

## LET'S FOCUS ON BAPTISM

The word 'baptism' simply means 'to put into or on.'

There are several types of baptism in the Bible. We'll look at them in this study.

John the Baptist was so called, because he was a baptizer:

**Mark 1:4,5** John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance FOR the remission of sins.

The word 'remission' is like 'sending away' .... cancer can go into remission.

The common people of Israel .... went to John's baptism .... and participated.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

But the religious leaders .... only watched.

They just looked on .... when John scolded them. We'll read several verses in Matt 3:

**Matt 3:7-12** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

To escape God's judgment in the Tribulation, they will have had to have been water baptized.

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

Hold your place in Matt 3. The theme of John's message was repentance:

**Matt 3:1,2** In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Jesus preached repentance also:

**Matt 4:17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**Luke 13:3** I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

**(Go back to Matt 3):9** And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Notice the 3 different baptisms in this 1 verse:

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance (there's one baptism - with water): but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, (there's another baptism - spiritual) and with fire: (there's a 3rd baptism - physical and spiritual)

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Obviously, every time you read about baptism .... you can't just assume its water.

Let's look at the 3 baptisms:

- 1) John and Jesus' 12 disciples baptized --- with water.
- 2) Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Ghost --- which He did at Pentecost.
- 3) Jesus will also baptize the unbelievers --- when He returns to earth --- with fire.

We'll continue for now .... with the 1st one .... water.

As we saw .... the religious leaders were the ones who had a problem with it:

**Luke 7:29,30** And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, (How did they do that?) being not baptized of him.

Go back to Matt 3, for the record of Jesus' water baptism.

Jesus was sinless .... and John questioned Him, but His baptism was necessary:

**Matt 3:13-17** Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (Jesus had no sin, yet He was obeying God's command to enter the kingdom on Earth.)

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 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:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

**Jesus' water baptism was needed and acknowledged for the righteous plan of God. As a priest, it was essential that Jesus be washed in water:**

**Exo 40:12-15** And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons (they were the priests) unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.

13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:

15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

**As the sacrificial Lamb of God, Jesus had to be washed in water:**

**Lev 1:10-13** And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish.

11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar:

13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

**The reason for John's water baptism was for Israel to recognize their Shepherd:**

**John 1:31-34** And I (John) knew him (Jesus) not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Water baptism was the thing that distinguished believers from unbelievers.

It was the 'door' into God's kingdom that will one day be established on earth.

**John 10:1-8** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (Jesus came through the 'door' of water baptism .... just as the sheep have to.)

3 To him the porter openeth (John the Baptist is the 'porter' who opened the 'door' of water baptism for Jesus to go through); and the sheep (that's the 'little flock', the 'true Israel') hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. (He went in by the door .... He is the door .... and He is the shepherd)

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

They had to be water baptized .... to get into God's earthly kingdom:

**Mark 16:16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

That's why someone would have been baptized for the thief on the cross ....

since he professed faith while he was nailed there .... and he couldn't get to water

(Luke 23:39-43). They had to be water baptized to enter eternal life in God's kingdom.

It wouldn't have mattered though, if there were no resurrection:

**1 Cor 15:29** Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

Washing with water was a symbol of cleansing from sin that God required for Israel:

**Psa 51:2,3** Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

The water baptism .... was what God required .... (not to pay for sins) .... but to send away their sins:

**Acts 22:16** And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

O.K. we've looked at water baptism and saw that it was NOT OPTIONAL, but necessary FOR the remission of sins.

Now, let's examine the 2nd of the 3 baptisms .... that Jesus promised to do .... with the Holy Ghost. Just before He ascended into Heaven, He told them again:

**Acts 1:4-9** And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (They're still 'rightly' expecting God's kingdom to be established on earth .... it's just not the time for it yet.)

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 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.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

The evidence of the baptism with the Holy Ghost .... was speaking in tongues. They ALL got it:

**Acts 2:1-5** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem **Jews**, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. (This happened to the Jews who were celebrating the feast of Pentecost.)

The prophecy was that blessings would flow THROUGH Israel .... onto the Gentiles.  
That was God's program that was in operation then:

**Acts 10:44-48** While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 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.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,  
47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Next, let's look at the 3rd baptism .... from Matt 3:11 --- 'putting into' the fire.

When Jesus returns to Earth .... He'll be coming in wrath and judgment:

**Psa 50:3** Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

**Psa 97:3** A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

**Isa 29:6** Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

**Isa 66:15** For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

**Matt 13:41,42** The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

**Matt 25:41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

**2 Pet 3:7** But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

**Rev 20:15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

We looked at 3 different baptisms in Israel's program:

- 1) with water for the remission of sins
- 2) with the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking in tongues
- 3) with fire, God's holy wrath and anger against unbelievers.

The way to avoid the baptism with fire .... is to get the baptism with water!

Now, let's see 'our mail' .... letters God sent to us, the Church, the Body of Christ .... (those that will dwell in the heavenlies forever) through His official spokesman for today --- the Apostle Paul.

Here we can understand another baptism .... in the dispensation of grace.

First of all, **now there's only 1 baptism:**

**Eph 4:4-6** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, **one baptism**, (In Times Past, there was more than one. But Now, there' only one. Since Paul said it, let's let Paul tell us which one it is.)

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

**Remember, baptism means 'putting into.'**

Secondly, **notice 'Who' and 'what' we're put into:**

**Rom 6:3-6** Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ** (He is not water - He is a Person - we're put into Him) were **baptized into his death?**

4 Therefore **we are buried with him by baptism into death:** that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death (**that's our baptism**), we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him (**that's our baptism**), that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

We are put into Christ .... we are put into His death --- therefore, God counts His death .... as our death. **Thus, the penalty for our sin is PAID.**

**Gal 2:20** **I am crucified with Christ:** nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Here's that same baptism again. We are put into a Person .... into His body:

**Gal 3:27** For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.

Verse 12 in this next passage teaches the same principal as Rom 6:3-4 does:

**Col 2:10-12** And ye are complete in him (What a blessed truth to understand and rejoice in!) , which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands (that's a spiritual thing, that you can't see, that God does to you), in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 **Buried with him in baptism,**

wherein also ye are risen with him

through the faith (faith is something you cannot see, yet believe - Heb 11:1)

of the operation of God (God is Who performs this baptism --- not a preacher), who hath raised him from the dead.

In yet another verse, Paul explains our ONE baptism.

In the previous 'spiritual' baptism we studied ....

Jesus is the Person of the Godhead doing the baptizing with the Holy Ghost.

By contrast, in 'our spiritual' baptism ....

It is the Holy Spirit that is the One placing us into Christ's body:

**1 Cor 12:13** 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 been all made to drink into one Spirit.

We've seen 6 verses where Paul detailed our baptism.

It is clearly and certainly different from any of Israel's baptisms.

Paul spoke of water baptism, too ....

but under the exact opposite commission than Jesus' 12 disciples had:

**1 Cor 1:17** 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.

Jesus' 11 apostles couldn't say that. After His resurrection .... He specifically commanded them TO water baptize in the so-called 'Great Commission':

**Matt 28:16-20** Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (most people don't want to read the next verse)

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (obedience to the law was also required): and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

.... and that's just what they did. At Pentecost, Peter proclaimed to Israel:

**Acts 2:36-38** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified (Peter charged Israel with MURDER), both Lord and Christ.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent,

and be baptized every one of you (every person had to do it)  
in the name of Jesus Christ

FOR the remission of sins, (there's their 'born of water')

and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (there's their 'born of spirit')

Those are the same 2 baptisms Jesus told Nicodemus about:

**John 3:1-5** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water (baptized in water) and of the Spirit (baptized with the Holy Ghost), he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

## Nicodemus questioned the Lord:

**John 3:9,10** Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?  
10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Nicodemus should have known .... because he had the scriptures that told him .... and furthermore, he was a teacher of the Jews:

**Ezek 36:25-27** Then will I **sprinkle clean water upon you** (there's their water baptism --- even sprinkling --- not emersing .... 'born of water'), and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you (there's their baptism with the Holy Ghost .... 'born of spirit'), and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Peter (to whom Jesus gave the keys to the kingdom - Matt 16:18,19), wrote to Israel (Gal 2:9). He also indicated water baptism was required for their salvation:

**1 Pet 3:20,21** 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.

21 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:

Finally, in conclusion .. we have seen that Israel's program had several baptisms:

**Heb 6:1-2** 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 of faith toward God,

**2 Of the doctrine of baptisms** (plural .... that's what Israel had), and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

God's program for us (the church who will inherit the heavens) has just one baptism.

Let's get the right 'one baptism' for us --- and none other!

*This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"*