

Chapter 3

FOUNDATION 3 **BAPTISMS**

SECTION 1: WATER BAPTISM

Water baptism, in one form or another, has been practiced by the church for the past 2000 years. Nearly every Christian group today practices some form of water baptism. In this study we will look briefly at the origins, the scriptural basis, and the practice of water baptism.

The word "*baptize*" or "*baptism*" comes from a Greek word "*baptizo*" which means to immerse or wash in water. The word was adopted into the language of faith to describe the practice of water baptism for Christian believers and the believers' experience of being "*baptized*" or filled with the Holy Spirit.

- I. Water baptism seems to be an issue on which there are a whole range of opinions concerning its importance and how it should be practiced. Why does the church practice water baptism?
 - A. Jesus (our Master) set the example. Even though Jesus didn't need to repent or be forgiven for sins, he began His ministry by presenting Himself for water baptism by John the Baptist. (Matthew 3:13-17)
 - B. Jesus (our Teacher) taught and commanded us to do so. When Jesus commissioned His followers to preach the gospel and make disciples, He always associated that commission with the command to water baptize those who believed. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16)
 - C. The apostles taught and commanded us to do so. As Peter and the Apostles interpreted and applied the instructions Jesus gave, they also instructed that Christian believers be baptized in water. (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12; Acts 10:48)
 - D. The early church practiced water baptism. From both scriptural and historical records we know that the church has practiced water baptism from the day of Pentecost onward. (Acts 8:12, 36-38; Acts 10:48; 19:5)
- II. What is the purpose of water baptism? In order to practice water baptism in faith, we need to know what the Bible says about its meaning and purpose.
 - A. It symbolizes cleansing from sin. Even though the water does not actually wash away sin, it is a symbolic act picturing what happens to the heart and life of a person whose sin has been washed away by the blood of Jesus. (Acts 22:16)
 - B. It pictures the death of the old nature and the birth of the "*new person in Christ.*" Just as Jesus' baptism marked the end of His life as the carpenter from Nazareth and the beginning of His ministry as the Lamb of God, so water baptism marks the end of an old

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life and the beginning of a new life with and for Christ. (Romans 6:3-4)

- C. It is a "circumcising of the heart." Under the Old Covenant, circumcision marked a person as one of God's people by the cutting away of flesh, so in the New Covenant, water baptism is a kind of heart circumcision marking the cutting away of the old (flesh) nature and the birth of the new (spirit) nature. (Colossians 2:11-12)
- D. It identifies us with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Just as Christ died, was buried, and rose again, in baptism we show that we have crucified the old life, buried it in baptism, and we rise to a new life in Christ. (Romans 6:3-6)
- E. It is an act of faith and obedience to Christ. Even though there are many things about water baptism we can know and understand, it is also important that we practice and experience it as an act of simple obedience and faith.
- F. Water baptism becomes one of the first outward declarations of our commitment to Christ. It shows the church, the world, and the unseen spiritual realm that we have passed from death to life, from the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God; that we have made a decision to follow Christ.

III. Who should be water baptized?

- A. Every Christian believer. The Bible tells us very clearly that anyone who believes; that is, anyone who believes the gospel and repents of his or her sin and puts his faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior should then be baptized in water. (Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 8:36-38)
- B. Water baptism should follow repentance. There is an important sequence to be observed. When one hears the gospel and is convicted of personal sin and believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior, a new birth occurs. Water baptism then gives testimony to the act of grace that has occurred. (Acts 2:38)

IV. Water Baptism Questions.

- A. What does the word "*baptize*" mean?
- B. Who should be baptized?
- C. How should we be baptized?
- D. In what name or names should we be baptized?
- E. Should anyone be baptized more than once?
- F. Does baptism save us?

SECTION 2: HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Another aspect of baptism we find in the New Testament is Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Though the term "Baptism in The Holy Spirit" is not used in that form in the Bible, John the Baptist introduces the idea when he says of the Christ that "*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*" Then on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit is poured out on the waiting believers, Peter relates the experience to the prophecy of Joel which states that "*in the last days, God will pour out His Spirit on all people (both men and women, both young and old).*" The baptism in the Holy Spirit is also referred to as "being filled with the

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Holy Spirit” and “receiving the Holy Spirit” or “receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16)

- I. What is Baptism in the Holy Spirit?
 - A. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience for Christian believers in which they are “*baptized*” or immersed in the Holy Spirit. This experience has also been called being “filled with the Holy Spirit.”(Joel 2:28; Mark 1:8; Acts 2:4)
 - B. The Holy Spirit is that person of the Godhead who manifests Himself in the world today (and always). God has revealed Himself in His word as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, one God manifested in three persons.
- II. God’s promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, given through Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and John the Baptist began to be fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism and later when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. The baptism in the Holy Spirit continued to be experienced by Christian believers throughout the scriptural accounts of the development of the church in the book of Acts. (Luke 3:22; Acts 2:1-4, 16-18)
- III. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is experienced or received in the life of the Christian believer in three ways. We call this the three-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit. The three aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer are:
 - A. **With** - Convicting of sin, leading, guiding, and protecting. The Holy Spirit is with us always. He is with us from the time we are conceived in our mother’s womb; He is with us long before we are aware of Him or His presence. He is with us to protect us from harm, to guide us towards salvation through Jesus Christ, to convict us of sin, and to convince us of the truth of the gospel when we hear it. Key word - **LEAD**. (Matthew 28:18-20; John 14:16)
 - B. **Within** - Born again of the Spirit. When we believe the gospel and are born again through faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us. A spiritual birth takes place and the Holy Spirit who has always been with us now lives within us. He now gives us new life in Christ. He leads and guides us, inspires the truth of scripture to us, gives us spiritual gifts, and gives us eternal or God-life within. Key word - **LIFE**. (John 3:5)
 - C. **Upon** - Baptism of the Spirit. When we receive the third aspect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, He comes upon us to empower us to be witnesses for Christ, to live a life of testimony and example, and to serve God effectively through the use of the spiritual gifts God has given us. He also may impart gifts that allow us to experience and operate in the supernatural spiritual realm. According to scripture, all believers can receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Key word - **POWER**. (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38-39)
- IV. Here are some examples and scriptural evidence from the New Testament that believers received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - A. Jesus told His followers to wait in Jerusalem until they were empowered by the outpouring

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of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, one week after He had ascended to heaven, they were gathered for prayer. At that time, God chose to pour out the Holy Spirit and they were all baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came to rest on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues and glorified God. (The day of Pentecost) (Acts 2:3-4)

- B. Later that same day, Peter preached the gospel to the crowd of people who gathered to see what had happened. In response to the question from the crowd, "What shall we do?", Peter said to them, "*Repent and be baptized ... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" (The day of Pentecost) (Acts 2:38)
 - C. After a considerable amount of time had elapsed, possibly several years, Philip the evangelist went to Samaria and through his preaching many people believed in Jesus and were converted. The church at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to them and after the believers were baptized in water, Peter and John laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. (Samaria - some time later) (Acts 8:14-17)
 - D. Even later, after the conversion of Saul, the Holy Spirit sent Peter to the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion in Caesarea. When Peter preached the gospel to those who had gathered to hear him, they believed and were converted even though they were Gentiles. As Peter was preaching to them, the Holy Spirit came on all those who heard the message and believed. (Cornelius' house - Caesarea - some time later) (Acts 10:44-48)
 - E. Many years later, possibly 30 years after the day of Pentecost, on Paul's third missionary journey, he came upon a group of Christian believers in Ephesus. He asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit as believers and they replied that they knew nothing of the Holy Spirit. Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues and prophesied very much as the disciples had on the day of Pentecost. (Ephesus - many years later) (Acts 19:2,6)
- V. If you have experienced the ministry of the Holy Spirit WITH you to LEAD, protect, and convict, and if you have experienced the ministry of the Holy Spirit WITHIN you to give you eternal LIFE in Christ, you may be wondering "How can I receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit so that I can also experience the ministry of the Holy Spirit UPON me to give me POWER to be a witness for Christ?" Here are some of the things we can learn from Scripture about receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit:
- A. You must be a believer. To be a believer in Christ, you must hear and believe the gospel, be convicted and repent of your sins, and put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38)
 - B. You must desire to receive the Holy Spirit and ask God to baptize or fill you with His Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:11-13)
 - C. Often the Holy Spirit can be given or poured out on a believer through the laying on of hands. This experience is common both in scripture and in present day practice. (Acts 8:17; Acts 9:17; Acts 19:6)

- VI. In the Scriptural accounts of people being baptized in the Holy Spirit, there are usually outward signs or manifestations associated with the experience. These experiences are consistent with those experienced today when people are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps the most outward or visible sign is speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is often accompanied by giving of ecstatic praise to God and by prophesying.

Other clear indications that one has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit are: The power to be a witness and to testify boldly of one's faith and experience, a transformed life, a fresh hunger for God's word, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

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1. What is the most important thing for a Christian to know and do about water baptism? Why?
2. Do you feel that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an important part of a Christian's foundation for faith? Why?