

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Introduction

The last lesson examined the second foundational stone mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-3 “faith toward God”. We will continue our study with the third foundational stone “the doctrine of baptisms. In our foundation text listed above, the Greek word for “*baptisms*” is plural, implying that there is more than one baptism. However, the scripture specifically says that there is but one baptism.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 NASB)

There are seven “ones” in these verses:

one body

one Spirit

one hope

one Lord

one faith

one baptism

one God and Father.

Since Scripture doesn't contradict itself, there is obviously something that we need to understand about baptism that is not clear when we see a singular baptism in this verse and a plural baptism in the foundation verse.

Definition of Baptism

The verb phrase “*to baptize*” is transliterated into English from the Greek. When something is transliterated the original word is used with the English version of the letters which make up the word. The Greek word is “*baptizo*” which becomes our word “*baptize*”. When a word is transliterated, it is not defined, just put into English.

Why was this word transliterated? In the early years of the 17th century, King James of Britain, authorized an English translation of the Bible (this is the Authorized King James version which we have today). While King James held political power as an absolute monarch yet, in matters of religion, he was answerable to the Bishops of the established Church of England. King James made it known to the translators that he did not want anything introduced into the Bible translation that would cause

unnecessary offense to the Bishops or which would be too obviously contrary to the practices of the established Church. Therefore, two words were transliterated without definition: bishop and baptize. Baptize came directly from the Greek to English; bishop came from the Greek to Latin to English without a real translation. Had the Greek word for bishop been translated correctly everywhere by its meaning of “overseer”, the result could have been considered a challenge to the established hierarchical order of government in the Church of England

The root of “*baptizo*” is “*bapto*”. To give a Greek verb a special, causative meaning, you insert “*iz*”. This creates a compound verb which always has the sense of causing something to be or to happen. The precise nature of that which is caused to be or to happen is determined by the meaning of the simple root verb out of which the causative form was built.

The root of “*bapto*” is used three times in the Greek text and is always translated by the English verb “*to dip*”:

Luke 16:24--“...dip the tip of the finger in water...”

John 13:26--“...a piece of bread when I have dipped it.”

Rev. 19:13--“...a robe dipped in blood.”

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible defines “*bapto*” as “*to cover wholly with fluid*,” hence “*to dip*”.

A compound version of “*bapto*” is made by adding the Greek preposition “*en*” or “*em*” which means “*in*”. “*Embapto*” is used three times in the Greek text:

Matthew 26:23--“...He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish...”

Mark 14:20--“...It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.”

John 13:26--“... I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it... when he had dipped the sop...”

Therefore, there is only one meaning for “*baptizo*”: to cause something to be dipped into a fluid and then taken out again.

In secular Greek, the word is used for the action of dipping a cloth into dye in order to dye the cloth.

Types Of Baptism

There are a number of baptisms mentioned in the New Testament. Each of those mentioned have different meanings.

1. The Baptism of John

Mark 1:4 “...baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

This form of baptism was a transitional baptism between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. It was not intended to be utilized after baptism in the Name of Jesus was available.

2. The Baptism of Suffering

Luke 12:50 "I have a baptism to be baptized with..."

Mark 10:38 "Can you ... be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

It doesn't appear that the baptism of suffering is a universal baptism that all Christians would receive but is only applicable to those that the Lord has called to it.

3. Christian Baptism (baptism into the Name of Jesus)

Matthew 28:19 "...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Act 2:38 "be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ..."

Act 19:5 "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Throughout the Greek text, only two prepositions are ever used with the verb phrase "to baptize"----*in* and *into*.

4. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:5 "...you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Jesus told His disciples to wait until they received power, until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit before being witnesses.

5. Baptism into the Body

1 Corinthians 12:13 "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,..."

It is the Holy Spirit who immerses us into the body; who places us according to the will of the Lord.

Out of these five baptisms, we have one which is transitional and not intended to be utilized today, one which is not considered to be universal, and three which are for everyone--christian baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and baptism into the Body. So, there are three baptisms which are applicable to us, yet the Scriptures tell us that there is only one baptism. What does that mean? How do we reconcile the difference baptisms?

I believe that we have revealed in this another of the mysteries of the Word. We believe in One God who is manifested in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He created man in His image, so man is also three in one. The one man is made up of three components—body, soul, and spirit. The One Baptism is the same way—three in one—one baptism with three parts—Christian (water) baptism, baptism in the Holy spirit, and baptism into the Body.

JOHN'S BAPTISM

Sometimes people confuse John's baptism with Christian water baptism; however, they are not the same. Christian water baptism supersedes John's baptism.

It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:1-5 NASB)

These scriptures show the distinction in nature and significance between John's Baptism and Christian Baptism. John's baptism could not be accepted as equivalent nor could it be substituted for Christian baptism.

John's baptism indicates an outward act of being baptized as a visible confirmation that those being baptized had already passed through the experiences of repentance and forgiveness.

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. (Mark 1:4-5 NASB)

We are not baptized merely because we are sinners who have confessed and repented of our sins; that would be no different than John's baptism. We have passed into something fuller. Romans 5:1 tells us that we are "justified by faith". God has imputed to us the righteousness of Christ on the basis of our faith. We are baptized as an outward act of obedience to complete the inward righteousness which we have received in our hearts by faith.

Then, why was Jesus baptized by John?

Then Jesus *arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he *permitted Him. (Matthew 3:13-15 NASB)

Jesus was not baptized as outward evidence that He had repented of His sins because He had no sins for which He needed to repent. He was baptized to fulfill (that is, complete) righteousness. Jesus deliberately and consciously established a standard of behavior, thereby, setting an example and pattern of the baptism in which He desired Christians to follow Him.

Conditions For Christian Baptism

It is not by chance that the Doctrine of Baptisms is third in our foundation study list. First comes repentance from dead works, then faith (belief) toward God and then baptism. Baptism must be built on repenting and believing. Baptism without repenting and believing is a worthless act. It accomplishes nothing and has no significance unless we have repented from our own dead works and turned our faith toward God. This would eliminate infant baptism as a part of our traditions since the infant would not have been able to repent and believe.

The Philippian jailer gives us the pattern:

and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that *very* hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. (Acts 16:30-33 NASB)

The Word gives us four conditions for Christian baptism:

1. Repentance

Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38 NASB)

2. Belief

"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. (Mark 16:16 NASB)

3. A good conscious

Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 3:21 NASB)

4. Become a disciple

"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; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 NASB)

In other words, the person

must have heard enough of the gospel to understand the nature of his act

must have repented of his sins

must confess his faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God

must be able to answer God with a good conscious on the grounds that he has fulfilled all of God's requirements for salvation, and

must commit himself to a life of discipleship.

Significance Of Christian Baptism

Many in our churches today seem to think that baptism is simply a ritual that can be performed

whenever one gets around to doing it. However, that is not the way that the Scriptures present it.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. (Romans 6:1-7 NASB)

These verses present two mutually exclusive facts:

1. If we have availed ourselves of God's grace, we are dead to sin.
2. If we are not dead to sin, then we have not availed ourselves of God's grace.

The purpose of baptism is a declaration of death, burial, and resurrection in order that we might not live to sin but instead live to righteousness.

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14 NASB)

If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. (Romans 8:10 NASB)

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24 NASB)

The average Christian today:

has some kind of belief that their past sins can be forgiven
goes to Church to confess and obtain forgiveness for sins committed
has no thought or expectation of experiencing any inward transformation of own nature
leaves Church unchanged and continues committing the same kind of sins which was confessed.

To be dead to sin and alive to God and righteousness requires two things of us:

1. "Knowing this"--Rom. 6:6
2. "Reckon yourselves"--Rom. 6:11

If God's people do not know this truth, they can't believe it; if they can't believe it, they can't experience it. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea 4:6

There are three successive stages to the ordinance of baptism:

1. We died with Jesus on the Cross.
2. We are buried with Him.
3. We are raised with Him in His resurrection.

This produces an inner transformation within the believer: 1) death to sin, 2) new life to righteousness in God.

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. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ([Colossians 2:12-14 NASB](#))

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ([Galatians 3:27-28 NASB](#))

We have an example in the Old Testament when the children of Israel followed Moses through the Red Sea. The New Testament calls this a baptism.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that 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 NASB](#))

We learn 5 lessons from this example that are applicable to us in our baptism.

1. Baptism is a memorial.
2. Baptism involves a confession
3. Baptism declares solemn determination
4. Baptism announces separation
5. Baptism means new identity.

In Acts Peter gives us the first three steps in our walk with God:

Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ([Acts 2:38 NASB](#))

- 1) Repent;

- 2) Be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,
- 3) Receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Too many Christians stop after water baptism and don't move on to receive the Holy Ghost.

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

As shown in Acts 2:38, receiving the Holy Spirit comes after believing and being baptized. This is what happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. This was important enough that Jesus told his followers to wait until they received the Holy Spirit before doing anything.

Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5 NASB)

Jesus said wait for the promise of the Father and equated this with being baptized with the Holy Spirit. What, exactly, is the promise of the Father?

Jesus speaks of this in John.

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17 NASB)

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (John 14:26 NASB)

Jesus says the Father will send another Helper, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost to abide with the disciples. The Holy Spirit is not for the world because they can't receive Him because the world doesn't see Him or know Him. He is for the disciples and He dwells with them (in Jesus) but would be in them.

The purpose of the Helper is two-fold:

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. (John 16:7-15 NASB)

The Helper will

- 1) reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment
- 2) guide believers into all truth and glorify Jesus.

Jesus adds a third purpose of the Spirit for the believer when He tells the disciples to wait to be baptized in the Holy Spirit: power.

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NASB)

To do the work that we need to do requires the power of the Holy Spirit. Effective witnessing to the Truth can only be done through the power of the Holy Ghost. If it was necessary for the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit before going forth, how much more do we need to receive the Holy Spirit before we can go forth and witness of Jesus and do the works that He has called us to do in His name?

Examples of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, there were certain manifestations of the event. Let's see if there is a consistent occurrence each time the Baptism in the Holy Spirit occurs.

1. The Day of Pentecost (Acts Chapter 2):
 1. a rushing mighty wind
 2. tongues of fire over the heads
 3. 3) speaking with tongues
2. Samaria (Acts Chapter 8):
 1. sign not named but was visible because Simon offered money to Peter and John for the ability to lay hands on people so that they would receive the Holy Spirit.
3. The House of Cornelius (Acts Chapter 10):
 1. speaking with tongues
 2. magnifying God
4. Certain disciples at Ephesus (Acts Chapter 19):
 1. speaking with tongues
 2. prophesy

The only commonality of these examples is "speaking with tongues". The only example which doesn't name "tongues" is Samaria. However, Simon saw something different than what he had seen before. With Phillip. He had seen miracles, healing, deliverance, and great joy. Since he saw something happen different than he had seen before, it seems logical to assume (based on the other incidences

given) that he saw them speak with tongues.

We can conclude that “speaking with tongues” is a consistent evidence of having been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

[NOTE: for more study on the baptism of the Holy Spirit see “[The Holy Spirit Study Guide](#)”, “[The Promise of the Father](#)” and “[Receiving the Holy Spirit](#)”.

Baptized Into One Body

The third part of the one baptism is when we are baptized into one body.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. (1 [Corinthians 12:13-14 NASB](#))

This aspect of baptism is not often (if ever) discussed because its significance is not recognized. But as we begin to understand the meaning of baptism as immersion, this aspect takes on greater significance. The three-in-one baptism is progressive: 1) water baptism, 2) Holy Spirit baptism, and 3) body baptism.

We can see the progressive nature of the one baptism as we look at the one who ministers the baptism and at the element in which one is baptized (that is, immersed). This will be easier if we place these three aspects of baptism into a table format where we can see each part as it relates to the whole.

Baptism begins with water. A servant of the Lord baptizes one by “dipping” them in water. The person is buried with Christ and raised in newness of Life. Then, the Lord takes the person and “immerses” them into the Holy Spirit where they receive power. Then, the Holy Spirit takes the person and “immerses” them into the Body where they find their place and function.

By One Baptism, we are identified with Christ, filled with power, and functioning in our place in His Body.

It is important that we complete the progressive baptism.

ONE WHO MINISTERS	ELEMENT	RESULTS
Servant of the Lord	Water	Immersed in the water, raised new
Jesus	Holy Spirit	Immersed in the Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit	People	Immersed in the people of the Body