

Acts 19:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Analysis

John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance—Paul carefully explains John's role as forerunner, whose baptism called for moral reformation (μετάνοια, metanoia—change of mind) while directing people toward **him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus**. The Greek construction emphasizes John's explicit instruction: believe (πιστεύσωσιν) on the Coming One. John's ministry was never an end in itself but an arrow pointing to Christ. This verse refutes both those who elevate John above his preparatory role and those who dismiss baptism's importance—John's baptism mattered precisely because it anticipated Christian baptism.

Historical Context

John the Baptist (AD 27-29) stood at the hinge of redemptive history, the last prophet of the old covenant and herald of the new. His execution by Herod Antipas (AD 31-32) occurred before many heard of Jesus' resurrection, leaving some followers in theological limbo.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between preparatory religious practices and saving faith in Christ?
2. What does John's self-effacing ministry teach about Christian leadership and pointing others to Jesus?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν δὲ Παῦλος Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν βάπτισμα
said Then Paul John verily baptized with the baptism
G2036 G1161 G3972 G2491 G3303 G907 G908

μετανοίας τῷ λαῷ λέγων εἰς τὸν
of repentance G3588 unto the people saying is on G3588
G3341 G2992 G3004 G1519

ἐρχόμενον μετ' αὐτὸν ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν τοῦτ'
him which should come after him that they should believe G5124
G2064 G3326 G846 G2443 G4100

ἔστιν εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν
is on G3588 Christ Jesus
G2076 G1519 G5547 G2424

Additional Cross-References

Acts 1:5 (Baptism): For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts 11:16 (Baptism): Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

John 1:7 (Faith): The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

John 1:27 (Parallel theme): He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.