

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Read carefully through this document on the Doctrine of Baptisms, so that you will easily be able to fill in the answer gaps in paper 4.B.

The most vital part of these studies, is to know what the Word of God says, not man's words. Read all the scriptures which have been written out for you carefully and prayerfully.

Key Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:4-5 *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism;"*

Matthew 28:19 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

Romans 6:1-11 *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."*

"For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Luke 3:16 *John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

Luke 11:13 *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

We usually concentrate only on three major baptisms. However, the Bible speaks of a fourth, which should not be ignored. All four of these aspects of "The Doctrine of Baptisms" will be dealt with in this paper.

1. **POSITION**
Baptism by One Spirit into One Body: Placed, positioned or baptised, into the Church by Jesus - we then become part of His Body. This happens at conversion.
2. **PUBLIC CONFESSION**
Baptism in water - Publicly identifying with His death and resurrection.
3. **POWER**
Baptism in the Holy Spirit : This is received by those who ask for it.
4. **SUFFERING (SANCTIFICATION)**

Baptism with “fire” These are phases of difficulty in our own lives.
The greatest “Baptism with Fire” was the crucifixion of our Lord.

IN BAPTISM THERE ARE THREE COMPONENTS

1. **Baptizer**
The person ministering, by immersing the believer.
2. **Candidate**
The person to be baptised
3. **Element**
The element into which one is being baptised.
(e.g. The church, water, the Spirit or by suffering ‘fire’.)

1. BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST. THE CHURCH

- a. **Baptised by One Spirit Into One Body (at conversion)**
 - i) This is a baptism that all born again believers must know.
“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)
“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4-5)
 - ii) This baptism into the Body of Christ takes place at conversion. The repentant sinner who places his faith in Christ is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Body of Christ. Only Jesus can baptise us into the Body of Christ, through the Holy Spirit. At that point we are a “Born-Again” child of God.
“to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” (Acts 26:18)
 - iii) Part of the work of the Holy Spirit is the placing of each ‘new born’ spiritual ‘baby’ believer into the ministry ordained for that believer - within the body of Christ. God guides those He has called. This does not happen overnight. God trains us. *“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”(Rom.8:15)*
And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” (Galatians 4:6)
- b. **Commitment to the Body**
 - i) Serious problems can occur when believers get restless with the position they have been given and try to change it themselves. We should learn, as Paul did, to be content, whatever the circumstances.
“... I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content” (Philippians 4:11)
 - ii) Only the Lord Jesus, who is the Head of the body, may change the believer’s function or even the whole “Body’s” function, if necessary.

- iii) We need to listen to Him and go wherever He tells us to go and do whatever He tells us to do.
- iv) Commitment to the local church and to the body of Christ universally is essential - because we have been baptised by one Spirit into this one body. (The Church - One family.) Never to be lonely again.
- v) We need the body of Christ and we are needed within it. We need to serve in whatever capacity the Lord calls us to. Everyone who has been born- again has a place in the body where they can have the privilege of serving others.
- vi) There is no such thing as independence in God's Kingdom but rather interdependence We all need each other in order for the body to be the full expression of Jesus, as God intends it to be.

c. The Believer's Function

- i) We all need to function because the body cannot function fully without us. Every member is important.
- ii) The body of Christ is a place of security. Christians should be the most secure people on earth, because they are part of a body of which Jesus Christ is Head and He loves and cares for it

2. WATER BAPTISM.

The word "baptise" comes from the verb "bapto" which means to "dip or immerse"

a. Water baptism is a believers baptism.

It is a physical act expressing a spiritual truth. Our washing or cleansing from sin is symbolised and testified to in water baptism. It is an outward confession of what has happened within. It expresses our identification with Jesus.

b. In water baptism we are saying in effect - that :

We share **with** Christ in the fact of His death and resurrection. Rom.6:8
Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

i) We have received New Life.

Obviously the person baptised is not dying for sin as did Jesus, but rather he is making a public testimony to the fact that he is availing himself of Christ's work. As Christ died **for** sin, so he is now symbolically dying **to** sin as he goes into the water and is completely immersed, the burial of the old sinful nature is symbolised. This nature is left under the water and the person is then symbolically raised up to new life in Jesus. *"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"* (Romans 6:11).

ii) A declaration that we live for Jesus as His disciple.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians.2:20)

iii) **We are now ‘Dead in Christ’**

The person being baptised is literally agreeing with God that he is ‘dead in Christ’ to the principles of sin and death and he is now alive in Christ to God. *Therefore we were **buried** with Him through baptism into death...* (Rom.6:4),

iv) **We are identified with Christ**

We willingly, gladly and with joy, associate ourselves with the redemptive work of Calvary. “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin”. (Romans 6:6).

WATER BAPTISM IS A SYMBOL

Our washing or cleansing from sin is symbolised and testified to in water baptism. It is an outward confession of what has happened within. It expresses our identification with Jesus. *“.... do you **not** know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His **death**? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:3-6).*

*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus **were baptized into His death**? Therefore we were **buried** with Him through baptism into death...” (Romans 6:8).*

a) **Why full immersion?**

i) The Greek word for ‘baptism’ is ‘baptizo’ which means ‘to dip’ or ‘immerse’. The word was used to describe the immersion of a cloth in a dye.

ii) John the Baptist baptised in the Aenon River “because there was much water there,” which indicates full immersion
Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. (John 3:23).

iii) The main reason is that only full immersion can properly symbolise burial (i.e. a watery grave). *“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”. (Rom.6:4)*
“ buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” (Col.2:12.)

b) Why should a person be water baptised?

- i) It is a command of Jesus
“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)
- ii) It is the pledge of a good conscience towards God.
“There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...” (1 Peter 3:21),
- iii) Because Jesus Himself was baptised.
“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan river”. (Mark 1:9)
- iv) It is a kind of circumcision.
*“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made **without hands**, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,...”* (Colossians 2:11). His circumcision became our circumcision, He did it all. The symbol being - circumcision of the heart - male or female.
- v) It was a foundational doctrine of the early church
“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized...” (Acts 2:41a)
- vi) Water baptism symbolises washing or cleansing
This is only a symbol as, in fact, we are washed clean by the blood of Jesus and we are cleansed by the Word of God
- vii) Baptism is like a seal on a legal document.

c) Questions most commonly asked about Baptism.

- i) **Sprinkling?**
Sprinkling is not ‘baptism.’ It is not immersion. (“Baptiso”)
- ii) **Babies?**
Jesus was circumcised and dedicated to God, by his parents as a baby and later He was baptised, voluntarily, as an adult.
“....Joseph and Mary took Him (Jesus) to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord” (in the temple). (Luke 2:22b)
- iii) **Conscious Act?**
Baptism is a conscious act of a believing person, who confesses that he/she desires to be obedient to God’s commands.
- iv) **Children?**
 - a) There is no indication in the Bible as to the age of the believer desiring to be baptised in water. Children who are truly “born again” and who desire to be baptised, can be baptised at the discretion of the Elders.

- b) Permission to baptise must be granted by the parent or guardian for a child who is under-age.
 - c) A child must not be baptised because Mom or Dad desire it.
- v) **Healing?**
Baptism in water is not the symbol for healing of sickness, or for the solving of problems etc. The water is not a magic potion. But, nevertheless, God is sovereign and a person may well experience healing after baptism. But that is not the sole purpose for water baptism.
- vi) **Forgiveness?**
- a) Water Baptism is not a symbol of “forgiveness” as such. Through baptism we acknowledge that we are cleansed from sin by the death of Jesus and by confessing our sin. The candidate needs to have experienced “rebirth” (being ‘born-again’) and confessed his/her sin to Jesus - coming to a full understanding that Jesus “died” for him/her and that they understand that water baptism is a following of Christ into the water to identify with His death.
 - b) Jesus commands that our confession of our faith must be a public confession. We are not “secretly” saved
 - c) Believers living in a country where they are in danger of their life if they become Christians, may confess their love for Jesus one to another, within the household of God. They will be led by God as to how and when to witness to others in the world.
- vii) **Water Baptism more than once?**
- a) A **believer** needs to be only baptised in water once in a lifetime. We accept by faith that we have died to sin in Christ. In baptism thereafter, we are cleansed and forgiven - by confession.
“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)
 - b) There is, however, an incident of Paul the Apostle baptising people for the second time, in Scripture. *And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” “Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Act.19:3-5)*
 - c) If a person desires to be baptised for the second time because they feel that they were not actually “born-again” in the past when they were first baptised, or they were too young at the time, they may feel led to go through the waters of baptism again, for conscience sake.
- viii) **Baptism in water is a multi-confession to:**
- a) **Life After Death - Heaven is our home.**

Our belief in life after death and our resurrection. *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according the Scriptures...”* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

b) **The church Worldwide.**

We believe the Church to be the “Ecclesia” - the called out ones - We are part of The Body of Christ worldwide, but the local church where God places you, is the place in which you faithfully serve the body, pay your tithes and where encouragement and sanctification does it’s good work. We see the local church at work in Jerusalem in Acts 2:42-44 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.* (NIV)

c) **Turning away from the world.**

A turning away from, and not loving, the things of this world - we are finished with it. We are now part of the Kingdom of God.

d) **Turning away from The Devil.**

We have turned away - he no longer has power over us. We have changed over to God’s side. In Jesus, sin has lost it’s power.

NOTE: It is only necessary to immerse the believer in the water once - in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost - not three times. If a person is afraid of water allow them to bend at the knees and immerse themselves in the water. Never force the believer into the water.

3. **BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT (The power)**

Thank God not only for the position into which He has brought us, but also for the fact that He has made available to us, the power to live in that position.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Act.1:8a)

a) **The reasons for being baptised in the Holy Spirit :**

i) **It is a command .**

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18) We can only be filled to our capacity to receive. This may be very small at the start, but as we go on to maturity our capacity will increase. We therefore need to be continually filled to whatever capacity we have at that moment.

ii) **We receive new power and boldness to witness**

“...You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8).

iii) **The fullness of the Holy Spirit Releases the gifts.**

It is necessary for the release of the gifts of the Holy Spirit

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. These are given by the Spirit : Wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines” (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

- iv) **Fruit of the Spirit.** (Galatians 5:22).
With the help of the Holy Spirit we have the potential for the maximum evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. *“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”*.
 - v) **Living for God’s Glory** (John.16:14)
The Holy Spirit is necessary to live a life for God’s glory. *“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”*
 - vi) **The Holy Spirit makes Jesus more real to us** (John 15:26)
“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”
 - vii) **The power of the Holy Spirit produces greater effectiveness in prayer.**
“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom.8:26)
 - viii) **Revelation**
The Baptism in the Holy Spirit brings a fresh understanding of, and love for, the Word of God. *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (Jn.16:13)* He tells us what is going to happen in the future through prophecy, both in the Word of God and by word of mouth,.
- b) **We all need to be filled.**
- i) In order to be filled we need to have clean hearts. We need to confess our sins and to forgive others no matter how right we think we are. *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, ...” (1 John 1:7a)*
 - ii) We then need to thirst (want to be filled). Come to Jesus and drink. *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:37-39)*
 - iii) Then out of our innermost beings will flow rivers of living water,

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38)

- c) **The sign (evidence) that we have been filled with the Holy Spirit**
A new and fervent desire to be like Jesus, a longing for and the understanding of His Word, His work and His empowering, becomes evident by the change in our lifestyle.
- d) **Speaking in tongues**
All believers, when baptised in the Holy Spirit have the capacity to speak in tongues. Our intellect is the biggest hindrance to exercising this ability. In the early church everyone who was baptised in the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues.
- e) **What happened in the Bible when people were filled?**
 - i) One example is when 120 people were gathered - and the Holy Spirit came upon them and they began to speak with other tongues and spoke the Word of God boldly. *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* (Acts 2:4) (See also Act.10:46; 19:6)
 - ii) Cornelius and those with him spoke with other tongues and praised God *"The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God."* (Acts 10:45-46).(NIV).
 - iii) Paul received his sight
"Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said. 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 9:17-18) (NIV)

CONCLUSION

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13)

The baptism in the Spirit is given to those who seek it by faith. It is not to be struggled for, agonised about, begged for, tarried for or bargained for. It is a free gift of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples to enable us to become more like Him.

4. BAPTISM IN SUFFERING - FIRE

- a) Many Christians are ignorant of this baptism whilst others sometimes misunderstand it. Yet it is a very real experience in the lives of true Christians. ***"Everyone will be salted with fire."*** (Mark 9:49) (NIV)
- b) In this present world many Christians find the thought of "suffering" as distasteful or frightening and try to ignore this doctrine. Suffering is not only sickness or financial difficulties. No-one seeks out to suffer, but suffering is part of living. *"...For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the*

word, immediately he stumbles.” (Mt.13:21b). God wants to strengthen us so that we do not stumble. The Scripture says “*when*”, not “*if*.”

- c) The true child of God who has yielded His life to Christ and taken up his cross, will find that in the same way as the world rejected and persecuted Christ, so they will turn on the Christians. Jesus said that “if you follow Me you will ALL experience persecution in one way or another.
“and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.” (Mark 4:17)
- d) Almost all of us have experienced being misunderstood, rejected and even falsely accused. Some of this has come from members of our own churches or even members of our own natural families - as well as from the outside world. The hurts we feel are part of the baptism of suffering. The Bible says “Consider it all joy.” *Yes, and all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.* (2 Timothy 3:12) Never give up!
- e) Jesus was at first, a popular, highly acclaimed man, arousing jealousy among religious leaders. He later suffered rejection and great physical suffering.. Not many of us have been beaten or spilt blood. *“The servant is not greater than His master.”* When resistance and trouble comes, stand in the full armour of God.
- f) The world is becoming more and more anti-Christian every day.
- g) There are Christians suffering and dying for their faith in different parts of the world right now. Remember to pray for them. However, this produces great joy because we realise that we are suffering for Christ’s sake.
- h) Of course, we must be sure that we have not done anything evil to deserve suffering. That would bring a reproach on the Name of Jesus.
- i) All suffering - while in the work of Jesus Christ will have a purifying (or sanctifying) effect in our daily living, body, soul and spirit.

5. WHAT IS SANCTIFICATION (HOLINESS)

- a) When a person is placed into Christ, then immediately at that point, the person assumes the holiness of Christ in the sight of God.
- b) Yet it is a progressive experience.
This appears as a contradiction of the previous statement, BUT *“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* (Php.3:12-13)
- c) It is “new life.” This is a **legal** statement.
We are new creatures - God said it.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

The **goal** is to be conformed to the image of Christ, controlled by the Spirit of God.