

Christian Baptisms



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Introduction

Historically, baptism has been used as a rite of initiation, showing the inductee's entrance into a new belief or observance. Baptism in the church is also a token of the forgiveness of sins we experience at salvation—in much the same way that Pilate attempted to show his innocence by washing his hands with water (**Matthew 27:24**), Christians show they are cleansed by Christ when they are baptized by water.

We will look at Baptism to see how it operates and benefits the Christian believer. Our objective is to identify, clarify, and apply Biblical truth.



The Bible talks about many different baptisms. There is evidence of The Baptism of Moses, The Baptism of The Cross, The Baptism of Repentance, The Baptism In Water, The Baptism of Fire, The Baptism in the Holy Spirit, The Baptism of The Holy Spirit, The Baptism of Suffering and several more that I will not go into now.

There are five major baptisms that are crucial to the foundation of doctrinal belief. Every Christian should know them and how they affect their faith and lifestyle. It's important to know that the Holy Spirit initiates all baptisms. He is the Baptizer. I have broken them down and present them for your review

but they are all from one main source, God's Holy Spirit. The following scriptures will validate what I am teaching:

Baptism of Repentance...The apostle John records Jesus talking about when the Holy Spirit comes. Here's part of what He said. "When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment:" **John 16:8** The Holy Spirit reproves the world of sin, exposes it for what it really is. This is done so men can repent.

Water Baptism... is only a symbol of what has already taken place in the heart. We separate this baptism with that of repentance but they are really the same. You repent and are baptized in water as a show of your change of heart. This is because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit does not stop with water baptism. He places you in the Body of Christ and indwells us and fills us with His presence. We call this a baptism into the body of Christ but it really isn't a baptism. It is a placement. Then He gives us gifts that are for edification of the body, evangelism of the lost and administration of the church.

Notice that there is really only one Baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit that initiates repentance, emersion in water, placement into the body of Christ, the endowment of Spiritual Gifts and most of all the witness that we are the children of God. **Romans 8:16**

Now lets break it up into segments so we can study it better.

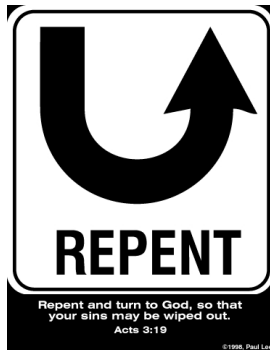
The Baptismal Process In The Life of A Believer

The commentary from this point will be a combination of several contributors including Got/Questions.com, Robert Wells of HLLC,

1. Baptism of Repentance

The Baptism of Repentance is the first Baptism that a believer experiences. He or she is immersed in the Spirit of Repentance that is given by God. The

believer comes to a clear reality of how terrible their sin is and that they cannot be saved without the help of a loving God



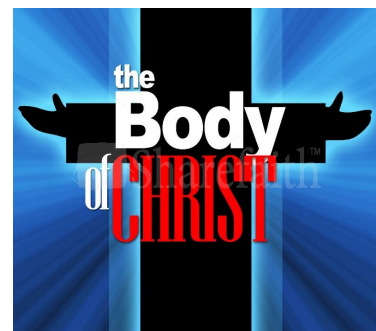
The Baptism of Repentance is the beginning of the Baptismal journey that the believer takes. John The Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, proclaiming His identity as Messiah and His soon arrival. John, the Baptist, baptized all who repented and pointed them to a coming Messiah that would shortly follow him.

Those who were baptized by John were showing their faith in John's message and their need to confess their sin. In **Acts 18:24–25**, a disciple of John's named Apollos preaches in Ephesus; however, only knowing the baptism of John and the need for repentance, he needed to be further instructed in the death and resurrection of Christ. Later in the same city, **Acts 19:1–7**, Paul encounters some more followers of John. These disciples had been baptized for repentance, but they had not heard of the new birth or the Holy Spirit. Paul taught them the whole message of salvation in Christ, and they received the message and were subsequently baptized in Jesus' name.

Shortly before Jesus Christ was revealed to the people as the awaited Messiah, John the Baptist was baptizing people with the baptism of repentance, telling them to believe on him, which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus (**Acts 19:4**). Luke records it this way, "*And he (John the Baptist), came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin.*" (**Luke: 3:3**)

2. Baptism Into The Body of Christ

The Baptism Into Christ's Body... This baptism, allows the repenting person to be spiritually converted into the faith of Jesus Christ, and the believer now looks to Jesus as his Lord and Savior. The saved believer also recognizes that the wages of their sinful life was death but that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. (**Romans 6: 23**)



The believer has come to terms with the scripture as it's recorded in **Romans 10: 9-13** which says, *"That if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation, for whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Having fulfilled the baptism of repentance, the believer is now ready to become baptized into the body of Christ and thus – they are “Born Again.” The new converts have been born of the Spirit of God and are now given the power to be called children of the Most High God.

“Being Born Again”

Being, “Born Again” is to be fathered by the Spirit of God. He actually breathes life into our dead spirit and we become a living soul, just like Adam. This is again validated by Paul's teaching in **Romans 5:12**,



“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. ” The walking dead lives again.

The new believer was dead spiritually until they accepted the gift of Life in Christ. The new believer in the body of Christ is now a totally new creature regardless of their past sinful life. The former sinful life has passed away, and the sins purged off by the cleansing power of the precious blood of Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 5:17**). The believer is transferred from the Kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God by faith through Jesus Christ.

"One Baptism"



Baptism into Christ's body is what the Bible terms, "**One Baptism**". This baptism brings together all people on the same footing in the eyes of God – whether rich or poor, literate or illiterate, men or women, white or black, different races, tribes, ethnicity, and languages. It's recorded, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into **One body**, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (**1 Corinthians 12:13**) What they all have now is, "One Lord", "One Faith" and "One Baptism." (**Ephesians 4:5**).

This Baptism is one of unity. It clarifies who is who and confirms true "New Birth" experiences. This is evident from Paul's teaching to the Roman believers. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." **Romans 8:16**

3. Baptism In Water

CBN.org offers this historical summary...The Bible teaches the baptism of believers (**see Mark 16:16, Acts 8:36-37**). And in the early centuries, Christian baptism was by immersion. The concept of infant baptism is not specifically found in the Bible. The early church began baptizing infants because of the idea that children are born in sin and need immediate baptism to ensure their salvation.



At the time of the Reformation, though, Martin Luther rediscovered the biblical truth that spiritual regeneration and justification are by faith. A baby cannot exercise faith. Nevertheless, because so many of those who became

his followers had already been baptized as infants in the Roman Catholic Church, Luther did not require them to be baptized again. In fact, he continued to baptize children of believers.

"Covenant Theology."

When John Calvin came on the scene in Geneva, he taught what is known as "covenant theology." According to covenant theology, if the parents have entered a covenant relationship with God, then their children are part of the covenant, too, and are proper candidates for baptism as infants.

In churches that practice infant baptism there is usually some type of confirmation rite in which a child of ten, eleven, or twelve reaffirms the parental faith expressed at his or her baptism.

Some Reformation theologians strongly disagreed with infant baptism. They maintained that people should be baptized only as believers, because baptism is a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (**see Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12**). Baptism to them was the end of the old life and the beginning of a new life in Christ. Since a baby does not have an old life to deal with, they maintained, if someone has been baptized as an infant, he would need to be baptized again as an adult believer. These people were called "Anabaptists," which means "rebaptizers."

Today there is still disagreement about the proper form of baptism. But, more and more, Methodist, Presbyterian, and some other churches that have historically practiced infant baptism are looking anew at both the qualification of a candidate for baptism and the mode of baptism. A number of people, even though they may have been baptized as infants, are being rebaptized by immersion as adult believers.

Got/Questions.com explains further... (**Matthew 28:19**)— this is a washing in water to symbolize the action of the Holy Spirit in a believer's heart. Believer's baptism is one of the two ordinances given to the church. Different churches practice different modes of baptism, but all who follow Christ should be baptized, since our Lord commands it.



Water baptism pictures some wonderful spiritual truths. When we are saved, we are "buried" with Christ and "rise" to newness of life; our sins are

“washed away,” and we are cleansed. Water baptism is our outward expression of that event.

“All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:3–4).

Water baptism is biblically meant for all those who have repented and have consequently been baptized into the body of Christ. It is worthy to note that this type of baptism does not save a person from sin (does not cleanse sins), but it is a recognition rite, confirming a person's coming into the Church. The believer, after the initial cleansing of their sins by the blood of Jesus, then goes through water baptism following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptism by water started in the New Testament and it continues up to this very day. Just like in our times, John the Baptist was baptizing using the medium of water. He baptized many people, as they turned away from evil, and turned to the living God. They came from Jerusalem, Judea, and regions around Jordan and were baptized in the river Jordan confessing their sins. This type of baptism follows only after the sinful person asks for forgiveness and repents of their sins. Sincere repentance is the only qualification for this type of baptism.

Jesus’ Baptism

Jesus Christ, the son of the living and most high God, underwent a unique water baptism while here on earth in the form of a human being. Unlike mankind, who must repent first before going through a sincere and biblically founded water baptism; Jesus Christ instead was baptized without repentance.

This is because He had no sin to repent of. He was without sin, for this Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world, was sinless. The Lord was baptized in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, and with his own baptism, the Lord Jesus Christ was telling us that such a baptism was meant for all believers. **(It also signified His eternal identification with us)**

As Jesus was being baptized in water, God spoke from heaven saying He was well pleased with His beloved Son, Jesus Christ (**Matthew 3:17**). This happened to fulfill the prophetic scriptures, which said, "I will declare that thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Psalms 2:7, Isaiah 42:1). The Holy Spirit also descended down on the Lord in a bodily form of a dove after he was baptized in the water. (**Matthew 3:16**)

Water Baptism In The Ministry of Jesus

Thereafter, as the Lord Jesus Christ began his active ministry on earth, He and His disciples traveled all over the area baptizing. **John 3:22** "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them while they baptized". However, during his ministry Jesus did no baptizing on his own, and he did this to show all believers, that any other believing Christian could perform the act of baptizing another believing Christian. **John 4:2** "Although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized."



So water baptism is one of the ordinances that Jesus Christ left for those believing in him. Speaking to his disciples (and to believers today) he said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (**Matt. 28:19**). Water baptism is thus a sacred rite with a specific purpose for all the believers.

4. Baptism of/In The Holy Spirit

We should be careful to not confuse baptism in the Holy Spirit with the various other ministries of the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit is how He empowers and controls us (**Acts 4:31; Ephesians 5:18**). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is God the Holy Spirit taking up permanent residence in our lives (**John 14:17; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 1 John 4:4**). The sealing of the Holy Spirit is God marking us as His permanent possession (**Ephesians 1:13-14**). Baptism in the Holy Spirit is related to these other ministries of the Holy Spirit, but at the same time, it is separate from them.



In the book of Acts, baptism in the Holy Spirit sometimes resulted in speaking in tongues (**Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; Acts 19:6**). However, in other instances, people believed and therefore received baptism in the Holy Spirit, but nothing is said of tongues (**Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 8:17; 13:12, 48; 14:1; 17:12, 34; 18:8**). Again, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that every believer has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:13**), but not every believer speaks in tongues (**1 Corinthians 12:27-31**). As a result, there is no specific sign that a believer should expect when they are saved and receive baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit can be defined as: *at the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit places a believer into permanent union with Christ and with other believers in the Body of Christ.* **1 Corinthians 12:13** and **Romans 6:1-4** are the central passages in the Bible where we find this doctrine. **1 Corinthians 12:13** states, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." **Romans 6:1-4** says, "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is why Paul could state, "For **we were all** baptized by one Spirit into one body... **we were all** given the one Spirit to drink" (**1 Corinthians 12:13**). As we read in Acts chapter 2, baptism in the Holy Spirit began on the day of Pentecost. This was in fulfillment of Jesus' words in **Acts 1:5**, "...but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." The Apostles experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It resulted in them being empowered to proclaim the Gospel and lead thousands of people to faith in Christ (**Acts 2:41**). In two instances later in Acts, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was temporarily delayed in order to demonstrate to the Apostles that



Samaritans (**Acts 8:14-17**) and Gentiles (**Acts 10:27-48**) were equally a part of God's plan of salvation. The Apostle Peter proclaimed, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." From that point on, every believer received the baptism in the Holy Spirit the moment they believed.

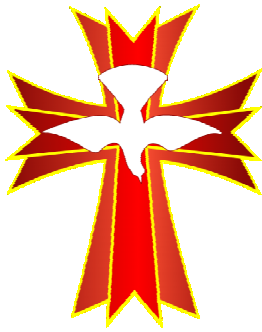
To summarize, baptism in the Holy Spirit does two things. **First**, it identifies us spiritually with the death and resurrection of Christ, uniting us with Him. **Second**, baptism in the Holy Spirit joins us to the body of Christ, and identifies us as united with other believers. Practically, baptism in the Holy Spirit means we are risen with Him to newness of life (**Romans 6:4**), and that we should exercise our spiritual gifts to keep the body of Christ functioning properly as stated in **1 Corinthians 12:13**. Experiencing baptism in the Holy Spirit serves as an exhortation to keep unity of the church (**Ephesians 4:5**). Being identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection-through baptism in the Holy Spirit-establishes the basis for realizing our separation from the power of indwelling sin and our walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:1-10, Colossians 2:12**).

"You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (**Romans 8:9**).

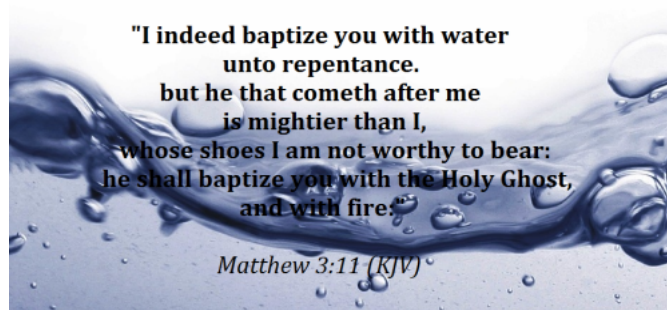
So, in the Old Testament days, the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out from heaven upon all those who believed in the living God. But we do find in many places in the Old Testament where prophets like Joel, announce a big change is coming – that the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh. "And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind". (**Joel. 2:28**)

During His earthy ministry, Jesus Christ taught that the Father would give to his believers, His gift – the comforter, the counselor, the spirit of truth – the Holy Spirit. The Lord also taught that unless he goes back to the Father, the Gift of the Father would not be released. He had to go up to heaven so that the Holy Spirit would come down to the believers (**John 16:7**). In **acts 1:4-5**, the Lord Jesus Christ commands his disciples not to preach the gospel until they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. A few days later during Pentecost, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred upon the 120 disciples who had obeyed the Lord's command to await this special Baptism at Jerusalem (**John 24:49, Acts 2:1-4**).

And so in the New Testament, the scenario changes. Here we find true believers receiving the Holy Spirit who now indwells them constantly. This was the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers in the New Testament era. From that time up to this present time, the Holy Spirit's baptism is open to all believers who desire him, whether Jews or gentiles. Unlike in the Old Testament, in the New Testament we find the Holy Spirit indwelling in the lives of the believers - **He lives in them, on them, and around them.**



Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is the filling of a believer's life with the Holy Spirit who is sent from God the Father. This baptism into the Holy Spirit is mandatory to any believer who desires a victorious spiritual life. **Why is this?** – Because God first calls the believer, then cleanses the believer, then moulds the believer into a new person, then fills the believer with the Holy Spirit. This in turn not only empowers the believer to lead a Godly life, but it also enables the believer to witness Jesus Christ to the world.



Other Holy Spirit Activity In The Life of A Believer

The Holy Spirit does a great many other things in the lives of believers.

- 1) He teaches the believers about the truth of the word of God.
- 2) He enhances understanding, revelation and remembering the word of God.
- 3) He comforts and counsels the believers throughout their Christian walk.
- 4) He gives Godly guidance and advice to the believer.
- 5) He helps the believer in their prayer life.

- 6) He intercedes for the believer before the throne of God.
- 7) He reveals and manifests the character of God in the lives of the believers.
- 8) He gives spiritual gifts to believers to help them in their walk of Faith.
- 9) He testifies of our relationship with God – that we are God's children.
- 10) He opens our spiritual eyes so we can see and perceive the purpose that God has for us.

The Holy Spirit plays an extremely large role in the Church. A church without the Holy Spirit is like the world before creation – shapeless, empty and in chaos. Such a church would be no different from a social club.

As we read the Word of God, we find that the Holy Spirit formed the church into a complete structure (**Acts 2:1-4**), that he makes the body of Christ to be a new and living church of God and the individual believers to be lively stones (**2 Corinthians 3:6**). He also brings direction and guidance to the church as well as spiritual gifts and grace to the believers (**2 Corinthians 8:7**).

Spiritual Gifts



Mary Fairchild, of About Religion, defines the term... "spiritual gifts". It comes from the Greek words *charismata* (gifts) and *pneumatika* (spirits). They are the plural forms of *charisma*, meaning "expression of grace," and *pneumatikon* meaning "expression of Spirit."

While there are different kinds of gifts (**1 Corinthians 12:4**), generally speaking, spiritual gifts are God-given graces (special abilities, offices, or manifestations) meant for works of service, to benefit and build up the body of Christ as a whole.

Spiritual gifts are the source of much controversy and confusion among believers. This is interesting and something of a sad commentary, since these gifts from God are for the edification of the body. Even today, as in the early church, the misuse and misunderstanding of spiritual gifts bring division--splitting up, rather than building up--in the church.

The spiritual gifts can be found in the following passages of Scripture:

- **Romans 12:6-8**
- **1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28-31**
- **Ephesians 4:7-13**
- **1 Peter 4:10**

I would like to classify these gifts into three categories: **Administrative, Body Ministry, and Service.**

Administrative Gifts

The Administrative gifts serve to reveal the plan of God. They are characteristic of a full-time office or calling, rather than a gift that can function in and through any believer.

These gifts were once presented to me through a five-finger illustration that I've never forgotten:



Apostle - An apostle establishes and builds churches; he's a church planter.

An apostle may function in many or all of the ministry gifts. He is the "**thumb**," the strongest of all of the fingers, able to touch every finger.

Prophet - Prophet in the Greek means to "forth tell" in the sense of speaking for another. A prophet functions as God's mouthpiece, speaking forth God's Word. The prophet is the "**index finger**," or pointer finger. He points to the future and points out sin.

Evangelist - An evangelist is called to be a witness for Jesus Christ. He works for the local church to bring people into the body of Christ where they can be discipled. He may evangelize through music, drama, preaching, and other creative ways. He is the "**middle finger**," the tallest one who stands out in the crowd. Evangelists draw a lot of attention, but they are called to serve the local body.

Pastor - The pastor is the shepherd of the people. A true shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The pastor is the "**ring finger**." He is the ringleader of the church; called to oversee, nurture and guide.

Teacher - The teacher and the pastor are often a shared office, but not always. The teacher lays the foundation and is concerned with detail and accuracy. He delights in research to validate truth. The teacher is the "**pinky finger**." Though seemingly small and insignificant, he is designed specifically for digging into tight, dark places, shining light and picking apart the Word of truth.

Body Ministry Gifts

These are manifestation gifts that serve to reveal the power of God. They gifts are supernatural or spiritual in nature. They can be further subdivided into three groups: utterance, power, and revelation.

Utterance - These gifts **say** something: **Power** - These gifts **do** something:
Revelation - These gifts **reveal** something:

Prophecy - This is the "forth telling" of the inspired Word of God primarily to the church, for the purpose of confirming the written Word and building up the entire body. The message is usually one of edification, exhortation or consolation, although it can declare God's will in a particular circumstance, and in rare cases, predict future events.

Speaking in Tongues - This is a supernatural utterance in an unlearned language, which is interpreted so that the entire body will be edified. Tongues may also be a sign to unbelievers. It is also a source of self-edification in times of sorrow, stress and confusion.

Interpretation of Tongues - This is a supernatural interpretation of a message in tongues, translated into the known language so that the hearers (the entire body) will be edified. The interpretation is always in line with God's Word. It will never contradict the written Word.

Faith - This is not the faith that is measured to every believer, nor is it "saving faith." This is special, supernatural faith given by the Spirit to receive miracles or to believe God for miracles.

Healing - This is supernatural healing, beyond natural means, given by the Spirit. There can be multiple healings and various different healing occurrences at the same time.

Miracles - This is the supernatural suspension of the natural laws, or an intervention by the Holy Spirit into the laws of nature. The miracles can be from disease, health issues, financial, or other related situational matters.

Word of Wisdom - This is supernatural know-how in the application of Biblical truth.

Word of Knowledge - This is supernatural knowledge of facts and information that can only be revealed by God. This word can be just a word or a full message. It may be for a congregation, a person, or even a city. (Jonah was given a word to share with Nineveh.)

Discerning of Spirits - This is the supernatural ability to distinguish between spirits such as good and evil, truthful or deceiving, prophetic versus Satanic. It will discern the Spirit of God (His Voice and presence), any evil demonic forces and their attacks as well as the intent of the human heart.

Service Gifts

These are motivational gifts that serve to reveal the personality of God. They are practical in nature. They describe the inner motivations of the Christian servant.

Prophecy - Those with the motivational gift of prophecy are the "seers" or "eyes" of the body. They have insight, foresight, and act like watchdogs in the church. They warn of sin or reveal sin. They are usually very verbal and may come across as judgmental and impersonal; they are loyal to truth over friendship, serious and dedicated.

Ministering/Serving/Helps - Those with the motivational gift of serving are the "hands" of the body. They are concerned with meeting needs; they are highly motivated doers. They may tend to over commit, but find joy in serving and meeting short-term goals.

Teaching - Those with the motivational gift of teaching are the "mind" of the body. They realize their gift is foundational; they emphasize accuracy of words and love to study; they delight in research to validate truth.

Giving - Those with the motivational gift of giving are the "arms" of the body. They truly enjoy reaching out in giving. They are excited by the

prospect of blessing others; they desire to give quietly, in secret, but will also motivate others to give. They are alert to people's needs; they give cheerfully and always give the best that they can.

Exhortation/Encouragement - Those with the motivational gift of encouragement are the "mouth" of the body. Like cheerleaders, they encourage other believers and are motivated by a desire to see people grow and mature in the Lord. They are practical and positive and they seek positive responses.

Administration/Leadership - Those with the motivational gift of leadership are the "under-shepherds" of the body. They have the ability to see the overall picture and set long-term goals; they are good organizers and find efficient ways of getting work done. Although they may not seek leadership, they will assume it when no leader is available. They receive fulfillment when others come together to complete a task.

Mercy - Those with the motivational gift of mercy are the "heart" of the body. They easily sense the joy or distress in other people and are sensitive to feelings and needs. They are attracted to and patient with people in need, motivated by a desire to see people healed of hurts. They are truly meek in nature and avoid firmness.

Denial of Spiritual Gifts

Not all Christians have Spiritual gifts. Many ignore them and do not walk in them because of peer pressure. Others believe the gifts ended with the death of the apostles. However, the gifts of the Spirit are essential in the life of a believer to help him or her in spiritual warfare and daily living. Because you may not understand the operation of one or more gifts doesn't mean you need to reject them.

The controversy is over one particular scripture, **I Corinthians 13:8-10** and its interpretation.

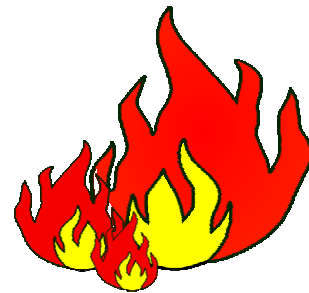
“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

Paul is saying that the gifts will end when, “*That which is perfect is come*” However, as of the writing of this eBook, we are still waiting for Mr. Perfect. His name is Jesus and He will come but has not as yet.

Another logical support for the gifts being needed and in operation today is the population growth of our planet. They say that in Jesus’ day, the earth has around 300 million dwellers. Now we are in excess of 7-Billion. The gifts validated the truths concerning Jesus being the Son of God and the true Messiah or Christ. It seems to me that more than ever, the gifts are essential in proving that Jesus is who He said He was.

5. Baptism With Fire

John the Baptist, who really knew baptism, said: “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (**Lk 3:16**)



What does John mean by "baptize you with fire"? Here are a few suggestions I found in my research.

- 1) It refers to the tongues of fire in **Acts 2:3** If it's a reference to the tongues of fire, it seems to make the idea redundant to a baptism by the Holy Spirit.
- 2) It refers to trials. But and I couldn't find any references elsewhere to baptism by fire that would perhaps suggest the suffering motif.
- 3) It refers to a separate "baptism" for those who are judged. This is evidenced by the contrast set in the next verse of the wheat and chaff. Yet, I don't see language anywhere else of unbelievers being baptized.

The baptism of fire (**Matthew 3:11–12**) – John prophesied that Jesus would baptize men “with fire.” This speaks of Jesus’ judging the world for its sin (**see John 5:22**). Immediately after mentioning the baptism by fire, John describes Jesus as overseeing a harvest to come: “His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (**verse 12; cf. Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43**). Those who are judged by Christ in the last day will be cast into the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:15**).



Matthew chapter 13 is where Jesus tells us of the parable of the Wheat & Tares. As the story goes, good seed was planted in a field but while folks slept an enemy planted tares. Because both were growing up together and trying to separate them would be hard, the owner of the field said to let them be until the harvest and then separate them. This is the harvest to come that John, the Baptist, was talking about. This is also a clear support for the Baptism with/of Fire as being focused towards the tares. It is not for the Christians that are growing up in the midst of the tares.

The Tares, seemingly by how they are positioned in the story, are false Christians that hide among real Christians. They try to take away the glory of God from the Wheat and usurp authority wherever they can.

Baptism And Suffering

Some would say that the Fire is strictly for Christians but the context of the scripture does not support that assumption. If there is any fire that comes towards God's children it's the friction between the Wheat and the Tares as they grow up together. Christians are already subject to fiery darts aimed at them by the wicked one. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." (Eph 6:16)

These folks refer to the fire as the *baptism into sufferings*. The Apostle Paul tells us that even though the sufferings in this life may be severe, they are nothing when compared to the joys that we will experience when we arrive in heaven and are with the Father. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18)

They confuse the Fire with suffering. We are instructed by the scriptures that, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" II Timothy 3:12 Paul is just saying that our suffering, no matter how terrible could never compare with what is in store for us in the Kingdom of God.

Beside what I said before, Jesus said, as recorded by John in his gospel record, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I

have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.”

Life abundant is what Jesus came for. He wants us to be well and prosper, not to suffer. Suffering is not our cross to carry.

Conclusion

There are four major baptisms that are available to every believer. It is a process as we walk the walk that we will experience three of the four. The 5th Baptism being reserved for the false Christians who hide themselves in religion and who are growing up with the Wheat unto the harvest of God.

The sad part is that many mainline Christian denominations do not believe that the Baptism of/with/in the Holy Spirit is biblical. They shy away from the gifts because they feel that the manifestations are disruptive and distracting from their preplanned order of service.

I look at the three Baptisms as a picture of the Trinity. **God the Father** = Water Baptism, a symbol of repentance and being “Born Again” which replaces his image and likeness in us. **God The Son** = the Baptism into the Body of Christ, where all believers are joined together in unity and **God, the Holy Spirit** = The Baptism of The spirit, designed to equip believers with various ministry gifts.

It’s important to know that the Holy Spirit initiates all baptisms. He is the Baptizer.

I hope you have benefited from this eBook. There are many more on this website and you can download them free of charge.