

WATER BAPTISM

God's Word teaches:

That water Baptism is essential to our obedience after reconciliation with God. Water Baptism is one immersion (not three) "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," as Jesus commanded - Matthew 28:19; 3:13-17; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; 8:38,39; 19:1-5; Romans 6:4,5.

Water baptism is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet one of the most misunderstood teachings by contemporary teachers and preachers. Some, at one extreme, believe that it is not necessary because of its abuse by nominal Christians while on the other extreme, others believe that without water baptism, one cannot be saved. In the middle is yet another group that believes that, though it is necessary, it must be administered in the name of Jesus only.

All of them are wrong because Jesus Christ commanded that water baptism should be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). Doing otherwise, therefore, is to disobey Jesus Christ.

The word 'baptize' is a Greek word '*baptiso*' which means to immerse, 'dip inside liquid'. This shows the proper form of baptism by immersion inside water. The immersion signifies identification with the burial of Christ in His death and rising up in newness of life with Him at His resurrection (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12). In baptism, the believer shows his faith that Christ died for his sins and rose again for his justification: that if he dies he will be raised again in the resurrection; and that he dies to his old life and rises to walk in the new life with Christ.

The immersion is done only ONCE and not THRICE. Jesus Christ was dipped inside River Jordan only once (Matthew 3:16); the Eunuch of Ethiopia was immersed in water once (Acts 8:38).

When we submit for water baptism, it is a public declaration of our new relationship with Christ. Therefore, it is a public ceremony which witnesses to all that one has put on Christ (Galatians 3:27).

Jesus commanded that sinners be preached to, and as they repent and believe the gospel, they should be baptized. This confirms that water baptism is for those who fully repent of their sins (Acts 2:38). This also confirms that it is only people who can exercise faith to believe that can be baptized (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 20:20,21; Mark 1:14,15). It is fundamentally wrong to baptize infants who have not reached the stage of accountability, as it's being practised by some orthodox churches.

The pages of the New Testament are filled with references on water baptism. In Matthew 3:13-17, Jesus Christ submitted Himself to John the Baptist for water baptism to fulfill all righteousness. The testimony of God the Father to the

BIBLE DOCTRINE 8 (CONTINUED)

ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ, through the descent of the Holy Ghost on Him as He came out of the water after the water baptism was in agreement with it. Christ's command in Matthew 28:19 was re-echoed in Mark 16:16. The Apostles also continued to baptize in obedience to the command of Christ: the converts on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-42,47); Eunuch of Ethiopia (Acts 8:36,37), Samaritan converts (Acts 8:12,13), Cornelius and his kinsmen (Acts 10:47,48); the Philippian Jailor (Acts 16:30-33); the Ephesian disciples (Acts 19:5).

Salvation does not come through water baptism but by grace through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesian 1:7; 2:8,9; I John 1:7,9; Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 26:28; John 1:12; 3:16,17; I Peter 3:21). The Scripture records a catalogue of those who got saved without water baptism being a pre-condition: the sick of the palsy healed by Jesus Christ (Matthew 9:1-7); the woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and cleaned them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10); the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43); Eunuch of Ethiopia (Acts 8:30-37); those who believed in Antioch (Acts 11:20,21). Saul of Tarsus was addressed as 'Brother Saul' by Ananias before he submitted himself for water baptism (Acts 9:17).

Jesus has laid down the standard for water baptism and it is to be carried out in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). Every believer, in obedience to Christ's command, should therefore submit to this ordinance of water baptism. The importance of water baptism was expressed by Jesus Christ in His parting words. He said, **"He that believeth and is BAPTIZED shall be saved"**.

The opinion of men cannot contradict the stand of the Scripture (Matthew 28:19). Once a person repents of his sin, it is mandatory that he submits himself for water baptism as commanded in the scriptures (Romans 6:3,4). The practice was upheld in the early Church. Converts were baptized in water soon after their salvation experience (Acts 2:41; 8:37,38; 16:30,31,33). Every convert is therefore enjoined to yield to this important injunction. God-ordained church leaders must do their utmost best to encourage their flocks to attach great importance to this practice (Acts 20:28). Like Peter did, church leaders must encourage their hearers to **"repent and be BAPTIZED ... for the remission of sin ..."**.

HOLY GHOST BAPTISM

God's Word teaches:

That the Baptism in the Holy Ghost is the enduement of power from on High upon the sanctified believer. It is "the promise of the Father" and when one receives this "gift of the Holy Ghost", it is accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking a language unlearned previously, referred to as speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance - Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:8; Luke 3:16; 24:49; John 1:30-33; 7:37-39; 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:12-15; Acts 1:5-8; Mark 16:17; Acts 2:1-18; 10:44-46; Acts 19:1-6. We do not teach or instruct people how to speak in tongues: the Holy Spirit gives utterance. We also stress the necessity of purity before power. The Gifts of the Spirit are for believers today - I Corinthians 12:1-31; 14:1-40.

The baptism in the Holy Ghost is the enduement of power from on High upon the sanctified believer. It is the promise of the Father. When one receives this gift of the Holy Ghost, it is accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking a language unlearned previously, referred to as speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:30-33; 7:37).

We do not teach or instruct people how to speak in tongues; the Holy Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4). Jesus Christ the great Teacher preached it and promised it (John 7:37-39; Luke 24:49; and Acts 1:4-8).

The Baptism in the Holy Ghost is different from the new birth or salvation (John 7:37-39; 14:17; 17:6-9,14-16; Luke 10:19-24; 24:49). It is not the sanctification experience (John 17:9; 17:21-23; Acts 2:1-4). Jesus prayed for the sanctification of His disciples and yet commanded them to wait for the enduement of power, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Moreover, sanctification is for purity whereas the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is for power.

It is also for illumination, feeling of joy, liberty and victory in prayer, self-denial or zeal (Luke 24:27,31-32,44,45; Acts 8:8,14-17).

The Holy Spirit is not a mere impersonal force. He is not a mere power that we can get hold of and use. He is not a mere influence that we feel. He is a Person who seeks to get hold of us and use us. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Personality who we must honour, worship, fellowship with and listen to. He is called the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of the Living God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of your Father, the Comforter, the Eternal Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Luke 11:13; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 1 Peter 1:11; 4:14; Romans 1:4; 8:2). The Holy Ghost is eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and holy. He is the Inspirer of the Holy Scriptures, the General Overseer of the militant Church, the Great Teacher, Helper and Guide of all the saints, the character Builder of all members of the Body of Christ (Hebrews 9:14; Psalm 139:7-10; Acts 10:38; Matthew 12:28; I Corinthians 2:10,11; John 14:17-26; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22,23). The Holy Ghost is the third Person in the Trinity (I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:3-6; Matthew 28:19).

BIBLE DOCTRINE 11 (CONTINUED)

The Holy Spirit:

1. Searches all hearts (John 16:8-11; I Corinthians 2:10,11).
2. Convicts of sin (John 16:7-11).
3. Regenerates (Titus 3:5). *rebirths, renews*
4. Bears witness with us (Romans 8:14-16).
5. Adopts into God's family (Romans 8:15).
6. Helps and gives victory in temptation (Romans 8:2,26-27).
7. Helps in prayer (Romans 8:26,27; Zechariah 12:10).
8. Fills believers with joy, peace and boldness (Acts 13:49-52).
9. Sanctifies (Romans 1:4; 5:5). *grows God's love in our hearts*
10. Quickens and heals our body (Romans 8:11). *Gives life to mortal bodies*
11. Comforts, counsels and commands (Isaiah 11:1,2).
12. Intercedes for saints (Romans 8:26,27).
13. Illuminates and inspires (2 Peter 1:21). *prophecy*
14. Searches and reveals the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-12).
15. Teaches (John 14:26). *all things, brings into remembrance*
16. Guides into all truth (John 16:13).
17. Creates (Psalm 104:30).
18. Empowers (Acts 1:8).
19. Directs gospel work (Acts 8:26-29).
20. Confirms the gospel (Hebrews 2:3,4). *Gives gifts Heb 2:4*

The mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit is promised to all flesh; and those who meet God's conditions can receive God's abundance (Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Joel 2:28,29; John 7:37-39). Few (very few) of the Old Testament saints had the bulk of the Spirit upon them for some special tasks that the Lord gave them to do. Majority of the Israelites lived all their lives without the "special privilege" of having "the Spirit upon" them. Even those who had this privilege did not all enjoy His continuous abiding presence (Numbers 11:25; 24:2; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 14:6; 1 Samuel 10:9,10; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

There were great expectations and a "diligent searching" by the Old Testament prophets. They looked forward to the glorious Gospel days in which we live. Even the angels dared to look into these things.

In as much as Christ's incarnation, birth, life, dominion, rejection, suffering, meekness, death and resurrection were all foretold, and the messianic prophecies were fulfilled in every detail, so also, will all prophecies concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit must be fulfilled.

Today, we can all receive the Spirit in baptismal measure. We can be baptized in the Holy Spirit if:

1. We thirst - have strong desire (Isaiah 44:3; John 7:37,39).
2. We receive "**a new heart**", "**an heart of flesh**", renewal of "**the stony heart**", "**circumcision of heart**" (Ezekiel 36:26,27).
3. We have "**faith**" to "**receive**" (Galatians 3:2,14; Mark 11:22,24).
4. We pray to receive (Luke 11:13).