

BAPTISM

When a person becomes a Christian, he is baptized with the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3: 11; Jn. 3: 5; Rom. 8: 9; Gal. 3: 24). That baptism is a one-time, complete action occurring at conversion (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4: 5). During our daily living we are to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be empowered to live the kind of life that glorifies God (Eph. 5: 18). However, the Scriptures talk also about a baptism of water that is to show the world that we have entered a new way of life (Ac. 10: 47).

I. WHAT IS BAPTISM WITH WATER?

- a. An act of obedience on the part of believers (Ac. 8: 36; 10: 44-48; 19: 4, 5). It must be done with the understanding that it is an act of obedience and has nothing to do with actual salvation (see section IV below).
- b. Baptism with water is a symbol of death to an old way of life and resurrection to a new way of life (Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 12).

II. WHY DO WE NEED TO BE BAPTIZED WITH WATER?

- a. It is commanded (Mt. 28: 19; Ac. 22: 16).
- b. Because of the New Testament example
 - i. Jesus was baptized (Mt. 3: 13-16)
 - ii. Jesus' disciples baptized (Jn. 3: 22; 4: 1,2)
 - iii. Paul was baptized (Ac. 9: 18)
 - iv. The Apostles and early Christians baptized (Ac. 2: 41; 8: 12, 13, 36-38; 16: 14, 15, 33; 18: 8; 19: 4,5; I Cor. 1: 13-16)
- c. Baptism is a sign of our faithfulness to God (Ac. 16: 15)
- d. Baptism is a testimony to the world of our changed life (Ac. 2: 41-43)

III. HOW TO BE BAPTIZED WITH WATER:

- a. By immersion (Mt. 3:16; Ac. 8:36-38) because:
 - i. The Greek word for baptism (BAPTIDZO) literally means to immerse.
 - ii. Immersion provides a way to show completely in the act what baptism is to symbolize: death, burial and resurrection of our life (Rom. 6: 3, 4).

IV. PASSAGES OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD WHEN STUDYING BAPTISM:

- a. Ac. 2: 38...Often interpreted as teaching baptism is necessary for salvation; but:
 - i. The Greek word "EIS" translated "for" actually means "because of." Therefore, the verse means "repent and be baptized **because of** the remission of your sins" which occurred when you trusted Christ to save you. For example, we imprison a man for a murder already committed, not to allow him to commit murder. Baptism occurs because we are forgiven, not in order to be forgiven.
 - ii. Baptism is not a part of the Gospel throughout the rest of Scripture (I Cor. 15: 14; Lk. 7:50; Eph. 2: 8, 9; Jn 3: 36; Rom. 1: 16,17; I Pet. 1:9; Eph. 3: 17; Ac. 15: 9; 16: 30, 31; 3: 19; 10: 44-48; 11: 18; Mt. 12: 44; Rom 10: 9-13; Tit. 3: 5-7.)
- b. Jn. 3: 3-8...Often interpreted as teaching that you must be baptized as a part of receiving the Holy Spirit; but:
 - i. The water here obviously from the context refers to physical birth. One must not just be born physically, but born spiritually in order to be saved.
 - ii. Other passages indicate the Holy Spirit's coming upon believers before they were baptized (Ac. 10: 44-48; 11: 17).

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- iii. The Greek word “KAI” translated “even” in the Amplified (vs. 5) means “and,” as it is translated in all modern versions. So, it is not “born of water even the Spirit” but “born of water (physically) and the Spirit (spiritually)” to be saved.
- c. I Pet. 3: 18-21...Often interpreted as teaching that baptism washes away our sins and saves us; but:
 - i. The phrase “corresponding to that” refers to Noah’s entering the ark and not to being saved through water. The water actually killed. It is Noah’s entering the ark by faith 7 days before it rained that saved him (Gen. 7: 1-10; Heb. 11: 7).
 - ii. Baptism here refers to baptism of the Holy Spirit, instead of baptism by water, for it says it is **not** for the washing away of dirt but an appeal for a clear conscience before God (v. 21).
- d. Mk. 16: 16...Often interpreted as Jesus’ teaching that you must be baptized to be saved; but:
 - i. This passage does not even appear in the majority of original manuscripts. Therefore, it is a questionable passage from which to draw a doctrine concerning salvation.
 - ii. In the last half of the verse Jesus says nothing about not being baptized as a reason for not being saved. Therefore, believing is the source of salvation with baptism coming as a result of conversion.