

BAPTISMS



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SECTION 1: WHAT IS BAPTISM?

The word baptize in the Greek is baptizō and it means:

To make whelmed (that is, fully wet); used only (in the New Testament) of ceremonial ablution, especially (technically) of the ordinance of Christian baptism: -baptist, baptize, wash. (Strong's, G907)

It means to be overwhelmed, or completely covered, by something. For example, water baptism means to be completely covered by water.

It's important for us to understand what baptisms are available and what each one signifies. Many believers think there is only one kind of baptism, being immersed in water, but Paul tells us in Hebrews that there are multiple kinds of baptisms.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and the faith toward God, of the doctrines of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:1-2)

If we back up and read scriptures leading up to that statement by Paul, we'd see he's admonishing the Hebrews because the things he listed in verses 1 and 2 are foundational topics as a believer, yet the Hebrews didn't fundamentally know them.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (Hebrews 5:12-13)

Paul is saying that the Hebrews should be teaching others about Christ and the foundations of Christianity but instead they themselves still don't grasp

the basics and need to be taught. These basics listed in Hebrews 6:1-2 include baptisms!

We should also understand these basics before we can move on to the “meat”, which means to have a deeper understanding.

Check on Learning

- 1. In your own words, define what the baptism is.*

SECTION 2: OLD COVENANT BAPTISMS

Baptisms occurred in the Old Covenant, though they were the foreshadows of baptisms that would be realized under the New Covenant. The Old Covenant simply refers to the period of time leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection and the New Covenant is from that point forward.

Here are two examples of Old Covenant baptisms:

- 1) Noah and his family in the ark

**Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
(1 Peter 3:20-21)**

Saved here means to preserve through danger (Gr. diasōzō). Noah and his family were preserved through the flood, as the world was baptized, or cleansed, from sin and corruption.

- 2) The Israelites in the cloud and passed through the Red Sea

**Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
(1 Corinthians 10:1-2)**

Being baptized unto Moses simply means they identified with Moses, just like we as Christians identify with Jesus. Moses was the mediator between God and the people that saved the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt like Jesus saved us from the bondage of sin.

Notice in the example of the Israelites, even though they were baptized, they didn't all get to enter the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb were the only two people from the generation that set out from Egypt that were allowed into the Promised Land. All the other Israelites that entered with them were from the next generation.

But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still. (Numbers 14:38)

The "baptism unto Moses" didn't save them. Not all baptisms save people, and in fact, only one baptism does save and that's the baptism into the Body of Christ. We'll discuss that and the various other baptisms in the next section.

Check on Learning

- 1. In your own words, define what the baptism is.*

- 2. Did the baptism in Moses save the Israelites, meaning did they all get to go into the Promised Land?*

SECTION 3: NEW COVENANT BAPTISMS

By doing a simple word search in the Bible for *baptize*, *baptized* or *baptism* you will see there are various kinds listed. In every instance, baptism will always consist of 3 things:

- 1) Baptizee (one being baptized)
- 2) Baptizer (one doing the baptism)
- 3) Medium in which the baptizee is baptized

There are 3 types of baptism that are available in the New Covenant today. One of them occurs at salvation and the other two can only happen after salvation. The 3 types of baptism are:

- 1) Baptism into the Body of Christ
- 2) Water baptism
- 3) Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Let's look at each at each one more in-depth.

1. Baptism into the Body of Christ

Baptizer: Holy Spirit

Baptizee: New believer in Christ

Medium: Body of Christ

This is the baptism that occurs at the very moment of salvation, and in fact it is what saves us. When a person accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior they are added into, or baptized into, the Body of Christ. This is also referred to as being born again.

Born again means that a person has accepted Christ and become a new creation.

**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:
old things are passed away; behold, all things are become
new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

When a person is saved, they still have their same body and soul, but their spirit, or inner man, has been awakened to God.

Paul, in his letter to the church at Corinth, tells us who the baptizer and the baptizee are, as well as the medium the baptism occurs in.

**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,
whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or
free; and have all made to drink into one Spirit.
(1 Corinthians 12:13)**

By the Holy Spirit (baptizer) are we (baptizees) baptized into one body (medium in which we're baptized), which is the Body of Christ

In Acts 2, when Peter spoke to the crowd, he told them what to do to be saved: repent and be baptized.

**Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every
one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of
sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
(Acts 2:38)**

To accept salvation, a person must first realize they need to turn from their current way of trying to be good enough on their own by doing everything on their own and realize they need a Savior. The turning away from the current sinful way is what repentance is!

The baptism into the Body of Christ saves and cleanses us from all sin, and the result of salvation is the receiving of the Holy Spirit!

**But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that
the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not
the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. (Romans 8:9)**

The decision to accept Jesus and be baptized into the Body of Christ is the single most important decision anyone will ever make. The Bible tells us that God wants everyone to be saved.

Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

Making the decision to accept Jesus opens up so much in our life. Not only do we get to spend eternity with God when we die, our lives are immediately impacted starting at the moment of salvation!

...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10b)

When a person receives Jesus into their life, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside of them.

**Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
(1 Corinthians 3:16)**

The Holy Spirit in the believer is what ensures them that they are saved.

In whom (Jesus) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13)

The Holy Spirit inside of the believer will guide them to make Godly decisions in their walk.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth (Holy Spirit), is come, he will guide you into all truth...(John 16:13a)

Again, accepting Jesus is the single most important decision a person can make...ever! At the instant a person believes, they are baptized into the Body of Christ and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside of them.

Now let's move on to the next type of baptism.

2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Baptizer: Jesus

Baptizee: Believer

Medium: Holy Spirit

I list this baptism second because I believe that aside from salvation this is the most important decision a person can make. Salvation is required to enter relationship with God but the baptism in the Holy Spirit is crucial to lead an effective Christian life.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is also known as having the Holy Spirit **upon** you. Pay attention to that word "upon". When saved you get the Holy Spirit in you (see Eph 1:13) but having the Holy Spirit **upon** you is a completely different experience!

Jesus Himself did no ministry until He had the Holy Spirit upon Him.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. (Matthew 3:16)

Then, soon after Jesus received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, He announced His ministry would begin.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

Any and all ministries should be dependent on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. All ministries should point people to Jesus, and to effectively do this, they

should be emersed in the Holy Spirit baptism. In fact, the main purpose of receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to be effective witnesses of Jesus!

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

This scripture was spoken by Jesus to His disciples. Remember, these followers of Jesus had spent approximately three years with Him. They ate what He ate, slept where He slept, watched all the miracles and heard all of His amazing teachings. They knew Him better than anyone. But, even with all of the first-hand experience they had with Jesus, He still didn't want them to minister until they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Experience isn't enough!

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Acts 1:8 above also has another key word in it: power. The Greek word for power used here is dunamis. Dunamis basically means God's supernatural power operating through someone who is baptized in the holy Spirit.

Dunamis operates through a person in various ways, the most common of which are the Bible calls the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit opens the door to the Holy Spirit gifts operating in and through a person. These gifts (listed below) are a powerful witness to an unbelieving world!

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one

and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Corinthians 12:8-11)

When one of these gifts is operating through a person, that is called a manifestation of the Spirit. It can happen any time the Holy Spirit wants, but we have to be open to Him manifesting through us.

When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit there should be some manifestation immediately following the baptism, and in the Bible it was often tongues or prophecy that followed. Here are some examples in scripture of manifestations of the Spirit after people were baptized in the Holy Spirit:

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:3-4)

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God... (Acts 10:44-46)

In our society we have a lot of man-made religion that can make it difficult for people to let the Holy Spirit manifest in tongues or prophecy because it seems "weird". We are often too concerned with what we'd look like in front of people if we were to start Speaking in tongues. If this describes you and you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit but have yet to let the Spirit manifest in you, simply go to a quiet place, close the door and start praising Jesus. Sing to him, and then just let whatever noises arise out of your inner man begin to flow. You'll be speaking in tongues in no time!

Like salvation, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a free gift available to every believer. How does a believer receive this free gift? Just like with salvation, ask for it and believe you received it!

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:13)

Now let's move on to the third type of baptism available to New Covenant believers.

3. Water Baptism

Baptizer: a Christian

Baptizee: a Christian

Medium: water

Water baptism is important in the sense that it identifies the baptizee with Christ. Water baptism does not save a person, it simply is an opportunity to publicly display their decision to follow Jesus.

The arrival of Jesus and His ministry was preceded by John the Baptist who was chosen to "make straight the way of the Lord."

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. (John 1:23)

We know that the reason John baptized people was to bring forth the mindset of repentance. As mentioned in the baptism into the Body of Christ, repentance must occur before salvation (repent and be baptized – repentance comes first!), and John baptized a baptism of repentance.

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. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:4-5)

Water baptism was established through John the Baptist to make known to the people that repentance had to happen before salvation could come. Jesus was perfect and never needed to repent of anything He had done but yet He too was water baptized. I believe He was water baptized to allow salvation into the world. If repentance had to first occur before salvation could be introduced, Jesus took the repentance on our behalf. Because repentance is also changing our mind, and actions, away from sin and towards God, we still must repent (change our way of thinking) before salvation can occur as well. We cannot do everything perfectly on our own and therefore need Jesus, who is perfect, to change us.

If Jesus already was baptized on our behalf, does that mean a person should never be water baptized? Of course not, as mentioned before it is a public declaration of a person's desire to follow Christ. It symbolizes dying to the flesh (going into the water) and coming up out of the water a new person. It also represents a cleansing of sin and becoming clean.

There are examples in the Bible where people in the New Covenant were water baptized, and again, it is something that every believer should experience. In the below scripture, a eunuch that received Jesus was water baptized by Philip. Philip didn't stop the eunuch from making the public declaration of being water baptized.

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him (Acts 8:38)

Paul, however, made a point that he only baptized a few people. This tells us that if water baptism was a requirement he fell short of his duties as a minister of the gospel, which of course we know he did not fall short!

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (1 Corinthians 1:17)

Water baptism is important to do because the Bible gives us examples of new believers doing it, but we shouldn't get wrapped around the axle in thinking it is mandatory for us to be emersed in water or we're not saved. We are saved by grace through faith, not by anything we do to earn our own righteousness, to include water baptism. Accepting Jesus is what saves a person, and if they try to add anything on top of simply accepting Him then they are trying to become righteous by works.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Check on Learning

- 1. What are the 3 types of baptisms available in the New Covenant?*
- 2. Which of the 3 baptisms brings salvation?*
- 3. Which of the 3 baptisms allows God miraculous power to operate through you?*
- 4. Is water baptism mandatory for salvation?*

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The three types of baptisms available to us today are:

1. Baptism into the Body of Christ
2. Baptism into the Holy Spirit
3. Water baptism

All three are important, but the most important is the baptism into the Body of Christ because that is salvation. This baptism reestablishes a lost connection with God the Father and opens a whole new realm of relationship with Him. Without this baptism, a person cannot experience everything that God has for them and they will not spend eternity with the Lord.

In my opinion, the second most important is the baptism into the Holy Spirit because that is required to be effective witnesses of Christ. A person who has received the baptism into the Body of Christ but has never been baptized in the Holy Spirit will find their Christian walk difficult at best because without the Holy Spirit baptism there is no power. For the Holy Spirit to manifest in a through a believe they must be baptized in the Holy Spirit!

Water baptism is more symbolic but should be done because we see examples of it in scripture. Why would a Christian not want to make a public declaration of becoming a follower of Christ? Water baptism is an opportunity to do that. It also symbolizes being cleansed by Jesus, which occurred at salvation.

This lesson just hit some highlights of these different types of baptisms. I encourage you to dig deeper because the Bible has a lot more to say about each of them!