus-centered way, as v. 28 (“he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus”) implies.

Therefore, Apollos is to be considered a Christian missionary, who taught the baptism of repentance that originated from John the Baptist. Priscilla and Aquila did not reject this, but explained to him their understanding of baptism, which was supposedly more strongly connected to Jesus Christ.

1.2. Acts 19:1–7

Another example of Christians that only knew the baptism of John appears in 19:1–7, just after the paragraph about Apollos. The introduction “while Apollos was in Corinth, Paul ... came to Ephesus” indicates that this episode should

n. 20 and C. S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 2809, take this “more” as elative comparative, “not implying that they corrected his misinformation (he already taught “accurately” in Acts 18:25) but that they increased his base of knowledge” (Keener, *ibid.*).

11 The disagreement between Paul’s and Apollo’s factions seems to have been caused by their different understandings of baptism, as 1Cor 1:13–17 suggests. So, also K. Berger, *Theologiegeschichte des Urchristentums*, UTB (Tübingen/Basel: Francke, 1994), 114.

be read in connection with the preceding scene, which is also situated in Ephesus (18:24–28). But it is not clear whether Apollos and the “disciples” mentioned here have a historical relation to each other, because this introducing verse belongs to the Lucan redaction.¹²

Paul came to Ephesus and met some “disciples” there (v. 1). But they knew neither the Holy Spirit nor the baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus (vv. 2–3). Scholars’ opinions are divided on the problem of whether these disciples are to be regarded as disciples of John¹³ or as Christians.¹⁴

There are good arguments for the latter view. First, the unmodified expression “disciple” in Acts means Christian (cf. 18:23, 27).¹⁵ Second, Paul’s question

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- 12 The introducing phrase ἐγένετο [δὲ] ἐν τῷ is a typical Lucan phrase: Luke 1:8; 3:21; 5:1, 12; 7:11; 8:1, 40; 9:18, 51; 10:38; 11:1; 14:1; 17:11; 18:35. Cf. Thiessen, *Christen*, 71; J. Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums*, KEK Sonderband (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 25–26.
- 13 On the history of research, see Thiessen, *Christen*, 61–70. Scholars supporting this view are e.g., E. Schweizer, Art. πνεῦμα κτλ., *ThWNT VI* (1959, 330–453), 411; Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum*, 218–219; Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, 281–282; R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, vol. 2, EKK V/2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986), 165; C. K. Barrett, “Apollos and the Twelve Disciples in Ephesus,” in *The New Testament Age* (FS B. Reicke), ed. W. C. Weinrich, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984, 29–39), 36–38; Keener, *Acts*, 2816–2817. K. Backhaus, *Die „Jüngerkreise“ des Täufers Johannes*, PaThSt 19 (Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1991), 209, takes them not as disciples of John in a narrower sense, but as the “people” of Israel who were audience of John and baptized by him (cf. Acts 13:24).
- 14 E.g., Arai, *Shito-Gyōden*, vol. 3, 16–17; Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, esp. 88–95; K. Aland, “Zur Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe,” in idem, *Neutestamentliche Entwürfe*, TB 63 (München: Kaiser, 1979, 183–197), 193; Lake and Cadbury, *Acts*, 237–238.
- 15 Pace M. Tellbe, *Christ-Believers in Ephesus*, WUNT 242 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 78 n. 87; Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum*, 217–218, and Witherington, *Acts*, 570–571, who both consider them disciples of John. The lack of definite article cannot be a counterargument here.

in v. 2 whether these disciples received the Holy Spirit when they became believers presupposes their “Christian” faith, regardless of its content.¹⁶

However, their answer to Paul appears contradictory to their Christian identity, namely, that they “have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” (v. 2) and were baptized “into John’s baptism” (v. 3). How can their answer be explained?

The fact that they have never heard of a Holy Spirit cannot be historically correct and therefore should be ascribed to an exaggeration by Luke in an attempt to impress the incompleteness of John’s baptism, because, if it was Apollos who led them to John’s baptism, they must have been aware that he was filled with the Spirit, as 18:25 denotes. In any case, it would be very hard to imagine that they knew nothing about John’s word on the “baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt 3:12//Luke 3:16).¹⁷ Therefore, together with Paul’s very abrupt question (v. 2) to prepare for the descent of the Holy Spirit in v. 6, this statement is to be regarded as a Lucan composition. If this conversation is based on tradition, the answer of the Ephesian disciples originally meant that they had not heard of a *reception of the Holy Spirit at the baptism*, as the Western text reads (λαμβάνουσίν τινες instead of ἔστυν; $\text{P}^{38.41}$ D* sy^{hmg}).

“John’s baptism” can be understood in the same way as it is presented in 18:25, namely, as the baptism that derives from John the Baptist. Like Apollos, the Ephesian disciples were Christian believers (cf. v. 2) who were baptized through the baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins that was initiated by John. Therefore, this baptism did not contradict their Christian identity.

The second question of Paul, *into what* they were baptized, evidently presupposes an answer like “into the name of Jesus.” However, the disciples responded to him: “into John’s baptism.” This strange answer probably reflects a

16 Pervo, *Acts*, 468 with n. 45 correctly notes: “Had the author intended to identify these persons as followers of the Baptizer, he could have done so” (cf. Luke 5:33; 7:18).

17 So Arai, *Shito-Gyōden*, vol. 3, 18; Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, 516; Zmijeski, *Apostelgeschichte*, 681.

historical fact: they were not baptized “into (the name of) John,” i.e., they were neither believers nor adherents of John. They simply experienced the baptism that originated from John, namely, a baptism of repentance of sins in preparation of the eschatological judgment of God. But this baptism was not connected with the reception of the Holy Spirit.

However, for Paul (as well as Luke), this is an insufficient baptism, because in his view the baptism should be given “into the name of (Lord) Jesus Christ,” the ultimate being whose arrival John had announced. Here we can see a “re-interpretation” of baptism, in other words, its “de-Johannization” and “Christianization” (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; cf. also 1Cor 1:15; 6:11).

Both these Ephesian disciples and Apollos were baptized with John’s baptism, but while the former were re-baptized “into the name of Lord Jesus” (19:5), the latter was not.¹⁸ This difference is often ascribed to Apollos’ possession of the Spirit (18:25), which the Ephesian disciples evidently lacked.¹⁹ This would only be correct if the conversation between Paul and the Ephesian disciples concerning the Holy Spirit was based on fact, as opposed to our observation (see above). In either case, we can also take the differences in person into account: while Paul could not accept other baptisms apart from those “into the name of Lord Jesus” (19:5), Priscilla and Aquila were not so exclusive.²⁰ In any case, this episode il-

18 Luke does not explicitly say who baptized them. The context suggests that it was Paul, but according to his own comment in 1Cor 1:14–17 he baptized nobody, with a few exceptions. Thus Thiessen, *Christen in Ephesus*, 86, doubts the historicity of this verse. However, not Paul himself, but somebody else could have baptized them before Paul laid his hands on them for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

19 E.g. F. Avemarie, *Die Taufenzählungen der Apostelgeschichte*, WUNT 139 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 79–81: “Die Jünger empfangen deshalb eine zweite Taufe, weil sie *sowohl* des den Apollos auszeichnenden missionarischen Charismas *mangeln als auch* im Unterschied zu den samaritanischen Christen nur die Johannestaufe empfangen haben” (81, italics in original).

20 Avemarie, *Taufenzählungen*, 81, refers to this as one of the possibilities. The differ-

illustrates that a process of alternation from “John’s baptism” to the baptism “into (the name of) Jesus” was already in progress in earliest Christianity.

2. The Process of “de-Johannization” of baptism

2.1. John’s influence on earliest Christianity

As discussed above, the two episodes in Acts 18:24–19:7 indicate that the “baptism of repentance” that derived from John the Baptist was not only given during his lifetime, but also in earliest Christianity, after the deaths of John and Jesus (on the connection of repentance and baptism, cf. also Acts 11:18). Apollos inherited this baptism of John, as did the “disciples” in Ephesus, although it is not certain whether they belonged to the same group.

The baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins was most likely the original type of baptism in earliest Christianity (cf. Acts 2:38).²¹ As John 1:35–42 denotes, the first disciples of Jesus formerly belonged to John; they must have been baptized by him.²² Undoubtedly, they maintained this ritual of repentance

ence between Paul and Priscilla/Aquila is regarded as the definitive factor also by M. Wolter, “Apollos und die ephesinischen Johannesjünger (Act 18,24–19,7)”, *ZNW* 78 (1987, 49–73), 55–62. But Wolter ascribes this difference to the Lucan conception of salvation-historical continuity linked with the apostolic tradition, according to which only Paul could baptize (67).

21 Acts 2:38 is, together with Peter’s Speech (2:14–36), usually attributed to Lucan composition (e.g., Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, 151; Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum*, 52; Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, 61). However, that the imperative “repent, and be baptized [...] so that your sins may be forgiven” corresponds to the message of John about the “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) supports the view that a “primitive rock” [...] appears through” (“Urgestein ... durchscheint;” Aland, “Vorgeschichte”, 196. So also Thiessen, *Christen*, 78).

22 John 1:40 refers to Andrew and another disciple of John, but also Peter (1:41) was probably a former disciple of John. Supposedly, in the followers of Jesus there were

and forgiveness of sins not only during the lifetime of Jesus (John 4:2), but also after his death, when they had become disciples of Jesus. Thus the baptism became a “Christian” ritual, although Jesus himself was not positive towards it (cf. John 4:2). The disciples of Jesus would not have done this if John and his teaching had not been important for their religious identity, even after they began to follow Jesus.

Based on this, we may assume that John the Baptist had a much bigger influence on earliest Christians than is usually supposed. He was the very person that advocated repentance and forgiveness of sins, which was essential for early Christian soteriology (cf. Matt 11:20–24 par.;²³ 12:41 par.; Acts 2:38). Not only baptism, but also fasting (Mark 2:18 par.; Acts 13:2; 14:23) and prayer (Luke 5:33; 11:1; Acts 1:14; 13:3) derive from John and his disciples.²⁴ John’s undeniable influence on earliest Christianity can be clearly recognized from the fact that all four canonical Gospels refer to his appearance as preceding Jesus. Among these, Luke’s description is worthy of mention: he introduces an infancy narrative of John and combines it with that of Jesus (Luke 1:5–80).²⁵ Obviously, John the Baptist was such an important person for the earliest Christians that they could not ignore him. However, they thought it necessary to restrict his influence in order to develop their religious movement on the basis of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This process can be called “de-Johannization” of earliest Christianity.

other former adherents of John.

- 23 R. Bultmann, *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, FRLANT NF 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ⁵1961), 118, is correct in seeing that Matt 11:21–24 par. was formed by earliest Christian community whose sermon in Capernaum ended in failure. Bultmann supposes that also Matt 12:41 par. derives from the earliest Christianity (ibid.).
- 24 So Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung*, 87, 96.
- 25 Here we leave undecided, whether this combination of two infancy narratives is Lucan or pre-Lucan.

But why was it necessary? Based on the descriptions of John in the Gospels (Mark 1:3 par.; 2:18–22 par.; Matt 11:2–19 par.; Luke 1:5–80; John 1:1–28; 3:22–30; 4:1–3) it has been often assumed that a group of John’s disciples continued to be active after their master’s death and competed with earliest Christianity.²⁶ However, this assumption is far from assured because neither this group’s existence nor its rivalry with earliest Christianity are supported by textual evidence from the early Christian writings, not to mention the New Testament; they have only been assumed based on the above-mentioned references in the Gospels.²⁷ The references to John and his disciples could also be, and in my view should be, assigned to the “Christian” tradition that reflects John’s influence on the first Christians, and their struggle to reduce it in order to establish their faith in Jesus Christ.

2.2. “De-Johannization” of baptism

Undoubtedly, the baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins was one of John’s greatest influences on earliest Christianity. Therefore, the first Christians had to separate this ritual from its originator (i.e., de-Johannization) and give it a new meaning, linked to their faith in Jesus Christ (i.e., Christianization).

They attempted this by applying John’s prophecy to Jesus: John prophesized

26 E.g. J. Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer. Interpretation – Geschichte – Wirkungsgeschichte*, BZNW 53 (Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 352–363, who assumes that the disciples of John and those of Jesus had brotherhood in the beginning, but soon alienated each other. On the history of research, cf. Backhaus, *Jüngerkreise*, 2–10.

27 Backhaus, *Jüngerkreise*, 368: “Die Jüngergemeinschaft tritt auch nach dem Tod ihres Meisters noch in Erscheinung, löst sich aber wohl noch in der „ersten Generation“ auf, indem sich ihre Glieder entweder der Synagoge oder der Kirche oder dem „heterodoxen“ mouvement baptiste anschließen.” From this “narrower circle” of John’s disciples Backhaus tries to distinguish the “wider circle” of repentance-movement in Palestine which John brought into being.

that “one who is more powerful than I” would come after him and “baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt 3:11//Luke 3:16). With this expression, he must have meant God himself or his heavenly representative (cf. Dan 7:13–14; 1 Enoch 37–71; 2 Esdr 13), but the earliest Christians tried to identify this “one” as Jesus and make him the heavenly one that was superior to the Baptist.

This process was carried out by connecting Jesus and baptism more closely. First, the baptism of Jesus by John, which implies John’s superiority and therefore must have been a stumbling block for the faith in Jesus, was modified to represent God’s approval of Jesus as his son by giving him the Spirit (Mark 1:9–11 par.).²⁸

The baptism of Jesus, accompanied by the descent of the Spirit, probably played a paradigmatic role in earliest Christianity. This “baptism-legend”²⁹ was almost certainly formed in the Jerusalem Church.³⁰ It has the function to give a new “Christian” significance to baptism: one is baptized and given the Holy Spirit in the same way as Jesus himself was. A. Yarbro Collins is right in thinking that “the reference to baptism in the Holy Spirit in v. 8 (sc. of Mark 1) would have called to mind the ritual of initiation into the community of the followers of Jesus (1Cor 6:11; Acts 2:38).”³¹

Thus, Jesus Christ was identified as the one who received the Holy Spirit

28 The modification is more intensified in Matthew and Luke: The former tries to emphasize the superiority of Jesus by adding a word of John “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” (Matt 3:14). Luke was intentionally vague as to who baptized Jesus (Luke 3:21). These redactional changes prove how much the earliest Christians were troubled by this historical fact.

29 Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 267.

30 Pace Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 267–268, who argues for its non-Palestinian origin. The absolute usage of τὸ πνεῦμα for the Spirit of God can be found, contrary to Bultmann’s assertion, in the Jewish literature: Cf. LXX Num 11:25–26; Ps 50:12; 1 Chr 12:19.

31 A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 147.

through baptism and who gives “baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

The episode of Pentecost, the first descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Jerusalem Church (Acts 2:1–13), is evidently related to this baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. Jesus’ remark in Acts 1:5 (“John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now”), which Luke in fact borrowed from John’s words (Matt 3:11//Luke 3:16), undoubtedly prepares that episode,³² and the description of the Holy Spirit as “tongues *like fire*” (Acts 2:3) is related to John’s prophecy.³³

Although the episode of Pentecost should be ascribed to the Lucan composition in its present form,³⁴ in essence it probably derives from an oral tradition of the Jerusalem Church, where it must have been told as fulfillment of John’s prophecy. All those in the Jerusalem Church (v. 1) were thus “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (1:5). In this way, the Jerusalem Church came to characterize the new “Christian” baptism by the Holy Spirit. This could be called the “branding” of baptism: only baptism accompanied by the reception of the Holy Spirit could be authentically Christian, because this was the baptism that Jesus himself had once received and now gave to his followers. The Jerusalem Church seemingly strived to spread this new definition of baptism among the Christian circles outside of Palestine, as can be inferred from the episodes in Acts 2:38; 8:14–24; 9:17–18; 10:44–48; and 19:1–7 (cf. also Eph 1:13; Tit 3:5).

2.3. Baptism “into the name of Jesus”

Originating as a ritual of repentance and forgiveness of sins, as introduced by John the Baptist, the baptism is now “de-Johannized” and was “Christian-

32 Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum*, 31–32.

33 So also C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 114.

34 On Lucan wording in 2:1–4, see Lüdemann, *Das frühe Christentum*, 44.

ized” by relating it to the reception of the Holy Spirit. This baptism was understood as going into a communion with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, and was described as the baptism “into (the name of) Jesus.”

This process seemingly began during a relatively early stage of the Jerusalem Church, because not only Paul (cf. 1Cor 1:13: ἡ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε;) but also Philip, one of the Hellenists (Acts 6:5), appears to have known about it (Acts 8:16). However, the exact meaning of this phrase seems to be open to interpretation. This is strongly suggested by the unstable use of prepositions: Luke uses βαπτίζειν with ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι (Acts 2:38)³⁵, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα (Acts 8:16; 19:5),³⁶ and ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι (Acts 10:48), apparently without differentiating them from each other. If, as C. K. Barrett notes, “we should probably be right in thinking that for Luke the preposition was relatively unimportant,”³⁷ we may infer that, even for Luke, who wrote his two-volume work in the latter half of the first century A.D., it was not yet clear how the name of Jesus Christ functioned in the ritual of baptism. As Barrett continues, “what mattered was the name”;³⁸ namely, the name of Jesus Christ was called at the baptism (Acts 22:16; cf. also Rom 10:9–13; Jas 2:7). This might have implied the communion with Jesus Christ in some way, but what this communion exactly meant is left undefined.³⁹

35 The form βαπτίζειν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι, which appears only here, can be ascribed to Luke’s own wording; cf. Acts 4:17, 18; 5:28, 40. The reading ἐν (B D 945 1739 1891 Ir^{lat} Did) is secondary.

36 This form seems to be most known: Mt 28:19; Did 7:1; 9:5; Herm vis 3.7.3; cf. further 1Cor 1:13, 15; Gal 3:27.

37 Barrett, *Acts*, 154.

38 *Ibid.*

39 Paul interprets this as “clothing oneself with Christ” (Gal 3:27), or as being “buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). These are, however, Paul’s own explanation for the “baptism *into Jesus Christ*”, which was

In this way, the baptism was connected to Jesus Christ and thus “Christianized.” However, the examples of Apollos and the Ephesian disciples reveal that there were also believers that stood outside this “Christianization.” The episode in Acts 19:1–7, which tells about a “re-baptism” into the name of Christ Jesus, strongly suggests that Paul and the Jerusalem Church intended a unification and standardization of baptism “into the name of Jesus Christ,”⁴⁰ although its meaning was still open for interpretation.

3. Closing Remarks

The episodes of Apollos and the Ephesian disciples elucidate the practice of “John’s baptism,” i.e., the baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins, which derives from John the Baptist. This is the original type of baptism in earliest Christianity, whose leading figures were former followers of John.

John’s baptism survived in earliest Christianity although Jesus himself evidently did not inherit it from him. This fact indicates how great John’s influence was on earliest Christianity and the first Christians could not ignore it; rather, they tried to minimize it by degrading him to a herald of Jesus to construct their faith in Jesus as Christ. In this process, the baptism was also “de-Johannized” and instead interpreted as a baptism given by Jesus Christ, who “will baptize

neither something like an official view nor widely shared in early Christianity.

40 Cf. Did 9:5: “let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord (οἱ βαπτισθέντες εἰς ὄνομα κυρίου).” This instruction suggests that the baptism “into the name of the Lord” could function as criterion of the “orthodox” Christianity. This writing, written in the name of the Twelve Apostles, obviously intends to distinguish and guard the “orthodox” Christianity, which is represented by the Twelve in the Jerusalem Church, from other forms of beliefs; cf. 11:1–2: “if anyone should come and teach you all these things that have just been mentioned above, welcome him. But if the teacher himself goes astray and teaches a different teaching that undermines all this, do not listen to him.”

you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt 3:11 par.). Thus, this new “Christian” baptism was characterized as imparting the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38; 8:16–17; 10:15–18; 19:1–7), which introduced the baptized one into a communion with Jesus Christ. However, the exact meaning of this communion still seems open to interpretation.

There were still followers of Jesus, however, who belonged to the Johannine baptism and who did not share this “Christian” baptism, as the episodes in Acts 18:24–19:7 illustrate. Therefore, the Jerusalem Church and Paul tried to unify this ritual into the baptism “into (the name of) Jesus Christ.”